

## PLATO'S FORM OF THE BEAUTIFUL IN THE SYMPOSIUM VERSUS ARISTOTLE'S UNMOVED MOVER IN THE METAPHYSICS (A)

Aristotle entered Plato's Academy in 367 B.C. and remained there for nearly twenty years until Plato's death. Hence to infer that Plato was the most significant influence on the formation of Aristotle's metaphysical doctrine is not out of the question. In fact, Aristotle retained Plato's concept that the object of knowledge should be of the real and universal (cf. *Metaph.* Z.15), although he rejected Plato's eternal Forms as the objects of knowledge. In the *Metaphysics* (A), however, Aristotle defines the nature of the divine substance (that is, the Unmoved Mover) in terms of what is characteristic of Plato's Forms. To his Unmoved Mover, Aristotle appears to attribute the pure reality, eternal oneness, and absolute divinity of Plato's Forms.

In this paper I shall first consider the peculiar interrelation of love and the Form of the Beautiful in the *Symposium*, and then through a close comparison of Platonic and Aristotelian texts argue that Plato's treatment of the Beautiful foreshadows Aristotle's understanding of the Unmoved Mover in its nature and function. It will thus be shown that the role of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is equivalent to that of Plato's Form of the Beautiful in respect of fulfilling the role of the efficient cause, by being the final cause; both are the objects of desire. In positing the Unmoved Mover which, although unmoved, is the ultimate source of movement and the final cause working in the universe, Aristotle is generally supposed to have been original.<sup>1</sup> I shall, however, argue that Plato's concept of the Form of the Beautiful was the inspiration for Aristotle's Unmoved Mover as the efficient-final cause of the universe.

### I. THE FUNCTION OF LOVE IN RELATION TO THE FORM OF THE BEAUTIFUL IN THE SYMPOSIUM

1. In the *Symposium* (203b–212c) Plato through the mouthpiece of Diotima characterizes the operation of love as begetting (generation), and then enquires into the function of mortals' love in order to explicate, above all, how the Form of the Beautiful exerts its influence step by step on human beings. To this effect Plato makes it clear that love which desires the Beautiful is something whose *cause* he is intent on establishing.<sup>2</sup> Thus Diotima asks Socrates: 'What is the *cause* of all this love and desire?' (Τί . . . αἴτιον εἶναι τούτου τοῦ ἔρωτος καὶ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας; 207a6–7). She

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. E. R. Lloyd, *Aristotle* (Cambridge, 1973), 157. Yet Aristotle himself recognizes a predecessor: 'so too Anaxagoras is right when he says that Mind is impassive and unmixed (τὸν νοῦν ἀπαθὴν φάσκων καὶ ἀμυγῇ εἶναι), since he makes it the principle of motion; for it could cause motion in this way only *by being itself unmoved*, and have control only by being unmixed' (κινεῖν ἀκίνητος ὢν καὶ κρατοῖν ἀμυγῆς ὢν, *Phys.* 256b24–7). E. L. Elders, on the other hand, presumes that Eudoxus might have contributed to the genesis of Aristotle's doctrine of the Unmoved Mover. He argues that under the influence of Eudoxus, who observed the complicated movements of the celestial bodies 'motivated by their inborn desire for pleasure, which is identical with the desire to act and to live', Aristotle 'arrived at the conception of his theory that all moving things strive for a happiness which, in its highest form, exists in a supreme being which is joy and activity' (*Aristotle's Theology* [Assen, 1972], 9 and see also 43).

<sup>2</sup> I translate αἴτιον or αἰτία as 'cause'. On the justification for my translation, see C. J. Rowe, *Plato: Symposium* (Warminster, 1998), 185.

asks again at 207b7–c1: ‘What is the *cause* which disposes wild animals to be in such a state of (sexual) love?’ (τὰ δὲ θηρία τίς αἰτία οὕτως ἐρωτικῶς διατίθεται;). Socrates asks her to teach him ‘the *cause* of this as well as of everything else to do with love’ (τούτων τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν περὶ τὰ ἐρωτικά, 207c7). Here Plato indicates that Diotima’s questions imply that there is a distinct cause prior to the operation and effects of love, which, being the ultimate object of love, puts human beings and animals (mortals) in the condition of falling in love, and thereby causes them to aspire after their object.

Plato, in describing the operation of the Form of the Beautiful, applies the term *διατίθεται* (to dispose) to its function (207c1 and cf. 207a8, b1 and 216a1). The efficacy of the Beautiful is taken to be *disposing* mortals to the condition of falling in love. In so far as love’s disposition is understood as a state of affairs, the Form of the Beautiful must be conceived of as the cause of this state of affairs. In fine, the causality of the Beautiful is comprehended to exist owing to love’s (sexual or intellectual) stimulus in mortals, for the state of affairs (the effect) of mortals’ falling in love would not happen without the existence of the ultimate cause.

In contrast is the condition of Love (*Ἔρως*) in mortals (cf. 204b2), which is ‘by nature neither mortal nor immortal’ (203d8–e1) and also is ‘in between wisdom and ignorance’ (203e5, and cf. 204b5). The intermediate nature of love enables mortals to transcend the limits of their condition, impelling them ‘to perceive their lack of divine qualities and hence to desire to possess them’.<sup>3</sup>

Plato stresses that since the god of Love is by nature a lover of what is beautiful, he is *not* ‘the object of being loved’ (τὸ ἐρώμενον) but ‘a lover’ (τὸ ἐρών) (204c2–3); if love were ‘being loved’, then it would be identical to its object. Socrates’ specification of Love as a lover of what is beautiful is in fact a direct refutation of Agathon’s concept of love that the god of Love is the most beautiful and the best (195a7, and cf. 197c2 and 199a1). Agathon describes the god of Love as a skilled poet (generator) who makes others into poets (generators) as well as the creator of all living creatures (cf. τὴν γὰρ τῶν ζώων ποιήσιν, 197a1) (196e4–197a3). Agathon’s Love is also taken to be responsible for the generation of all kinds of crafts (τὴν τῶν τεχνῶν δημιουργίαν, 197a3). Once the god of Love was born, Agathon argues, from the love of the beautiful all good things came about for both gods and men (197b7–c1). Hence the gods’ activities were established after the birth of Love—love of the beautiful (197b3–4).

Here Agathon conceives of Love as the cause (maker) of beautiful things, being himself the most beautiful, which Diotima (Plato) attributes to the nature of the Beautiful. For, as he claims, one cannot give to another what one does not have oneself (196e5–6). Agathon concludes that Love, being himself the most beautiful and the best, is the *cause* (maker) of others’ possession of things of this sort (ἄλλων τοιούτων αἴτιος εἶναι, 197c3). Socrates repeats Agathon’s claim that Love is the most beautiful and the best, and the *cause* of everything that is beautiful and good (αὐτὸν τοιοῦτόν καὶ τοσοῦτον αἴτιον, ὅπως ἂν φαίνεται ὡς κάλλιστος καὶ ἄριστος, 198e6–199a1).

Socrates disputes Agathon’s thesis on the grounds that Love desires that of which it

<sup>3</sup> C. Osborne, *Eros Unveiled* (Oxford, 1994), 110. She further discusses the role of love as medium as follows: ‘Eros is an intermediary. So also is Socrates, whose task it is to convey the wisdom of the priestess Diotima to the company at the party. Eros is neither ignorant nor wise; neither is the philosopher, whose love earns him the immortality he desires. . . . Plato chooses to stress certain features of Socrates in this dialogue as part of his definition of love’ (100–1). Yet Osborne fails to notice Diotima’s identification of the essential function of love as ‘begetting and creation in the beautiful’, which Socrates definitely denies in the *Theaetetus* (148e–151d). Socrates merely helps to bring forth the youth’s conception.

is the love (200a2–3). Since what desires desires what it lacks (200a9), Love cannot be supposed to have the object it is in love with. Agathon is therefore forced to admit that Love is neither what is beautiful nor the cause (maker) of beautiful things. For, as Socrates points out, what is in need of the beautiful and does not possess it at all cannot be beautiful (210b8–9). Here both Agathon and Socrates agree that what is in need of the beautiful cannot make something beautiful (cf. *Symp.* 196e5–6).<sup>4</sup>

Plato identifies the nature of love as the desire for the perpetual possession of what is beautiful and good. In exploring the nature of that object Plato argues that the desire for the possession of what is beautiful and good (204d3–e4), that is, of happiness (cf. 205a5–8) is ‘the supreme and treacherous love’ common to human beings (205d2–3), and ‘everyone desires to have good things forever’ (πάντας τὰγαθὰ βούλεσθαι αὐτοῖς εἶναι αἰεὶ, 205a6–7, d2–3).<sup>5</sup> Hence the function of love is disclosed at this stage as aspiring to the good forever (cf. 205d1–206a13).

The essential function (τὸ ἔργον) of love in achieving this (206b3) is expressed as ‘bringing forth upon the beautiful’ (τόκος ἐν καλῷ), whether in the body or in the soul (206b7–8), for it is to desire ‘begetting and creation in the beautiful’ (τῆς γεννήσεως καὶ τοῦ τόκου ἐν τῷ καλῷ), *not* just the beautiful (206e2–5).<sup>6</sup> That is, for the sake of the Beautiful, love stimulates mortals’ creative activity, whether at the biological level or at the intellectual level (206b7–8). The end of love is conceived of as the eternal possession of the good through what is beautiful, since the continuous begetting (reproduction) of offspring is the mortal form of acquiring immortality (206e8–207a2). Owing to the power of love which desires what is beautiful, mortal nature seeks so far as possible to live forever and be immortal (that is, the good) (207d1–2).

Here the final *object* of love (that is, what the lover is attracted to) is differentiated from the ultimate *end* (goal) of love (that is, what the lover aims at): the final *object* of love is the Form of the Beautiful, whereas the ultimate *end* of love is the eternal possession of the good (that is, begetting and creation in the beautiful).<sup>7</sup> The Form of the Beautiful is then not the end the lover ultimately desires to possess (cf. 206e2–5), although it is conducive to his acquisition of the end. Yet what the lover attains at last is not the Form of the Good, but the good,<sup>8</sup> for the possession of the good will be given to the lover as a result of his aspiration to the Beautiful, not for the Good. Even what the philosopher achieves (that is, moral excellence) is derived from the Form of the Beautiful, *not* from the Form of the Good whose existence is nowhere to be found

<sup>4</sup> Here we may observe Socrates’ remark in the *Phaedo* that ‘nothing else makes (ποιεῖ) something beautiful except the Beautiful itself’ (100d4–5).

<sup>5</sup> To this effect C. H. Kahn argues that ‘the theory of *eros* formulated in the *Symposium*, and prefigured in the *Lysis*, is a direct development and transformation of the doctrine of the *Gorgias* and *Meno* that everyone desires the good’ (*Plato and the Socratic Dialogues* [Cambridge, 1996], 259).

<sup>6</sup> D. Halperin conjectures that ‘The purpose behind Diotima’s refusal to call *eros* a desire for the beautiful *tout court* is to avoid the otherwise inescapable implication that erotic desire *aims* at the possession of beautiful things’ (‘Platonic *eros* and what men call love’, in N. D. Smith [ed.], *Plato: Critical Assessments* 3 [London and New York, 1998], 66–120, at 81).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 89. Halperin clearly explains their difference as follows: ‘To desire an object *x* for the sake of a final good *F* is to make the possession or actualisation of *F* the ultimate aim of the desire for *x*, whereas to desire *x* because *x* is *F* (i.e., because *x* has the property *F*) is to identify *F* as the property *x* that makes *x* desirable in itself and that must therefore be reckoned the ultimate object of desire in the desire for *x* (except, of course, where *F* stands for the property “contributes to the final good *G*”)’ (88).

<sup>8</sup> H. Neumann, ‘Diotima’s concept of love’, *AJP* 86 (1965), 33–59, at 37–8.

in the *Symposium*. The good then refers to 'the particular good of a particular being',<sup>9</sup> since there is no mention of the Form of the Good in the *Symposium*.

2. From now on the desire of possessing the good through what is beautiful which entails immortality, is changed into the desire to gaze upon the Beautiful (206b–212a).<sup>10</sup> In contrast to mortals' love, which desires immortality through their physical offspring, the philosopher's quest for the ultimate cause of the intellectual offspring of love is expressed as 'initiation into the rites of love' (τὰ ἐρωτικά . . . μνηθῆναι)—'the final and highest mysteries' (τὰ τέλεια καὶ ἐποπτικά, 209e5–210a1, and cf. 210e and 211c). Here philosophical contemplation and mysterious ecstasy coincide, inasmuch as the Form of the Beautiful is posited as the divine object in the synthesis of philosophical investigation and religious experience.<sup>11</sup>

The epistemological process of grasping the Form of the Beautiful from the particular is described as follows:<sup>12</sup> the lover (that is, the philosopher) advances from a single beautiful body to all beautiful bodies; after this the lover will be forced to gaze at the beauty of activities and laws and to see that all this is akin to the beautiful, with the result that the beauty of bodies is a thing of no importance (210a–c, and cf. *Rep.* 476b). The lover at last turns to the great sea of the Beautiful, and, gazing upon this, brings forth many beautiful ideas and theories in unstinting love of wisdom; having grown and been strengthened there, he catches sight of a single form of the Beautiful (210d–e).<sup>13</sup>

The philosopher who has been thus far guided in matters of love is coming to an understanding of the final object of love and, all of a sudden, will catch sight of something wondrous and beautiful in its nature (210e1–5).<sup>14</sup> The cause of love's aspiration (that is, the Form of the Beautiful) 'for the sake of which' (οὗ δὴ ἔνεκεν) the lover has toiled so far (210e6, and cf. 211c2) is now disclosed as an eternal being (ἀεὶ ὄν, 211a1), by itself and with itself always in an eternal oneness (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ μεθ' αὐτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν, 211b1–2); it is absolute, pure, unmixed (εἰλικρινές, καθαρὸν,

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 38. Hence I do not accept K. J. Dover's interpretation that τὸ ἀγαθόν and τὸ καλόν are coincident classes (*Symposium* [Cambridge, 1980], 136). Cf. Rowe (n. 2), 179.

<sup>10</sup> On this Osborne ([n. 3], 102) comments that 'the need to possess is a need to possess immortality in order to gaze for ever on the beautiful itself'.

<sup>11</sup> In the *Phaedrus*, too, Plato claims that if the philosopher makes right use of the means of recollection, that is, the comprehension of Forms, being initiated in perfect mysteries (τελέους ἀεὶ τελετὰς τελούμενος), he can achieve *real perfection* (τέλεος ὄντως, 249c6–8). Here Plato conceives of the philosopher's state of mind as a kind of 'possession' (ἐνθουσιάζων, 249d2): 'this reveals itself as the best of all the kinds of divine possession from the best of sources; and so it is that when he partakes in this madness, he who loves the beautiful is called a lover' (ὅτι ταύτης μετέχων τῆς μανίας ὁ ἐρῶν τῶν καλῶν ἐραστὴς καλεῖται, 249e1–4). Therefore if the philosopher is initiated into the most blessed of mysteries (τῶν τελετῶν . . . μακαριωτάτην, 250b9–c1), he will be introduced at the moment of final revelation to the spectacle of wholeness and steadfastness which is unchanging and blissful in its nature (250c2–4).

<sup>12</sup> Rowe (n. 2), 197.

<sup>13</sup> On this process, I think, Halperin ([n. 6], 97) is right in arguing that 'there is no sublimation because the authentic object of desire never changes during the upward journey towards the Form'. See also I. Singer, *The Nature of Love* (New York, 1966), 51–2 and J. M. E. Moravcsik, 'Reason and eros in the "assent"—passage of the *Symposium*', in J. P. Anton and G. L. Kustas (edd.), *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (New York, 1971), 285–302, at 291.

<sup>14</sup> In the *Lysis* (219c5–d2) Plato pursues this line of argument to the effect that there is a hierarchical structure of goals leading upwards to the first object of love (friendship) (πρώτον φιλον), which is not loved for the sake of anything else, and of which all other objects of love are but images or mere words. The suggestion is that there must be a single starting point: the first love for the sake of which all other things are dear, this being the only thing that is *really* loved.

ἀμεικτον, 211e1), beautiful in every respect (211a2–5), non-spatial (211a8), and is not subject to change (211b3–5).<sup>15</sup> This is indeed ‘the divine Beautiful’ (αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλόν, 211e3), for ‘what is divine’ (τὸ θεῖον) is always the same in every respect (παντάπασι τὸ αὐτὸ ἀεὶ εἶναι, 208a8–b1) and what is beautiful is in harmony (ἀρμόττον) with all that is divine (παντὶ τῷ θείῳ, 206d1–2).<sup>16</sup>

Through the mediation of love, the philosopher looks at (βλέποντος) the Beautiful itself, and contemplates it (θεωμένον), and can therefore be with it (συνόντος αὐτῷ, 212a1–2).<sup>17</sup> Hence as a result of his contact with the Beautiful, the philosopher brings forth not merely ‘semblances of excellence’ (εἰδωλα ἀρετῆς), but ‘true excellence’ (ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ), and will therefore be dear to the gods (θεοφιλεῖ) and be immortal (ἀθανάτω, 212a5–7).<sup>18</sup> The philosopher’s acquisition of ‘true excellence’, which is necessary to attain spiritual immortality, does indeed have its ultimate cause as the Beautiful which is prior to it and without which there can be no excellences in him.

3. Now let us consider how the eternal Form of the Beautiful performs the role of the final cause of love by acting as its *final object* (τέλος) (210 e4, 211 b7). The quest for the origin of the effects of love is described as going upwards ‘for the sake of’ their ultimate cause. In order to grasp the final object (ἄπτοιτο τοῦ τέλους, 211b7) the lover must always move upwards *for the sake of* the Beautiful (ἐκείνου ἕνεκα τοῦ καλοῦ ἀεὶ ἐπανιέναι, 211c2) which deserves ‘to be loved’ (τὸ ἐραστόν) and ‘which is in fact beautiful, graceful, perfect and blissful’ (τὸ τῷ ὄντι καλὸν καὶ ἄβρὸν καὶ τέλειον καὶ μακαριστόν, cf. 204c4–5).<sup>19</sup>

The final object of the philosopher’s intellect is disclosed as the transcendent Form of the Beautiful which urges his desire to search for means to gaze upon itself, in helping the philosopher’s soul transcend previous objects of love by revealing new objects.<sup>20</sup> The Form of the Beautiful, then, being the most attractive and alluring of

<sup>15</sup> In the *Phaedo* the Beautiful itself (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν) is identified as what it is itself (αὐτὸ . . . ὃ ἔστιν), never admitting any change (μεταβολήν), being uniform itself by itself (μονοειδὲς ὃν αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό), never admitting of any kind of alteration (ἀλλοιῶσιν) in any respect (78d4–7); it is both eternal (ἀεὶ) and invisible (αἰδές) (79a9). In the *Phaedrus* the nature of Form is conceived of as true being without colour or shape, intangible (ἡ γὰρ ἀχρῶμάτος τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφῆς οὐσία ὄντως οὐσα), observable only by the pilot of the soul, the intellect (247c6–8).

<sup>16</sup> In the *Phaedo* again the term ‘divine’ (θεῖον) is applied to the nature of Forms (80b1, 84a9). In the *Republic* the contemplation of Forms is likewise identified as that of divine things (ἀπὸ θεῶν . . . θεωριῶν) (517d4–5), so the lover of wisdom who associates with the divine order will himself become orderly and divine in the measure permitted to man (500c9–d1). Further in the *Phaedrus* what is divine (τὸ θεῖον) is called beautiful, wise, good (καλόν, σοφόν, ἀγαθόν, 246d8–e1).

<sup>17</sup> G. Vlastos hence makes the point that the term “‘Ecstatic contemplation” fits perfectly the experience which Plato describes through verbs for seeing, viewing, gazing (ὄρᾶν, καθορᾶν, ἰδεῖν, κατιδεῖν, θεᾶν) and touching (ἅπτομαι, ἐφάπτομαι) for the terminal apprehension of Form’ (*Socrates* [Cambridge, 1991], 78).

<sup>18</sup> The philosopher’s begetting of ‘intellectual offspring’ is also mentioned in the *Republic*: if the philosopher achieves an understanding of the essential nature of Form (αὐτοῦ ὃ ἔστιν ἐκάστου τῆς φύσεως ἀψασθαι), by getting near what really is and having union with it (ᾗ πλησίον καὶ μυγεῖς τῷ ὄντι ὄντως), he will thereby *beget* intelligence and truth (γεννήσας νοῦν καὶ ἀλήθειαν, 490b3–6).

<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere Plato characterizes ‘what is beautiful’ (κάλλος) as ‘the most evident and most beloved’ (ἐκφανέστατον εἶναι καὶ ἐρασμιώτατον, *Phdr.* 250d7–8), and ‘what is most beautiful’ (τὸ κάλλιστον) as ‘the most lovable’ (ἐρασμιώτατον, *Rep.* 402d6).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Vlastos (n. 17), 48. Halperin (fn. 6], 99) also remarks that ‘Sexual activity, for the erotic man at least, represents a low-order form of philosophical activity: every passionate longing for

desire, is revealed to evoke the philosopher's love and thereby to get him to undertake the quest for the cause of this very condition of love which the Beautiful has 'disposed' (cf. 207c1), and therefore to the new exploration which terminates in the final contemplation of itself, the Form of the Beautiful. Because the (efficient) causation of the Beautiful is exercised simply by its being the philosopher's final object, its status as an unchangeable eternal reality is unaffected. The highest form of love is understood as philosophical enquiry and contemplation, and indeed philosophical activity is now conceived in terms of love as much as knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

The method by which 'what is mortal participates in immortality' (*θνητὸν ἀθανασίας μετέχει*, *Symp.* 208b3) is expressed in the terminology characteristic of final causation: 'for the sake of immortality, mortals show this exertion of love' (*ἀθανασίας γὰρ χάριν παντὶ αὕτη ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἐπεται*, 208b5–6). This is intrinsically, in the final analysis, the way in which the transcendent Form of the Beautiful causes the philosopher's contemplation to be directed towards itself and thus makes him excellent and thereby immortal so far as this is possible for a mortal.

To sum up, the Form of the Beautiful is revealed to meet the condition of the object of which both Agathon and Socrates are in quest; being itself the most beautiful, it is the *cause* of everything that is beautiful and good (cf. 197c3 and 198e6–199a1). The Form of the Beautiful is thence conceived of as exercising a causative power in attracting mortals by being their final cause. But it operates through the medium of love, which is best understood as a form of attraction like the operation of a divine magnet.<sup>22</sup> The identity of love is the motive force impelling the creative urge to achieve

the physical beauty of a human individual is an expression of a more profound, if inchoate, metaphysical desire to transcend the conditions of mortality and make the good one's own forever.' The desire of a beautiful body is disclosed as a transcendental desire which leads to an object of metaphysical knowledge.

<sup>21</sup> For this reason Vlastos ([n. 17], 78, note 157) mentions that love is 'as salient a feature of the philosopher's relation to the Form [of the Beautiful] as is knowledge'. The role of the *Symposium's* love is again stressed in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*: the philosopher's love is directed towards what is good and beautiful. In the *Phaedo* Plato mentions that the philosopher's soul *strives for* Form (*δρέγεται τοῦ ὄντος*, 65c9). In the *Republic* too Plato articulates that the dominant feature of the philosophical nature is a constant *desire or love* for the kind of knowledge which reveals to the philosopher something of that essence that is eternal (*μαθήματός γε αἰεὶ ἐρώσιν ὁ ἄν ἑαυτοῖς δηλοῖ ἐκείνης τῆς οὐσίας τῆς αἰεὶ οὐσης*) and that does not pass into and out of existence (485a10–b3, and cf. 485d3–4). For the philosopher's soul seeks to apprehend and associate with the divine, immortal, and everlasting being to which she is akin (611e1–3). The relationship of the philosopher to the objects of knowledge is expressed in terms of desire, love, or striving (*ὄρεξις*, *ἔρως*, *ἐπιθυμία*, *ἄμιλλα*, 475b8, 485b1, d4, 490a9, etc.). Hence if the philosopher *strives towards* true being (*πρὸς τὸ ὄν πεφυκὼς εἶη ἀμιλλᾶσθαι*, 490a8–9), then he achieves an understanding of its essential nature (*αὐτοῦ ὁ ἔστιν ἐκάστον τῆς φύσεως ἀψασθαι*, 490b3). The philosopher will thus enter into union with Form (*ᾧ πλησίνας καὶ μιγεῖς τῷ ὄντι ὄντως*), and thereby will beget intelligence and truth (*γεννήσας νοῦν καὶ ἀλήθειαν*, 490b5–6). Therefore the philosopher, associating with the divine order, will himself be ordered and divine in whatever measure is permitted to him (500c9–d1). The nature of true love is a sober and harmonious love of the ordered and the beautiful (*Rep.* 403a7–8), and thereby the rational part of the philosopher's soul can accomplish its end so that it can participate in its eternal objective (cf. *Symp.* 211b). For this reason F. M. Cornford claims that the three impulses which shape the three types of life (in the *Republic*) 'are manifestations of a single force or fund of energy, called Eros, directed through divergent channels towards various ends' ('The doctrine of eros in Plato's *Symposium*', in his *The Unwritten Doctrines and Other Essays* [Cambridge, 1950], 71). Hence Kahn ([n. 4], 263) is right in making the point that 'The universal desire for the good that is central to Socratic intellectualism is thereby not rejected but deepened, reconstrued as *eros*, and fully integrated into Plato's mature metaphysics and psychology.'

<sup>22</sup> Cf. C. H. Kahn, 'The place of the prime mover in Aristotle's theology', in A. Gotthelf (ed.), *Aristotle on Nature and Living Things* (Bristol and Pittsburgh, 1985), 183–205, at 184.

a form of immortality, whereas it is itself motivated by the causality of the Beautiful as—in some sense—its efficient-final cause. Plato's hypothesis of an ultimate principle operating on mortal desire is effective only if this transcendent-desired object motivates change in mortals without itself undergoing or engaging in change, given that it is eternal and unchangeable.

## II. A COMPARISON OF THE ROLE OF ARISTOTLE'S UNMOVED MOVER WITH THAT OF PLATO'S FORM OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Now let us consider Aristotle's Unmoved Mover in the *Metaphysics* (A) in comparison with Plato's treatment of the Form of the Beautiful in the *Symposium*. In the *Physics* (VIII) Aristotle argues for the necessity of the first and single motive cause in the universe: there must always be motion, and motion must be continuous since what is always is continuous; if motion is continuous, it is one, and the cause of continuous motion must itself be an eternal unchanging mover (259a, and cf. *Metaph.* 1012b30–1). In the *Metaphysics* (A) Aristotle presents the chief explanation for the nature and function of the Unmoved Mover that it is the ultimate principle on which the heavens and the world of nature depend (1072b13–14).

1. In the *Metaphysics* (A) Aristotle gives a detailed account of the nature of the Unmoved Mover, which can be summed up as follows:

1. The Unmoved Mover is a mover which is not moved, being eternal, substantive, and actual (τὸ δ' οὐ κινούμενον κινεῖ, αἰδῖον καὶ οὐσία καὶ ἐνέργεια οὐσα, 1072a25, and cf. 1071b4–5, b20).
2. The Unmoved Mover is the object of desire and thought (τὸ ὀρεκτὸν καὶ τὸ νοητόν, 1072a26).
3. The Unmoved Mover, as that for the sake of which (τὸ οὗ ἐνεκα, 1072b1), produces motion by being loved (κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον, 1072b3).
4. The Unmoved Mover is good (καλῶς) and a first principle (ἀρχή) (1072b11).
5. The Unmoved Mover is a divine thing (θεῖον, 1072b23).
6. The Unmoved Mover is a living being, eternal and most good (ζῶον αἰδῖον ἄριστον, 1072b29).
7. The Unmoved Mover is eternal and unmoveable and separate from sensible things (οὐσία τις αἰδῖος καὶ ἀκίνητος καὶ κεχωρισμένη τῶν αἰσθητῶν, 1073a4–5).
8. The Unmoved Mover does not have any magnitude (μέγεθος), being without parts and indivisible (ἄμερής καὶ ἀδιαίρετός, 1073a6–7, and cf. *Phys.* 266a10–11).
9. The Unmoved Mover is impassive, unalterable (ἀπαθὲς καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον, 1073a11) and immaterial (that is, without matter) (ἄνευ ὕλης, 1071b21); for the primary essence which does not have matter is fulfilment (ἐντελέχεια, 1074a36).
10. The Unmoved Mover is one both in formula and in number (ἐν ἄρα καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ, 1074a36–7).
11. The Unmoved Mover is a thinking on thinking (νοήσεως νόησις, 1074b34–5).

Here Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is described as resembling Plato's Forms in not

being an object of sense-perception (that is, (2), (5), (7), (8), (9), and (11)). Like the nature of the Unmoved Mover, Aristotle recognizes that Platonic Forms are eternal and unchangeable (*ἀτῖδια καὶ ἀκίνητα*) in their essential nature (*Metaph.* 987b16–17); thus Forms are separated from sensible objects (*τὰ αἰσθητὰ παρὰ ταῦτα*, 987b8). Being eternal, unmoveable, and separated from sensible things, the Unmoved Mover is posited as being without matter (that is, (8) and (9)). For if it had matter, it could possess magnitude and would therefore be capable of being otherwise than itself. Yet no finite magnitude can possess the infinite power the eternal mover is required to have through infinite time (*Metaph.* 1073a3–8). Having an infinite power (*δύναμις ἄπειρος*, 1073a7–8), the Unmoved Mover could not therefore be part of the heavens nor in the heavens (*De Motu Animalium*, 699a13–14; cp. *Symp.* 211a8). Hence Merlan makes the point that ‘it is obvious that the subject-matter of Aristotle’s theology is of precisely the same nature [as Plato’s Forms]: it is something separated, eternal, and unmoved’.<sup>23</sup>

There is of course one interesting but salient difference: although Plato argues that the Form of the Beautiful is a divine thing (*θεῖον*, *Symp.* 208b1, 211e3), he does not make it a god (*θεός*) as Aristotle does the Unmoved Mover (*Metaph.* 1072b25, b28–30). What justifies this difference is Aristotle’s ascription of *thought* to the Unmoved Mover. The Unmoved Mover is identified as a living and conscious being (that is, (6)) which itself thinks in sharing the nature of the object of thought (1072b19–20); ‘for it becomes an object of thought by coming into contact with and thinking its object, with the result that thought is identical to its object’ (1072b20–1). Since the actuality of thought is living (*ζωή*), and the Unmoved Mover is that actuality, the essential actuality of the Unmoved Mover is living which is most good and eternal (*ζῶν ἁρίστη καὶ ἄθδιος*, 1072b26–8). The Unmoved Mover can therefore be contrasted to Plato’s Forms in respect that it thinks itself; its thinking is a thinking on thinking (that is, (11)).<sup>24</sup> Apart from this point, though, it seems manifest that in introducing the Unmoved Mover, Plato’s most distinguished pupil follows in his teacher’s footsteps.

2. In the *Metaphysics* (A) Aristotle characterizes the Unmoved Mover as the object of desire (*τὸ ὀρεκτόν*, 1072a26) or the object of ‘being loved’ (*ἐρώμενον*, 1072b3) (that is, (2) and (3)). The object of desire (*τὸ ὀρεκτόν*) is taken to be equivalent to the object of thought (*τὸ νοητόν*), which implies that what is beautiful (*τὸ καλόν*) is identical to what is good (1072a26–8) and to what is in itself desirable (*τὸ δι’ αὐτὸ αἰρετόν*, 1072a35).

The object of desire and the object of thought are taken to move in this way: they move without being moved (that is, (1) and cf. *De An.* 433a17–30). From the way in which it is desired, that is, without undergoing any change or alteration, the Unmoved Mover, that is, the object of desire, remains unmoved, exceptionally as an Aristotelian

<sup>23</sup> P. Merlan, ‘Aristotle’s Unmoved Movers’, *Traditio* 4 (1946), 1–30, at 3.

<sup>24</sup> The fact that the Unmoved Mover is a thinking on thinking implies that it is the efficient cause of its thinking as well as the final cause of its thinking, since it is not only the source of its thinking but the end (object) of its thinking. In the world of nature too it is not only the efficient cause (originator) of natural change which brings about the desire of natural things, but the final cause (end) of natural change into which the desire of natural things terminate. Hence the Unmoved Mover is on the one hand in act in the sense of that from which the process originates, and is on the other hand not in act in the sense of that for the sake of which the process takes place. For ‘the active power is a cause in the sense of that from which the process originates; but the end, for the sake of which it takes place, is not active’ (*Gen. Corr.* 324b12–14).



efficient cause.<sup>25</sup> For were it to undergo any change, then it would not after all be the first cause; its own change would be caused from a further source.

The way in which the Unmoved Mover exerts its influence requires consideration in comparison with the causality of Plato's Form of the Beautiful. In the *Symposium*, too, Plato describes the nature of the Beautiful as the object of aspiration, desire, or love (βούλησις, 205a5; ἐπιθυμία, 205d2, 207a7, e2; ἔρως, 205d3, 206a11, 207a2, 207a7, etc.);<sup>26</sup> 'what is in fact beautiful' (τὸ τῷ ὄντι καλόν) is to mortals the object of 'being loved' (τὸ ἐρώμενον, 204c2) or 'to be loved' (τὸ ἐραστόν, 204c4).

In order to examine Aristotle's notion of desire (ὄρεξις) one needs to take into account the *De Anima* (III) where the object of desire (τὸ ὀρεκτόν) is described as that which moves without being moved (κινεῖ οὐ κινούμενον) by being apprehended in thought or in imagination (433b11–12). In all its aspects, Aristotle argues, the nature of desire (ὄρεξις) is relative to an end (ἐνεκά του, 433a15).<sup>27</sup> For that which is the objective of desire (οὐ γὰρ ἡ ὄρεξις) is the stimulant (origin) of practical thought (ἀρχὴ τοῦ πρακτικοῦ νοῦ, 433a15–16) which calculates means to an end (ὁ ἐνεκά του λογιζόμενος, 433a14). The object of desire (τὸ ὀρεκτόν) originates a movement; as a result, since the object of desire is a source of thought's stimulation (ἀρχὴ αὐτῆς [διάνοιας] ἐστι τὸ ὀρεκτόν, 433a18–20), thought (ἡ διάνοια) gives rise to movement for the sake of some end that is desired (433a22–5, and cf. *Metaph.* 1072a26–7, *Eth. Nic.* 1139a35–b4).

For an analysis of how the object of desire operates, Aristotle examines three (*de facto* four) factors involved in purpose action (*De An.* 433b13–18): (a) that which originates movement (τὸ κινεῖν) [divisible into (a.i) that which is not moved (τὸ μὲν ἀκίνητον) and (a.ii) that which both moves and moved (τὸ δὲ κινεῖν καὶ κινούμενον)]; (b) the instrument by which desire produces movement (ὧ κινεῖ); (c) that which is moved (τὸ κινούμενον).<sup>28</sup>

Aristotle makes the claim that 'that which moves without itself being moved' (a.i) is the realizable good (τὸ πρακτόν ἀγαθόν),<sup>29</sup> 'that which moves and is moved at the

<sup>25</sup> Here we may observe L. Judson's distinction between two sorts of Aristotelian efficient cause: the 'energetic' efficient causes, which involve the transmission of energy or motion, and the 'nonenergetic' efficient causes, which do not. Souls would be of the first type, the τέχνη of building or medicine would be of the second ('Heavenly motion and the Unmoved Mover', in M. L. Gill and J. G. Lennox [edd.], *Self-Motion* [Princeton, 1994], 155–71, at 165–6). See also E. Berti, 'Metaphysics Λ 6', in D. Charles and M. Frede (edd.), *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda* (Cambridge, 2000), 181–206, at 188.

<sup>26</sup> The main difference between ἔρως and ἐπιθυμία lies in that the former can both desire and love, whereas the latter can only desire (D. A. Hyland, 'Ἐρως, Ἐπιθυμία, and Φιλία in Plato', *Phronesis* 13 [1968], 32–46, at 36). Hence their difference can be conceived of as 'the difference between a good-dependent and a good-independent desire: erotic desire [ἔρως] incorporates an implicit, positive value-judgement about its object, whereas appetitive desire [ἐπιθυμία] expresses no such judgement' (Halperin [n. 6], 79).

<sup>27</sup> In the *De Anima* Aristotle posits ἐπιθυμία (appetite or desire for pleasure), θυμός (self-assertive feelings connected with anger and pride), and βούλησις (a rational desire for what is good) as species of ὄρεξις (414b2 ff.).

<sup>28</sup> In the *Physics*, however, Aristotle presents three factors—the moved (τὸ κινούμενον), the mover (τὸ κινεῖν), and the instrument of motion (τὸ ὧ κινεῖ)—since there is no discussion about the faculty of desire (256b14–15). The moved must be in motion, but need not move anything else; the instrument of motion must both move something else and be itself in motion (for it changes together with the moved, with which it is in contact and continuous); the mover—that is to say, that which causes motion in such a manner that it is not merely the instrument of motion—must be unmoved (*Phys.* 256b15 ff.).

<sup>29</sup> In the *De Motu Animalium* Aristotle also remarks that 'the eternally fine, and the truly and

same time' (a.ii) is the faculty of desire (τὸ ὀρεκτικόν), and 'the instrument by which desire produces movement' (ᾧ κινεῖ), (b) is the bodily organ, while 'that which is in motion' (c) is the animal (τὸ ζῶον) (433b15–18). In summary, (a.i) acts as the cause of the motion of (a.ii) without moving itself, and (a.ii), being itself caused by (a.i), is the moving cause of (c) itself by means of (b), while (c) has the sole characteristics of being moved. Here the soul is conceived of as the locus of the faculty of desire.<sup>30</sup>

In the *Symposium* Plato proposes three factors in the operation of love: (i) the final object for the sake of which love acts (that is, the Form of the Beautiful); (ii) love which desires the object; (iii) mortals in whom love is present and upon whom it acts. That is to say, (i) is the immovable movent which is the object of love, (ii) is the movent itself moved by (i), and (iii) is that in which movement is produced. Yet in Plato there is no mention of the instrument by which love (desire) produces movement (ᾧ κινεῖ) (that is, (b)), the examination of which falls within the province of the functions common to body and soul (cf. *De An.* 433b19–21).

Now the working of Aristotle's desire (ὄρεξις) is revealed, its function being compatible with the function of Plato's love, being the movement itself moved by its object.<sup>31</sup> The faculty of desire is in need of receiving a stimulus from the Unmoved Mover, while it is itself the source of movement. The relationship of the faculty of desire to the Unmoved Mover is in the order of final causation, just as love is to the Form of the Beautiful; on the one hand it is in the state of passion, but on the other hand it is in the state of activating the animal to desire the ultimate object of the Unmoved Mover.

By analogy with the function of the Beautiful, the most specific feature of the Unmoved Mover is therefore that it acts the role of the final cause of 'desire' (that is, (3)).<sup>32</sup> Aristotle applies to it teleological terms, such as 'for the sake of which' (τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα, *Metaph.* 1072b1, 2, etc.; ἔνεκά του, *De An.* 433a14, 15, etc.), which Plato has already used in the *Symposium*—'objective' or 'end' (τέλος, 210e4, 211 b7), 'perfect' (τέλειον, 204c4) and 'for the sake of' (χάριν, ἔνεκα, ἔνεκεν, 208b5, 210a1, 210e6, 211c2). But the most striking of all the resemblances is Aristotle's claim that the Unmoved Mover acts as the final cause by being loved (κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον, *Metaph.* 1072b3; cf. τὸ ἐρώμενον, *Symp.* 204c2).

3. In contrast to the causality of the Form of the Beautiful, however, the objects that are subject to the efficacy of the Unmoved Mover even include inanimate things as

primarily good (which is not at one time good, at another time not good), is too divine and precious to be relative to anything else. The Unmoved Mover then moves, itself being unmoved, whereas desire and the faculty of desire are moved and so move' (700b32–701a1).

<sup>30</sup> The role of the soul is a medium which is 'to move' animal bodies while it itself is motivated by the origin of its desire. In the *Phaedrus* Plato remarks that the role of the soul is a medium for the contemplation of the Form of the Beautiful, by means of which the soul's divine purity can be achieved (250c ff.).

<sup>31</sup> Hence we cannot accept M. C. Nussbaum's claim that 'The contribution of Aristotle's innovation seems to be precisely that it does enable us to see and focus on what is common to all cases of animal movement, whereas the Platonist structure does not. Aristotle, by choosing this particular word [i.e. *orexis*], is saying that the single or common element which Plato fails to recognize is this element of reaching out for something in the world, grasping after some object in order to take it to oneself. Both human and the animals, in their rational and non-rational actions, have in common that they stretch forward, so to speak, towards pieces of the world which they then attain or appropriate' (*The Fragility of Goodness* [Cambridge, 1989], 275–6).

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle applies the term 'cause' (αἰτίον) to the Unmoved Mover in the *Metaphysics* (1041a27–31) in the sense of the final cause, which, being essence, is that for the sake of which.

well as the heavenly bodies.<sup>33</sup> The fact that the Unmoved Mover acts as the ultimate cause of generation in the universe as a whole is the most distinctive feature compared to the operation of the Form of the Beautiful whose influence does not extend beyond the world of mortals. The Unmoved Mover, from which all natural change is derived, is identified as the being upon which the heavens and the world of nature depend (cf. *Metaph.* 1072b13–14) and without which the whole world of nature would be destructible (1071b5–6).

In Aristotle's scheme of science, nature is the principle of change; everything in nature has an internal source of change it undergoes (cf. *Phys.* 192b13–23, 254b16–17). Yet, Aristotle remarks, 'in all things nature always strives towards the better' (*ἀεὶ τοῦ βελτίονος ὁρέεσθαι* . . . *τὴν φύσιν*, *Gen. Corr.* 336b28, and cf. *De An.* 415b1–2). Since nature makes everything realize what is specific to it, and is also a principle in the thing itself (*Metaph.* 1070a7–8), nature is considered as the efficient cause of the universe.<sup>34</sup> Hence to be a natural thing means to have the internal principle of change for the fulfilment of the complete form (cf. 1032a12–14). In nature there is a systematic and coherent design (end) which induces each thing to act in a fixed pattern.

In every case of natural change what is potential (that is, deprived of the form), is designed by nature 'to aim at and to desire the form that is actual in accordance with its own nature' (*ἐφίεσθαι καὶ ὁρέεσθαι αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν*, *Phys.* 192a18–19);<sup>35</sup> 'what is actual [the form] is produced from what is potential [the matter] by what is actual' (*Metaph.* 1049b24–5). This goal-directedness in nature's works is their inherent characteristic of desiring to realize their nature.<sup>36</sup> Being divine and good and desirable (*ὄντος γάρ τινος θείου καὶ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἐφετοῦ*, *Phys.* 192a16–17), the principle of the form is the ever-present end of the process of generation, and therefore is prior in substance to what is potential (*Metaph.* 1050b4). The principle of form is thence specified as the primary cause of each thing's being (1041b25–8). Hence what explains the change bringing about nature's works (that is, the form) always coincides with the end in which the process of their generation terminates; their formal cause is identical to their final cause, both of which are identified by reference to the act of their mature specimen.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* 6 (Cambridge, 1981), 265; J. Hankinson, *Cause and Explanation in Ancient Greek Thought* (Oxford, 1998), 187; Kahn (n. 19), 184; and D. N. Sedley, 'Metaphysics A 10', in Charles and Frede (n. 25), 327–50, at 333–4. I follow Kahn's broader view that the Unmoved Mover 'serves as the divine drawing force like a magnet for all variety of teleological change in nature as well as in mortals' life and action' ([n. 19], 184, and cf. 186). Aristotle in fact does not make a clear distinction between living things and non-living things: 'nature proceeds little by little from things lifeless to animal life in such a way that it is impossible to determine the exact line of demarcation, nor on which side thereof an intermediate form should lie' (*Hist. An.* 588b5–6). In the *De Caelo*, Aristotle remarks, the natural movement of the elements to their own place is a movement towards the achievement of their own form (310a), which indicates that the elements have a certain kind of desire for the actualisation of their potentialities. Hence the four elements are said to imitate the eternal circular locomotion of the heavens by their circular intertransformations (*Gen. Corr.* 337a ff).

<sup>34</sup> D. M. Balme, *Aristotle: De Partibus Animalium I and De Generatione Animalium I* (Oxford, 1992), 98; S. Manson, 'Ontological composition of sensible substances in Aristotle (*Metaphysics* VII 7–9)', in J. Barnes, M. Schofield, and R. Sorabji (edd.), *Articles on Aristotle 3. Metaphysics* (London, 1979), 80–7, at 83; and Sedley (n. 33), 330.

<sup>35</sup> In the *De Anima* it is said that matter is what is potential while form is realization (412a9). So matter is supposed to have a nature of such a kind as to reach the perfect (the form) (cf. *Phys.* 192a22).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Hankinson (n. 33), 126.

<sup>37</sup> J. Cooper, 'Aristotle on natural teleology', in M. Schofield and M. Nussbaum (edd.), *Language and Logos* (Cambridge, 1982), 197–222, at 200

The end for the sake of which all things strive (*De An.* 415b) each in its degree is the pure and perfect form towards which their potential end is directed; 'that for the sake of which a thing is, is its principle, and its becoming is for the sake of the end' (*Metaph.* 1050a8–9). Since the non-random, 'for-something's sake' (ἐνεκά τινος), is present in nature's works in the highest degree, 'the end for which nature's works are put together and produced occupies the place of the beautiful' (οὐ δ' ἔνεκα συνέστηκεν ἢ γέγονε τέλους, τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ χώραν εἴληφεν, *Part. An.* 645a25–8). Yet the end in which the process of a natural change in what is informed terminates is traced back to the Unmoved Mover whose essence is eternally actual; 'one actuality always precedes another in time right back to the actuality of the eternal Unmoved Mover' (*Metaph.* 1050b5–6, and cf. 1049b24–5). This Unmoved Mover is the ultimate cause which urges all things in nature to achieve the complete actuality in so far as their material constraints will permit.<sup>38</sup>

The nature of the universe, that is, the principle of the good that constitutes the nature of each thing (1075a22–3),<sup>39</sup> depends upon the Unmoved, which is in itself the principle of the good in nature (cf. 1075a11–12). For this reason Aristotle infers from the movement of the whole heavens that something (that is, the Unmoved Mover) stands to the whole nature (τὴν ὅλην φύσιν) in the same relation as the earth does to animals and the bodies moved by them (*De Motu Animalium*, 699a24–7).<sup>40</sup> The principle of the good for the universe is therefore not just in the transcendent Unmoved Mover but also to some extent throughout the hierarchy of the universe.<sup>41</sup> Yet the possession of the good differs with the hierarchy of things in the universe; natural things' participation in divinity and eternity is different in degree. The most natural function of living things is then to imitate the Unmoved Mover in their own way.<sup>42</sup>

Yet nature cannot simply be identical to the Unmoved Mover, for it is not conceived as an independent being. Instead the Unmoved Mover is expressed as the principle from which the nature of all the contents of the universe is derived. Then nature refers to a general term which comprises the nature of all the contents the universe contains;<sup>43</sup> it is expressed as 'a kind of disposition' (ἐξίς τις, 1070a12). Hence, as Guthrie puts it, 'to speak of nature as a unity is to speak only . . . analogically'.<sup>44</sup>

Owing to the aetiological role of the Unmoved Mover, which is the principle of the good in the universe, the structured and teleological change of nature is kept working in a specific way through the medium of desire. The process of the world will go on as the inward urge in nature responds to the perfect and transcendent being of the Unmoved Mover that is without.

In the *Symposium*, however, nature is applied only to mortals' behaviour, although Plato remarks elsewhere that all things do their best to be like 'what is' (προθυμεῖται μὲν πάντα τοιαῦτ' εἶναι οἷον ἐκεῖνο, *Phd.* 75a1–2); 'all the things which are equal' in the sense-perceptions are *striving for* 'what is equal' (πάντα τὰ ἐν ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν

<sup>38</sup> Hankinson (n. 33), 187 and Sedley (n. 33), 327.

<sup>39</sup> On the text, see Sedley (n. 33), 329.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 330.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 334. Aristotle in fact argues that the nature of the universe is the principle of the good, both as something separate and by itself and as the order of the parts (*Metaph.* 1075a10–13).

<sup>42</sup> Guthrie (n. 33), 265. On Aristotle's debt to Plato on this line of thinking, see D. N. Sedley, 'The ideal of godlikeness', in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato 2* (Oxford, 1999), 309–28.

<sup>43</sup> D. M. Balme, 'Teleology and necessity', in A. Gotthelf and J. G. Lennox (edd.), *Philosophical Issues in Aristotle's Biology* (Cambridge, 1987), 275–85, at 279.

<sup>44</sup> Guthrie (n. 33), 265. He adds that 'Causes and principles are in a sense different for different things, but in another sense, speaking generally and analogically, they are the same for all' (*ibid.*).

ἐκείνου τε ὀρέγεται τοῦ δ' ἔστιν ἴσον, 75b1–2, and cf. 74d9–e2, 75a2). Diotima attributes 'the desire to give birth' to the nature of mortals: 'our nature desires to give birth' (τίκτειν ἐπιθυμεῖ ἡμῶν ἡ φύσις, 206c3–4). Then she says that 'mortal nature seeks so far as possible to live forever and to be immortal' (ἡ θνητὴ φύσις ζητεῖ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἀεὶ τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατος, 207d1–2). Here she identifies 'the desire to give birth' with 'the desire to exist forever and to be immortal'; the end of mortal nature is defined as begetting in order to exist forever and be immortal.

Since all generation or begetting (ποίησις) is conceived of as 'that which causes what was not in being before to go to what is in being' (ἡ γὰρ τοι ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ ὄν ἰόντι ὁττωὺν αἰτία, *Symp.* 205b8–c1, and cf. 197a–b),<sup>45</sup> and the nature of mortals' love is creative of the end (the good), mortals' begetting of a new specific end can be understood as actualization of their potential end through the medium of love. Plato's concept of nature is to some extent analogous to that of Aristotle in the sense that being the impelling force of mortals nature makes them realize what is specific to them. Like the world of Aristotle, there is a definite end in the nature of mortals that induces them to act in a fixed pattern.

Mortals' actualization of their specific nature (that is, begetting and creation in the beautiful) is considered from the perspective of the degree of their end. The nature of mortals desires to realize their specific end in terms of the maintenance of their species (that is, biological reproduction) (206c, 207d, 208b,e); the nature of human beings, mainly the philosophers, desires to achieve their specific end with an understanding of the Form (that is, intellectual reproduction) (210d–e, 212a).<sup>46</sup> The offspring of mortals are different in their degree of immortality and beauty inasmuch as the end of their nature is concerned.<sup>47</sup>

Hence from the viewpoint of mortals' begetting in the beautiful, the Form of the Beautiful is taken to draw mortals' potential end on to their actual end, that is, to propel the creative power (love) of mortals in their degree to actualize their specific nature. In particular Plato's application of terms such as 'objective' or 'end' (τέλος) or 'perfect' (τέλειον) (204c4) is intended to express the perfection of mortal's own nature or the actualization of their own inherent end (form).<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> In the *Sophist* Plato takes 'generation' (making) to be 'the bringing into being of anything that did not exist before' (Πᾶν ὅπερ ἂν μὴ πρότερόν τις ὄν ὕστερον εἰς οὐσίαν ἄγῃ, 219b4–5). Generation is also identified as 'any capacity that causes things to come to be that were not before' (πᾶσαν . . . εἶναι δύναμιν ἣτις ἂν αἰτία γίγνηται τοῖς μὴ πρότερον ὄσιν ὕστερον γίγνεσθαι, 265b9–10). In the *Philebus* Plato again articulates the idea of generation: 'everything is either for the sake of something else, or else is that towards which the other kind comes to be in each case' (τὸ μὲν ἕνεκά του τῶν ὄντων ἔστ' ἀεὶ, τὸ δ' οὐ χάριν ἐκάστοτε τὸ τινὸς ἕνεκα γιγνόμενον ἀεὶ γίγνεται, 53e5–7). The process of generation is directed for the sake of a particular being, and becoming as a whole is directed towards being as a whole (σύμπασαν δὲ γένεσιν οὐσίας ἕνεκα γίγνεσθαι συμπάσης, 54c2–4). Here the difference between being and becoming is to be interpreted by reference to the actualization of the good or the end (54d); for the sake of being (οὐσία) becoming (γένεσις) exists.

<sup>46</sup> E. Pender observes the difference between the mortal offspring at the biological level and the spiritual offspring at the intellectual level: 'the parents "live on" through the children they leave behind. But in the case of the lover of Beauty, the "children" he begets—intelligence and the rest of virtue—cannot exist independently of him, for they are new virtues present in his soul. Thus he cannot be said to "leave behind" these children after death. Both the physically and spiritually pregnant men achieve immortality by means of procreation, but the relationship between parent and child and the type of immortality in each case are quite different' ('Spiritual pregnancy in Plato's *Symposium*', *CQ* 42 [1992], 72–86, at 85).

<sup>47</sup> Rowe (n. 2), 192.

<sup>48</sup> Hence Halperin ([n. 6], 91) argues that 'Eros is . . . the desire to realize an objective potential in the self.'

The *raison d'être* of the Unmoved Mover is similarly taken to provide an ultimate end of living things' aspiration, since their natural behaviour is designed for the sake of preserving their species. For the perfection of the universe is fulfilled when the continuity of coming-to-be is uninterrupted, since that coming-to-be should itself be the closest approximation to eternal being (*Gen. Corr.* 336b33–4).

In the *De Anima* Aristotle maintains that 'the most natural act is the production of another like itself, an animal producing an animal, a plant a plant, in order that, as far as its nature allows, it may *participate in the eternal and divine*' (ἵνα τοῦ ἀεὶ καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ μετέχωσιν ἢ δύνανται, 415a26–b1). That is the goal towards which all things strive (πάντα γὰρ ἐκείνου ὀρέγεται), that 'for the sake of which they do whatsoever their nature renders possible' (ἐκείνου ἕνεκα πράττει ὅσα πράττει κατὰ φύσιν, 415b1–2; cf. *Phd.* 75b1–2). Since no living thing is able to partake in what is eternal and divine continuously (for nothing perishable can for ever remain one and the same), it tries to achieve that end in the only way possible to it, and success is possible in varying degrees; so it remains not indeed as the self-same individual but continues its existence in some thing like itself—not numerically but specifically one (415b4–7).

In the *De Generatione Animalium* Aristotle repeats the same idea:

since it is impossible that the class of animals should be of an eternal nature, therefore that which comes into being is eternal in the only way possible. Now it is impossible for it to be eternal as an individual—for the substance of the things that are is in the particular; and if it were such it would be eternal—but it is possible for it as a species. This is why there is always a class of men and animals and plants. (731b32–732a3)

Since ceaseless coming-to-be is the closest approximation to eternal being (*Gen. Corr.* 336b32–3), living things can acquire their immortality through the continuous reproduction of their species. Therefore, Aristotle remarks in the *Politics*, 'male and female must unite for the continuance of the species—not from deliberate intention, but from the natural desire, which exists in animals and in plants, to leave behind them something of the same nature as themselves' (1252a26–30).

Hence again follows the distinction between the ultimate *object* of living things' desire and the ultimate *end* (goal) of their desire: what the desire of living things is attracted to is the ultimate *object* of the Unmoved Mover, whereas what the desire of living things intends to attain is their *end* of partaking in what is eternal and divine (that is, the preservation of their species).<sup>49</sup> The end for the sake of which all living things strive each in its degree is the pure form of the Unmoved Mover, but the ultimate effect of their striving is the acquirement of their immortality.

This distinction is specified in the works of Aristotle (*De An.* 415b2–3, 20–1, *Metaph.* 1072b1–2 and *Eth. Eud.* 1249b15–16). He argues two kinds of 'for the sake of':<sup>50</sup> a living thing which by nature acts 'for the sake of' its end or form (that is, for its (specific) good) is compelled to act 'for the sake of' the Unmoved Mover (that is, for the good). For living things the desire to act for the sake of their species (that is, their

<sup>49</sup> See note 6 above concerning Plato's distinction between the *object* of love and the *end* (aim) of love.

<sup>50</sup> W. D. Ross points out that 'the οὗ ἕνεκα of a thing means (1) that the thing is good τινί, for some conscious being, or (2) that it is good τινός (ἕνεκα), for the sake of some end' (*Aristotle: Metaphysics II* [Oxford, 1924], 376). See M. Frede, in Charles and Frede (n. 25), 41; W. Kullman, 'Different concepts of the final cause in Aristotle', in Gotthelf (n. 22), 169–75; and D. N. Sedley, 'Is Aristotle's teleology anthropocentric?', *Phronesis* 1991 (32), 179–96, at 180.

acquisition of immortality) is in fact generated by the ultimate cause of their desire, which is itself the objective good and causes them to desire for itself.<sup>51</sup>

Yet Aristotle's idea of the reason for the necessity of living things' desire can in fact be traced back to the *Symposium*: 'mortal nature seeks so far as possible to live forever and to be immortal' (ἡ θνητὴ φύσις ζητεῖ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἀεὶ τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατος, 207d1–2). Since reproduction (procreation) represents to mortals something everlasting and immortal (ἀειγενές . . . καὶ ἀθάνατον, *Symp.* 206e8), mortals with the aid of reproduction always leave behind the young in place of the old (207d3–4). So through the action of reproduction mortals can *participate in* immortality (θνητὸν ἀθανασίας μετέχει, 208b3; cf. *De An.* 415a26–b1). For the sake of immortality (ἀθανασίας χάριν) mortals show love or desire (*Symp.* 208b5–6) which seeks to possess the good forever (207a2).

In the *Laws* Plato reaffirms the eternity of the mortal species in remarking that 'nature has not only somehow endowed the human race with a degree of immortality, but also planted in us all a desire [ἐπιθυμία] to achieve it'; the race of mankind is by nature a companion of eternity (721b7–c1), and 'preserves its unity and identity for all time (ταῦτόν καὶ ἐν ὄν ἀεὶ) by successions of reproduction (procreation): it partakes of immortality by means of reproduction' (γενέσει τῆς ἀθανασίας μετεληφέναι, 721c4–5). The eternity of the mortal species is maintained through the continuity of reproduction according to their kinds; generation takes place for the sake of the eternity of the species. The *raison d'être* of mortals' (sexual) love or desire is the maintenance of their species; the species of mortals would not change, although the individual is coming-into-being and passing-away.

In so far as the behaviour of mortals is concerned, both Plato and Aristotle agree that mortals' possession of immortality is derived from their respective eternal being which, possessing the nature of the good, is the origin of their desire and end. To them there is a definite end behind the scenes of all generation of mortals, which is the source of the principle of their movement and which lies at the root of the world of their nature. What is eternal produces the eternity of motion or generation in the world of mortals (cf. *Gen. Corr.* 336a15–28) through love or desire which mediates between the world of mortals and the world of eternity. To Plato and Aristotle becoming (generation) is for the sake of being that is the end; every becoming in mortal nature is towards fulfilment of being which it does not possess before. For this reason Aristotle claims that 'nature in all cases desires what is better, and being is better than not being' (*Gen. Corr.* 336b26–9). Just as Plato's Form of the Beautiful is introduced for the explanation of the maintenance of mortal beings' species, so if Aristotle's Unmoved Mover did not exist, the whole species of living things could not achieve their pertinent eternity.

Plato's identification of mortals' love with nature indicates that the change of nature is analysed from the perspective of what is characteristic of human or mortal behaviour. Nature is read into what is specific to mortal or human beings (that is, love). Even for Aristotle the nature of the universe is analysed in terms of what is peculiar to human or mortal beings (that is, desire). The concept of mortal or human beings' characteristic nature is projected into the change of the whole universe at large. Further, for Aristotle, as Sedley claims, 'Nature is anthropocentric to the extent that man is the ultimate *beneficiary*, while god remains the ultimate object of aspiration, that which all lesser beings strive to imitate.'<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Frede (n. 50), 41.

<sup>52</sup> Sedley (n. 50), 180. See also J. Cooper, 'Aristotle on teleology', in M. Schofield and M. C.

## CONCLUSION

Aristotle's postulate that the Unmoved Mover should be the cause of sensible objects' being as they are is in effect a revision of Plato's notion of the Form of the Beautiful. Of course Aristotle's understanding of Platonic Forms recognizes that they are the cause of sensible objects (τὰ γὰρ εἶδη τοῦ τί ἐστὶν αἴτια τοῖς ἄλλοις, *Metaph.* 988a10–11, cf. 987b18). He criticizes Platonic Forms, however, as unable to perform this function: 'nothing is gained even if one supposes eternal substances unless there is to be in them some principle which can cause movement' (*Metaph.* 1071b14–16; cf. 991a8–11, b3–9, 992a29–32, 1033b26–1034a5). Yet Aristotle entirely ignores the theory of love in the *Symposium* which indicates how the Form of the Beautiful constitutes just such a principle, even though in both the *De Anima*'s account of desire and in his own account of the Unmoved Mover this Platonic material is applied. Then we may conclude that Aristotle is deeply indebted to Plato's Form of the Beautiful when he introduces the Unmoved Mover as the ultimate cause of the universe. But we must not disregard Aristotle's contribution to the development of Plato's theory of love to the effect that the eternal object of desire exerts its influence over the scale of the universe as a whole.<sup>53</sup>

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Nussbaum (edd.), *Language and Logos* (Cambridge, 1982), 197–222; Kahn (n. 22); and D. Furley, 'The rainfall example in *Physics* ii.8', in his *Cosmic Problems* (Cambridge, 1989), 115–20. On Aristotle's anthropocentric view, see *Pol.* 1256b15–20 and *Eth. Nic.* (IX) 1166a1–19.

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