

AHRC-funded Motherhood in post-1968 European Literature Network
Aims and Research Questions for Workshop 2
'Mothering and Work: Employment Trends and Rights' (Friday 26 October 2012)

Aims:

Of course, mothering is work in itself, but Workshop 2, 'Mothering and Work: Employment Trends and Rights', will focus on the relationship between mothering and *paid* work in a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary context. It aims to identify specific problem areas relating to this relationship in Europe, asking what kinds of insights literature may offer to the issues raised.

Research questions:

1. What are the key contemporary issues relating to mothering and employment in different European countries?
2. What specific problem areas arise in debates around mothering and employment?
3. How are mothers as paid workers affected by the contemporary climate of austerity and precarity of employment in European countries?
4. What issues do maternity rights and provisions raise for working mothers in the current economic climate?
5. What is the impact on non-parents of maternal rights and provisions in the workplace?
6. What kinds of negotiations do mothers make relative to paid employment?
7. How do literary texts respond to and/or shape current debates on mothering and employment, and vice versa?
8. How are issues relating to mothering and employment treated in literary and popular texts (i.e. what kinds of literary techniques and effects are employed to convey meaning in relation to the topic)?
9. What insights can literary narratives and representations relating to mothering and paid work offer to interdisciplinary discussion?
10. What kinds of relationship are there between literature and real life experience, and between literature and contemporary social issues, in particular regarding the relationship between mothering and employment trends and rights?
11. Which particular issues arise from cross-cultural comparisons of mothering and employment trends and rights?
12. How can we create productive interdisciplinary discussion on the topic?