

PRINT: ISSN 0971-8923 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6756

JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Interdisciplinary Reflection of Contemporary Society

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J. Soc. Sci., 16(3): 187-197 (2008)

PRINT: ISSN 0971-8923 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6756

DOI: 10.31901/24566756.2008/16.03.02

Romantic Love in Heterosexual Relationships: Women's Experiences

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KEYWORDS Romantic love; qualitative research; intimacy; commitment; heterosexual relationships; power

ABSTRACT Narratives of romantic love pervade Western culture. However, the complexity of the lived experience of romantic love is not reflected in many of these. Qualitative research that addresses this complexity is largely absent in the psychological and anthropological literature. My research is an attempt to redress this oversight. Utilizing a qualitative framework and individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews with eight heterosexual women of European descent, it examines women's lived experiences of romantic love. The findings are discussed in the context of a broad range of academic theories and research on romantic love. My results indicate that romantic love has affected women in both positive and negative ways, and that the interviewed women were far more ambivalent about romantic love than popular culture would have us believe.