

The First Mover's Potentiality? Pleasure, Desire, and *νόησις νοησέως* in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Λ

JEFFERY M. J. MURPHY

THE SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY of Aristotle¹ is easily divisible into two broad categories: natural (physical) philosophy and metaphysical (first) philosophy. Both of these categories in Aristotle's philosophy give rise to an elaborate logical system, the branches of which interconnect almost completely near their outermost edges. The sheer size and complexity of both the Aristotelian physical system and the metaphysical system, however, necessitate a strong conceptual grounding for each frame of reference from which complex ideas can be considered. Aristotle himself saw the need for such a frame of reference for the interpretation of his philosophy; as a result, both his physical and metaphysical systems are grounded in a particular style of Aristotelian "divinity." Both Aristotle's natural philosophy and his first philosophy require the existence of a "god" or "First Mover" in order to validate their postulates and to provide a starting point from which Aristotelian philosophy may be approached. They also form a "ground-level principle" so as to prevent infinite regression and illogicality in certain circumstances. While Aristotle suggests the existence of the First Mover in numerous locations throughout the Aristotelian *corpus*, its nature is described most thoroughly in the *Metaphysics*, Book Λ.² Aristotle's descriptions of the

Jeffery M. J. Murphy is a senior studying classics and philosophy at Xavier University. He will pursue a Ph.D. in classics this fall, specializing in ancient philosophy.

¹All citations of Aristotle in the original Greek are taken from the Oxford Classical Text edition. All translations are those of the author.

²In referring to the books of the *Metaphysics*, the original Greek letters will be used rather than the Roman numerals used to designate books in other

First Mover's relation to actuality and potentiality, especially, however, give rise to certain metaphysical inconsistencies regarding the First Mover, particularly when considered *vis-à-vis* Aristotle's other philosophical doctrines.

The First Mover is required in the physical system as both the first and the final cause of nature and/or things which exist by nature (*Physics*, II, 7, 198b).³ Investigation of the origin of motion, in Aristotle's eyes, produces an infinite regress of agent "movers," each of whom is in turn moved by a previous mover, and so on. This consequence was unacceptable to Aristotle (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 3, 1070a3-4: "The process will go on to infinity...there must be a stop"), since it illustrated only a rather chaotic universe which was without a fixed physical truth, and it explained the origin of motion only in terms of pre-existent motion. Therefore, in order for motion itself to have come into existence, there must have been a "first unmoved mover" by whom it was begun (*Physics*, Book II). In the metaphysical system, on the other hand, the First mover is necessitated as an actualizer of potentials, since existence is concomitant upon actuality (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 6, 1048a),⁴ and potentials

works due to the confusion caused by the spurious second book. Now known to have been composed not by Aristotle, but by his student Theophrastus, the second book of the *Metaphysics* is generally referred to as book α (lowercase). It has historically been classified as book II, however. Some philosophers, moreover, opt to number the books of the *Metaphysics* in the traditional way, including book α as book II, while some opt to number them leaving book α out, designating book A as book I and book B as book II. Greek letters are therefore retained to avoid this confusion. Roman numerals are used for Aristotle's other works.

³See Lindbeck, "A Note on Aristotle's Discussion of God and the World" 99-106. The First Mover is, however, the final cause of the world not as a formal goal, but rather only in the sense that it is that which makes forms to be desirable (as will be discussed more thoroughly later).

⁴More precisely, existence is, in Aristotle's view, dependent upon substance, which is defined as a composite of form and matter. The form of a substance corresponds to actuality, since it actualizes (gives essence to) matter, which by itself possesses the potential to be anything (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 5, 1071a5-13). Since

would seem to have no ability to actualize themselves.⁵ As pure actuality itself, moreover, Aristotle's metaphysical First Mover functions as the source of being and the definition of being itself; it is, more so than any lesser being (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 7, 1072a–b).⁶ The three major proofs for the existence of the First Mover are given in *Physics* VII, *Physics* VIII, and *Metaphysics* Λ (Lang 500–17).

Aristotle's actual description of the First Mover needed to fulfill the above-summarized functions is given in *Metaphysics* Λ , 7, 1072b. According to Aristotle, the First Mover must be eternal ($\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\iota\omicron\varsigma$), incorporeal ($\alpha\acute{\nu}\epsilon\upsilon\ \upsilon\lambda\eta\varsigma$), and immovable ($\alpha\acute{\kappa}\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$); it must also be indivisible ($\alpha\delta\iota\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$), without parts ($\alpha\acute{\mu}\epsilon\rho\eta\acute{\varsigma}$), and without magnitude ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\theta\omicron\varsigma\ \omicron\upsilon\delta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$). Aristotle also provides reasons for all of his assertions. In addition to these features, the First Mover must also exist as pure actuality ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$) without potentiality ($\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$), due to the fact that the concept of potential itself implies change, lack, and unfulfilled perfection (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 12, 1019a–1020a)—all of which possibilities are thoroughly discounted by Aristotle. Due to its metaphysical supremacy, there can be only one such being. And finally, the First Mover's thought ($\nu\acute{\omicron}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) must be a "thinking of thinking" ($\nu\acute{\omicron}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \nu\omicron\eta\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\omega\varsigma$) (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 9, 1074b–1075a); specifically, a contemplation of the most noble subject (i.e., the First Mover itself). The First Mover cannot think of anything other than itself (i.e., anything less perfect than itself) lest it diminish its own perfection by doing less than it possibly *could* do (i.e., by possessing an unfulfilled potential). The combined physical and metaphysical necessities of the First Mover (i.e., that it must be both a *cause of motion* and a self-contained,

there is no existence without substance, and there is no substance without form and matter (except in the special case of the First Mover), and since form is the actualization of matter (which is potentially anything), then existence is directly dependent upon actuality. In other words, only *actual* existence is existence. *Metaphysics* book Λ deals almost exclusively with the nature of actuality and potentiality.

⁵*Metaphysics*, Λ , 6, 1071b, e.g.

⁶Thomas Aquinas expanded upon this explanation in the *Summa Theologica* (*Quaestiones* 12, 44), stating that the essence of God, unlike the essence of any other being, was existence itself.

self-thinking (*νόησις νοησέως*) being, when incorporated into Aristotle's assertion that the First Mover exists as *actuality without potentiality*, however, give rise to certain inconsistencies in Aristotle's metaphysical system. Specifically, the synthesis of these ideas can in two ways lead to the attribution of potential to the First Mover, an obviously unsuitable consequence for Aristotle.

Even before an investigation of the deeper philosophical problems of Aristotle's First Mover is begun, an obvious problem would seem to arise. The characterization of the First Mover as a thinking being whose *νόησις* is a *νόησις νοησέως* would seem to illustrate this "god" as a completely removed, self-contained, and self-sufficient entity which, due to its absolute perfection and its resultant constant contemplation of itself, *cannot* intervene in (or even have knowledge of) the less-perfect world of mortal beings.⁷ A being of such a sort would, however, seem unfit to fulfill the requirements of Aristotle's physical system (i.e., as an initiator of motion). The description of the First Mover given in the *Metaphysics*, then, naturally provokes the question "how can such a First Mover move anything at all (as it must in order to give a conceptual basis to the assertions in the *Physics*), if it is forbidden by its very perfection to intervene in, or even to have knowledge of (DeKoninck 473),⁸ the less-perfect mortal world?"⁹

⁷There are several informative articles on this problem. See Lindbeck, *op. cit.*; Gibson, "Two Strands in Natural Theology"; DeKoninck, "Aristotle on God as Thought Thinking Itself"; Campbell, "Aristotle's Natural Theology." The ramifications of this issue cannot, however, be fully analyzed here.

⁸It is obviously a contradiction to suggest that a supremely perfect being possess ignorance, however. Most commentators (Aquinas, Hegel, Lear, e.g.) have addressed this problem by stating that the First Mover (God) knows all things through knowing Itself, for it is the superlative and sum total of all temporal and mortal perfections. As Aquinas wrote: "intelligendo se, intelligit omnia alia" (12, Lect. 11, n. 2614).

⁹This is the very problem around which most of the theological debate of the 1200s AD at the University of Paris between the faculty of theology and the Latin Averroists centered. Students in the Faculty of Arts (philosophy) accepted the conclusions of the Muslim commentators Averroës, Avicenna, and Alfarabi, who stated that, according to Aristotle, it was an incontrovertible fact that the world was uncreated and that God held no knowledge of nor played

Aristotle promptly offers an answer to this seeming conundrum in *Metaphysics*, Λ , 7, 1071a, by stating that the First Mover moves things not in the same way that the motion of one body sets another into motion, but in "the way in which the object of desire ($\epsilon\pi\iota\theta\upsilon\mu\eta\tau\omicron\nu$) moves [one in whom the desire resides], without itself being moved ($\kappa\iota\nu\epsilon\iota\ \o\upsilon\ \kappa\iota\nu\o\upsilon\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha$)." Thus, the problem would seem to be adequately remedied; the First Mover instigates motion in beings insofar as beings are *desirous* of the First Mover. Upon further scrutiny of Aristotle's terminology,¹⁰ however, a problem arises which can, upon extrapolation, lead to the attribution of potentiality to the First Mover.

In order to more closely analyze Aristotle's proposed answer to the problem of the First Mover's moving, one must first more fully examine what exactly Aristotle meant by *desire*. He writes in the *De Anima*, II, 3, 414b5, that "desire ($\epsilon\pi\iota\theta\upsilon\mu\iota\alpha$) is a longing ($\o\delta\rho\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) for the pleasurable ($\eta\delta\epsilon\o\sigma$)." Thus it would seem that from this definition it may be stated that mortal beings are moved by the First Mover in virtue of our desire for the First Mover, and we desire It because It is somehow pleasurable to us. What is it about the nature of the First Mover that gives us pleasure, then? An answer is given by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Λ , 7, 1072b15: "its actuality is also pleasure"; human beings (and all other moved beings) are desirous of the actuality of the First Mover, which is a source of pleasure to us, and in which we can participate for only a limited time (through motion or process),¹¹ but in which the First Mover participates indefinitely.¹²

any role in its workings other than nomological knowledge of its laws and forms (see George (61–74)). It was this debate, moreover, which gave rise to the philosophical career of Thomas Aquinas. The historical significance of this problem can be more fully appreciated in this light. See Aurthur Hyman and James J. Walsh, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*.

¹⁰Especially helpful is Kiernen's *Aristotle Dictionary*.

¹¹*Physics*, III, 2, 201b31–32: "motion ($\kappa\iota\nu\eta\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) is assumed to be some sort of actuality ($\epsilon\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$), but an incomplete ($\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\lambda\eta\varsigma$) one."

¹²Cf. Lindbeck and Campbell. In this sense, the difference between the First Mover and the "moved" is solely in virtue of time; temporal beings exist insofar as they are *temporarily* actualized in a way similar to the *eternal* actuality of the First Mover. The actuality of moved beings cannot,

Up to this point, from Aristotle's information it can be stated that the First Mover is pure actuality without potentiality and is also pleasurable to mortal beings (as the object of their desire, through which they are moved by It). By syllogism, then, it may be rightly asserted that, in Aristotle's scenario, actuality *must* be pleasurable, a conclusion which is affirmed at *Metaphysics*, Λ , 7, 1072b. Aristotle unfortunately leaves unclear the way in which actuality is pleasurable—we are not told precisely *where* in the process of actualization pleasure is to be found. Is actuality to be thought of as pleasurable in and of itself (*qua* actuality), or is it really the actualization of a *potential* which is pleasurable?

Taking into account the descriptions of the nature and activity of the First Mover offered in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle's scenario would seem to require the former, namely, that actuality be pleasurable *qua* actuality. This conclusion seems obvious, given the overt statement given by Aristotle at *Metaphysics*, Λ , 7, 1072a, that the First Mover is *pure actuality* (which it must be in order to be primary, since actuality must be prior to potential; *Metaphysics*, Λ , 6, 1071b). Since, to instigate the motion of mortal beings, moreover, the First Mover must be desirable to them, and since, in order to be desirable, It must be pleasurable, it would seem that actuality *itself*, *qua* actuality, must be what is pleasurable in the process of actualization, due to the fact that the First Mover *cannot* possess potential (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 7, 1072b). All loose ends regarding the initiation of motion would thus seem to be neatly tied up. Aristotle's terminology, however, leaves us with another question to answer: "if *desire* is longing for the *pleasurable*, then, how exactly is the Aristotelian concept of *pleasure* to be construed?"

An examination of Aristotle's concept of pleasure in actuality within his natural writings must begin with a search for a precise definition of "pleasure." In the *Rhetoric*, 1, 11, 1369b34–1340a, Aristotle writes that "Pleasure ($\eta\delta\omicron\nu\eta$) is a certain motion ($\kappa\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) of the soul, and a settlement of it, at once rapid and perceptible, into its own proper nature." From this definition, it is clear that within Aristotle's philosophical system, pleasure arises as the result of a movement ($\kappa\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$). This definition of pleasure also immediately provokes a

however, be external, due to the corporeality (i.e., *inherent* potentiality yet to be actualized) of moved beings.

further terminological question, namely, 'what exactly is to be understood by *motion*?' In the *Physics*, a work devoted largely to the assessment of this very issue, Aristotle gave his famous explanation that "it is the actualization of the potential *qua* potential (ἢ τοῦ δυνατοῦ, ἢ δυνατόν, ἐντελέχεια) that is a motion (κίνησις)" (*Phys.*, III, 1, 201b). When Aristotle's terminology is examined more fully, then, his physical doctrines seem to suggest that, since motion is the actualization of the potential *qua* potential, and since pleasure is a motion of the soul, pleasure must result from the *actualization of a potential qua potential*, not simply from actuality *qua* actuality. Therefore, potential is required somewhere in the process.

What are the consequences of this incongruity upon the First Mover? Aristotle's metaphysical system, on the one hand, seems to require a First Mover whose being is without potential (in order to retain its primacy among beings), but the physical definitions given for the terms used by Aristotle in his metaphysical proofs seem to suggest otherwise. Thus we reach an undesirable attribution of potential to the First Mover which 1) It must possess to instigate motion through desire, and 2) It cannot have by virtue of its metaphysical primacy. The problem can be summarized thus:

1. Motion requires a First Unmoved Mover, but this mover, due its absolute perfection, cannot move things *directly*.
2. The First Mover moves (without being moved) by means of the desire for Itself (i.e. its actuality) experienced by other beings (*Metaphysics*, Λ, 7, 1072a).
3. A *desire* is a desire for the *pleasurable* (*De Anima*, II, 3, 414b).
4. *Pleasure* entails a *motion* of the soul (*Rhet.*, I, 11, 1369b33–35).
5. *Motion* is the actuality of the potential *qua* potential (*Phys.*, III, 1, 201b).

Therefore, pleasure requires potential.

Therefore, desire requires potential.

Therefore, to move beings through desire for Its pleasure, ***the First Mover would require potential.***

The attribution of potentiality to the First Mover is obviously a problem for Aristotle, who took great pains to illustrate in *Metaphysics*, Λ, 6, 1071b that actuality must precede potentiality. We shall examine later the consequences of a potential First Mover and why Aristotle needed to

avoid exactly such a conclusion. Before this, however, a second method by which potentiality may be attributed to the First Mover through comparison of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* with his other works will be examined.

Until this point, our discussion of the Aristotelian "god" has centered largely upon the nature of the being itself; the means by which the First Mover is perceived by "moved" beings, and the way in which they are moved thereby, have been examined much more fully than what this First Mover actually *does*. None of the above arguments necessitates any action on the part of the First Mover Itself (Lindbeck 99–100)—to be desired and to move beings thereby, It need do nothing other than simply exist. Aristotle provides a description of the First Mover's actions, however (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 9, 1074b–1075a), and so it can be assumed that the First Mover in Aristotle's scenario does not only exist, but does other things as well.

Aristotle concludes in *Metaphysics*, Λ , 9, 1074b that the First Mover's existence must entail some sort of activity, lest "god" be cast as a dullard—why exist at all if there is no purpose for one's existence? In order to do something, the First Mover must do so either physically, or through the intellect. Aristotle repeatedly asserts that the action of the active intellect is more noble than physical actions (cf. *De Anima*, III, 4&5, 429a10–430a25), since it is through thinking (the active intellect) that we come to know the causes and principles of things (cf. *Posterior Analytics*, II, 19, 100b and *Nichomachean Ethics*, VI, 6, 1140b–1141a, in addition to several instances throughout the first books of the *Metaphysics*). Thus, thinking entails a more universal species of knowledge than does physical action, and therefore the activity of the First Mover must be of this more fundamental and more comprehensive sort. The First Mover's action, then, consists of intellection; is this intellection to be an active thinking or a passive capacity to think actively? Aristotle would seem to choose the former, stating that "if He does not think of anything, why the veneration of Him? He is like a man who sleeps" (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 9107b18–19)—i.e., a god with an intellect which is not active is an absurdity (cf. *Eudemian Ethics*, I, 5, 1216a3–8). Indeed, one of the most common terms used by Aristotle to refer to his god is $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ (intellect). Aristotle then remarks (*Metaphysics*, Λ , 9, 1074b21–23) that whether the First Mover's "substance is intellect or thinking, what does it think about" ($\epsilon\tilde{\tau}\iota\ \delta\epsilon\ \epsilon\tilde{\iota}\tau\epsilon\ \nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \eta\ \omicron\upsilon\zeta\iota\alpha\ \alpha\tilde{\upsilon}\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \epsilon\tilde{\iota}\tau\epsilon\ \nu\omicron\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \epsilon\tilde{\sigma}\tau\iota,\ \tau\acute{\iota}\ \nu\omicron\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$)? It must think either of itself or

of something else (ἢ γὰρ αὐτὸς αὐτὸν ἢ ἕτερόν τι), and it must do so either always about the same thing, or sometimes about one thing, sometimes another (ἢ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀεὶ ἢ ἄλλο). The final conclusions are that the First Mover thinks always, that this thought is always of the same thing, and that this thought must be of the most noble (καλλίστος) of things (i.e., the First Mover itself, since, metaphysically, there can be nothing more noble than It). Thus, the First Mover's thinking is a thinking with itself as the object of its own thought (DeKoninck 477).¹³ How then is this activity to be fitted to Aristotle's prior description of the First Mover as a νόησις νοησέως? Let us examine the terminology in more detail.

The process of intellection, νόησις, is described in detail in Aristotle's discussion of the "thinking soul" (ἡ νοητικὴ ψυχὴ) in *De Anima*, III, 4, 429a–430a. It involves the interaction of two separate components: the intellect itself (νοῦς or τὸ νοεῖν) and the object which is perceived by the intellect (νόητον)—the perception of the νόητον by the νοῦς defines the process of νόησις (Norman 64–67). In this section of the *De Anima*, Aristotle defines how exactly the νόητον comes to be known: the passive intellect, as a potentiality, takes in forms, and it is actualized by these forms by actually becoming them in a way. Thus, in a way, the νοῦς "becomes" the νόητον. This unique type of co-identity between the intellect and the object of intellect would seem to clarify the confusing notion of a god who thinks only about Himself, since during the process of intellection, the two become momentarily identical (Campbell 145). There are, however, problems to be found in this scenario.

In his discussion of the nature of the First Mover's method of moving, Aristotle states (*Metaphysics*, Λ, 7, 1072a30–31) that "νοῦς δὲ ὑπὸ

¹³This phrase, when interpreted in an anthropomorphic sense, can seem quite absurd. As Norman writes "it [i.e. an anthropomorphic interpretation] suggests that the Prime Mover is a sort of heavenly Narcissus, who looks around for the perfection which he wishes to contemplate, finds nothing to rival his own self, and settles into a posture of permanent self-admiration." The statement 'νόησις νοησέως' ought not be interpreted in such a sense, but rather in terms of νοῦς and νόητον. Aristotle himself (*Metaphysics*, Λ, 8, 1074b) describes anthropomorphism as "mythical."

νοητοῦ κινεῖται”—“the νοῦς is set into motion by the νόητον.” This statement gives rise to two inconsistencies. The first is that, since the First Mover is the νοῦς in this scenario, it would need to be moved (κινεῖται) in order for the intellectual process to be completed; this problem is, however, rather insignificant in this context of the potentiality of the First Mover, and will not be discussed further. The more significant logical inconsistency to be found in the νόησις νοησέως hypothesis is again the attribution to the First Mover of potentiality, just as in the case of movement by desire, discussed above.

In this discussion of the significance of the movement of the νοῦς by the νόητον, let us hearken back to the definition of *motion* (κίνησις) given by Aristotle in *Physics*, III, 1, 201b, as the actualization of the potential *qua* potential (ἢ τοῦ δυνατοῦ, ἢ δυνατόν, ἐντελέχεια). Since the νοῦς is moved by the νόητον, then the νοῦς would seem to require the actualization of a potential *qua* potential within itself; but since the νοῦς is in this situation the First Mover itself, it cannot, by definition (*Metaphysics*, A, 7, 1072b), have any potentiality to actualize. It has already been established, however, that the First Mover must exercise active thought and that this active thought must be of itself (i.e., that the First Mover must participate, as a νοῦς, in a νόησις, the νόητον of which is it itself (DeKonink, 477)).¹⁴ In order to have a First Mover whose existence is not “an absurdity, like a man asleep,” Aristotle’s system must imply the attribution to this First Mover of potentiality, even if Aristotle himself denies this option outright. The problem can be summarized thus:

1. A First Mover is necessary (physically and metaphysically), as described above.
2. In order to avoid absurdity, this First Mover must think actively, always, about the most noble thing, i.e. itself (*Metaphysics*, A, 9, 1074b21–23).
3. This thinking of itself is a νόησις νοησέως, wherein the First

¹⁴The notion of the First Mover as thought thinking itself could even be seen to imply some sort of divisibility essentially inherent in the First Mover, which Aristotle describes, however, as indivisible and without parts (*Metaphysics*, A, 7, 1072b).

Mover itself is both the νοῦς and the νόητον (*Metaphysics*, 9, 1074b & *De Anima*, III, 4-8, 429a10-432a14).

4. The νοῦς is set into motion (κίνησις) by the νόητον (*Metaphysics*, Δ, 7, 1072a).

5. Motion (κίνησις) is the actualization of the potential *qua* potential (*Phys.*, III, 1, 201b).

Therefore, since the νοῦς is moved, the νοῦς must possess potential.

Therefore, since the First Mover is in this case the νοῦς, ***the First Mover must possess potential.***

Thus it can be seen that there are in the threads of Aristotle's philosophy of the First Mover two distinct pathways by which we may ascribe potentiality to the being of the First Mover (a circumstance with which Aristotle would seem to have disagreed and which he attempted to avoid). Aside from the simple and obvious fact that, in Aristotle's system, actuality must be prior to potentiality (*Metaphysics*, Δ, 6, 1071b), the question arises as to why the ascription to the First Mover of potential is to be so zealously avoided. On the one hand, the capacity for potentiality would seem to indicate the capacity to be movable—obviously unacceptable for an Unmoved Mover. In addition, the concept of potentiality itself is defined from act (DeKoninck 481), not from potentiality; thus, were the First Mover to possess potentiality, this potentiality would need to be defined by some act. Since potentials would seem to have no ability to actualize themselves, such a situation would hint at the existence of a being more prior to the First Mover, another metaphysical absurdity.

How might these metaphysical difficulties be resolved in light of Aristotle's doctrines? Perhaps if the actuality/potentiality system which defines the relationship of the First Mover to the World is expanded away from the First Mover itself and extended in such a way as to include moved beings as well. In such a scenario, the potentiality of the "god-world system" could be attributed solely to the "world" half. Also feasible is the hypothesis that perhaps the pleasure experienced by the First Mover in its state of eternal pure actuality is not of the same sort as that experienced by human beings (whose pleasures arise as the result of a motion of the soul, and hence the actualization of *potential*). It may well be asserted that Aristotle's First Mover could experience a pleasure whose definition differs from the definition of human pleasure. It would

indeed seem quite possible for there to exist two species of pleasure: one as actuality *qua* actuality, and another as the actualization of the potential *qua* potential. The only factor which might stand in the way of such a supposition is the fact that Aristotle himself did not seem to make this distinction, utilizing the same terminology in his descriptions of both the physical and the metaphysical concepts of pleasure, potentiality, and actuality (e.g. ἐπιθυμία, ἡδονή, κίνησις, ἐνέργεια, ἐντελέχεια, δυνατόν). We could assume that, had he intended divine pleasure to be different in nature from physical pleasure, Aristotle probably would have pointed out this difference; this is, however, an *argumentum ex silentio*, and as such cannot be fully trusted as a positive indication that Aristotle did not intend two separate concepts of pleasure.

Unfortunately, due to our natural human condition of corporeality, we cannot ever fully reach the end of first philosophy. Indeed, by that time we would have acquired comprehensive knowledge of everything, allowing us to know fully the pleasures of divine *and* physical beings. But alas, we must be comforted with the fact that, although these problems exist in actuality, we possess only the potential to find the truth.¹⁵

¹⁵Thanks to Professor Timothy S. Quinn under whose instruction and suggestion the original version of this paper was composed.

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