(1) Two radically different opinions about the importance of Plato’s philosophy in our times expressed by two great 20th century thinkers.

The first, formulated by Whitehead, who stressed Plato’s dominance over all later philosophers.

*The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato*


The second, formulated by Popper, who exposed the devastating influence of Plato’s views on contemporary political practices.

In *Open Society and its Enemies* Karl Popper presented Plato as the proponent of the closed society (opposed to the open society)
in which an individual was only a part of the social whole. According to Popper, Plato’s vision of a perfect society (presented by him in *The Republic*) was a first project of a totalitarian state. In Popper’s view social utopia defended by Plato in *The Republic* was in fact realized in the totalitarian societies of the 20th century.

*Those who promise us paradise on earth never produced anything but a hell.*

Both philosophers exaggerate the role of Plato’s philosophy in 20th century. But both our everyday thinking and subtle philosophical inquiries are still overshadowed by his ideas.

(2) Elements of Plato’s philosophy

(i) *Plato’s theory of forms (ideas)*
Forms (ideas) are:

Eternal
Unchangeable
Perfect
Sources of things

Things are:

Temporal
Changeable
Imperfect
Copies of forms

In consequence, there are two worlds (realms): the world of things, which we experience through our senses and the world of forms that could be grasped only by intellect (reason).

The distinction between form and thing has its analogue in the sphere of cognition. There we can distinguish between opinion (Greek:
doxa) that is probable (imperfect), changeable, temporal and imperfect and knowledge (Greek: *episteme*) that is true (perfect), eternal and unchangeable. Ordinary human beings take the opinions about the world in which they live as true knowledge. They do not realize that true knowledge does not refer to things but only to forms.

We have two oppositions:

Forms vs Things
Knowledge vs Opinion (belief)
(ii) *Plato’s concept of tripartite soul and society*

**Reason** is the part of the soul that is attached to knowledge. It is responsible for guiding and regulating the functioning of the soul as a whole. Knowledge is necessary to successfully perform this task. Reason takes into consideration the concerns both of each of the three parts separately and of the soul as a whole.

**Spirit** is attached to honor and, more generally, to recognition and esteem by others. When its desires are frustrated, it gives rise to emotional responses such as anger and indignation, and to behavior that expresses and naturally flows from such responses. It is a mediating element between reason and appetite.

**Appetite** is primarily concerned with the desires of the body such as food, drink and
sex. Socrates also calls appetite the money-loving part, because, in the case of mature human beings at least, appetite also tends to be strongly attached to money, given that it is most of all by means of money that its primary desires are fulfilled.

PLATO ABOUT SOUL (MIND)
• properties of the parts of a soul:
  o wisdom (reason)
  o courage (spirit)
  o temperance (instincts)

• property of soul as a whole: justice
id - pleasure principle
ego - reality principle
superego - conformity principle
Structure of a society and a soul (mind)

properties of society and soul:
courage, temperance, wisdom, justice