In their preface to a commentary on Plato's *Republic* published in 1964, Cross and Woozley say that "most of what Plato has written in the *Republic*, but not quite all, is, in our opinion, philosophically important; and views about what is important, and how important it is, vary from one philosophical generation to another". From the perspective of 1964, feminism did not rank as an issue of philosophical importance. As a result, Plato's contention that women like men should be guardians in his ideal society is touched upon briefly, without comment, at the start of a chapter devoted to a discussion of the difference between the philosopher and the non-philosopher.

Though she doesn't mention Cross and Woozley, Natalie Bluestone would surely classify their work as typical of one species of a whole genre of scholarship from 1870-1970 when, as she tells us, Plato's views on sexual equality were generally "dismissed, deplored or ignored" (p. 3). By contrast, after a resurgence of feminism in the late sixties, there arose a revitalised interest in Plato's proposals. A new perspective on what is philosophically important has led to an outpouring of writing devoted to...
Plato's treatment of women. The assessments have been varied. Some praise Plato as an early champion of women's rights; others see such an endorsement as thoroughly misguided. Bluestone sides with those who regard Plato as a feminist. In the course of arriving at her assessment, she provides us with what is, in effect, a lengthy critical review of a whole host of positions which have been adopted about the fifth book of the Republic. Histories of feminism have been written where the authors either praise or blame Plato without displaying any signs of having actually read the text. Others who have read the text but little of the scholarly commentary are led to reinvent the wheel and announce discoveries which are far from new. All this Bluestone rightly deplores and seeks to correct the record. The more competent scholarship, with one glaring exception, is assessed fairly and carefully. In my view, the book she has written fills an important gap. For feminists and those interested in the history of feminism, her book should help avoid the making of premature judgements about Plato based on an inadequate knowledge of the text. For philosophers and classicists interested in Plato, Bluestone's book provides a far fuller resource than is usually available.

The main body of her work is to be found in its two central chapters. The first of these begins at about 1870 when Jowett's translation made Plato widely available in English. For about a hundred years, apart from a few notable exceptions such as Grote, Gomperz, and A.M. Adam—the only female commentator—the reception was generally