After telling his friend what Phaedrus said in his speech on love, Apollodorus says that Aristodemus couldn’t remember a few of the next speeches very well, so he skipped to Pausanius’ speech, which is a sort of legalistic defense of Athenian sexual customs.

Pausanius says there are two kinds of love, and to go about praising love, we have to explain which it is we’re talking about. He says that after he’s explained what we’re talking about, he’ll give his hymn of praise to love.

What are the two kinds of love Pausanius talks about?

What is the object of each kind of love?

Pausanius talks about a double standard when it comes to love: behavior that is normally shameful, like getting on your knees and begging, is perfectly acceptable in matters of love. Can you think of any examples of this same sort of double standard?

Though Athenian pederasty (this is the word that means “boy-loving”) is socially acceptable, does what Pausanius say indicate that fathers and other boys are fully in favor of it?

Do you agree with Pausanius that the same action can be either honorable or vile, depending on the context?

What is the one good reason for willingly subjecting yourself to someone else?

The next in line to speak was Aristophanes, but he was suffering from a bout of hiccups. He tells Erixymachus (a physician) to either cure him or go next.

Erixymachus delivers the next speech. He speaks as a doctor about how love pertains to the body and its relative healthiness or disease.

What three things does he tell Aristophanes to do to cure his hiccups?

Erixymachus says that Pausanius’ distinction between the types of love is useful, but falls short. What beings, other than humans, are subject to love, according to him?

Erixymachus applies Pausanius’ distinction between two types of love to the body, saying that each type, “common” and “noble” of love are manifest in the body, and he equates the craft of practicing medicine with the way society practices the encouragement or discouragement of behavior in individuals – it’s an odd sort of comparison. The doctor is society; a doctor should encourage healthiness in a body.
just like society should encourage noble love between people. Likewise, a doctor should discourage disease just like society should discourage common love. “The hallmark of an accomplished physician is his ability to distinguish the Love that is noble from the Love that is ugly and disgraceful. A good practitioner... can implant the proper species of Love when it is absent and eliminate the other sort whenever it occurs.”

Erixymachus introduces a third concept of love as a harmony between opposites. He understood the human body to be comprised of different opposites. When the opposites are balanced perfectly, is creates a harmony and is good health.

He adds that physical education, farming music and poetry, like medicine, are “are guided everywhere by the god of Love.” In fact, he understands the entire world to be organized according to dichotomies.

For next time, Aristophanes’ and Agathon’s speeches (through section 197e).