Nicole Miglio

PhD Student, San Raffaele University (Milan)

[ninicole.miglio@gmail.com](mailto:ninicole.miglio@gmail.com)

I earned both my BA and MA in Philosophy (University of Milan) with a particular focus on feminism and aesthetics. I am doing an international PhD program in Theoretical philosophy and Gender Studies (San Raffaele University, Milan). Last semester, I was visiting student under the supervision of Prof. Gail Weiss (George Washington University), and I am currently working with Dr. Luna Dolézal (University of Exeter).The mail goal of my research is to inquiry the relationship between the qualitative variations of the experience of pregnancy (both in first and third perspectives) and its ontological structure.

**Is the Gestating Subject “Split” or “In-between”? Thinking the ambiguity of the pregnant embodiment through the immanence/transcendence dialectic**

**Keywords:** Phenomenology; Feminism; Maternal Studies; Pregnancy; Subject

Through an analysis of the conceptual couple immanence/transcendence and of the notion of “Split Subjectivity”, I aim to argue for a characteristic “in-between” condition of the pregnant subject.

In the phenomenological heritage that Beauvoir and Young critically discuss, the conceptual couple immanence/transcendence is a tool for defining the intrinsic duplicity of the human subject, which is by nature embodied (Merleau-Ponty, 1945).

In the first part of my talk, I will show how Beauvoir develops this dialectic, applying it to the sexual difference. Beauvoir, as Weiss (1999) and Heinämaa (2003) point out, maintains the positive connotation of the transcendence as openness of the subject, in contrast with the immanence considered as biological rootedness to the body. Young (1984) re-thinks the immanence/transcendence duality, applying it to the idea of “contradictory bodily modalities”. The peculiar and highly problematic position of the female subject is exemplified by the trope of “Split Subjectivity” (Weiss, 1999).

In the second part of my paper, I will inquire how these conceptual tools apply to the issue of pregnancy. My goal is to articulate the relationship between “immanence/transcendence” couple and the notion of “Split Subjectivity”. Firstly, I will discuss the biased conception of motherhood in Beauvoir’s philosophy, arguing for a clear cut between pregnancy and motherhood. In doing so, I will suggest to consider the pregnant embodiment as a peculiar embodied experience. Secondly, I will briefly analyse two cases where the notion of “Split Subjectivity” has a negative connotation. According to Bartky (1990) and Weiss (1999), the female subject could suffer for a deep-seated internalization of the patriarchal gaze that entails a form of splitting under the form of an auto-reification. Another relevant use of the term is diffused in the Disabilities Studies: the splitting self is here a threatened self, invaded by an alien form of life (Smith & Hutchison, 2004).

In the comprehensive analysis of Young (1984), the splitting concerns many aspects (i.e. corporeality, sexuality, and temporality). My proposal is the following: the trope of splitting subjectivity led us important insights, in that it could help to articulate the constitutive ambiguity of the gestating subject. Nonetheless, I do think that this trope seems to complicate fruitlessly the position of the pregnant one, opening to serious issues about the ideals of unity and integrity of the subject (Weiss, 1999). Furthermore, It seems to me that the relationship between the gestating subject and the modalities of being that she is supposed to be split in (especially immanence and transcendence), is not at all one of the splitting (see “x or y”), but instead one of the in-between (“x and y”, in a non-pacific neither linear way). In conclusion, I will show how fruitful could be comparing the Split and the In-between models, in respect of the pregnant embodiment. Against Young (1984), I will use the Lived/Objective body dialectics (Husserl, 1929; Merleau-Ponty, 1942) to account for the in-between character of the pregnant embodiment.