# Hegel, Aristotle and Plato

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It is generally assumed that Hegel's many passages of his main works are very difficult to understand. But Hegel shares with Aristotle. Indeed, Hegel was highly controversial in his vigorous opposition to all "abstract" thought. To him, any thought that was not taking account of the fullness of things was abstract, and his mocking brief essay on *Who Thinks Abstractly?* Is a straightforward exposition of this central thought. His notion of the concrete is closely linked to his brief in the organic unity of which the spirit is the most comprehensive. George Lasson has put emphatically the close similarity between Hegel and Aristotle in this respect:

In Aristotle Hegel encountered a similar spirit. The sober sense for the actually real, the skillful tilt of the reflection, the cautious weighing of aspects of a concept and the elevated conception of the living spiritual of aspects unity of the universe were as peculiar for one as for the other. The way in which Aristotle used the development of Greek philosophy as a premise for his system by summing it up and concluding it, corresponds to Hegel's understanding of the interrelations in the history of philosophy. Upon this model Hegel has perfected his method to its mastery. It is the dialectics of the concept which enables him to recognize true being in the concrete single thing or event in which the general gives itself its particular form , rather than in the abstracting of the general and the juxtaposition of the particular things. The more comprehensive methodical context we find in Hegel, shows, as in Aristotle, the pattern of a *spiritual organism.* The naturally organic is, therefore, the first and immediate appearance of the concept in reality.

Very significant is Hegel's contrasting of Plato and Aristotle in his *History of Philosophy.* He says there: "Aristotle is the most worthy to be studied among the ancients. In Plato we have the general in a rather abstract form as a principle; a basis has been laid, In Aristotle" thought has become concrete; it is no longer the motionless, abstract idea, but rather the idea taken as concrete in its work."

Concretization is, thus for Hegel not the process by which a general or abstract concept or thought is manifested in a particular thing or event but the process by which thought takes hold of any real something, no matter how spiritual or general. It is motion, a