

### Plato's Forms

*If understanding and true opinion are distinct, then these "by themselves" things definitely exist -- these Forms, the objects not of our sense perception but of our understanding only. But if -- as some people think -- true opinion does not differ in any way from understanding, then all the things we perceive through our bodily senses must be assumed to be the most stable things there are. But we do have to speak of understanding and true opinion as distinct, of course, because we can come to have one without the other, and the one is not like the other . . . Since these things are so we must agree that (i) that which keeps its own form unchangingly, which has not been brought into being and is not destroyed, which neither receives into itself anything else from anywhere else, nor itself enters into anything else anywhere, is one thing. It is invisible -- it cannot be perceived by the senses at all, and it is the role of understanding to study it. (ii) The second thing is that which shares the other's name and resembles it. This thing can be perceived by the senses, and it has been begotten. It is constantly borne along, now coming into being in a certain place and perishing out of it. It is apprehended by opinion, which involves sense perception. . . .*

Plato  
*Timaeus* (51d)