Feminism (Also) for Men: Souls, Bodies, and the Question of How to Live

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Abstract

This article aims to demonstrate how men who feel confused and irrelevant in feminism classes can engage with feminism on two levels: listening to the voices of women, but also seeing feminism as an opportunity to supplement their own (male) perspectives. It discusses Adriana Cavarero's *In Spite of Plato*, and points out that she emphasises its relevance for women much stronger than its relevance for men – almost to the point where the latter is completely eclipsed. Cavarero criticises the Western philosophical tradition originating with Plato as propagating a genderised soul–body hierarchy, in which the male = the soul, the female = the body, and the former is centralised while the latter is merely defined in terms of its deviation from the former. She proceeds to reread (marginalised) female characters from male-produced texts in order to carve out space for an embodied female subjectivity. While she discusses embodied wisdom with regards to Penelope (Odysseus's wife in *The Odyssey*) and thereby women more generally, she does not emphasise the value of embodiment for men. This article emphasises that the bod(il)y can supplement male subjectivity too and can lead towards a more complete philosophical approach: the abstract intellectualism of the tradition Cavarero criticises is impoverished and cannot satisfactorily address an everyday, situated question such as "How should I live?". Hopefully this will make some of those men in feminism classes feel less confused and irrelevant.

About the author

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1. Introduction

This article is predominantly aimed at men who find themselves feeling confused and irrelevant in feminism classes. In fact, it was written by a man in that precise context. For men, feminism classes can easily feel like classes only about giving voices to women (or, rather, them taking voices for themselves – as it should be). And it is about this, but not simply about this. It is also about critiquing men's perspectives and offering perspectives that can supplement these, but this is not always emphasised or made explicit. Below is a discussion of a feminist text that, while being directly relevant to men, does not emphasise this fact at all. I aim to emphasise its relevance to men and thereby demonstrate another level on which men can engage with feminism. Hopefully, this will allow some men to feel less irrelevant and confused in feminism classes. Please note that I am not arguing that men should only take from feminism what is directly relevant for themselves and ignore the important activity of women becoming part of the conversation. Both features of feminism are important.

What can men learn from a feminist perspective on the Western philosophical tradition, as exemplified by a thinker like Plato? This article investigates the shortcomings of a philosophical approach that centralises intellectual contemplation and considers how an alternative, in which the value of embodied wisdom and the important relationship between philosophy and everyday life are acknowledged, could supplement the former.

The Italian feminist philosopher, Adriana Cavarero, in her book *In Spite of Plato*, argues that Plato's writings have influenced a male-centric tradition of philosophy in the West that erases the female perspective and voice. She claims that traditionally, the male has been equated with the soul/mind and the female with the bod(il)y, thereby leading to the aim of philosophy to cultivate the soul and renounce the body — to foster eternal, abstract knowledge by transcending the body and its senses, which can only distract by perceiving the world of flux. The result, she argues, is a male-centric symbolic order which is fundamentally disembodied and which leaves no room for female subjectivity, where subjectivity refers to a position of agency or a perspective from which the world is interpreted. The (disembodied) male perspective is deemed neutral, and the (embodied) female becomes a mere object defined in terms of her deviation from the male. Thus, she rereads (marginalised) female characters from male-produced texts in order to carve out a space for female subjectivity.

The emphasis of the book very much falls on the development of a female subjectivity. However, Cavarero does highlight the philosophy of sexual difference as one of her theoretical axes and briefly suggests how her work relates to men: "[In] the new philosophical horizon of sexual difference, the basic element of philosophy is a *two*, not a *one* … . And this two brings into language living and embodied humans, in all the splendor of their finitude" (Cavarero, 1995:6). This article will make explicit that the value of embodiment, highlighted by the space carved out for a female subjectivity, can supplement male subjectivity and lead to a more complete philosophical approach.

Western philosophy — exemplified by thinkers such as Plato and later René Descartes — has been pre-occupied with rationalist, abstract ideas that fail to answer one of the most basic philosophical questions: How should I live? The movement towards a more complete philosophical approach, one that values embodiment, can bring philosophy closer to everyday problems, such as this fundamental question.

The structure of this article is as follows: First, Plato's genderised soul–body hierarchy will be discussed with reference to *The Phaedo* and Aristophane's Love Myth in *The Symposium*. Then Cavarero's feminist rereading of Penelope, the wife of Odysseus from *The Odyssey*, will be recounted. It will be demonstrated that this feminist rereading of ancient texts carves out a space for the female within the male-centric symbolic order, and that the embodied knowledge it exemplifies suggests a way towards a more complete philosophical approach for both women and men.

2. Plato's Soul–Body Hierarchy

Plato's writings are ripe with references to a soul–body distinction in living beings, which is particularly significant for humans. The main reason is the importance of this distinction — in fact, hierarchy, as will be shown later — for philosophy, and philosophy is typically a human endeavour. Plato assigns the soul (or mind; this article does not distinguish between the two)

as belonging to the realm of eternal, abstract entities, which he calls the Forms. The body, on the other hand, is assigned to the realm of ever-changing, concrete matter — the world that is experienced with our senses. This distinction is hierarchised, with the realm of the Forms (and thus the soul) placed above the worldly realm (and thus the body). Plato views philosophy as the pursuit of eternal, abstract knowledge, which is characterised as knowledge of the Forms by moving away from the ever-changing and thus imperfect knowledge stemming from our sense-experiences of the material world. Philosophy is thus the process of ascension (transcendence) from the body to the soul.

Plato's dualist distinction between soul and body is found in Socrates's definition of death in *The Phaedo*. Socrates is imprisoned and awaiting his execution after having been tried and prosecuted for corrupting the youth and impiety. In his discussion about death with his friends visiting him in his cell, he offers the following definition:

> Is [death] anything other than the separation of the soul from the body? … The body is separated from the soul and is just by itself, while the soul, having been separated from the body, is just by itself? Is death anything other than this? (Plato, 2025b:64c)

If soul and body can separate, then they both must be distinct entities within themselves. However, what is also implied is that these two entities interact or combine at a stage and, if death is separation, their combination must be life. Socrates proceeds to assign philosophy to the realm of the soul: "the preoccupation of such a person [a philosopher] is not about the body, but is directed away from it as much as possible, and turned towards the soul" (Plato, 2025b:64e). The reason for this is that "[the body] disturbs the soul" (Plato, 2025b:66a) — Socrates even goes as far as describing it as a "badness" (rendered as "an evil" in some translations, e.g., Plato, 1951:66) with which "the soul is compounded" (Plato, 2025b:66b 5). The body is part of the physical realm where everything is in flux, and the physical senses can only perceive these fleeting entities, i.e., what *appears* to be. What is — reality — consists not of such changing appearances, but rather of the eternal, abstract Forms. The Forms are apart from the world of flux and, as the physical world is perceived by the senses, the abstract Forms are perceived by the soul. The body can thus only distract the soul by sensing what is temporary, thereby pulling it away from its philosophical pursuit of (abstract, eternal) truth.

Plato believes that the philosopher's goal is pure and complete separation between soul and body, so that the soul can return to where it belongs — the realm of the Forms. That is why Socrates describes engaging with philosophy as a "pursuit of nothing except dying and being dead" (Plato, 2025b:64a). Since death is the definite separation of the soul from the body, philosophers — pursuing eternal, abstract knowledge — strive for a pure, complete separation so that the body will stop distracting the soul with sense information about the temporary. The souls of non-philosophers, whose attention was not fixed towards the eternal but rather on bodily pleasures, do not separate completely at death. The tie between their souls and bodies is strong and, when they die, their bodies weigh down their souls and prevent complete separation. Philosophy is thus the art of practising death, of how to separate purely and completely from the body.

Absolute knowledge can only be known in death. Since life is marked by the union of the soul and body, the body will always distract the soul from pure contemplation with sense-information of the ever-changing. Although the philosopher cultivates the soul and not the body, the body is still there during life. Only once the body dies and the soul is not too attached to the body, can the soul successfully know eternal, abstract truth. Plato therefore posits a metaphysical dualism between soul and body and that philosophy is the pursuit of the former, whereas the latter is a mere hindrance. Thus, a clear hierarchy between soul and body is found in Plato's thought.

3. Male Souls and Female Bodies

Some feminist philosophers, such as Cavarero, argue that Plato's soul–body hierarchy is gendered in that the soul = the male and the body = the female. This can be deduced from the fleeting references made to Xanthippe (Socrates's wife) and Penelope (Odysseus's wife) in the *Phaedo.* Further evidence for the soul–body hierarchy being gendered will be given through a discussion of love as depicted in *The Symposium.*

Socrates does not allow Xanthippe to be present at his final discussion about death, moments prior to his

execution. When Socrates's friends join him in his cell, Xanthippe laments, "your friends will be speaking to you now for the very last time, and you to them" (Plato, 2025b:60a). Consequently, Socrates sends her home. This is significant for two reasons: First, it suggests that the home, instead of philosophical discussion, is the proper sphere for women. Socrates and his friends are about to discuss philosophy, and his wife may not be present, so is sent back to her proper sphere. Moreover, they are about to discuss death — possibly the most important philosophical topic given my discussion above. This relates to the second point: that Xanthippe, a woman, laments the physicality and embodiment of Socrates's imminent death — it is the last time that he and his friends will be and speak together. This indicates Xanthippe's unfamiliarity with philosophy and with the significance of death as the soul escaping the body and returning to where it came from. Xanthippe's ignorance of death and philosophy, and Socrates's sending her home, suggest a gendering of the soul–body hierarchy into the male (soul) and female (body). Women were believed to be too bodily oriented and disengaged from the soul to practise philosophy, and were instead associated with the realm of "bodily distractions".

The brief reference to Penelope in *The Phaedo* further supports this notion. When Socrates's friends lament the fact that he is about to die, Socrates says that they are in effect trying to undo his philosophical pursuits by focusing on his bodily death and overlooking the fact that his lifelong goal is about to materialise. They are performing bad philosophy, since their attention is focused on the physical and ever-changing — the bodily — and is counter-productive to the pursuit of philosophy as pure and complete separation of the soul from the body[1]. Socrates relates this bad philosophy to Penelope's "weaving some web in the opposite direction" (Plato, 2025b:84a). Here, the bodily focus of bad philosophy is assigned to Penelope's role of weaving, which is not only a physical activity that does not require much contemplation, but is also typically assigned to women. Moreover, it is deemed aimless because Penelope unweaves at night what she had woven in the day. Penelope is therefore depicted as a bad philosopher who is too pre-occupied with the body and avoids contemplative activities and, consequently, unfit to separate completely from her body at death.

That Plato's soul–body hierarchy is gendered is more explicit in parts of *The Symposium*. During a symposium on love, in which Socrates and others are present, Aristophanes offers his view of love by recounting a myth (Plato, 2025a:189d–193c) about ancient humans as dual, egg-shaped entities consisting of two people joined together. According to this myth, there were three types of dual humans: with male-male, male-female, and female-female combinations. These dual humans were very strong and wanted to compete with the Gods. Zeus, somewhat threatened, decided to slice them in half in order to weaken them. Love is defined as the longing for individual humans to find their lost halves and to be reunited with them. Individual men originating from male-male entities love males, and those originating from male-female entities are lovers of women. Women originating from male-female entities love men, and those originating from female-female entities love women. According to Aristophanes, heterosexual love leads to mere procreation and child-rearing (Plato, 2025a:191c). But real men, "the very best of boys and youths … [who] are by nature extremely manly … do not, by nature, have an interest in marriage and begetting children" (Plato, 2025a:192a–b). In male homosexual love, they would have "satisfaction from their intercourse" and be able to "return to their activities", such as "civic affairs" (Plato, 2025a:191c–192b).

Moreover, as Socrates recounts Diotima's[2] view on love in *The Symposium*, male homosexual love[3], rather than the human babies of heterosexual love, produce idea babies; they give birth from their souls (Plato, 2025a:209a). In *Theaetetus*, Plato even describes the character Socrates as a midwife for idea babies (Plato 2025c:150b–e). The superiority of idea babies over human babies is evident in that

[1]Note how despite the "bad philosophising" of these men, Socrates is still willing to engage philosophically with them, whereas he does not with Xantippe, who is sent home.

[2]Yes, she is a woman who Socrates deems wise, but notice that she is not present at the symposium — in fact, no women are, except the servant. This exclusion echoes Xanthippe's not being present at Socrates's final philosophical discussion.

[3]It is also interesting to note that no productive output is identified for female homosexual love. Plato does not even bother to discuss the situation in which men are not present.

> everyone would prefer to have such children as these [ideas] rather than the human kind .... Many shrines have already been established for them because they [men with great ideas, like Solon the famous legislator] had such children as these, but this has never yet happened because of human children. (Plato, 2025a:209c–e)

The physical process of child-rearing — ensuring that the "race would continue" (Plato, 2025:191c) — comes second to more intellectual matters like "civic affairs". Since having sexual intercourse with a woman is what leads to the physical, bodily affair of procreation, it suggests that the female body and the concomitant of child-rearing are the culprits that distract men from their intellectual activities.

This supports Cavarero's notion that Plato established a male-centric symbolic order based on a soul–body hierarchy: the soul is identified with maleness and male heterosexual love and is raised above the body, which is identified with femaleness in that heterosexual love begets "lesser" children — human ones — in comparison to the children of the soul — ideas — which is conceived of male heterosexual love.

Plato's writing, exemplified here in *The Phaedo* and *The Symposium*, can thus be read as positing a view of philosophy in which the soul is prioritised over the body and the male is prioritised over the female. In defining death as the separation between the soul and the body, and philosophy as striving for a complete and pure separation by renouncing the body and cultivating the soul, the former is achieved. In praising the birthing of ideas, which results from the intellectual love between men, as a more fulfilling endeavour than begetting human children, which results from the physical love between men and women, the latter is achieved. Let us now consider a critical feminist rereading of Plato's Penelope that lays the groundwork for moving towards a union between soul and body in philosophy for both genders.

4. Rereading Penelope: Towards Embodied Philosophy

Cavarero sets out to displace Plato's gendered soul–body hierarchy. She argues that Plato's work influenced a male-centric era that feigns neutrality, thereby invalidating any female subjectivity, i.e., a position of agency and a perspective from which to interpret. She claims that the West operates within a male symbolic order, originating in Ancient Greece and with Plato as a seminal figure, perpetuated by male mythic figures into the present (Cavarero, 1995:2). This symbolic order claims a central position for the male in which "the roles played by female figures have their meaning in the patriarchal [male-centric] codes that constructed them" (Cavero, 1995:2). Women are thus mere objects of the male gaze. They are excluded from the male centre and marginalised as deviations from men. Consequently, "women find that [they] are the object, not the subject, of the other's thought" (Cavarero, 1995:2). Cavarero's method of displacing the soul–body hierarchy involves rereading female characters in male-produced texts from the perspective of a modern woman, i.e., she adopts a neo-materialist perspective grounded in female embodiment and mediated by personal experiences. She performs a type of "repossession", in which she steals (marginalised) female characters from male-centric texts and gives them a new voice. My focus will be on her rereading of Penelope, one in which her role is transformed into a sort of embodied *metis* — a cunning, embodied reason, used to outwit opponents — that carves out a space for an embodied female subjectivity. However, I will discuss how Cavarero fails to make explicit that the value of a soul–body union is also relevant to men and can thus supplement male subjectivity.

In her rereading of Penelope, Cavarero demonstrates the fissures within Plato's logic by highlighting the partiality of pure intellectualism through discussing the embodied wisdom demonstrated in Penelope's weaving and unweaving. But more significantly, Penelope's (un)weaving counters her prescribed role in the male symbolic order. She weaves and unweaves in order to stave off possible suitors who want to marry her, because her husband, Odysseus, has been at sea for many years. She tells these suitors that she must first complete weaving a funeral cloak for her father-in-law before she can consider a new suitor. She weaves at the cloak during the day and unweaves her work again at night, thereby never completing and never having to remarry. The embodied act of (un)weaving becomes a form of cunning reason that Penelope uses to control her environment. Moreover, while it may seem that Penelope was staying loyal to Odysseus in not wanting

to remarry, it can also be read as an act of freedom, in which Penelope finds a way to remain somewhat independent of male companionship.

Penelope's (un)weaving distances itself from the male symbolic order in temporality and medium. It is "cadenced" and repetitive (Cavarero, 1995:19). It stands in direct contrast with male temporality characterised by "action", in which novelty is pursued at "a tempo of progressing events" (Cavarero, 1995:15). Male temporality is represented by Odysseus and his endless adventures at sea, in pursuit of immortality via a heroic death. This male-centric obsession with immortality is echoed in the discussion of philosophy as pursuing the eternal and foregoing the temporary through complete separation between soul and body at death. From this view, slow, rhythmic, repetitive acts would be characterised as "useless" or "time-wasting". Penelope's cadenced and repetitive, embodied act of (un)weaving, however, resists this characterisation in demonstrating its usefulness for her to control her situation. Although it does not constantly pursue novelty, the repetitiveness of the act is what makes it effective, as (un)weaving too much in a day, or moving from task to task and adding to what must be completed, would be more conspicuous. Moreover, while it is an intellectual decision or manoeuvre, it is with the physical medium of (un)weaving that it materialises, and is also a typically female activity performed from the typical sphere for women within the male symbolic order: the home. She uses her imposed role (staying at home, weaving) to enact control over her situation. Through giving a new voice and a new perspective to Penelope's role, Cavarero demonstrates that Plato's own characterisations of women, within his male-centric philosophical works, contain a rereading that carves out a space for a female, and embodied, subjectivity.

Cavarero points to another fissure in Plato's logic, stemming from his metaphorical use of Penelope in *The Phaedo.* In the metaphor (operating within the male symbolic order and temporality), it is Penelope's *un*weaving that is absurd, as she undoes what she spent her entire day trying to achieve. For a philosopher who spends his life focused on separating the soul from the body, to lament at death and in effect "cling on" to (bodily) life, is like undoing what he spent his entire life trying to achieve. Plato therefore uses Penelope's counter-productive unweaving as an example of "bad philosophising". There is thus an interesting logical inversion at play here, a fault line in Plato's logic which Cavarero presses into a fissure.

If, on Plato's view, Penelope's act of weaving is seen as retying the body and the soul, her *un*weaving effectively "turns the task of philosophy around" (Cavarero, 1995:23). Let us return here to what has been said about philosophy, death, and birth previously. The male symbolic order prioritises dying, with philosophy as the preparation for a "pure death". This theme is also seen in the male obsession with dying a heroic death at sea or in battle, thereby securing one's immortality through the intellectual offspring (ideas) of poets and lyricists. While birth is acknowledged as the means of continuation, Socrates (recounting Diotima's philosophy) assigns priority to birth from the soul — of ideas — over the physical, biological birth of human offspring. This soul–body hierarchy is also genderised, as male-male love leads to intellectual discussion while male-female love leads to procreation and "distraction" from the pursuits of the soul. Whereas philosophy is aimed at untying the soul from the body and thereby focusing on death and dying purely, Penelope's weaving — read as (re)tying the soul and body — emphasises the importance of life and its concomitant embodiment. On Plato's view, the process of birth is understood as a "descent of the soul into the body" (Cavarero, 1995:24) and the aim of philosophy is for the soul to "rise" or return again through death to the realm of the Forms. Death, understood as the return of the soul to the realm of the Forms, becomes a purely abstract notion, separated from life as we know it, which is inevitably embodied. Birth is also abstracted, in that it is aimed for in thought rather than in body. This abstract, eternal, intellectualism of Plato's philosophy and the male symbolic order in general is inverted in Penelope's weaving. The soul is tied to the body; embodied life is not an evil from which to remain untouched on the soul's journey back to abstraction, but rather a source of life and of birth. It emphasises the importance of the bod(il)y and the value of embodied wisdom (*metis*). This rereading of Penelope's role therefore offers an alternative to the male-centric, death-driven, intellectualism of Plato's philosophy: life, physical, bodily life, can be embraced and a proper union and mediation between body and soul can serve as a philosophical task. The body is not an

inherent distraction, but an inevitable medium through which the soul lives, or experiences life.

In highlighting this fissure in Plato's, and accordingly, the Western philosophical tradition's, logic, this possibility of a rereading that undermines this view exposes the feigned neutrality of the male symbolic order. Plato envisioned only a single proper philosophical subject — that of the intellectual male — and claimed for it *the* position from which to interpret the world, thereby implying that any alternative is improper or even distracting. Women and the bod(il)y were thus simply defined in terms of their deviation from the ideal of the intellectual male. However, in giving Penelope a new voice and demonstrating the embodied *metis* displayed in her character, an alternative to this male intellectualism is highlighted and its partiality exposed. Women and the bod(il)y are not simply a "lack of" or deviation from maleness and intellectualism, but rather another perspective that deserves recognition in its own right. However, the significance of the bod(il)y for men is sidelined in Cavarero's chapter on Penelope. Throughout the entire chapter, she discusses Penelope's embodied metis in contrast to male intellectualism. The only time the bod(il)y is somewhat linked to men is towards the end: "The intertweaving of intelligence and the senses is where all humans exist as part of their gender" (Cavarero, 1995:30). But soon afterwards she emphasises female embodiment again: "Having let men go forth to their adventures at sea, they [the women] stay together quietly, exchanging looks and words rooted in the individual wholeness of their existence [body-soul union]" (Cavarero, 1995:30).

What I want to emphasise is that male–female, soul–body distinctions do not have to stand in opposition to one another. Without male-female love there would be no human offspring and therefore no human lives in which the soul could find expression. And the soul is dependent on the body for sensory experience and expression within the world. Most importantly, everyone has a body, and philosophical inquiry should therefore view embodied, situated knowledge as a legitimate form of knowledge. The development (birth) of ideas is important, but it is inextricable from biological birth. I, therefore, read Cavarero's feminist philosophy not as competing with and attempting to eradicate intellectualism and abstraction, but to re-embody it — to supplement it — and to point to a more complete philosophy for both genders, one aimed at answering the question: "how should I live?".

Cavarero's Penelope works on two different looms: "the first composes the different figures of a feminine [female] symbolic order. The second unties the matted threads of the father's tapestry" (Cavarero: 1995:7). Concerning the first, in demonstrating the value of what was erased in the male symbolic order — the female and the embodied perspectives — a new subjectivity is given its own footing. Unfortunately she does not elaborate on the second. I understand it to refer to undoing the male-centric symbolic order of the Western tradition by exposing its partiality and poverty as it centralises intellectualism, abstraction, and death, thereby weakening its foothold. Yet Cavarero's book emphasises the first loom and appears to sideline the second loom. I wish to emphasise that the goal is not to replace the male-centric symbolic order with a female-centric one, but rather to carve out a space for the latter besides the former, so that a more complete subjectivity can be reached. All men have bodies and all women have souls, all men sense and express, and all women contemplate. Philosophy, and life, is about mediating between these different aspects in order to live fully. My further point is that this not only opens a space for a female subjectivity, but in doing so it opens up to the possibility of pluralism[4], of acknowledging that there are multiple, situated, embodied perspectives that can offer legitimate knowledge.

5. How Should I Live?

The male-centric symbolic tradition's answer to the question "how should I live?" is "turn towards the soul via contemplation of the eternal and abstract while renouncing the (distracting) body". Not only does this demonstrate a singular perspective or subjective position, but in renouncing the body, it ignores and suppresses an important source of (applicable) knowledge. I argue that it therefore impoverishes the question by limiting its subjectivity and ignoring the bod(il)y.

[4]Note that Cavarero disagrees with this and holds that the basic element of philosophy is a two, not a one, but also not a many (Cavarero, 1995:6).

In the light of the discussion above, the question can be phrased as "how should I, an expression of thought inextricably tied to a physical body with sensory experiences, who is 'thrown'[5] into concrete situations, live?". A perspective that unifies body and soul is better suited to address such a question. Cavarero's feminist rereading highlights the significance of the bod(il)y, but fails to emphasise that it is significant for men too. Such a suggestion of moving towards an embodied philosophy ties into a broader philosophical context. The pragmatist tradition, for example, calls for a move away from purely intellectual endeavours and towards guidance for practical situations. Acknowledging our bodies as an epistemic source highlights our situatedness and brings knowledge back "down to earth" — back to the problems of everyday living. Moving towards an embodied philosophy is therefore not a "descent" into the physical, but an augmentation of the partiality of purely intellectual and abstract philosophising, a movement towards a more complete philosophy.

6. Conclusion

This article has discussed the Western philosophical tradition, through the works of Plato, as male-centred and focused on the soul, i.e., the eternal and abstract. It has recounted Cavarero's rereading of Penelope and how it carves out a space for a female subjectivity, which in turn opens subjectivity to pluralism. Further, it emphasised that Cavarero's feminist reclaiming of the body in the philosophical endeavour offers a broadened perspective not only to women, but men too. This article has argued that the feminist rereading of Plato's work is significant, not only because it carves out a space for female (and other — plural — forms of) subjectivity, but also highlights the shortcomings of the male-centric tradition and the way it impoverishes the question "how should I live?" — although this was not always made explicit by Cavarero herself. It is therefore an example of how men can engage with feminist philosophy on another level. Besides simply reading and listening to women (in philosophy) and feminist philosophy, which men should also do, this article demonstrates how feminist philosophy can give a voice to women, while also edifying male philosophical perspectives. Hopefully, this changes the attitudes of some men who find themselves feeling confused and irrelevant in feminism classes.

[5]Heidegger's (1962:173–174) notion of *Geworfenheit* ("thrownness") refers to how humans do not choose the historical, social, and economic situation they are born into.

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