

Two Aristotelian Notions

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1) Pythagorean table of opposites (*Metaphysics* 1.5.986a22-25)

"Others among them [the Pythagoreans] say the principles are ten, which they arrange in columns: limited and unlimited, odd and even, one and plurality, right and left, male and female, rest and movement, straight and curved, light and darkness, good and evil, square and oblong."

limited unlimited rest movement

odd even straight curved

one plurality light darkness

right left good evil

male female square oblong

NB: These are the principles by which certain Pythagoreans explained things. They aren't explicitly endorsed or condemned by Aristotle in this passage. Elsewhere, he does seem to be in broad agreement as soon as one adds activity and potentiality to the list, as at *Metaphysics* 12.7.1072b1 ("what is fine and choiceworthy for itself are in the same column").

2) Distinction of Potency and Act (*Metaphysics* 9)

Potency (= *dynamis*) has two forms: a) power (= capacity to do something or disposition to act in a certain way); b) potential (= capability of being changed or of being developed by learning).

Act (= *energeia* [lit., "being at work"]) has two forms: a) motion (= being changed from one state to another or changing something else from one state to another); b) activity (= staying within oneself by awakening a capability to develop by learning or by intensifying a state by acting on a disposition).