



The Ladder: Escaping from Plato's Cave

Andrew Marker

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In *The Ladder*, I claim that Plato was right. All human beings are born into a kind of cave, the darkness of which symbolizes our natural ignorance. What we call "philosophy" is just a determined attempt to escape the cave and break out into the light of day. The ladder referred to in the title is the power of human reason, which provides the means of reaching that light. Has anyone ever succeeded in reaching it? I do not know. All I know for sure is that I am not on the list of people who have. My goal in *The Ladder* is simply to help the reader do some intellectual spelunking. I will try to take the reader as many rungs up the ladder as I can. Along the way we will discuss the nature of wisdom, truth, God, and morality. We will draw on the insights of Socrates, Aristotle, Hume, Darwin, and Wittgenstein. Readers will no doubt find much in these pages with which to disagree. We should consider this a good thing. As noted in the Introduction, the books that profit us the most are often the ones we find the least congenial.

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