

Susanne Thuermer

PhD title Nomadic Feminism and Transnational Dialogue: A Comparative Analysis of French and Italian Feminist Theory and Practice

Supervisors [Dr Kate Ince \(/staff/profiles/french/ince-kate.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/french/ince-kate.aspx) (French Studies) and [Dr Charlotte Ross \(/staff/profiles/italian/ross-charlotte.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/italian/ross-charlotte.aspx) (Italian Studies)

I am in the third year of a PhD in French and Italian Studies at the University of Birmingham under the supervision of Dr Kate Ince (French Studies) and Dr Charlotte Ross (Italian Studies). I am also a member of the Postgraduate Steering Committee of the [Graduate Centre for Europe \(/research/activity/gcfe/index.aspx\)](/research/activity/gcfe/index.aspx). I teach on undergraduate modules in both the Italian Department (Cinema and the Written Word) and the French Department (Year 1 Language, La France Moderne 2).

Research project

My thesis argues that greater attention should be paid to dialogue as a means of feminist epistemology, and examines the implications of nomadic feminism for challenging binary oppositions. A 'nomadic feminist' re-thinking of subjectivity by theorists such as Rosi Braidotti, Teresa de Lauretis and Judith Butler turns women into powerful sites of social and discursive transformation and helps feminist theory move beyond the inhibitions of different form of determinism which still persist or are being re-created: (1) the question of a female essence and the validity of a feminist standpoint, (2) dialogue, (3) the – challenged – dichotomy between 'sex' and 'gender', (4) nationalism and the transnational/-cultural. The emphasis is on pointing out affinities between strands of feminist thought that have often been perceived as incompatible, and on showing that openness to thinking outside established frameworks leads to new opportunities for feminist theory and activism. For this reason, I focus on the work of certain thinkers who have defined themselves or have been labeled as adhering to clearly demarcated theoretical and/or national strands of feminist thought, such as Adriana Cavarero, Luisa Muraro and Butler, and on theorists who have worked outside of such systems of definition, or have in fact deconstructed nationally-identified feminisms through the geography of their careers, like Luce Irigaray, Braidotti and de Lauretis. As such, by adopting a transnational point of view, my thesis seeks to rectify the lack of sustained analysis of dialogue as a means of feminist theorizing and activism, in order to move beyond the dualistic confrontational categories in which the relations between the sexes have often been framed.

My research is funded by a University of Birmingham Humanities Research Scholarship.

Background

I completed my undergraduate degree in Modern Languages (French, Italian) and European Studies (Politics) at the University of Birmingham and went on to study for an MPhil before 'upgrading' my registration to a PhD.

Publications

- 'Gender as an Integrating Force: The Potential for Dialogue Between French and Italian Feminism', Birmingham Journal for Europe 1, 2010

Conference papers

- 'The Importance of French and Italian Feminist Theory and Practice for Transnational Feminism', "On ne naît pas... on le devient". Les Gender Studies et le cas Italien; des années 70 à aujourd'hui: Entre libération sexuelle et nouveaux tabous, Grenoble University, November 2010.
- "Nomadic Feminism" in Theory and Practice: Insights from the French and Italian Experience', SIS Postgraduate Colloquium, University of Warwick, June 2010.
- 'The Potential for Dialogue Between Italian and French Feminism', ASMI Postgraduate Conference, University of Edinburgh, July 2009.
- 'Gender as an Integrating Force: The Potential for Dialogue Between French and Italian Feminism', Graduate Centre for Europe Postgraduate Conference, University of Birmingham, April 2009, and Birmingham-Warwick Postgraduate Forum, University of Birmingham, May 2009.

Conference co-organisation

- Association for the Study of Modern Italy (ASMI) Postgraduate Conference, Department of Italian Studies, University of Birmingham, June 2010
- GCfE Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference – Europe: Inside Out, Graduate Centre for Europe, University of Birmingham, March 2010