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Irving Singer's trilogy *The Nature of Love* has been called "majestic" (New York Times Book Review), "monumental" (Boston Globe), "one of the major works of philosophy in our century" (Noûs), "wise and magisterial" (Times Literary Supplement), and a "masterpiece of critical thinking [that] is a timely, eloquent, and scrupulous account of what, after all, still makes the world go round" (Christian Science Monitor). In the second volume, Singer studies the ideas and ideals of medieval courtly love and nineteenth-century Romantic love, as well as the transition between these two perspectives. According to the traditions of courtly love in the twelfth century and thereafter, not only God but also human beings in themselves are capable of authentic love. The pursuit of love between man and woman was seen as a splendid ideal that ennobles both the lover and the beloved. It was something more than libidinal sexuality and involved sophisticated and highly refined courtliness that emulated religious love in its ability to create a holy union between the participants. Adherents to Romantic love in later centuries, affirmed the capacity of love to effect a merging between two people who thus became one. Singer analyzes the transition from courtly to Romantic by reference to the writings of many artists beginning with Dante and ending with Richard Wagner, as well as Neoplatonist philosophers of the Italian Renaissance, Descartes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Hume, Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. In relation to romanticism itself, he distinguishes between two aspects—"benign romanticism" and "Romantic pessimism"—that took on renewed importance in the twentieth century.