

# Welcome

**Name:** Lauren Wilson

**PhD:** Classics

**Thesis Title:** Classical Afterlives: Language, Gender and Genre in Renaissance Dialogue

## Thesis Description:

The dialogue genre, a literary form found in ancient texts such as the writings of Plato, Cicero, Lucian and others, experienced a decline in the post-classical period but a startling rebirth in the Renaissance. During this period, in which humanistic culture appreciated, imitated and emulated the literary and cultural achievements of antiquity, the genre became immensely popular and was used for prose writings on a wide variety of subjects: from love and beauty to more technical treatises on natural philosophy, human behaviour and music. The connection the form implied with the ancient world and its status as a genre that explicitly staged the act of communication made it a suitable choice for different writers in the ever-changing circumstances of the early modern period. My highly interdisciplinary project aims to study this afterlife of the classical dialogue form in the Renaissance (roughly from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries), critiquing, for instance, the views of Virginia Cox in her 1992 book *The Renaissance Dialogue* to examine and give nuances to her statement that in Italy, Ciceronian models of dialogue were preferred.<sup>[1]</sup>

Though my initial proposal covered the whole of Europe during the early modern period, to confine the project to within the scope of a PhD thesis, I will primarily consider the use and appropriation of the classical dialogue in Renaissance dialogues originating from the Italian peninsula and the islands. It will also be limited chronologically to the sixteenth century.

This new geographical and chronological focus will enable the dialogues within the selected area and time period to be studied in greater depth, using historicist and comparative literary approaches to contextualise the dialogues and situate them within the genre and the wider literary context. Part of the project will also include providing my own translations of the Latin, Italian and Classical Greek passages chosen for close analysis; this should help to minimise translation loss in key areas and ensure greater understanding of the texts.

Four key themes running through the texts that I have read so far are as follows; these will become my chapter headings:

1. Language
2. Form
3. Self-representation
4. Gender

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[1] Virginia Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue* (Cambridge, 1992).10

**Supervisors and Institution(s):** Prof Helen Lovatt - University of Nottingham  
Dr Ita Mac Carthy - University of Birmingham  
Prof Sarah Knight - University of Leicester

## Publications:

- Watch this space

## Scholarly / Public Engagement Activities:

year 2017/2018

- Watch this space

## Other Research Interests:

- Classical reception in the early modern period
- Issues of gender in classical and early modern texts

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