

**CBCP Summer conference**

**5<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**Call for Papers**

**Class in publishing and print: ceilings, inequalities and diversities**

*“A gloomy novel apparently written by a working man. V.R. says it is ungrammatical and has no merits” (Publisher’s rejection, 1926, UoR Chatto & Windus archives)*

*“Class will be intersectional or it will be bullshit” (adapted\* from Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 2017)*

Social class has long been a barrier for writers from working-class backgrounds to getting into print. From D. H. Lawrence to James Kelman, Buchi Emecheta to Pat Barker, working-class writers have been told to edit and revise dialect, style and characters to get their work published in the literary mainstream. Thanks to austerity policies and the erosion of the welfare state, barriers to entry in the creative industries are higher than ever (see *Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries* by Brook, O’Brien and Taylor, 2018). Prompted by today’s inequalities and the systemic barriers to entry in the cultural and creative industries, interest in contemporary working-class writing is at a high and publishers are trying to address the “class ceilings” and regional biases in their own workforces.

This conference at the University of Reading brings together academics, writers, publishers and agents to explore the relationships between publishing genres, printing, national and regional diversity, readers, business decisions and social class.

We invite talks and presentations on any of the following:

- Contemporary working-class writing and publishing
- The long history of publishing work by writers who identify as working-class
- Peaks and troughs in the history of publishing working-class writing, challenges in sustaining a career as a working-class writer
- Publishing for the working class
- Publishing and class struggle: political party presses in Europe and beyond
- Trade unions, strikes and the print industry
- Labour and ideas of value in the book trade
- Standardizing dialect and publishing
- Editing in/out linguistic differences in publishing
- Class and national identity in printing and publishing
- Networks: patrons, publishers, editors and publishers’ readers who have helped working-class writers reach a wider readership
- Publishing today: challenging class and regional biases, diversity initiatives
- Literary form and working-class writing – genre fiction/literary fiction/poetry/drama
- Self-publishing, workers/writers’ circles, community publishing, blogging / DIY and grass-roots design and print
- Literary prizes and social class

Please submit abstracts (up to 200 words) and a short 2-line bio by **20th April 2020** to Dr Nicola Wilson at [n.l.wilson@reading.ac.uk](mailto:n.l.wilson@reading.ac.uk). Speakers will be notified by 30<sup>th</sup> April.

The event will be held at Special Collections, University of Reading, UK. There will be a minimal daily charge to cover lunch and costs <https://www.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/>

There will also be a free public workshop and ‘meet-the-author’ salon at Reading Public Library on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Organising committee: Dr Nicola Wilson (Reading), Dr Lisa Blower (Wolverhampton), Dr Sophie Heywood (Reading), Dr Daniela la Penna (Reading), Professor Sue Walker (Reading)

<https://research.reading.ac.uk/centre-for-book-cultures-and-publishing/>