



# The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization

By Arthur Herman

Download now

Read Online ➔

**The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization** By Arthur Herman

Arthur Herman has now written the definitive sequel to his *New York Times* bestseller, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, and extends the themes of the book—which sold half a million copies worldwide—back to the ancient Greeks and forward to the age of the Internet. *The Cave and the Light* is a magisterial account of how the two greatest thinkers of the ancient world, Plato and Aristotle, laid the foundations of Western culture—and how their rivalry shaped the essential features of our culture down to the present day.

Plato came from a wealthy, connected Athenian family and lived a comfortable upper-class lifestyle until he met an odd little man named Socrates, who showed him a new world of ideas and ideals. Socrates taught Plato that a man must use reason to attain wisdom, and that the life of a lover of wisdom, a philosopher, was the pinnacle of achievement. Plato dedicated himself to living that ideal and went on to create a school, his famed Academy, to teach others the path to enlightenment through contemplation.

However, the same Academy that spread Plato's teachings also fostered his greatest rival. Born to a family of Greek physicians, Aristotle had learned early on the value of observation and hands-on experience. Rather than rely on pure contemplation, he insisted that the truest path to knowledge is through empirical discovery and exploration of the world around us. Aristotle, Plato's most brilliant pupil, thus settled on a philosophy very different from his instructor's and launched a rivalry with profound effects on Western culture.

The two men disagreed on the fundamental purpose of the philosophy. For Plato, the image of the cave summed up man's destined path, emerging from the darkness of material existence to the light of a higher and more spiritual truth. Aristotle thought otherwise. Instead of rising above mundane reality, he insisted, the philosopher's job is to explain how the real world works, and how we can find our place in it. Aristotle set up a school in Athens to rival Plato's Academy: the Lyceum. The competition that ensued between the two schools, and between

Plato and Aristotle, set the world on an intellectual adventure that lasted through the Middle Ages and Renaissance and that still continues today.

From Martin Luther (who named Aristotle the third great enemy of true religion, after the devil and the Pope) to Karl Marx (whose utopian views rival Plato's), heroes and villains of history have been inspired and incensed by these two master philosophers—but never outside their influence.

Accessible, riveting, and eloquently written, *The Cave and the Light* provides a stunning new perspective on the Western world, certain to open eyes and stir debate.

### **Praise for *The Cave and the Light***

“A sweeping intellectual history viewed through two ancient Greek lenses . . . breezy and enthusiastic but resting on a sturdy rock of research.”—***Kirkus Reviews***

“Examining mathematics, politics, theology, and architecture, the book demonstrates the continuing relevance of the ancient world.”—***Publishers Weekly***

“A fabulous way to understand over two millennia of history, all in one book.”—***Library Journal***

“Entertaining and often illuminating.”—***The Wall Street Journal***

 [Download The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, an ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, ...pdf](#)

# The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization

By Arthur Herman

**The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization**  
By Arthur Herman

**Arthur Herman has now written the definitive sequel to his *New York Times* bestseller, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, and extends the themes of the book—which sold half a million copies worldwide—back to the ancient Greeks and forward to the age of the Internet. *The Cave and the Light* is a magisterial account of how the two greatest thinkers of the ancient world, Plato and Aristotle, laid the foundations of Western culture—and how their rivalry shaped the essential features of our culture down to the present day.**

Plato came from a wealthy, connected Athenian family and lived a comfortable upper-class lifestyle until he met an odd little man named Socrates, who showed him a new world of ideas and ideals. Socrates taught Plato that a man must use reason to attain wisdom, and that the life of a lover of wisdom, a philosopher, was the pinnacle of achievement. Plato dedicated himself to living that ideal and went on to create a school, his famed Academy, to teach others the path to enlightenment through contemplation.

However, the same Academy that spread Plato's teachings also fostered his greatest rival. Born to a family of Greek physicians, Aristotle had learned early on the value of observation and hands-on experience. Rather than rely on pure contemplation, he insisted that the truest path to knowledge is through empirical discovery and exploration of the world around us. Aristotle, Plato's most brilliant pupil, thus settled on a philosophy very different from his instructor's and launched a rivalry with profound effects on Western culture.

The two men disagreed on the fundamental purpose of the philosophy. For Plato, the image of the cave summed up man's destined path, emerging from the darkness of material existence to the light of a higher and more spiritual truth. Aristotle thought otherwise. Instead of rising above mundane reality, he insisted, the philosopher's job is to explain how the real world works, and how we can find our place in it. Aristotle set up a school in Athens to rival Plato's Academy: the Lyceum. The competition that ensued between the two schools, and between Plato and Aristotle, set the world on an intellectual adventure that lasted through the Middle Ages and Renaissance and that still continues today.

From Martin Luther (who named Aristotle the third great enemy of true religion, after the devil and the Pope) to Karl Marx (whose utopian views rival Plato's), heroes and villains of history have been inspired and incensed by these two master philosophers—but never outside their influence.

Accessible, riveting, and eloquently written, *The Cave and the Light* provides a stunning new perspective on the Western world, certain to open eyes and stir debate.

## **Praise for *The Cave and the Light***

"A sweeping intellectual history viewed through two ancient Greek lenses . . . breezy and enthusiastic but resting on a sturdy rock of research."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Examining mathematics, politics, theology, and architecture, the book demonstrates the continuing

relevance of the ancient world.”—*Publishers Weekly*

“A fabulous way to understand over two millennia of history, all in one book.”—*Library Journal*

“Entertaining and often illuminating.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

**The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization**  
**By Arthur Herman Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #396874 in Books
- Published on: 2013-10-22
- Released on: 2013-10-22
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.51" h x 1.36" w x 6.35" l, 2.12 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 704 pages



[Download The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, an ...pdf](#)



[Read Online The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, ...pdf](#)

## Download and Read Free Online *The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization* By Arthur Herman

---

### Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Herman (*How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, 2002) boils Western philosophy and culture down to two competing notions: the idealism of Plato and the empiricism of Aristotle. Plato, says Herman, asks, “How do you want your world to be?”; Aristotle, on the other hand, asks, “How do you fit into the world that already exists?” Walking through two and a half millennia of Western thought, Herman emphasizes that the two philosophies—the material and the spiritual aspects of existence—have repeated themselves through Western history, waxing and waning and remaining in tension with each other to the present day. Romanticism? Poetry? Totalitarian dogmatism? That’s Plato. The U.S. Constitution? The Manhattan Project? Modern consumer culture? That’s Aristotle. If it sounds like a sweeping polemic, that’s because it is; Herman seems to revel in overbroad claims, particularly when he’s talking about modern phenomena. Beneath all the broad assertions and polemic showiness, however, lies a serious argument for the primacy of Plato and Aristotle and the essential dynamism of a culture that embraces both philosophies.

Review

#### **Praise for *The Cave and the Light***

“A sweeping intellectual history viewed through two ancient Greek lenses . . . breezy and enthusiastic but resting on a sturdy rock of research.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Examining mathematics, politics, theology, and architecture, the book demonstrates the continuing relevance of the ancient world.”—*Publishers Weekly*

“A fabulous way to understand over two millennia of history, all in one book.”—*Library Journal*

“Entertaining and often illuminating.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

#### **Praise for Arthur Herman**

*Gandhi & Churchill*

**Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize**

“You finish the book knowing that you can evaluate the world today, particularly modern India, with more knowledge and insight.”—*USA Today*

“Scrupulous, compelling, and unfailingly instructive . . . a detailed and richly filigreed account that introduces the Anglo-American reader to many facts and vivid if little-known personalities, both English and Indian.”—*Commentary*

*Freedom’s Forge*

“A rambunctious book that is itself alive with the animal spirits of the marketplace.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

*How the Scots Invented the Modern World*

“Professor Herman demonstrates an infectious and uplifting passion for his subject. Unlike many academics, he is a natural writer, weaving philosophical concerns seamlessly through a historical narrative that romps along at a cracking pace, producing a text that is highly accessible without compromising the rational quality of his argument.”—*The Guardian*

#### About the Author

**Arthur Herman** is the bestselling author of *Freedom's Forge*, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, *The Idea of Decline in Western History*, *To Rule the Waves*, and *Gandhi & Churchill*, which was a 2009 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Dr. Herman taught the Western Heritage Program at the Smithsonian's Campus on the Mall, and he has been a professor of history at Georgetown University, The Catholic University of America, George Mason University, and The University of the South at Sewanee.

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### Jonathan McLean:

Now a day people who Living in the era where everything reachable by connect with the internet and the resources included can be true or not call for people to be aware of each information they get. How many people to be smart in obtaining any information nowadays? Of course the answer is reading a book. Looking at a book can help persons out of this uncertainty Information specifically this The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization book since this book offers you rich details and knowledge. Of course the data in this book hundred pct guarantees there is no doubt in it you probably know this.

#### James Donofrio:

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also be a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. The huge benefits you got of course the knowledge the actual information inside the book that improve your knowledge and information. The knowledge you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want experience happy read one together with theme for entertaining including comic or novel. The particular The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization is kind of e-book which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

#### Melissa Sands:

Do you like reading a book? Confuse to looking for your chosen book? Or your book has been rare? Why so many problem for the book? But any kind of people feel that they enjoy intended for reading. Some people likes studying, not only science book and also novel and The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization or others sources were given expertise for you. After you know how the truly amazing a book, you feel desire to read more and more. Science guide was created for teacher or perhaps students especially. Those ebooks are helping them to add their knowledge. In various other case, beside science reserve, any other book likes The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization to make your spare time considerably more colorful. Many

types of book like this one.

**Rosa Rodriguez:**

Some individuals said that they feel uninterested when they reading a guide. They are directly felt it when they get a half elements of the book. You can choose the book *The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization* to make your own personal reading is interesting. Your own skill of reading talent is developing when you such as reading. Try to choose straightforward book to make you enjoy to see it and mingle the opinion about book and studying especially. It is to be 1st opinion for you to like to available a book and go through it. Beside that the publication *The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization* can to be your new friend when you're really feel alone and confuse in doing what must you're doing of that time.

**Download and Read Online *The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization* By Arthur Herman #G82BDJRHV3L**

# **Read The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization By Arthur Herman for online ebook**

The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization By Arthur Herman Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization By Arthur Herman books to read online.

## **Online The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization By Arthur Herman ebook PDF download**

**The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization By Arthur Herman Doc**

**The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization By Arthur Herman Mobipocket**

**The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization By Arthur Herman EPub**