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The Musical Structure of Plato's Dialogues

– A Quick Guide to the Strongest Evidence –

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Chapter 2

An Emphatic Pattern in the Frame

There is much stopping and starting at the beginning of the *Symposium*. These motions seem incidental, but they are *equally spaced* through the frame: the same number of Greek lines occurs between each scene. In particular,

- Apollodorus is hailed on the road to Athens and stops walking.
- Apollodorus and his friend start walking towards Athens.
- Socrates departs for Agathon's party but stops in a neighbor's porch.
- Finally arriving, Socrates walks to and sits down on Agathon's couch.

Moreover, these passages occur at the locations in the text where, according to the theory outlined in the last chapter, the musical notes should fall. This chapter argues that these passages contain a repeated cluster of symbols which can only be understood by comparing them carefully to the theory of musical harmony expounded in Eriximachus' speech. Plato is marking the first four notes emphatically, and thereby firmly establishing the rhythm of the musical intervals within the dialogue – just as a musician begins a song by calling out 'ONE, two, three, four ...'

The frame of the *Symposium* is considered here in a separate chapter because its notes are marked with a series of symbols that does not continue unaltered into the rest of the dialogue. As suggested above, evaluation of the evidence

for the musical structure should start with the short guide in the previous chapter.

Here and below, Jowett's translation of the *Symposium* is used as a base, but the critical, symbolic passages are often modified to make them less literary and more literal.¹

The next section reviews Eryximachus' theory of music, and especially the roles of motion and harmony, and then uses his theory to elucidate the clusters of symbols at the opening quaternotes. The commentary which follows is a more expansive and detailed discussion of the passages at each note.

2.1 A Theory of Music

An important key to the dialogue's symbolism is found in Eryximachus' discursus on music theory (187a1 ff.). He there criticises Heraclitus' theory of harmony as it is presented in the elliptical fragment about the bow and the lyre, and offers in its place a theory which helps to elucidate the pattern in the frame.

Eryximachus' theory can be concisely presented as a series of theses:

- Music involves combinations of opposites, both of the fast and the slow (tempo) and of the high and the low (pitch) (187b1-3, b7-c1).
- The combination or steady balance between fast and slow is 'rhythm' (b7), that is, the rhythmic temporal progression of the music as determined by the tempo of the beat or the pattern of short and long syllables in verse or song.
- The combination or blending of high and low pitches is 'harmony' in its specialised musical sense, a 'sounding together' (*symphōnia*) (a8-b2).

¹Consistent translations are preferred for key words, and any word which may have musical connotations is translated in a way that makes them explicit (e.g., since an *enkomium* is usually sung, *enkomiazein* may be translated as 'to sing the praises of' instead of just 'to praise.')

Neither the *Symposium* nor the *Euthyphro* has been translated afresh for this guide for two reasons. First, to render the symbolism more clear, the modified translation used below is allowed to become more literal and thus, at times, more awkward. This is not meant as a reader's translation, but rather as a quick index to the evidence for the musical structure. Second, my own more literary translation with commentary, already in draft, will be published as a separate work.

- Both rhythm and harmony are types of ‘agreement’ (*homologia*). Agreement cannot consist, Eryximachus emphasizes, of differing or disagreeing elements while they disagree (2/7), but only of formerly differing elements which are somehow made to agree (a8-b7).
- Music establishes agreement in all these cases by implanting *eros* and *homonoia*, or love and sameness of nous (c2-4). Eros is the third mediating force which reconciles two opposite and disagreeing elements.
- Thus music is the knowledge or science of ‘erotics,’ a *technē* for harmonising opposites and thereby creating rhythm and harmony (c4-8, 3.2).

Plato succinctly summarised this view of music in the *Laws*: ‘rhythm is the name for the order of the motion and harmony is the name for the order of the sound.’²

The very word for the kind of agreement involved in music, *homologia*, suggests that the music of ordinary, prosaic speech may also be harmonised. The connection between music theory and speech is later made explicit when Alcibiades compares Socrates to a mythical musician:

And aren’t you, [Socrates,] an *aulos* player! You are much more marvellous than [the satyr Marsyas]. He enchanted humans with [musical] instruments by the power of his mouth ... You differ from [Marsyas] only in so far as you do this ... without instruments, by language naked and bare, [that is, by speaking unmetrical prose] (215b8-d1, 10.0).³

Alcibiades here says that Socrates’ speech makes him a musician. This makes an important concept available for interpreting Plato’s symbols: Eryximachus’ theory of harmonisation in music may apply to ordinary speech.

2.2 Recurring Clusters of Features in the Frame

The following analyses similarities between four passages in the frame of the *Symposium*. These are similar enough to attract the attention of any reader attending to the possibility of Pythagorean symbols in the dialogue, and

²*tē dē tēs kinēseōs taksei rhuthmos onoma eiē, tē de au tēs phōnēs ... harmonia ...*, 664e8-a2

³See Bury’s notes to 215c [?, p. 145].

would introduce the musical structure to such readers. Careful study of the all the passages located at similar intervals from each other would gradually reveal the whole musical scheme.

Four elements are repeated at the initial whole note (0.0) and at the next three quarternotes (0.1, 0.2, and 0.3):

- **Activity/Motion:** walking or ‘doing.’
- **Opposition Between Wise and Unwise:** some association between the wise and unwise, or between philosophers and non-philosophers.
- **Agreement/Harmony:** an agreement or an assent to a call, request, or invitation.
- **Inactivity:** some cessation of activity.

As mentioned above, the three quarternotes stand out in a further way: cognates of the word *sophia* appear once at each note but not in between them.⁴

Eryximachus’s theory explains this recurrent pattern. The clusters of features are a kind of symbol for a musical sound or note. The motion or activity which occurs at the locations of the quarternotes but not between them is the ‘motion’ constitutive of musical rhythm. The resumption and cessation of the motion symbolises the beginning and end of a musical sound. Eryximachus’ ‘harmony of high and low’ is here the ‘agreement of wise and unwise.’ The invitation and its acceptance are a harmonisation produced in ordinary speech.

Eros or philia are arguably involved in each of these four agreements, and thus, as Eryximachus suggested, it is erotic forces which brings about each harmonisation.

In sum, there are two forms of interlocking evidence for musical structure in the opening frame. First, the emphatic recurrence of features in the four, equally separated passages suggest some sort of structure in the text. Second, the satisfying congruence with Eryximachus’ theory of harmony suggests they are indeed symbols for musical notes.

⁴‘Sophia’ does occur between 0.0 and 0.1. There is complicated, dense symbolism in this first quarter-interval. In general, arguments about symbols at the locations at notes do not imply that similar symbols do not occur between notes.

2.3 A New Kind of Commentary

To re-create the experience of reading Plato on a classical, literary scroll, a long, five or ten metre strip of smooth papyrus with its parade of neatly lettered, regular columns, the translated text of the *Symposium* is separated below into a succession of sections of equal length. Each ‘column’ on the left hand page contains approximately one quarter-interval of text, with the calculated location of the wholenote or quarternote placed approximately in the centre of the page (except for the first and last pages).

This is a new kind of commentary. Its ambition is to make the structure beneath the surface of the text apparent. It exposes the regular patterns of symbols by making their relations to the over-arching schema clear and distinct.

Several strategies are used:

- The locations of the musical notes and other mathematically significant locations in the text are marked. In classical literary papyri, the regularity of the columns and lines would have made these locations easy to track.
- The paragraph or so of text which marks each note is in boldface. The length of these marking passages varies. For example, the more consonant or dissonant notes may be marked more emphatically by longer passages.
- Plato’s musical symbols are glossed in the text with their connections to the various species of harmony and disharmony. These species are analysed systematically in an appendix, where arguments for the various identifications will be found, but the glosses should make immediately clear the musical significance of each passage.
- The correlation between the organisation of the surface narrative and the underlying scale is similarly glossed. The beginnings and ends of speeches that coincide with musical notes, for example, are so labelled.
- The more extended annotations on the right-hand pages collect together the various elements of the marking passages, and assess, for example, whether they are as a whole harmonious or disharmonious. In order to make each annotation as self-contained as possible, some information may be repeated.

Generally speaking, information which can be found in traditional commentaries is omitted.

After surveying the strongest evidence, collected in the previous chapter, a thorough page-by-page examination of the *Symposium*'s symbolism might proceed in the following way. The boxed glosses on the left-hand page will give a preliminary idea of the interpretation of each marking passage and its location on the scale. The discussion on the right summarises the interpretation, and might be read before a close reading of each passage in boldface.

The glosses and commentary often depend upon passages elsewhere in the *Symposium*. An appendix constructs a typology of the dialogue's markers and discusses the connections between them, and is essential for clarifying the unity and rigour of Plato's symbolic system.

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[NOTE 0.0] I believe I have got the story you inquire of pretty well by heart (*ouk ameletētos*). [HARMONY: RECITING SPEECHES] The day before yesterday I chanced to be going up [MOTION] to town from my house in Phalerum, when one of my acquaintance [OPPOSITES] caught sight of me from behind, some way off, and called in a bantering tone ‘Hullo, Phalerian! I say, Apollodorus, wait a moment.’ So I stopped and waited [1/8] [HARMONY: AGREEMENT; STOP]

Then, ‘Apollodorus,’ he said, ‘do you know, I have just been looking for you, as I want to hear all about the banquet that brought together Agathon [172b] and Socrates and Alcibiades and the rest of that party, and what were the speeches they delivered upon love. For somebody else was reciting to me the account he had from [2/8] Phoenix, son of Philip, and he mentioned that you knew it too. But he could not tell it at all clearly so you must give me the whole story, for you are the most proper reporter of your dear friend’s discourses. But first tell me this,’ he went on, ‘were you at that party yourself, or not?’ To which my answer was: ‘You have had anything [3/8] but [172c] a clear recitation from your reciter, if you suppose the party you are asking about to have been such a recent affair that I could be included.’ ‘So I did suppose,’ he said. ‘How so, Glaucon?’ said I, ‘You must know it is many a year that Agathon has been away from home and country, and not yet three years that

Note 0.0 (172a1)

Plato is pioneering a new kind of symbolism. In the opening sentence of the *Symposium*, the narrator says he has practised reciting the story of Agathon's party: he is 'not unpracticed' (*ameletētos*). The symbolic import of this word is revealed by two facts. First, at the location of a later musical note, Diotima says just this kind of repeated practicing preserves intellectual creations and thereby gives them and their authors a kind of immortality. 'Through this device, a mortal thing participates in immortality ...' (note 8.1, 208b2-3). Second, such 'participation' is an example of the blending or *krasis* which marks the notes in the *Symposium*. In this dialogue, participation is a species of the genus of harmony. This places a brief allusion to a kind of harmonisation in the opening sentence, and this symbol serves to mark the initial wholenote in the musical scale.⁵

Since music is, for Plato, motion (through time) and harmony (of pitches), the initial notes are marked by references to motion and the agreement of opposites:

- **Activity/Motion:** Apollodorus was recently going up to the city (a2).
- **Opposition Between Wise and Unwise:** the narrator studies philosophy, the questioner, Glaucon, turns out to be ignorant (c3 ff., b8-9).
- **Agreement/Harmony:** Apollodorus assents to a 'call' from behind by stopping (a4, 1/8).
- **Inactivity:** Apollodorus stops and waits (a5).

Much of the activity in the dialogue's frame serves as a pretext for introducing and repeating this symbolic structure.

Octads, The Markers Between the Quarternotes: Brief phrases mark locations between the quarternotes. Here, the octads are marked by further references to harmony: 1/8 by agreement, and both 2/8 and 3/8 to 'recitation' or practising of speeches.

⁵Although the evidence is too extensive to collect here, Plato elsewhere uses words with the syllable *mel*, like *ameletētos*, to refer to music, perhaps because of its connection to 'melody' (*melos*).

I have been mixing (*sundiatribō*) with Socrates and making it my daily care (*epimeles*) [4/8] to know whatever he says or does. Before that time, [173a] what with running about at random and thinking I did things, I was the wretchedest man alive; just as you are at present, thinking philosophy is none of your business.’ ‘Instead of jeering at me,’ he said, ‘tell me when it was that this party (*‘being together,’ sunousia*) [5/8] took place.’ ‘When you and I were only children,’ I told him; ‘on the occasion of Agathon’s victory with his first tragedy: the day after that of the dedicatory feast which he and his players held for its celebration.’ ‘Ah, quite a long while ago, it would seem,’ said he; ‘but who gave you the account of it? Socrates himself?’ ‘Goodness, no!’ I answered. ‘It was the person who told Phoenix [173b] – Aristodemus [6/8] of Cydathenaeum, a little man, who went always barefoot. He was of the company there, being one of the chief among Socrates’ lovers at that time, I believe. But all the same, I have since questioned Socrates on some details of the story I had from his friend, and he acknowledged them to be in accordance with his account.’ ‘Why,’ he said, ‘don’t you recite it to me?’ [7/8] **In fact the road up to town is well suited for telling and hearing as we go along.** So on we went **MOTION**, discoursing the while of this affair; [173c] and hence, as I said at the beginning, I have it pretty well by heart. **REF. TO BEGINNING, EPISODE ENDS AT NOTE** So, if you too must hear the whole story, I had better tell it.

HARMONY: AGREEMENT For my own part, indeed, I commonly find that, when I recite speeches **NOTE 0.1** about philosophy **WISE** or hear them from someone else – **HARMONY: RECITALS** apart from thinking them useful – I delight **PLEASURE** in them preternaturally. Whereas in the case of other sorts of talk – especially that of your wealthy, money-bag friends **UNWISE** – I am not only distressed **PAIN** myself but pity dear intimates like you, who think you are doing a great deal **DISHARMONY: DISAGREEMENT** [1/8] when you really **do nothing at all.** **STOP** [173d] From your point of view, I daresay, I seem a hapless creature, and I think your thought is true. I, however, do not think it of you: I know it for sure.’ [Companion:] ‘You are the same as ever, Apollodorus, – always defaming yourself and every one else! Your view, I take it, is that all men alike are miserable – except for Socrates – [2/8] starting with yourself. How you may have come by your title of “crazy,” I do not know: though, of course, you are always like that in your way of speech – raging against yourself and everybody except Socrates. [Apollodorus:] ‘My dear sir, obviously it must be a mere [3/8] manic aberration in me, to hold this opinion of myself and of you all!’ [Companion:] ‘It is waste of time, Apollodorus, to wrangle about such matters now. Come, without more ado, comply with our request and relate how the speeches went. [Apollodorus:] ‘Well then, they were somewhat as follows, – but instead, [173e]

Note 0.1 (173c3)

The text itself calls attention to the interval between the first and second notes. Apollodorus's comment here, 'as I said at the beginning, I am not unpracticed ... (173c1),' points directly back to the first sentence of the dialogue. This repeated assertion bookends the recollected episode, which fills out the first quarter-interval. Apollodorus now returns, at the note, to direct discourse. In general, Plato uses the musical scale as an outline and makes passages dealing with an episode or topic stretch out over one or more quarter-intervals. The narrative structure reflects the musical structure.

Like the first note, the passage at this note describes a roadside scene. The four features of the motion-harmony pattern are found again in the paragraph around the location of the note:

- **Activity/Motion:** the speakers are walking along the road to the city (b9).
- **Opposition Between Wise and Unwise:** philosophy contrasted with worldly pursuits (c5 ff.).
- **Agreement/Harmony:** Apollodorus agrees to recite the speeches (c2).
- **Inactivity:** Apollodorus knows that his interlocutor is really 'doing nothing' (d1).

Observe that positive terms cluster around the note, and negative ones afterwards: agreement, pleasure, and wisdom are followed by disagreement, pain, and ignorance.

Markers Between the Notes: At 4/8, the word *sundiatriberein* means 'to spend time together,' but *triberein* can mean 'rub,' 'grind,' or 'knead' (as the *pharmakon* at *Phaedo* note 11.3 = 117a6-7), and so *sundiatriberein* is etymologically 'to knead or mix together,' a symbol for *krasis* or harmony (its cognates will appear twice in the closing lines of the *Symposium* and twice in the opening lines of the *Euthyphro*). The midpoints of the quarter-intervals are generally marked more emphatically. Here, at 4/8, there is a reference to Socrates, a synonym for *krasis*, and another allusion to 'melody' (*epimeles*).

SPEECH BEGINS HALFWAY BETWEEN NOTES

I must try and tell you all in order from the beginning, [174a] just as my friend told it to me. 4/8 **SOCRATES ENTERS** He said that he met with Socrates fresh from the bath and wearing his best pair of slippers – quite rare events with him – and asked him whither he was bound in such fine trim. ‘To dinner at Agathon’s,’ he answered. ‘I evaded him and his celebrations yesterday, fearing the crowd; but I agreed 5/8 to be present today. So I got myself up in this handsome style in order to be a match for my handsome host. Now tell me,’ said he, ‘do you feel in the mood [174b] for going uninvited to dinner?’ ‘For anything,’ he said he replied, ‘that you may bid me do.’ ‘Follow along then,’ he said; ‘let us corrupt the proverb with a new version: What if they go of their own accord, the good men 6/8 to our Goodman’s board? Though indeed Homer may be said to have not merely corrupted the adage, but debauched it: for after setting forth Agamemnon as a man eminently good at warfare, [174c] and Menelaus as only ‘a spearman spiritless,’ he makes 7/8 Menelaus come uninvited to the banquet of the former, who was offering sacrifice and holding a feast; so the worse man was the guest of the better.’ To this my friend’s answer, as he told me, was: ‘I am afraid mine, most likely, is a case that fits not your version, Socrates, but Homer’s – a dolt going uninvited to the banquet of a wise man. **MOTION, OPPOSITES**

Be sure, then, to have **NOTE 0.2** a defence speech (*tī apologēsē*) ready when you bring me **HARMONY: RECITE SPEECH**; for I shall not agree to coming uninvited, [174d] but will come at your invitation.’ **HARMONY: AGREE** ‘When two are going together,” he remarked, ‘there’s one further along the road’ in devising what we are to say. So, let’s go.’ **MOTION** With some such conversation, he told me, they started off. Then Socrates, becoming absorbed in his own thoughts along the road, 1/8 fell behind him as they went; **STOP** and when my friend began to wait for him he bade him go on ahead. [174e] So he came to Agathon’s house, and found the door open; where he found himself in a rather ridiculous position. For he was met immediately by a servant from within, who took him where the company was reclining, 2/8 and he found them just about to dine. However, as soon as Agathon saw him, ‘Ha, Aristodemus,’ he cried, ‘right welcome to a place at table with us! If you came on some other errand, put it off to another time: only yesterday I went round to invite you, but failed to see you. But 3/8 how is it you do not bring us Socrates?’ At that I turned back for Socrates, he said, but saw no sign of him coming after me: so I told them how I myself had come along with Socrates, since he had asked me to dine with them. ‘Very good of you to come,’ he said, ‘but where is the man?’ [175a] ‘He was coming in just now behind me: I am wondering myself where he can be.’

Note 0.2 (174c8)

Like the two previous marking passages, this describes a roadside scene. That is, three passages in a row which fall at the calculated positions of musical notes all describe conversations and motion along a road. The passages filling the intervals between these notes do not refer to roadside conversations. The four features emphasising the frame's quarternotes recur here:

- **Activity/Motion:** Aristodemus jokes about 'going,' and they depart (c7, d4).
- **Opposition Between Wise and Unwise:** Socrates and Aristodemus, who is a mediocrity, visiting a 'wise man' (c7).
- **Agreement/Harmony:** Aristodemus agrees to Socrates' invitation (*keklēmenos* or 'call') to dinner (d1-3); Socrates agrees to give a 'defense speech' (c8 ff.).
- **Inactivity:** in a 'fit of abstraction,' Socrates stops on the road (d5-6).

Socrates' quip, 'if two go along together ...' emphasizes the harmony in motion: two friends are coupled together and travel along the road.⁶

Narrative Structure Reflects Musical Structure: The narrator begins to recount the story of Agathon's party halfway between the quarternotes. This midpoint is also the place where Socrates first enters in the dialogue.⁷

⁶There is also an allusion to Homer, but material in the commentaries will not be repeated.

⁷This point in the dialogue is harmonically significant and therefore may be an appropriate place for Socrates to enter the dialogue. This midpoint at 4/8 is five 'octaves' from the end of the dialogue, and is therefore faintly consonant with the twelfth note of the musical scale. That is, if twelve is divided in half five times (each division produces a note an octave apart), the resulting location is just the midpoint here between the quarternotes. Similarly, Socrates enters the andron at four octaves (see the appendix on the octaves).

‘Go at once,’ [4/8] said Agathon to the servant, ‘and see if you can fetch in Socrates. You, Aristodemus, take a place by Eryximachus.’ So the attendant washed him and made him ready for reclining, when another of the servants came in with the news that our good Socrates had retreated into their neighbors’ porch; there he was standing, and when bidden to come in, [5/8] he refused. ‘How strange!’ said Agathon, ‘you must go on bidding him, and by no means let him go.’ [175b] But this Aristodemus forbade: ‘No,’ said he, ‘let him alone; it is a habit he has. Occasionally he turns aside, anywhere at random, and there he stands. He will be here presently, I expect. So do not disturb him; let him be.’ ‘Very well then,’ said [6/8] Agathon, ‘as you judge best. Come, boys,’ he called to the servants, ‘serve the feast for the rest of us. You are to set on just whatever you please, now that you have no one to direct you (a method I have never tried before). Today you are to imagine that I and all the company here have come on your invitation so look after us, and earn our compliments.’ [175c] Thereupon, he said, [7/8] they all began dinner, but Socrates did not arrive; and though Agathon ever and anon gave orders that they should go and fetch him, my friend would not allow it. **He did then come, [MOTION: SOCRATES ENTERS THE ANDRON]** though he didn’t spend as much time (*diatripsanta*) as usual, and they were right in the middle of dinner. Then Agathon, who happened to be [NOTE 0.3] sitting alone in the lowest place, said: ‘Here, Socrates, come sit by me, so that by contact with you [175d] I may have some benefit from that piece of wisdom [WISE VS. UNWISE] that occurred to you there in the porch. Clearly you have made the discovery and got hold of it for you would not have come away before.’ Then Socrates sat down, [HARMONY: AGREE; STOP] and ‘How fine it would be, Agathon,’ he said, ‘if [1/8] wisdom were a sort of thing that could flow out of the one of us who is fuller into him who is emptier, by our mere contact with each other, as water will flow through wool from the fuller cup into the emptier. If such is indeed the case with wisdom, I set a great value on my sitting next to you: [175e] I look to be filled with [2/8] excellent wisdom drawn in abundance out of you. My own is but meagre, as disputable as a dream; but yours is bright and expansive, as the other day we saw it shining forth from your youth, strong and splendid, in the eyes of more than thirty thousand Greeks.’ [3/8] ‘You rude mocker (*hubristēs*), Socrates!’ said Agathon. ‘A little later on you and I shall go to law on this matter of our wisdom, and Dionysus shall be our judge. For the present, let the dinner be your first concern.’ [176a] After this, it seems, when Socrates had taken his place and had dined with the rest,

Note 0.3 (175c7)

Once again, the narrative structure reflects the underlying musical structure. Socrates sets off for Agathon's at the last note but stops. At this note, he finally completes the journey, which thus fills out the interval between successive quarternotes.

This note, like the previous three, mentions motion along a road. Here, Socrates enters the andron and has his first exchange with Agathon.⁸ The four features recur here when Agathon invites Socrates to sit and share the wisdom he has discovered:

- **Activity/Motion:** Socrates starts again and arrives at Agathon's (c4).
- **Opposition Between Wise and Unwise:** Agathon, who is no philosopher (as later criticism shows), wishes to hear Socrates' 'wisdom' (c8).
- **Agreement/Harmony:** Socrates accepts Agathon's invitation by joining him on the couch (d3).
- **Inactivity:** Socrates sits, and motion ceases again (d3).

Thus the first four notes in the dialogue have been emphatically marked by passages which describe motion and harmony, which are for Plato the two components of music.

⁸This quarternote is harmonically significant and may therefore be an appropriate place both for Socrates' entrance and for his first exchange with Agathon. As mentioned in the last footnote, this passage is four 'octaves' from the twelfth note. Thus Socrates enters the dialogue at the 'fifth octave,' and enters the andron at this 'fourth octave' (see the appendix on the octaves).

SPEECH BEGINS HALFWAY BETWEEN NOTES

they made libation $\boxed{4/8}$ and sang a chant to the god and so forth, as custom bids, till they betook them to drinking. Then Pausanias began a speech (*logos*) after this manner: ‘Well, gentlemen, what mode of drinking will suit us best? For my part, to tell the truth, I am in very poor form as a result of yesterday’s bout, $\boxed{5/8}$ and I claim a little relief; it is so, I believe, with most of you, for you were at yesterday’s party: so consider what method [176b] of drinking would suit us best.’ On this Aristophanes observed: ‘Now that, Pausanias, is a good suggestion of yours, that we make a point of consulting our comfort in our cups: for I myself am one of those who got such a soaking yesterday.’ $\boxed{6/8}$ When Eryximachus, son of Acumenus, heard this; ‘You are quite right, sirs,’ he said; ‘and there is yet one other question on which I request your opinion, as to what sort of condition Agathon finds himself in for drinking.’ ‘No, no,’ said Agathon, ‘I am not in good condition for it either.’ [176c] ‘It would be a piece of luck for us, I take it,’ the other went on, ‘that is, for me, Aristodemus, Phaedrus, $\boxed{7/8}$ and our friends here, if you who are the stoutest drinkers are now feeling exhausted. We, of course, are known weaklings. Socrates I do not count in the matter: he is fit either way, and will be content with whichever choice we make. **Now as it appears that nobody here present is eager for copious draughts, perhaps it will be less a displeasure** **PLEASURE** if I speak of **NOTE 1.0** intoxication, and tell you truly what it is. The practice of medicine, I find, has made this clear to me – [176d] that drunkenness is painful (*chalepos*) **PAIN** to mankind; and neither would I myself agree, if I could help it, to an excess of drinking, **MODERATION, MEAN** nor would I recommend it to another, $\boxed{1/8}$ especially when his head is still heavy from a bout of the day before.’ Here Phaedrus of Myrrhinus interrupted him, saying: ‘Why, you know I always obey you, above all in medical matters; and so now will the rest of us, if they are well advised.’ Then all of them, on hearing this, [176e] consented **HARMONY: AGREEMENT** not to make their present meeting (*sunousia*) $\boxed{2/8}$ a tipsy affair, but to drink just as it might serve their pleasure. ‘Since it has been resolved, then,’ said Eryximachus, ‘that we are to drink only so much as each desires, with no constraint on any, I next propose that the flute-girl who came in just now be dismissed: let her pipe to herself or, if she likes, to the $\boxed{3/8}$ women-folk within, but let us seek our entertainment today in conversation. I am ready, if you so desire, to suggest what sort of discussion it should be.’ They all said they did so desire, and bade him make his proposal.

Note 1.0 (176c7)

This passage alludes to important Pythagorean themes. Finding the mean between the opposites of pleasure and pain was one goal of Pythagorean ethics.⁹ Here, words for ‘pleasure’ and ‘pain’ occur near the note, and Eryximachus is recommending a moderate course.¹⁰ Eryximachus will later assert that medicine, like music, produces agreement and harmony and especially moderates desire and pleasure (187c5 ff., esp. e2 ff.). In the *Phaedo*, notes are marked by what is explicitly called there a ‘krasis’ of pleasure and pain.¹¹ Thus, this passage is an example of medicine producing an intermediate *krasis* or harmony between the opposites of pleasure and pain.

This is the first whole note, one twelfth of the way through the text of the *Symposium*. From this point onwards, the notes are marked by species of ‘harmony between opposites’ and do not mention motion explicitly.¹² Of the four features which served to mark the previous notes emphatically, only ‘agreement,’ i.e., various species of harmony, continues.

This passage is marked by an important agreement, all the symposiasts consent to moderate their drinking, and begins to establish harmony among the symposiasts. In the rest of the dialogue, threats to and restorations of this harmony will mark a number of notes.

Generally, in Plato’s dialogues, the first wholenote and the next quarter-note are where the topic and procedure (speeches or dialectical questioning, choosing an interlocutor, etc.) are established. Here, the speakers agree to drink moderately; at the next quarternote they agree on the topic. Although it remains implicit, the symposiasts are here agreeing on the way their wine will be served. Classical Greeks blended their wine in varying degrees with water in a large vase called the ‘krater’ or ‘mixing bowl’ in the center of the room. Thus this passage is an allusion to a kind of physical *krasis*. When Eryximachus sends the flute-girl away, he says the symposiasts will entertain each other with speeches or, literally, ‘be together by means of *logoi*.’ This signals that language will replace ordinary, sensible music as the medium for harmonisation.

⁹See, for example, Huffman [?, pp. 73-74, etc.].

¹⁰Forms of the words ‘pleasure’ and ‘pain’ appear (*aēdēs*, 176c8; *chalepon*, d1).

¹¹In the *Phaedo*, note 0.1 has the ‘krasis’ between pleasure and pain (59a6-7). Note 0.2 has pleasure and pain ‘joined’ together but does not repeat the word ‘krasis’ (60b3 – c1).

¹²The narrator, however, is supposedly continuing to walk toward Athens, in the background.

SPEECH BEGINS HALFWAY BETWEEN NOTES

So Eryximachus proceeded: ‘The beginning of my speech (*logou*) is in the words of Euripides’ Melanippe, 4/8 for ‘not mine the tale’ that I intend to tell; it comes from Phaedrus here. He is constantly complaining to me and saying, – Is it not a curious thing, Eryximachus, that while other gods have hymns and psalms indited in their honor by the poets, the god of Love, so ancient and so great, [177b] 5/8 has had no song of praise composed for him by a single one of all the many poets that ever have been? And again, pray consider our worthy professors, and the eulogies they frame of Hercules and others in prose, – for example, the excellent Prodicus. This indeed is not so surprising but I recollect coming across a book 6/8 by somebody wise, in which I found salt superbly lauded for its usefulness, and many more such matters [177c] I could show you celebrated there. To think of all this bustle about such trifles, and **not a single man ever essaying till this day to make a fitting hymn** 7/8 to Love! So great a god, and so neglected! **[SHAME]** Now I think Phaedrus’s protest a very proper one. Accordingly I am not only desirous of obliging him with a contribution of my own, but I also pronounce the present to be a fitting occasion for us here assembled to honor the god. [177d] So if you on your part approve, we might pass the time (*diatribē*) **[NOTE 1.1]** well enough in speeches; **[HARMONY: KRASIS RESTORES VIRTUE]** for my opinion is that we ought each of us to make a speech in turn, from left to right, singing praises to Love as beautifully as he can. Phaedrus shall open first; for he has the topmost place at table, and besides is father of our debate.’ ‘No one, Eryximachus,’ said Socrates, ‘will vote against you: **[HARMONY: ORDER, AGREEMENT]** 1/8 I do not see how I could myself decline, [177e] when I set up to understand nothing but erotics; nor could Agathon and Pausanias either, nor yet Aristophanes, who divides his time between Dionysus and Aphrodite; nor could any other of the persons I see before me. To be sure, we who sit at the bottom 2/8 do not get a fair chance: but if the earlier speakers rise nobly to the occasion, we shall be quite content. So now let Phaedrus, with our best wishes, make a beginning and give us a eulogy of Love.’ To this they assented one and all, (1/9) [178a] bidding him do as Socrates said. Now the entire speech in each case was beyond Aristodemus’s recollection, 3/8 and so too the whole of what he told me is beyond mine: but those parts which, on account also of the speakers, I deemed most memorable, I will tell you successively as they were delivered.

Note 1.1 (177d1)

This passage is, like the previous note, an important instance of harmony as agreement: the symposiasts all consent to make speeches in praise of Eros in a certain order, from left to right.

This passage is a model for many later passages which mark notes: something shameful outweighs its virtuous contrary, but this imbalance is put right by a harmony or *krasis*. Here the neglect of Eros is put right by an agreement to honour the god by passing the time with speeches.

This phrase ‘passing the time’ is another instance of *diatribein* at a note. As mentioned earlier (see 0.1), this word means, etymologically, ‘mix thoroughly,’ and thus plays the role in Plato’s symbolic schemes of an allusion to mixing or forming a *krasis*.

Songs (hymns and paeans) are mentioned, which also puts an explicit reference to music and thus to musical harmony at the note.

Altogether, the constellation of symbols here has important implications for understanding later marking passages. Sharing speeches (*logoi*) is itself a way of forming a *krasis*, and this may be understood as a form of music. Again, Socrates’ prose speeches will be explicitly called a kind of ‘music without instruments’ by Alcibiades (note 10.0). Thus a harmony in or among the speeches – or their speakers – should be understood as analogous to a musical harmony.

Narrative Structure Reflects Musical Structure: Eryximachus begins his short speech (at least he calls it a *logos*) halfway between quarter-notes.

Appendix E

OCT Line Numbers for the Musical Notes

As discussed in Kennedy [?] and chapter five, the measured locations of the musical notes on the *Symposium*'s musical scale are surprisingly accurate, despite the changes the text may have undergone during its transmission. The Stephanus pages have significantly variable lengths but, in the *Symposium* and not generally in other dialogues, the interval between quarternotes is coincidentally about one Stephanus page.

This coincidence does, however, make it clear that the Stephanus numbers prevented rather than helped detecting the musical structure of the dialogues. Here, the distance between quarternotes in the range from 0.1 to 1.2 is very nearly one Stephanus page (see below). Suppose a reader had noticed the repeated pattern of motions and agreements in the frame, and began examining other passages at similar intervals, using the Stephanus page numbers as a measure (and so looking for symbols around c3-8 on succeeding pages). Already by notes 2.0 and 2.1, the error between the actual location of the notes and the location found using the Stephanus numbers would be about half a page. Using the Stephanus page numbers as a measure would thus obliterate any trace of symbols repeated at equal intervals.

Wholenotes and quarternotes in the *Symposium*:

Note 0:	172a1,	1q: 173c3,	2q: 174c8,	3q: 175c7,
Note 1:	176c7,	1q: 177c8,	2q: 178d5,	3q: 179d8,
Note 2:	180e5,	1q: 182a4,	2q: 183a8,	3q: 184b3,

Note 3:	185b6,	1q: 186c1,	2q: 187c8,	3q: 188d1,
Note 4:	189d5,	1q: 190d6,	2q: 191d7,	3q: 192d8,
Note 5:	193d7,	1q: 194e4,	2q: 195e7,	3q: 197a2,
Note 6:	198a8,	1q: 199b4,	2q: 200c1,	3q: 201c5,
Note 7:	202c7,	1q: 203d1,	2q: 204d5,	3q: 205d10,
Note 8:	206e4,	1q: 208a1,	2q: 209a6,	3q: 210b1,
Note 9:	211b4,	1q: 212c2,	2q: 213c3,	3q: 214c1,
Note 10:	215c2,	1q: 216c6,	2q: 217c8,	3q: 218d2,
Note 11:	219d6,	1q: 220d6,	2q: 221d8,	3q: 222e7,
Note 12:	223d12			

Wholenotes and quarternotes in the *Euthyphro*:

Note 0:	2a1,	1q: 2b11,	2q: 2d2,	3q: 3b2,
Note 1:	3c6,	1q: 3d9,	2q: 4a9,	3q: 4c2,
Note 2:	4d4,	1q: 4e7,	2q: 5b2,	3q: 5c5,
Note 3:	5d9,	1q: 6a3,	2q: 6b7,	3q: 6d1,
Note 4:	6e5,	1q: 7a10,	2q: 7c4,	3q: 7d7,
Note 5:	8a4,	1q: 8b8,	2q: 8d1,	3q: 8e6,
Note 6:	9b1,	1q: 9c3,	2q: 9d6,	3q: 10a3,
Note 7:	10b7,	1q: 10c13,	2q: 10e7,	3q: 11a8,
Note 8:	11c3,	1q: 11d6,	2q: 12a4,	3q: 12b9,
Note 9:	12d3,	1q: 12e6,	2q: 13b1,	3q: 13c7,
Note 10:	13e1,	1q: 14a5,	2q: 14b8,	3q: 14d4,
Note 11:	14e8,	1q: 15b1,	2q: 15c5,	3q: 15d7,
Note 12:	16a4			

Fifths in the *Symposium*:

One: 182d5, Two: 192e8, Three: 203b7, Four: 213e3

Fifths in the *Euthyphro*:

One: 5a6, Two: 7e1, Three: 10c7, Four: 13b9

Sevenths in the *Symposium*:

One: 179d2, Two: 187b4, Three: 194c1, Four: 201e6,
Five: 209c1, Six: 216d4

Sevenths in the *Euthyphro*:

One: 4b10, Two: 6b2, Three: 8b2, Four: 10a9,
Five: 12a7, Six: 14a6

Ninths in the *Symposium*:

One: 177e7, Two: 183e3, Three: 189d5, Four: 195b1,
Five: 201a3, Six: 206e4, Seven: 212e1, Eight : 218b4

Ninths in the *Euthyphro*:

One: 3e3, Two: 5c1, Three: 6e6, Four: 8c1,
Five: 9e6, Six: 11c2, Seven: 12e10, Eight : 14c8

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