

Aristotle on ‘More or Less’

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Aristotle’s points about taking ‘more or less’ (μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον) are as following:

1. Substances do not admit of the more and the less. This is supposed to mean that a man is not more a man either than itself or than another man. This is not, however, the case between different substances because one substance can be more a substance than another. (Cat.,¹ 5, 3, 3b33-4a2) In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle tells us that substance in the sense of form does not admit of the more and the less ‘but if any substance does, it is only the substance which involves matter.’ (Met., H, 1044a9-11)
2. Quantities, including numbers, do not admit of a more and a less. (Cat., 6, 6a19-25; Met., H, 1044a9-10)
3. Some qualities, but not all of them, admit the more and the less. For example, one thing can be called paler or more beautiful than another. This is not, however, true about the shape: neither things that admit nor those that do not admit the definition of a shape, e.g. triangle or circle, is called more a triangle or a circle. (Cat., 11a5-) Moreover, a thing can admit of more or less of a quantity than itself in a different time. (Cat., 5, 4a3-9)
4. Some, but not all, relatives admit of a more and a less. For example, while a thing is called more or less similar or more or less unequal to another thing, what is double is not spoken more double or less double. (Cat., 7, 6b20-27)

¹ Abbreviations used in this paper:

Cat.	<i>Categories</i>
Met.	<i>Metaphysics</i>

5. Doing and being affected admit of a more and a less. It is possible, for example, to heat more or to be heated more or less. (Cat., 9, 11b1-7)
6. Aristotle speaks of the possibility of being more false or less false. (Met., Γ)