

# **What is Truth?**

## **The Republic**

Friday, 10/19

1. Discussion of Foltz study guide (34-36):

Truth within v. Truth without: kind of teacher? experience of truth? How do you know it? (34A and 35B)

- refutation of subjective relativism (bottom 34B-top 35A)
- truth relative to standards (35A)
- pluralistic epistemology(35A-B)

2.

a. Specific connection to the study of art: visual literacy as identification of standards by which to analyze, interpret, and communicate as steps away from opinion and toward knowledge. ("Allegory of the Cave;" Divided Line)

or/and

b. Art as representations of shadows, puppets, or real things

I'll choose a piece - either from Wednesday's class or one we've not discussed. If option a, I'll pick three or four terms, such as "subject," "content," and "iconography," assign each student one of these and ask students to look at and think about the piece strictly from that point of view. If option b, similar approach, except ask them to consider the piece as shadow, puppet, etc. The key question here is what kind of truth (specific or universal?) is shaded or highlighted. "Where" do those truths lie (in several senses of the word? Is truth in the object or in our minds or in some relationship between those two, etc.

3. Selected details from Gary's handout in the Faculty Guide

- Definition of dialectic: skepticism is not cynicism; notion of truth as collaborative, hence dialogues (why does this bring us closer to the truth? Each of us has forgotten something different from what others have forgotten? Myth of Er, Bk 10)

- Key assumptions of Plato's idealist philosophy: faith in reason, truth in Forms, which are objective: eternal, ultimate, unchanging, essence.

- World of Being (epistemology: knowledge) and World of Becoming (aesthetics: opinion): "Knowledge of nature of reality is key to happiness - otherwise you might mistake the superficially more attractive, changeable realm of Becoming, of appearances, flux, possessions, emotions, passions, transient desires for timeless transcendent Good in the realm of Being."

4. Intellectual Context: shift from myth/song culture to philosophy/books