



Philosophy of Love: A Partial Summing-Up (The Irving Singer Library)

By Irving Singer, Alan Soble

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In 1984, Irving Singer published the first volume of what would become a classic and much acclaimed trilogy on love. Trained as an analytical philosopher, Singer first approached his subject with the tools of current philosophical methodology. Dissatisfied by the initial results (finding the chapters he had written "just dreary and unproductive of anything"), he turned to the history of ideas in philosophy and the arts for inspiration. He discovered an immensity of speculation and artistic practice that reached wholly beyond the parameters he had been trained to consider truly philosophical. In his three-volume work *The Nature of Love*, Singer tried to make sense of this historical progression within a framework that reflected his precise distinction-making and analytical background. In this new book, he maps the trajectory of his thinking on love. It is a "partial" summing-up of a lifework: partial because it expresses the author's still unfolding views, because it is a recapitulation of many published pages, because love -- like any subject of that magnitude -- resists a neatly comprehensive, all-inclusive formulation. Adopting an informal, even conversational, tone, Singer discusses, among other topics, the history of romantic love, the Platonic ideal, courtly and nineteenth-century Romantic love; the nature of passion; the concept of merging (and his critique of it); ideas about love in Freud, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Dewey, Santayana, Sartre, and other writers; and love in relation to democracy, existentialism, creativity, and the possible future of scientific investigation. Singer's writing on love embodies what he has learned as a contemporary philosopher, studying other authors in the field and "trying to get a little further." This book continues his trailblazing explorations.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

I would say that I'm a maker of distinctions, writes MIT philosophy professor Singer in this short summation of his life's work, which has been, in the Socratic tradition, to clarify the meanings of large-scale terms like love, happiness, meaning of life, meaning in life, sex, beauty. The conversational tone of the book betrays its origins as a series of interviews, but it also fits Singer's focus on distinguishing his views against the perspectives of the past. Thus: Nietzsche goes too far, Freud made a number of errors, Even science has its flaws. It all makes for a fairly interesting dialogue between Singer and his predecessors and contemporaries. Although he may disagree with them, understanding what has come before is for him the only method for a reader to choose a thoughtful path. For Singer, Plato is the beginning, Shakespeare is the turning point and science is the present. Singer has written 15 works on the philosophy of love, and this latest can serve as an introduction to his oeuvre, a stand-alone survey of the topic or a model methodology for seeking greater understanding. (Mar.)

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From School Library Journal

This is an account of a life devoted to the idea of love and the love of ideas. As a young philosopher with an empiricist outlook, Singer first tackled the tangled ideas encapsulated in the word *love* with the techniques of logical analysis. The associated concepts include romanticism and sex, but they also include togetherness, community, basic human worth, and God. They resisted his analyses. The empiricism is still there, but what comes out now is a taste for John Dewey's pragmatism and a passion for history. During a long career at MIT, Singer has produced two trilogies, *The Nature of Love* and *Meaning in Life*, and a string of other works that extend to music and film. The present short work sums up much of this with relaxed charm. Singer's conclusion is that the study of love shows us an irreducible pluralism of justifiable human values. The pluralism cannot be overcome by system builders, but the system builders do not labor in vain, for they sharpen the choices, and the strength of their contrasting arguments shows us why there is a pluralism. Nearly everyone can learn something from this book.—Leslie Armour, Dominican Univ. Coll., Ottawa
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Review

Philosophy of Love is marvelous...a needed defense of humanism when the world seems to be growing more pragmatic and less reflective. In addition to introducing some important themes in the philosophy of love, the book should remind humanistic philosophers why they do what they do, and it should whet the appetites of a broader audience for further reading.

(*Notre Dame Philosophy Reviews*)

Nearly everyone can learn something from this book.

(*Library Journal*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christine Pena:

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also become a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. Associate programs you got of course the knowledge even the information inside the book that improve your knowledge and information. The knowledge you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want drive more knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want feel happy read one using theme for entertaining like comic or novel. The particular Philosophy of Love: A Partial Summing-Up (The Irving Singer Library) is kind of publication which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

Dennis Gaines:

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