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Why the Final Step of the Lover’s Ascent is a Generalizing Step

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Scaling the Ladder. Why the Final Step of the Lover’s Ascent is a Generalizing Step

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ABSTRACT

The ‘Scala Amoris’ (210a-212b), or ‘Ladder of Love’, constitutes the philosophical and aesthetic centrepiece of Socrates’ *encomium* of Eros in Plato’s *Symposium*. Here Diotima describes how a lover ascending up the Ladder directs his erotic attention to a number of different kinds of beautiful objects, first bodies, then souls, just institutions and knowledge, until he catches a glimpse of Beauty itself. In this paper I advance an ‘inclusive’ reading of the lover’s ascent – to use Price’s 1991 terminology – with a particular emphasis on justifying such a reading concerning the final step.

Keywords: Plato, *Symposium*, Scala Amoris, Beauty.

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