

Dr Ita Mac Carthy BA, PhD

Senior Lecturer in Italian Studies

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About

My research lies mainly in the renaissance period and focuses on the connections between literature, art and society, on questions of literary genre and aesthetic practice, and on women's studies. I am currently writing a book, provisionally called *The Grace of the Italian Renaissance*, that examines the notion of 'grace' in renaissance culture, literature and art; developing the next phase of a collaborative research project on *Early Modern Keywords*; and editing a volume of essays entitled *Cognitive Confusions* on dreams, delusions and early modern literature.

Biography

I received my BA and PhD from University College Cork, and moved from a post at Durham University to the University of Birmingham in 2007.

Teaching

Like most Italianists, I teach across many areas of Italian Studies, from Dante to Dario Fo and from literature to theatre, art and cinema. My main undergraduate teaching interests lie in the literature and art of the Renaissance period and in cinematic and literary accounts of Fascism and Terrorism in twentieth-century Italy. At postgraduate level, I teach gender theory, feminist historiography, the renaissance epic, and women in renaissance literature and art.

Postgraduate supervision

I welcome research proposals from students interested in: the interconnections and rivalries between literature and art during the Italian renaissance; renaissance keywords and their histories, lives, and afterlives; the renaissance epic, especially Ariosto; and on writing on and by women in the Italian renaissance.

Research

My research lies mainly in the renaissance period and focuses on the connections between literature, art and society, on questions of literary genre and aesthetic practice, and on women's studies. I am currently writing a monograph, provisionally called *The Grace of the Italian Renaissance*, that examines the notion of 'grace' in renaissance culture, literature and art and developing the next phase of a collaborative research project on *Early Modern Keywords*. This project has already produced the interdisciplinary conference I organised at Birmingham in September 2008 and the volume I edited, *Renaissance Keywords*, which was published with Legenda in 2013.

My first book was on the representation of women in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and on the making of a poem that both curses and blesses them (see below). Other publications include essays on travel in Ariosto's poem and on grace in Ariosto, Castiglione and Raphael. In the modern period I have published on the contemporary writer Maria Rosa Cutrufelli.

Research groups

As well as the Balzan research project mentioned below (see 'Other activities'), I serve on the editorial board of 'Renaissance Studies' and am a member of the Society for Italian Studies, the Society of Renaissance Studies and the Birmingham-based Centre for Reformation and Early Modern Studies.

Other activities

In January 2012 I took up a research lectureship funded by the Terence Cave Balzan Interdisciplinary Seminar on 'Literature as an Object of Knowledge' (www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/balzan). The aim of the broader project is to explore the cognitive value of literature in relation to other kinds of discourse. My contribution will be an essay on 'Cognition, Emotion and the Aesthetics of Grace' with a particular focus on Ariosto and Tasso and a workshop in Birmingham (in March 2014) on the sixteenth-century *paragone* debate that saw literature and the visual arts compete as instruments, objects and vehicles of knowledge.

Publications

Books

Mac Carthy, Ita (2007) *Women and the Making of Poetry in Ariosto's Orlando furioso*. Leicester, Troubador Press.

Edited volumes

Mac Carthy, Ita (ed) (2013) *Renaissance Keywords*. Oxford, Legenda.

Articles and book chapters

- Mac Carthy, Ita (2013) Ariosto's Grace. *Modern Language Notes*, (forthcoming)
- Mac Carthy, Ita (2013) 'Grace' in *Renaissance Keywords*, pp. 63-80
- Mac Carthy, Ita (2009) Grace and the Reach of Art in Castiglione and Raphael. *Word and Image*, 25 (1) January - March, pp 33-45
- Mac Carthy, Ita (2009) Ariosto the Lunar Traveller. *Modern Languages Review*, 104 (1) January, pp. 71-82

- Mac Carthy, Ita (2007) Ariosto the Traveller. *Modern Languages Review*, 102 (2) April, pp. 397-409
- Mac Carthy, Ita (2005) Marfisa and Gender Performance in the Orlando furioso. *Italian Studies*, 60 (2) Autumn, pp.178-95
- Mac Carthy, Ita (2004) Alcina's Island: From Imitation to Innovation. *Italica*, 81 Autumn, pp. 325-50
- Mac Carthy, Ita (2003) Olimpia: Faithful or Foolhardy? *Olifant*, 22, pp. 103-118
- Mac Carthy, Ita (2003) Identity and Subjectivity in Maria Rosa Cutrufelli's *Il paese dei figli perduti*. In: Conroy, Jane ed. *Cross-cultural Travel*. New York et al., Peter Lang, pp. 495-507

