

## QUESTIONS ON PLATO'S THE REPUBLIC

### Philosophy of Mind (Subjectivity):

[The Republic: Ch. XIII "The Three Parts of the Soul"]

1. Does thought and emotion originate in the soul or in the body?
2. How does Plato conceive of the soul (daemon)? Is it unified or is it potentially at war with itself? How does Plato come to this conclusion?
3. What is the soul's relation to the body?
4. What do you understand by the term 'dualism' in discussion of the relation between the soul and the body? Is Plato a dualist?

### Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge):

[The Republic: Ch. XXIII "The Good as the Highest Object of Knowledge"; Ch. XXIV "Four Stages of Cognition. The Line"; Ch. XXV "The Allegory of the Cave"; Ch. XXVII "Dialectic"]

1. What is the source of mere opinion and what is the source of knowledge?
2. What are the two kinds of empirical knowledge and the two kinds of rational knowledge described by Plato?
3. What does Plato's parable of the Cave illustrate about the nature of knowledge?
4. What do you understand by the term 'dialectic'? How may it be used to arrive at the truth?

### Metaphysics (Ontology):

1. How does Plato conceptualise the nature of reality?
2. What do you understand by the terms 'essence' and 'Ideal Form'?
3. What do you understand by the term 'mimesis'?
4. How does Plato come to the conclusion that such things as 'Ideal Forms' exist?
5. What do you understand by the term 'idealism'? In what sense is Plato an idealist?

### Aesthetics / Critical Theory:

[The Republic: Books II, III, X]

1. What does art in general represent?
2. Why does art "stand at a third remove from the essential nature of the thing" (327)?
3. What distinction does Plato draw between the art of using, making and representing?
4. What opinion does Plato have of poets, even ones of legendary status like Homer?
5. What examples does Plato use to illustrate his view that there is a difference between what our senses report and what our reason proves?
6. What does this difference reveal about the nature of the soul?
7. To what part of the soul does poetry appeal? Why is this potentially a bad thing?
8. What kinds of character is more often represented in poetry?
9. What distinction does Plato draw between comedy and tragedy?
10. Why is Plato dissatisfied with literature by contrast to philosophy?
11. Why does Plato want to banish poets from his ideal state on ethical or moral grounds?
12. What does Plato invite others to do on behalf of poetry (i.e. literature)?
13. On what two grounds does Plato wish to banish poets from his ideal state?
14. In what sense may Plato's views on literature also be described as partly pragmatic and partly mimetic?