

THE ABSOLUTE SUBJECT : OBJECT OF DESIRE BUT QUA OBJECT OF LOVE IN ARISTOTLE*

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ÖZET

Aristoteles *Metafizik*'in XII. kitabında evrendeki hareketin kaynağına ilişkin bir soruşturma başlatır: Ona göre her ne kadar her bir varlık kendi hareket ilkesini kendi içinde taşımış olsa da varlığın bütünündeki hareketin nedeni olan birşey var olmak zorundadır; çünkü olumsuzluğun sözkonusu olduğu varlık alanında hareketin kendisi de olumsal bir nitelik gösterir. İşte, Aristoteles'e göre evrendeki hareketin ilk kaynağı ,ilkesi olan bir varlık vardır ve bu varlık İlk Hareket Ettirici, Yetkin Varlık veya Tanrı'dır. O , evreni kendisi hareket etmeden hareket ettirir; ama bu hareketin biçimi mekanik fizikselliğin ötesindedir. Aristoteles'e göre Tanrı evreni bir sevgi objesi olması bakımından harekete geçirir; ve O bu anlamda evrendeki hareketin ilk nedeni olduğu gibi ereğidir de denilebilir.

In *Metaphysics XII.7* it is said that an object of desire moves without being moved itself.¹ And in Book V, of discussing the notion of potency , Aristotle distinguishes different meanings of it, and in essence for Aristotle to act on is prior to being acted upon ; further, the former is superior to it , since what is moved is by nature passive, whereas what acts upon something is active . Here what we discover is that "passivity " corresponds to the moved and "activity " to the mover .² A thing which is moved is open to certain sorts of affection and, therefore Aristotle calls it impotent in that respect. Beings could be said to be impotent or potent in virtue of these reasons:

I. To be capable of changing for the worse (*eupatheia ton kheironon*)

* I use *the Perfect Being, the Absolute Being, the Unmoved Mover* and *God* interchangeably

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¹ There are many excellent works on the subject. Some of the most important ones are: I. Merlan,P., *Aristotle's Unmoved Mover* , Traditio 4, 1946 , 1-30 ; II. Charlton, W. , *Aristotle's Physics , Book I and II*, Clarendon Aristotle Series , Oxford ,1970 ; III. Solmsen, F., *Aristotle's System of the Physical World*, New York ,1960 ; Bell, K., ' Causation , Motion and the Unmoved Mover ' , *Auslegung* , Vol :8 , 1981, 157- 173 ; Kosman ,A. L., ' Aristotle's Definition of Motion ' , *Phronesis*, Vol : 14 , 1969 , 40- 62.

² *De Anima* : III. 5 ; 417 b19-23 ; 429 b 4- 9 ; *Physics* : 198 a 35-b5 ; *Metaphysics* :1070 b 34-35

Hatice Nur ERKIZAN

II. To be capable of changing because of being impotent (*kata adynamian*)

III. To be resistant to change either for the worse or good (*apatheia*)

IV. Not to be capable of being changed (*dyspatheia*)³

Since "Perfect Being" is incapable of any sort of affection, it is potent in the sense of being absolutely potent and its potency is not relative to other types of potencies on the contrary they are relative to it.⁴ What moves is also independent of that which is moved, however the moved is not independent from the ontological point of view, for it is dependent on the mover and is open to affection by other things. Although Aristotle does not define God explicitly as a potent being it seems that there is no difficulty in saying that God or the eternal - actual substance is potent in the absolute sense of being potent.⁵

It is very well known that for Aristotle real beings are individuals and the absolute being is God which is said to be pure activity, eternal and absolutely potent in terms of not being affected by anything. It is that which is said to be the principle of movement which affect other beings as object of desire but qua being loved.⁶ After these introductory remarks, I now would like to turn to the discussion of final cause. In the *Metaphysics*, *XII.7* Aristotle introduces a term not new to his philosophy but new to the present discussion; this term is final cause and Aristotle says that final cause has two senses which are as follows:

I. something for whose good an action is done

II. something at which an action aims

However, he argues that a final cause may also exist among unchangeable entities. And in accordance with the two different meanings of it he comes to say that only the latter exists among unchangeable entities, whereas the former does not. In other words, only in the second sense can the *Unmoved Mover* be a final cause is deduced from what has been said above⁷ Thus if *the Unmoved*

³ Arslan, A., *Aristoteles: Metafizik*, Sosyal Yayınlar, 1996, s: 262, 263, 264; *Physics*: 200 a 15; 1046 a 11; 1048 a 33-35; *De Anima*: 412a 9. there is also an important article on the subject which is: Mourelatos, A.P. D., 'Aristotle's "Powers" and Modern Empiricism', *Ratio*, 9, 1967, 97-104.

⁴ *Metaphysics*: 1071 b 1-2; 1072a 19 and further; *De Caelo*: 285a 29-30.

⁵ Guthrie, W.K.C., *A History of Greek Philosophy VI: Aristotle*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, 243-277.

⁶ *Metaphysics*: 991a 12-14; 1072a 19-36. Aristotle does not use *orekton* but *eromenon* for love.

⁷ See also; *Metaphysics*: 1072b 5-10.

The Absolute Subject : Object Of Desire But Qua Object Of Love In Aristotle

Mover is to be proven to be an unchangeable entity , then it has to be a final cause and it has to be a final cause in the second sense .

The idea that *the Unmoved Mover* , which is said to move other things as a final cause yet without being moved itself could be clarified as follows:

I. *The Unmoved Mover* as object of desire moves other things without being moved itself.

II. It is possible only insofar as it is a final cause in the second meaning. The object of desire by which the faculty of appetite is stimulated remains unchanged for it is a stimulus to the creature to act in such a way as to achieve a good in activity (of course , through the intermediary of the faculty of appetite) . However , the object of desire is neither identical to that good nor is it identical to the activity which brings that good into being. In an entirely different way, the object of desire is that which in some sense represents or stands for or serves as the ideal of the good for which the animal strives and tries to realize in activity. It is in this sense we can say that an unmoved mover is a final cause of movement .⁸

It is obvious that this discussion generates and also necessitates deeper investigation into this subject, and in sum, it can be said that an unmoved mover is a final cause of movement and moves as an object of desire. The next lingering question is this: why and in what sense is *the Unmoved Mover* said to be an object of desire ? Any final cause , in general, is conceived to be an object of desire, that for the sake of which an activity is engaged in by a creature. However, any final cause in the second meaning of it generates movement in an animal without being moved itself . On the basis of these general remarks we shall now ask in what particular sense the first *Unmoved Mover* is an object of desire.

We have already stated that according to Aristotle the *Unmoved Mover* must be the cause of the eternal - circular motion of the first heaven. And , if the *Unmoved Mover* is to be the final cause of eternal- circular motion , it must be an object of desire for the first heaven, such that the first heaven realizes some good in that movement In other words- although they are not perfect in the sense of the *Unmoved Mover* - they turn their faces to it . Here , the *Unmoved Mover* represents the ideal of perfection and good , in the sense that heavenly bodies strive for that good and perfection , but nevertheless it is impossible for them to be identical with it . For example , let us imagine that we have two models of the ideal beauty (one

⁸ *Physics*: 192a 16-25 ; 255 b30 -31; 196b 21; *De Caelo* :271a 33; *Eudemian Ethics*: 1218a 30-33.

for men and the other for women) . Men try to be like the male model and women strive to be like the female model. Further , assume that some of them want to be identical with their ideal model but whatever they can do they will not be identical with their model of beauty . They could only come close to it , can imitate but never be identical with it . And partly in this sense heavenly bodies could act and *the Unmoved Mover* be an object of desire for them as such . It seems that descriptive attributes of eternal substance (*the Unmoved Mover*) are indispensable for the functional attributes of *the Unmoved Mover*, and that the two complement each other. ⁹ Nevertheless I qualify the descriptive attributes of eternal - actual substance as ontological and the latter functional. By the former Aristotle defines essentially the ontological character of an absolute being and by the latter he tells how it acts upon other things. Hence, I call it functional.

Aristotle insists that *the Unmoved Mover* is a substance, eternal, immaterial, entirely actual and is the source of movement.¹⁰ It produces movement without being moved insofar as it is an object of desire for that which it moves. As has been said previously, an object of desire must be good or an apparent good which can be actualized in some respect in some motion or activity. But in the chapter 7 of *Book XII* Aristotle reveals three other essential attributes of *the Unmoved Mover* which are:

- I. It exists of necessity
- II. Insofar as it exists by necessity , its mode of being is good
- III. It is a first principle in the sense of being a good . I shall consider each in turn.

I. If eternal - circular motion was caused by a mover which was in motion , the motion of that " subject " would be of a higher kind than eternal - circular movement. In virtue of this reason , eternal - circular motion must be caused by that which itself is not in motion . Therefore the *Unmoved Mover* exists by necessity .However the different meanings of necessity are given in *the Metaphysics V.5* Aristotle writes thus: " We say that which cannot be otherwise is necessarily as it is . And from this sense of 'necessity ' all the others are somehow derived ; ... " ¹¹ Of the nature of necessity he also says that : "Now some

⁹ *Politics*: 1323b 24-26 ; *Metaphysics*:1072b 13-30; and particularly chapter 6.

¹⁰ For the recent treatment of the subject see: Wedin,V.W., *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle*, Yale University Press, 1988; particularly chapter V.and VI.

¹¹ *Metaphysics* : 1015a 35-38.

things owe their necessity to something other than themselves; others do not , but are themselves the source of necessity in other things. "¹²

I would like to mention now briefly that for Aristotle the idea of necessity itself is unbearable. He seems to be fully convinced of what Evenus and Sophocles say : " For the compulsory is called necessary whence necessary is painful... for every necessary thing is ever irksome and compulsion is a form of necessity." ¹³ First, the essential sense of necessity is perceived "to be the source of necessity ", which provides a being with an absolute independence , an ontological ground. Such beings are not necessitated but necessitate. It is that principle which constitutes the unity of a thing which is said not "to be capable of otherwise ". As opposed to it "the necessitated " is necessarily dependent on the necessitator and it is that which takes away an ontological unity of a thing and as a result of this the "functional independency " of a thing , but on the ontological basis in essence. The first heaven owes its being actualized in circular motion to *the Unmoved Mover* which is its final cause. *The Unmoved Mover* does not depend on anything else for its existence;for it is itself the source of its being qua being eternal, *energeia*, and qua being perfect substance. What is missing in the necessitated is simply this : this necessitator is the principle of its own being , the cause of its existence,whereas the necessitated is not.

Aristotle tells us in *the Metaphysics V. 5* that it follows from this notion of necessity that that which exists by necessity is "the simple ". This view is consistent with what he says in *the Metaphysics XI.7* "... substance is first, and in substance , that which is simple and exist actually."¹⁴ What is it to be simple ? It is to be without parts and not to admit of alternate states of being . In other words , it is not subject to change of any kind. For if a being could admit of any motion or change of any kind , then it must have some potentialities which are unactualized by now. However , *the Unmoved Mover* has no unactualized potentiality in it. Therefore , in this sense, it is said to be simple. The simplicity of *the Unmoved Mover* flows from its necessity, since a being which exists of necessity cannot be other than what it is. A thing can be other than what it is when it admits of parts; for when it admits of parts , it admits of potentiality. But *the Unmoved Mover* exists by necessity so it can admit neither of parts nor potentiality of any sort. In sum , the ontological unity of *the Unmoved Mover* is based on excluding any sort

¹² *Metaphysics*: 1015 b 9-10.

¹³ *Metaphysics*:1015a 28-30.

¹⁴ *Metaphysics* :1072a 32-34; 1015b 11-14.

of potentiality from it. Additionally it is taken to be the source of its own existence yet it is the subject of eternal movement or the source of movement.¹⁵

In what sense is *the Unmoved Mover* perceived as a first principle ? He says in the *Metaphysics*, *V.I* that a principle is a " beginning " or a " starting " point. The relevant senses of " beginning " is the most general sense. Aristotle writes: " It is common, then , to all beginning to be the first point from which a thing either is or comes to be or is known ;but of these some are immanent in the thing and others outside. "¹⁶ In *the Metaphysics VII* Aristotle states that substance is that in which its principle is immanent. Nothing could be said to be extrinsic to it ; and this leaves out any sort of external determination. So if *the Unmoved Mover* is substance, it is correct to say that it contains in itself its own principle, from which it exists and by which it is known. Aristotle goes further and states that there are as many senses of cause as there are sense of beginning "for all causes are beginnings. "¹⁷ In the light of these ideas we could say that *the Unmoved Mover* is a principle in the sense that it contains within itself the beginning point . In other words it is source or origin of its own being and being known. *The Unmoved Mover* is a cause insofar as it is a principle of its being and being known. No kind of cause is transcendent to it , even its own. If so , of what is it a cause ? It is certainly the cause of itself because no other thing is higher in the scale of being of which *the Unmoved Mover* could be an effect , but it is also the final cause of the highest kind of motion . It is the final cause of the natural activities of other beings.

Lastly, I shall discuss in which sense *the Unmoved Mover* is said to be a final cause but before that I would like to examine Aristotle's claim that *the Unmoved Mover* is a good. *The Unmoved Mover* is the cause of itself for there is no other thing higher than it in being, goodness and actuality . Let us begin by asking why Aristotle says that beings desire to be godlike, or why we are advise as human beings to develop what we have in us as the divine element and to try to make ourselves immortal. The argument that *the Unmoved Mover* is a good is extremely compressed but decisive enough. What we find is this : "... and insofar as it [the first mover] exists by necessity, its mode of being is good , and it is in this sense a first principle. "¹⁸

¹⁵ *Metaphysics* : 1073a 1-12; *Physics* :VIII.10.

¹⁶ *Metaphysics*: 1013a 17-20.

¹⁷ *Metaphysics* : 1013a 16.

¹⁸ *Metaphysics*: 1072b 10-13

The Absolute Subject : Object Of Desire But Qua Object Of Love In Aristotle

What cannot be otherwise than itself is of profound importance for Aristotle. As we have said earlier, it reveals an essential character of an "independent and potent subject". Further it constitutes the ontological unity of being. Therefore it seems that the goodness of *the Unmoved Mover* is derived from its necessity, and that *the Unmoved Mover* is a first principle by virtue of that its mode of being is good and its goodness is not contingent.

In the beginning we were mainly concerned with the question which was in what sense an unmoved mover was understood to be an object of desire. If an object of desire is either a good or an apparent good, then the sense in which *the Unmoved Mover* is said to be an object of desire depends on the sense in which it is good. In the hope of not begetting confusions - (for I do not hope to treat it adequately here) I leave the topic to be discussed on another occasion. However, Aristotle's argument just quoted above is surely a nexus of central and fundamental themes in the philosophy of Aristotle. Therefore I shall try to cite some important details which, I hope, will shed light on the link between *the Unmoved Mover* and its being good.

The discussion of the column of opposites itself brings real difficulties into our present discussion and it is itself puzzling. According to Apostle "good" has as many senses as "being".¹⁹

"Good", like "being", can be predicated of all the categories. Therefore there is no sense of "good" apart from its being predicated of any of the categories. In other words there is no good-in-itself which could be abstracted from a good action, good woman, man or a good argument or a good house. So it is not correct to say that *the Unmoved Mover* can be a good in the sense of the good-in-itself. Aristotle says in *the Nicomachean Ethics* that a thing is thought to be the best when it is wanted for its own sake as opposed to chosen for the sake of something else. In other words what is chosen for the sake of something else is a lesser good than that which is wanted for its own sake. In the former the chosen is not itself aimed at, it is secondary to one's *telos* whereas in the latter the chosen is aimed at itself. Further it does not serve for anything else but is itself the aim. Therefore its status as a *telos* cannot be degraded by any sort of interference. It must be clear from the discussion above that a thing chosen for its own sake is better (also superior) than a thing chosen for the sake of something else. What follows is that an object of desire chosen for its own sake is most good. Aristotle speaks of it like

¹⁹ *Metaphysics*: 1072a 30-35 ; 986a 23; *Nicomachean Ethics*: 1096a 19-29; Apostle, H.G., *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Indiana University Press, 1996, 402.

this " ... the first in any class is always best , or analogous to the best."²⁰ The argument appears to proceed similarly for the case of being. The first in the scale of being is that which is as it is , and could not be otherwise than it is . The primary sense of being is that which exists by necessity. It follows as we have seen previously , that such a being must be eternal, simple and completely actual as well. What comes out of this discussion is that *the Unmoved Mover* is pre-eminent amongst substances . So its attributes are supreme or superlative. In consequence the relation between its necessity and its goodness is perceived to be the essential link which justifies the ontological and functional superiority of *the Unmoved Mover* . Insofar as a thing "exists " by necessity , it is also good . Such a being , therefore , must be an object of desire . In sum :

- I. *The Unmoved Mover* is pre-eminent amongst substances
- II. Its essential attributes are supreme
- III. It exist necessarily
- IV. It is a good being in the absolute sense (and not contingent)

However , there is another sense of "good " thought to be relevant for *the Unmoved Mover* . Not only is it said to be a good and in virtue of this it is chosen, but it is chosen for its own sake. It is an object of love (*eromenon*) . The crucial text for this argument is in book XII. 7 Aristotle writes thus: " The final cause , then, produced motion as being loved, but all other things move by being moved."

²¹ I interpred this passeege in this way : *the Unmoved Mover* , qua final cause , is an object of love as well as an object of desire. It is desired to be an object of love. What I mean is that *the Unmoved Mover* represents the ideal of perfection as a result of all the supreme attributes given to it- and being of that nature beings which are below it turns to *the Unmoved Mover* as an object of desire which is also an object of love for every individual being. In other words *the Unmoved Mover* is the object of desire but qua being an object of love. What is desired is lovable and vice-versa.

Nevertheless all final causes need not be objects of love. However ,one should be extremely careful in what has been said above. Aquinas in his commentary on *the Metaphysics* says that it is better to speak of *the Unmoved*

²⁰ *Metaphysics* :1072a 35-36.

²¹ *Metaphysics* : 1072b 4-5.

The Absolute Subject : Object Of Desire But Qua Object Of Love In Aristotle

Mover as something loved rather than as something desired.²² According to him there is desire only of something that is not yet possessed , whilst on the contrary there is love even of something that is possessed .

There are two kinds of object of desire. The first kind of object of desire corresponds to a desire to possess. For example , one might want to buy a very expensive car or a nice house or

"to have " good friends. The second kind of object of desire is desired, not so as to possess it , but

"to be " like it . Therefore in the former an object of desire could be possessed but in the latter an object of desire is that one could turn his / her face to it. The sun , light is desired not to be possessed but to turn ones face to it because "the sun " cannot be possessed. Similarly , *the Unmoved Mover* is an object of desire for all the beings not so as to be possessed but "to turn " to it. So Aquinas's comments on the subject matter are overwhelmingly important but it is too general. Therefore we are forced to say that *the Unmoved Mover* is an object of love rather than an object of desire .²³

The point here is that we desire only that which we do not possess yet or that we have not yet achieved. If we have possessed or achieved it we would no longer desire it. However human life does not consist of only "the possessive desire ". Even if we realized or achieved certain objects of desire we still love and admire them intensively and continue to act in the same way , for their own sake; such as intellectual activities . In the first sense all actions we do are done through the process of motion , in the second sense our actions are realized by "proper subject " and its actions are defined to be activities . Therefore , in the second meaning of an object of desire , there is not any kind of possession but rather an activity which allows us to realize and to flourish ourselves . Thus I call this type of object of desire "active desire " In the context of *the Unmoved Mover* , it is odd to say that things desire to possess it . But it is not odd to say that the heavens and terrestrial beings move and act as they do for the sake of achieving the "good " which *the Unmoved Mover* qua object of love is truthfully said to be . In conclusion we can go somewhat further than Aquinas . Let us take for granted that *the Unmoved*

²² Aquinas, T., *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, (trans.by. J. P. Rowan) Chicago, 1961, 889-900.

²³ Bell, K., ' Causation, Motion and the Unmoved Mover ', *Auslegung*, Vol:8, 1981, 157-173.

Mover is not an object of desire, in the sense that beings desire to possess it, but nevertheless that desire is important in understanding the causal relation between *the Unmoved Mover* and the heavens and other beings. *The Unmoved Mover* cannot be desired to be possessed but we do hope and desire to bring about, in particular activities, the good which *the Unmoved Mover* possesses in its being.

Lastly, I shall discuss the teleological character of Aristotle's metaphysics: but before that let me put forward one last point on the relevant sense of "good". An oversimplified but basically sound judgment of Aristotle's commitment to the teleological character of natural activity is this: what "natural objects" do of their own nature is thought to be the best for objects of that kind. The essence of a substance reveals what it is to be a thing of this kind.²⁴ Therefore, it is in an exact sense normative in that it discloses the essential attributes which a thing is expected to actualize if it is to be a "good" thing of its kind. In virtue of this reason the movement of the heavenly bodies and the "activities" of terrestrial beings, when these arise out of their natures, as the best. However, we should keep in mind that the specific content of what is best, of course, differs from species to species, but the very notion of what it is to be best is the essence of *the Unmoved Mover*. It is that substance to which actuality, eternity, perfection, activity and goodness pertains which is just what it is to be best. I interpret it like this: for Aristotle there are essentially two different sorts of beings. Those beings which are changeable, include matter and therefore have the potentiality to realize their perfection by means of activities. What is to be best for them is to act, to complete, to perfect their nature as much as possible. All natural beings include matter of some kind and we do not hope to actualize everything potential in us. This contingent nature of the potentiality in natural beings remains due to the matter they have. However, what it is to be a good oak tree or a good human being lies in the things themselves, in us. Everything desires to actualize itself as much as they can do, in the way appropriate to themselves.²⁵

The Unmoved Mover is not essentially a perfectly actualized, completed substance. It is pre-eminent substance among other substances and its *ousia* is pure *energeia* and in this sense it is

²⁴ There are innumerable studies on Aristotle's ontology. However, two of which are still outstanding. I. Owens, J., *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, Toronto, 1963; II. Leszl, W., *Aristotle's Conception of Ontology*, Padua, 1975. *Categories*: 2a 11-14; *Metaphysics*: 1017b 13; 1038 b 15; 1037a 29-30. Of teleology and its defence: *Nicomachean Ethics*: 1179b 22-23; *De Caelo*: 290a 31; 285a 29; 279a 28-30; *Physics*: 199b 26-33.

²⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics*: 1177 b 26-78a 8; *Metaphysics*: 1072b 4.

The Absolute Subject : Object Of Desire But Qua Object Of Love In Aristotle

entelecheia I call it therefore an "ontological principle " but not in this respect functional, although they cannot be divorced or thought apart from each other. For *the Unmoved Mover* which is said to exist by necessity, is the origin of eternal movement and as supreme good bears a functional relation to other beings. Therefore I define *the Unmoved Mover* as the "functional principle " as such. And they are to be conceived in juxtaposition. In other words, I suggest that, they reveal two aspects of the Perfect Being as such. It is that perfect being that we desire to become like insofar as we strive in our nature to be as completely "actual "as possible. However, we are determined in some way. So we strive, within the bounds of our natures, to achieve in activity that good which perfects us. In general, beings have potentialities to realize themselves; but since their essence is not that of "complete actuality" potentialities may remain unactualized potentialities. But the essence of *the Unmoved Mover* is *pure energeia*. It is the final cause of these activities, the eternal ideal of perfection which inspires things to act in certain ways to realize themselves. As human beings we engage ourselves in these activities which contribute to perfecting ourselves. *The Unmoved Mover* is a final cause in the sense that it is the actuality "at which action aims ".

The Unmoved Mover stands in the relation of final cause not only to the first heaven, but to all the other spheres and to terrestrial beings as well. In trying to develop a different conception of *the Unmoved Mover* I am not entirely concerned with the existence of Aristotle's God on theological grounds. I regard the conception of *the Unmoved Mover* as a rational endeavour on the way to understanding the universe and I believe that Aristotle achieves this in a completely radical way. What appears to be inappropriate is to say that *the Unmoved Mover* is remote from and plays no role in the universe and in the world of human activity. However, it should be clear from what has been said that traditional criticism of Aristotle's theology is obviously without foundation. As he says: " On such a principle, then, depend the heavens and the world of nature. And it is a life such as the best which we enjoy, and enjoy for but a short time (for it is ever in this state, which we cannot be) , since its actuality is also pleasure. (and for this reason are waking, perception, and thinking most pleasant, and hopes and memories are so on account of these.) "26

I conclude this discussion by saying that in essence *the Unmoved Mover* is the highest being in every sense and it is the Absolute Subject or God that is conceived to be object of desire but qua object of love by Aristotle. And it is the principle in the sense of being:

²⁶ *Metaphysics*: 1072b 13-18.

Hatice Nur ERKIZAN

- I. ontological (a substance as eternal - actual)
- II. epistemological (intelligible in full sense)
- III. ethical (being the highest good)
- IV. aesthetical (being the most perfect thing)

And here is the passage in which Aristotle describes what it is to be such a being: "... thinking in itself deals with that which is best in itself, and that which is thinking in the fullest sense with that which is best in the fullest sense. And thought thinks on itself because it shares the nature of the object of thought, for it becomes an object of thought in coming into contact with and thinking its object, so that thought and object of thought are same. For that which is capable_ of receiving the object of thought, i.e.the essence , is thought. But it active when it possesses this object. *Therefore the possession rather than the receptivity is the divine element which thought seems to contain, and the act of contemplation is what is most pleasant and best.* If,then, God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are, this compels our wonder;and if in a better this compels it yet more. And God is in a better state. And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's self - dependent actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God : for this is God."²⁷

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²⁷ *Metaphysics* : 1072b 18-30.

The Absolute Subject : Object Of Desire But Qua Object Of Love In Aristotle

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