

IRINA DERETIĆ

PLATO ON THE SOCIAL ROLE OF WOMEN: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS¹

1. Introduction

Plato was the first philosopher who gave an account for the highly controversial claim that both genders are principally equal in respect to their talents and abilities. Consequently, one may advocate the thesis that in Plato's view, the gender differences are rather the outcomes of social, cultural and political influences, than of natural factors. The aim of this paper is to elucidate the meaning and validity of Plato's arguments for the gender equality in the *Republic*, which will be supplemented with some important remarks on this same subject-matter from the *Laws*, in order to find out what social and political implications they have. In doing this, I will argue against some interpretations of prominent Plato scholars who criticize or reject his account of the social role that women should have in Plato's ideal city. Additionally, I will discuss the claim, advocated by George Vlastos, that Plato is a feminist in a modern sense of the term.

2. Plato's View on the Social Role of Women in the *Republic*

Contrary to the prejudices and opinions of his age, and even contrary to some of his own views, Plato consistently advocates the position of the inevitability of woman's social emancipation: namely,

1. This research was financed by the Ministry of Science, Education and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia within the project *History of Serbian Philosophy* [179064].

he believes that women should acquire all demanding jobs and obtain the highest social positions which had exclusively belonged to men. Why and how did Plato come to such a belief opposed not only to Athenian society of his time, but also to all societies in times to come until the seventies of the 20th century? The preliminary answer to that question might be as follows: In Plato's view, the emancipation of women is a significant part of his constructing the ideal *polis*, in which all human "sources" should be fully realized, i.e., all human beings are to fulfill all potentials.

The question of the enclosure of women² in the guardian class, on completely equal terms with men, Plato's Socrates introduces cautiously and gradually in the *Republic*. He points out that his own views on female equality will be not only strange, but also opposed to the common beliefs of Athenian society of his time. Having in mind that to his contemporaries –even interlocutors as sympathetic as Glaucon and Adeimantus– the novel theory of the new female socio-political role would be incredible, "ridiculous"³ and difficult to accept, he uses a subtle and refined dialectical skill to support his persuasive arguments and indicative analogies. Given the examples of Lacedaemonians and Cretans with their practicing of athletics that might be laughed at,⁴ Plato seems to indicate that some at first glance unusual practices turned out to be common and familiar among the members of a particular society. If Plato's Socrates proves that the inequality of women is merely the matter of a pure convention, then it is like any other convention that is variable and changeable. Standards, practices and customs are conventional, and they can be and often are changed by more reasonable,

2. The question concerning female equality in the *Republic*, Plato's Socrates introduces the first of the three waves of paradoxes, "contrary to present custom" (*Resp.* 452a10), because he was aware that his position would be held to be "ridiculous" and impossible to accept. In fact, these paradoxes are both challenging and controversial political proposals: first, the enclosure of women in the guardian class, on completely equal terms with men; second, the abolition of the family for this same class; and third, the establishment of philosophers as rulers.

3. Cf. *ibid.* 452a10, b4.

4. Cf. *ibid.* 452c9-d2.

functional, and efficient ones. The example with the watchdogs is more indicative than the previous ones: namely, the females of watchdogs join in guarding the male ones, sharing “all their pursuits”. Even before spelling out his main argument in favor of the claim that men and women are principally equal in respect to their gifts and abilities, Plato indicates that his theory on that subject-matter might be supported by this analogy from the natural, biological world, which suggests that it is not based upon conventions.

In the course of Plato’s debate on this issue, one will see that something seemingly contrary to belief is, in fact, in accordance with reason, i.e., with the logical strength of Plato’s Socrates’ well-founded arguments. Additionally, the articulation of such a non-conventional and revolutionary theory requires both intellectual expertise and boldness.

The essential question, with which Plato begins his inquiry about the best social role that women must perform in his ideal *polis*, is the following: “...whether female human nature is capable of sharing with the male all tasks or none at all, or some but not others, and under which of these heads this business of war falls.”⁵

In order to answer this important but controversial question, Plato’s Socrates spells out a developed and detailed argument, in which the subtle differentiation between the various senses of the concepts of sameness and difference plays the prominent role. Two starting premises of his argument seemingly contradict each other. These are the following: a) that we ought to allocate “different pursuits to different natures and the same to the same”, and b) that men and women can perform the same tasks, although they have different natures.⁶ The problem arises due to an oversimplification in understanding the conceptual distinction between the same and

5. Cf. *ibid.* 453a3-5. I use Paul Shorey’s translation of the *Republic*. Cf. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato including the Letters*, ed. by E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 1961, 575-844.

6. Cf. *ibid.* 454b.

the different in this particular case. Some things are not absolutely and always the same and different, despite the context and their relations to other things. If two “natures” are different in one respect, then they might not be different in another one. Additionally, what is important is to elucidate which difference in natures of the things is relevant to its performing a certain pursuit. Plato’s Socrates points out to Glaucon that if one is careful enough to “apply the proper divisions and distinctions to the subject under consideration”,⁷ then one will not only consider whether two natures are different or the same, but also whether they are different or the same *with respect to a particular function* that they ought to perform. Even if men and women are different in some respect, it is necessary to prove that this difference affects their capacity in performing the same pursuits. In this context, Plato’s Socrates draws a very telling analogy. Whether a person is bald or long-haired is irrelevant to whether he has the kind of nature that makes him a good shoemaker.⁸ The strategy of Plato’s argument is to show that gender difference is irrelevant to an individual man’s or an individual woman’s capacity to carry out the same task.

The next step in Plato’s argument will be to explicate the gender difference, which is a biological one: namely, “the female bears and the male begets.”⁹ According to him, even this difference between men and women is not sufficient to deny that women and men can perform the same pursuits and carry out the same tasks, and consequently play the same social roles. Only during the period of a woman’s pregnancy might some of her working capacities be impeded.

This part of Plato’s argument can be summed up as follows: 1. Two “natures” might be different or the same in many different ways; 2. Not all differences in one’s nature are to be taken into account in

7. Cf. *ibid.* 454a.

8. Cf. *ibid.* 454c.

9. Cf. *ibid.* 454d.

determining one's capacity to perform a certain social function, but only relevant ones; 3. The "nature" that women and men differ in is that women bear and men beget; 4. This biological difference is not relevant to determining their working and social function; 5. If this difference is the only one, then there is nothing to prevent women from acquiring not only the same social status, but also the same duties and responsibilities that men have.

The decisive difference between genders, if such exists, would be the difference in the souls of both genders, in their "parts", and their capacities. As it is shown in the fourth book of the *Republic*, the human soul has three "parts" or aspects: reason, spirit and appetites. Due to the fact that a female's soul has the same soul-aspects as a male's soul does, the female is also capable of thinking, of being courageous and warlike or passionate, etc. Consequently, women are the same as men with an innate aptitude for either medicine, or music,¹⁰ or gymnastics or philosophy and the like. If women are able to perform all these functions, according to Plato, then they must receive the same education as men. All gifted women should receive the kind of education that will free them from the bondage of their unnecessary desires and labors, like housewifery, enabling them to attain the excellences they are suited for.

Just as not all men will do the same things because they are men, not all women will do the same things because they are women. Neither gender has a special sphere, practice or profession, because individual variability exceeds any difference in average gender group activities. The criterion for pursuing certain professional tasks and attaining certain social roles does not depend on one's gender or class, but rather on the individual's physical and intellectual capacities. Similarly, Plato's Socrates in the *Meno*¹¹ attempts

10. Cf. *ibid.* 455e.

11. Cf. *Men.* 72d-73c. I use G. M. A. Grube's translation of the *Meno*. *Plato: Complete Works*, Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by John M. Cooper and associate editor D. S. Hutchinson, Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis/Cambridge.

to prove that human excellence or virtue (*arête*) is neither gender-bound nor class-bound. He argues against Meno's traditional belief that a man's excellence (*arête*) consists in managing the public affairs and a woman's virtue (*arête*) consists in managing the domestic affairs. In contrast to Meno, Plato's Socrates claims that: "Even if they are many and various, all of them have one and the same form which makes them virtues."¹²

In his long argument Plato's Socrates in the *Republic* concludes by claiming the following: "Natures are evenly distributed between the sexes, and a woman is naturally equipped to participate in all activities, and a man the same – though in all of them a woman is weaker than a man" (*Resp.* 455e).

The first part of the sentence could be interpreted in such a manner that "natures" or individual talents and aptitudes are distributed in individuals evenly in both genders. Among women, individual variation in ability and talent ranges across all the activities relevant to political and social roles, e.g., from medical, athletic, and military to philosophical and ruling talent. It seems, according to Plato, that the natural gifts are defined in terms of what an individual actually does. Apparently, he also believes that individual variability within one gender is of a greater degree than the differences between the two genders.¹³

The qualification about the relative weakness of a woman has already been prepared for by the female watchdog analogy. Female watchdogs do just what the male ones do, except that they are weaker and their lives are interrupted by giving birth.¹⁴ By analogy, the same is true of women; though they are weaker than men and their lives are interrupted by childbirth, they are otherwise the same. What Plato might also have in mind is that there are, on the average, more talented men than women for a particular task or calling.

12. Cf. *ibid.* 72c4-6.

13. Cf. Smith, 1994: 37.

14. Cf. *Resp.* 451d ff.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to understand that a relative weakness, which Plato ascribes to women, argues for their general inferiority in all respects of the female gender. If one considers the broader context of the overall discussion in the *Republic*, then one may come to a different conclusion. Plato is primarily interested in proving that the guardians of his *kallipolis* should consist of both genders. The guardians' main pursuit is to protect in all respects their *polis*, including using arms. In doing this job, women are obviously physically weaker. Moreover, Plato's Socrates' claim of the relative weakness of women is modified by Glaucon's remark that "many women, it is true, are better than many men in many things".¹⁵

If women are best in wisdom, then they are expected to participate in the uppermost positions in the *kallipolis* becomes explicitly clear at the end of 7th book of the *Republic*. Here, Plato's Socrates speaks of those who have survived the test and have been the best in all things both in knowledge and in action, have beheld the Form of the Good, and have taken their part in governing. To Glaucon's remark that Socrates beautifully sculptured the male-rulers in his words, Socrates replies: "And on the women-rulers too, Glaucon, said I, for you must not suppose that my words applies to the men more than all women who arise among them endowed with the requisite qualities".¹⁶ That the female gender, in Plato's view, is not inferior to the male one is once more supported by Socrates' reply. Moreover, this is not only a view, or a belief, but a claim collaborated by the solid argumentation that attempts to overcome the limits of the opposite view that had been so rooted in human history that it looked almost natural.

The fact that the genders are principally equal will have concrete social implications in Plato's ideal *polis*: both genders will receive the same education, will be in a position to acquire the same occupations,

15. Cf. *ibid.* 455d.

16. Cf. *ibid.* 540c-d.

even the most prominent ones, and have the same opportunities to realize their full potential. They ought also to be engaged in performing the highest political functions from the military and protecting to the ruling activities, if they are talented to do so. At 456cl-2, Plato even says that the social and political set-up of Athenian society during his time is “contrary to nature” (*para physin*) as opposed to his views on the social roles of both genders which are, “according to nature” (*kata physin*),¹⁷ based on the principle that similar natures should follow similar pursuits. One of Plato’s central social beliefs is that the laws are not to be understood as merely conventional, but have to be grounded “according to nature” in a certain domain of social phenomena and can be applied to the issue of the social roles that both genders ought to have in his *kallipolis*. Since the traditional social gender roles did not result from natural differences between men and women, they should be changed by introducing new law(s) which will be according to, but not against, nature. It seems that Plato believed that the presumed inferiority of women might well be due to the pressure of unfavorable circumstances, rather than due to any deficiency in their talents.

Plato envisages that the shifts in gender roles would have an immense impact on the family, which leads him, among other things, to abolish the family within the upper classes of his ideal city. If some women are best suited for guarding and governing, then they should according to his principle of justice be focused on performing only that task. With the help of nurses and governesses, these women will have an “easy-going child-bearing”, being spared all labors connected with infancy. They will not even know who their children are. This radical implication of the social gender role reform can be and were radically criticized on many levels, and for many reasons. Briefly, the abolishment of family is extremely inhuman, severely denying to both sexes, if they belong to upper

17. Cf. *ibid.* 456cl.

classes, to become parents, whether they improve on that or not. Additionally, it contradicts Plato's principle that his new *polis* ought to be construed "according to nature", since not taking care of one's own children is highly against human nature. Nevertheless, Plato rightly and insightfully foresaw that women's emancipation, or the women's new social and political roles, would have a large impact on the traditionally structured family. Therefore, the changes in respect to women's new active roles in creating the new society will inevitable cause the need to re-define the family role of both sexes.

3. Plato on Women's Social Roles in the *Laws*

In the *Laws*, Plato held the same views concerning the education of women, their abilities to acquire public positions, and the need that they should be equally treated. The fact that in the *Laws* the family is allowed back in must not prevent women from receiving the same education, as well as from participating in public life. As in the *Republic*, in the *Laws* Plato insists that they should be treated equally in all respects with men, despite the fact that women incline to be "secretive and crafty"¹⁸ and were inferior to men in their "natural potential for virtue" (781b2). Although Plato's Athenian here was only expressing the need for women to join in communal meals as did the men, for the welfare of the state, he would regulate all institutions for both men and women in common (781b). Consequently at 805c6-d2 he stresses: "In education and everything else, the female sex should be on the same footing as the male". Without the equal participation of women in all the political activities open to men, the *polis* would only be half a state with only half of its potentialities and strengths developed.¹⁹ Accordingly, any genuine

18. Cf. *Lg.* 781a5. I use Trevor J. Gonzalez's translation of the *Laws*. Cf. *Plato. Complete Works*, Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by John M. Cooper and associate editor D. S. Hutchinson, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis/Cambridge, 1997, pp. 1318-616.

19. Cf. *ibid.* 805a, 806c.

unity and harmony and *eudaimonia*²⁰ of the *polis* depended on making women as equal as possible to men in the performance of social and political functions.

In the *Laws*, Plato especially insisted that the compulsory education in cultural and military subjects should be applied to girls, as well as to boys.²¹ Women were to have the same training in athletics and gymnastics as men, not only to develop their physical well-being so that they could produce healthy children, but also to prepare themselves for battles (814c). Along with children, women are to partake in military exercises under the same rules as men.²² As bearers of arms, women would be citizens (814c) and members of the assembly. They had the right to hold office (785b) and could participate in civic duties as far as possible (805c-d) and, when deserving, are to receive the same awards as men (802a).

In his later dialogue, Plato does not provide us with such a subtle argumentation for the equal treatment of both genders as he had done in the *Republic*. Nevertheless, his general view on the role of women in society had not changed in his later work. In the *Laws*, Plato wrote in a more concrete and detailed fashion about women's duties, works, and social tasks in general, giving the variety of advises which can be applied in his "second best city".

4. The Relevance of the Criticism of Plato's Views on Women's New Social Role

Most of Plato scholars until the 70s of the 20th century were hostile²³ toward his views on the new social functions that should be assigned to women. Some of the most prominent Plato scholars

20. Cf. *ibid.* 781b.

21. Cf. *ibid.* 804d-e.

22. Cf. *ibid.* 829b-e.

23. Natalie H. Bluestone discusses seven categories of hostility to Plato's views on the philosopher queens. Bluestone, 1994: 114-27.

considered these beliefs to be upsetting and disturbing, some completely ignored them, and some even believed that Plato did not mean what he wrote, but rather that his intention was to ironize the issue of gender equality.

Usually, the commentators expressed their own views and some of the prejudices of their own time when interpreting Plato's opinions of this exceptionally controversial subject-matter. For example, Karl Popper in his severe "liberal" criticism of Plato's closed-society did not even mention Plato's equalitarian view on the relations between genders. It seems that Popper ignored Plato's views on women, since they are against his overall reading of Plato as a totalitarian and non-democratic thinker. Furthermore, it is not surprising that the philosopher Leo Strauss found that Plato was not serious when writing that genders are equal. He considered the passages on women in the *Republic* to be amusing and comical. The ironizing style of these passages from the 5th book of the *Republic* may support Leo Strauss' claim that Plato put in the mouth of Socrates something that was not his authentic opinion concerning this issue.²⁴ However, the fact that Plato repeats the same views on gender equality, wherever he discusses the question on female social roles like in the *Laws*, proves that Plato was serious when claiming that women should be trained to do the same tasks as men do, and that the best of women ought to obtain the highest positions, either in the ideal *polis* or in the second best city-state. Moreover, Plato's views on a woman's aptitude for even obtaining the most superior positions fit his general thought that all the "parts" of a *kallipolis*, including women, must perform those pursuits that they are best fitted for.

Presumably the most serious objections to Plato's theory of the radically new social role that women should perform in his *kallipolis*,

24. Cf. Staus, 1964: 61. Alan Bloom shares Strauss' opinion that Plato had an ironical intention when discussing the social role of women in his ideal city-state, which is for Bloom similar to Aristophanes' comedy *Women in Assembly*. Cf. Bloom, 1968: 381.

as presented for the first time in the *Republic*, came from some of the main Platonic scholars, like Benjamin Jowett, Ernest Barker, and A. E. Taylor etc. These objections seem to be important, since they attack the essential part of Plato's argument concerning the relevance of the difference in procreation. Each of these authors criticizes Plato's views on genders for ignoring the essential difference between men and women that is relevant to their future lives and pursuits. They argued that the fact that women bear children has a great impact not only on women's natural desires, but also on their dispositions and excellences. The famous English translator of Plato, Benjamin Jowett criticizes Plato for not seeing that the differences in sex give rise to differences in thinking and feeling.²⁵ For Ernest Baker, this difference "colors her whole being",²⁶ and A. E. Taylor expressively claims that motherhood and taking care of children "modify" a woman's "spiritual life profoundly".²⁷ According to these scholars, by ignoring this natural factor in a woman's life, Plato's insights on a woman's role in his ideal *polis* are both unnatural and erroneous. It seems that these authors believed not only that motherhood has the most significant role in a woman's life, but also that this natural inclination to have children makes her mind and feelings different from a man's reason and emotions. In my view, this kind of understanding of gender roles unfortunately does not sufficiently support its claims with the reliable reasons that can be sustainable today. These scholars do not explain the special way of women's reasoning and feeling that men do not have, and which hinders women from attaining the leading roles in a society. Moreover, they do not answer this question: Is a female life inevitably always affected by her natural inclination to bear and take care of children? Additionally, what about men and their

25. B. Jowett and L. Campbell, 1894: 215-16.

26. Backer, 1947: 261.

27. Taylor, 1956: 278.

parental feelings that may also influence their lives deeply? Although these Platonic scholars were right in claiming that Plato minimized motherhood in the lives of women, these three scholars, on the other hand, overstressed it as if bearing children would actually prevent women from having other pursuits and, therefore, from having higher social roles. Furthermore, these interpretations underestimate a man's role in taking care of and bringing up his children, which also does change his life as it does change a woman's life. From the 70s of the last century and onward, the social role of women has changed radically, affirming Plato's views on the female social role rather than those interpretations offered by his scholars.

Although there were Platonic scholars, e.g., George Grote²⁸ and Theodor Gomperz,²⁹ who acknowledged Plato for recognizing the importance of fulfilling women's unused abilities, they were the exceptions. The new interpretations of Plato's beliefs on and reasoning about the new social role of women in a more sympathetic fashion began in the 70s of the previous century. Among these readings, the most prominent and distinguishable is Gorge Vlastos' interpretation. In his famous article: "Is Plato a Feminist?", Vlastos points out that Plato assigned to women the rights to education, to vocational opportunity, to unimpeded sexual intercourse, and to equal legal status etc. Consequently, Vlastos is using a liberalist definition of feminism in which the main concern of feminism is for the equality of rights. Although his interpretation is imbued with lucid insights and remarks, such a modernizing understanding of Plato is, in my view, not entirely appropriate. Even if we use the conceptual framework of women's rights, Plato seems to be more interested in women's duties than their rights. What Plato actually has in mind when assigning women political roles is neither the elimination of the traditional sexual discrimination, nor a care for

28. Grote, 1888: 4, 170-206.

29. Gomperz, 1905: 3, 126.

the well-being of women, as well as their needs and desires. Women's emancipation is not a matter of their free will and choice, but rather a project for the benefit and good of the entire *polis*, and this project should be imposed compulsorily, if there is no other way to implement it. Both genders, being capable of attaining the highest positions in a *kallipolis*, should perform social functions not because they want or desire to do so, but instead for the well-being of the entire society.

5. Conclusion

Let's summarize some of the results of my analysis. Plato's view on the role of women in his utopian city is the first developed theory of gender equality in the history of Western thought and philosophy. According to my interpretation, Plato's main claim in favor of the women issue is that the essential difference between the genders is a procreative one, which is not relevant for determining their calling and social functions. Individual differences, not gender characteristics are crucial for defining one's aptitude for a particular pursuit or working task or social role. Plato's reflections on this subject-matter can be collaborated by and are in accordance with the findings of contemporary psychology;³⁰ these findings prove that the gender-related differences to be so small that they are of no crucial significance.

Using the psychological framework, Plato ascribes to both genders mind and spirit, each being necessary for attaining the highest positions in his ideal city-state. Most of the philosophers would agree with Plato that women have reason as a cognitive ability to think adequately and to learn about the things in the various domains. On the other hand, not many of his contemporaries believed, like Plato himself did, that women have practical reason as a deliberative and

30. Sherman, 1978: 23.

voluntary power for righteous decision-making concerning public interests, which will enable women to participate in social life and in political institutions. Due to a woman's capability of efficiently exercising her intellectual abilities, she must, in Plato's view, pursue various callings, including military and ruling ones, which were traditionally considered to be occupations exclusively for men.

For his time, Plato's radical and revolutionary theory on the social role of women is still both debatable and relevant not only for Platonic scholars in particular, but also for philosophers in general who deal with the social and political issues. From a historical point of view, one has to admit that Plato had asked some of the fundamental questions concerning social inquiry on the role that women should have in society long before modern sociology and social philosophy began their research on this subject-matter. Like everything else in Plato's philosophy, social relations and roles are not to be taken for granted; they have to be tested and proven by well-founded arguments. Plato attempts to prove that social and political relations, in which women should perform a significant part, are not conventional, but instead are established non-arbitrarily and "according to nature". If reason is the distinctive characteristic of human nature, in both of its genders, then it is in accordance with human nature to exercise reason to the most possible and attainable degree.

Bibliography

- Annas, J., "Plato's *Republic* and Feminism", *Philosophy*, 51 (1976), pp. 307-321.
- Backer, E., *Greek Political Theory: Plato and His Predecessors*, London: Methuen, 1947.
- Bloom, A., "Interpretative Essay", *The Republic of Plato*, New York: Basic Books, 1968.
- Bluestone, N. H., *Women and the Ideal Society: Plato's Republic and Modern Myths of Gender*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987.

- Bluestone, N. H., "Why Women Cannot Rule: Sexism in Plato Scholarship", *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, N. Tuana (ed.), Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994, pp. 109-130.
- Deretic, I., "Human Excellence: Past and Present", *21st Century Anthropology: A Reference Handbook*, H. James Birx (ed.), Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publication. Inc., 2010, pp. 526-535.
- Deretic, I., "Platon und Bioethik", S. L. Sorgner und T. L. Fischer (hrsg.), Paderborn: mentis Verlag GmbH, Deutschland, pp. 29-49.
- Fortenbaugh, W. W., "On Plato's Feminism in 'Republic V,'" *Apeiron*, IX, 2 (1975), pp. 1-4.
- Gomperz, Th., *Greek Thinkers*, London: J. Murray, 1939.
- Grote, G., *Plato, and the other companions of Socrates*, Vol. IV, London: J. Murray, 1888.
- Hamilton, E. & Cairns, H. (eds.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato including the Letters*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Irwing, T., *Plato's Moral Theory*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- Jowett, B. & Campbell, L., *Plato's Republic: The Greek Text*, with Notes and Essays, Oxford, 1894.
- Koumakis, G., "Sameness and Otherness in Social Justice according to Plato", *Skepsis* Vol. 15, 2-3 (2004): *Special edition in honour of Professor L. Bargiliotes*, pp. 540-545.
- Levin, S. B., "Plato's on Women's Nature: Reflections on the Laws", *Ancient Philosophy*, 20/1 (2000), pp. 81-97.
- Morag, B., *Women in Plato's Political Theory*, New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Plato, *Complete Works*, Edited with Introduction and Notes by John M. Cooper and associate editor D. S. Hutchinson, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis/Cambridge, 1997.
- Popper, K., *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (2 Volumes), London: Routledge, 1945.
- Osloenses, S., "Including the Women in Plato's Laws: A Note on Book 6, 781a-b", *Norwegian Journal of Greek and Latin Studies*, Volume 77, Issue 1, 2002, pp. 106-109.
- Saxonhouse, A. W., "The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato", *Political Thought*, Vol. 4, No. 2. (May 1976), pp. 195-212.
- Smith, J. F., "Plato, Irony, and Equality", in: *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, N. Tuana (ed.), Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994, pp. 25-48.

- Smith, N., "The Logic of Plato's Feminism," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 11 (1980), pp. 5-11.
- Sherman, J., *Sex-Related Cognitive Differences*, Springfield, III: Charles Thomas, 1978.
- Strauss, L., *The City and Man*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964.
- Taylor, A. E., *Plato: The Man and His Work*, Meridian Books: New York, 1956.
- Vlastos, G., "Was Plato a Feminist?", in: *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, N. Tuana (ed.), Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994, pp. 11-23.

Acknowledgement: I am very appreciative to Professor Leonidas Barge-liotes and Professor Charalampos Magoulas for their academic support, continuing collaboration and inspiring discussions over many years. I also wish to express my deep gratitude to Professor H. James Birx for his insightful reading of my manuscript and his expertise in helping me in preparing my paper for publication.

Irina Deretić
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Belgrade
SERBIA