

# A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE STRUCTURE OF LOVE IN THE U.S. AND RUSSIA: FINDING A COMMON CORE OF CHARACTERISTICS AND NATIONAL AND GENDER DIFFERENCES<sup>1</sup>

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**A fourteen-item Likert survey in Russia and the United States was used to discover if there is a common conception of romantic love and if there are national or gender variations. Evolutionary, cultural, and popular literature on love suggests that males and female differ in their conception of romantic love and its relation to sex. But what is the relationship (if any) in similarities and differences between these national cultures and between genders. Research results showed a strong overall agreement on a common core that includes altruism, intrusive thinking, and emotional fulfillment. Also, there were national and gender differences, with nation having a stronger effect on the conception of romantic love than does gender. (Romantic love, gender, cross-cultural, cultural model, Russia, U.S.)**

Romantic, passionate love is a cultural universal (Buss 2006; Jankowiak 2008; Jankowiak and Fischer 1992). Evolutionary psychologists have stated that romantic love serves an evolutionary function as an affective “glue” that binds people together for a long enough time to feed, nurture, and instruct children to an age where they can begin to care for themselves (Buss 2006; Chisholm 1993; Fisher 2004, 1992). Evolutionary psychologists also note that different mating strategies and preferences emerge from the different sexes (Gangestad, Haselton, and Buss 2006; Schmitt 2005; Schmitt, Shackelford, and Buss 2001; Spiro 1987). Thus, contra de Rougemont (1983) and Stone (1988), romantic love is not an invention of the West or of French troubadours, but has its beginnings with the origin of our species.

If romantic love is a cultural universal, then it must have a common affective core. This core may be variably manifested, and hence concealed across cultures, particularly in those societies where arranged marriages are the normative practice, where there is patriarchy, sexual segregation, and where romantic love is

negatively sanctioned. Nevertheless, even in Muslim societies where *purdah* is expected and spouses are selected by parents or other adults, romantic love is present (Amin 2004; Abu-Lughod 2000; de Munck 1996, 1998). Surprisingly little has been written on the characteristics of romantic love cross-culturally. Thus, while it is universal, its defining characteristics are unknown. Although consisting of a sample of only two cultures, this article reports on the research seeking for both a common core of romantic love characteristics and those characteristics that vary across cultures.

The survey used a questionnaire based on criteria associated with romantic love as suggested by Fisher et al. (2002), Freud (2002), Lindholm (1995, 1998), Hendrick and Hendrick (1992, 2006), Lee (1976), Fehr (1994), Ilouz (1997), Sternberg and Grajek (1984), Sternberg (1986, 1988), Singer (1994), and Tennov (1969). The fourteen-item questionnaire covers most of the major features identified by these theorists and are common in the Russian and United States samples. Although they may also be limited to these two or similar countries, they are candidates as universal characteristics. But if romantic love is a cultural universal and romantic love theorists are right with their attributes, then aspects of a universal core of common features identified with romantic love must be found in both national cultures. Of course, further testing would test this deduction.

If romantic love is a cultural universal, then there must be a similar model of romantic love across the two cultural samples. What would that model consist of? The evolutionary literature is virtually unanimous in asserting that there is a distinction in the conception or practice of romantic love by males and females (e.g., Buss 2006; Fisher 1992; Reagan and Atkins 2006; Regan 1998). Popular literature, as in the book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* (Gray 1992), and ethnographic research also seem to agree that males and females have different practices, if not conceptions, of romantic love (Jankowiak and Mixson 2008; Hewlett 2000; Hewlett and Hewlett 2008; Shanshan du 2003; Jankowiak 2002; Rebhun 1999; Cancian 1986). There is, presumably, a common core of concepts that reflect passion as a diacritical feature of romantic love in both national cultures, and presumably there also is variation between cultures and between the two sexes. The primary concern of this research was to determine if a common core of characteristics exists for both gender and national culture in Russia and the U.S. The research also addressed the issue of whether culture or gender matters more in shaping conceptions of romantic love (at least for these two national cultures). Would there be commonalities within gender but not between genders? And which would be the stronger factor in a model of romantic love—culture or gender? To answer these questions, the research used four distinct samples: Russian males, Russian females, U.S. males, and U.S.

females. The analysis is derived from 14 Likert survey questions that were posed to Russian and U.S. informants.

### QUESTIONNAIRE DESCRIPTION

The questionnaire was developed by Victor de Munck, who modified or used quotations about romantic love that were taken from books of quotations. The questions were selected to cover the range of good to bad feelings associated with romantic love and provided a reason for the emotion (e.g., “love without finance is no good”). The aim was to evaluate the features that researchers have considered core features of romantic love: for example, Tennov’s (1969) thesis of “intrusive thinking” or “limerence,” taken originally from Stendhal, and adopted by Brehm (1988) is the question concerning thinking constantly about the lover. The question concerning “doing anything for the lover” reflects Sternberg’s (1996, 1988, 1986) idea of commitment. Questions 4 and 10 reflect Lindholm’s (1998, 1995) emphasis that romantic love requires transcendence. Question 2 reflects a Freudian (2002) view of romantic love as “aim-inhibited sex.” Most of the questions reflect the 13 psycho-physiological characteristics that Fisher et al. (2002) found associated with romantic love. These 13 characteristics are: (1) thinking that the beloved is unique; (2) attention is paid to the positive qualities of the beloved; (3) contact or thought of the beloved induces feelings of exhilaration, increased energy, heart pounding, and intense emotional arousal; (4) in adverse times, feeling connected to the beloved is magnified; (5) “intrusive thinking”; (6) feeling possessive and dependent on the beloved; (7) a desire for “union” with the beloved; (8) strong sense of altruism and concern for the beloved; (9) re-order their priorities to favor the beloved; (10) sexual attraction for the beloved; (11) “emotional union” takes precedence over sexual desire; (12) the feeling of romantic love is involuntary and not controllable; and (13) romantic love is generally temporary (Fisher et al. 2002:416–17). Our ethnographic findings indicate that Russians (and Eastern Europeans in general) view romantic love as a kind of “sickness,” temporary, and unreal (de Munck 2008, 2006).<sup>2</sup>

The questionnaire contained the following statements:

1. Love is blind.
2. Love is lust concealed.
3. Sex without love leaves sadness in its wake.
4. To burn with love is to be raised to heaven.
5. To burn with love is to be cast down to hell sooner or later.
6. Only the immature “love at first sight.”
7. I will do anything for the person I love.
8. I constantly think about the person I am in love with (when I am in love).

9. Romantic love is the supreme happiness of life.
10. Love rules without rules.
11. Love makes fools of us all.
12. Romance without finance is no good.
13. Love is often the encounter of two weaknesses.
14. My love will make my partner a stronger and better person.

The respondents were asked to rate each statement on a five-point scale:

- 5 Completely agree
- 4 Mostly agree
- 3 The statement is true some of the time and not true other times
- 2 Mostly disagree
- 1 Completely disagree

The American and Russian samples shown below were obtained by approaching people in public places in both rural and urban areas of Russia and the U.S. The samples are approximately half from urban areas (Moscow and New York City, respectively) and half from rural areas, each about one hundred miles outside the city. The respondents were 65 American males, 130 American females, 40 Russian males, and 66 Russian females; 106 in all.

#### RESULTS: THE STRUCTURE OF COMMONALITY

The research aimed to examine differences and similarities in cultural models of romantic love between Russia and the United States and determine the respective effects of gender and national culture on conceptions of romantic love. The cultural models of love for all four samples are essentially similar (see Table 1). The table shows the means for each of the variables.

Table 2 presents the relative ratings for each of the variables among the four subsamples and illustrates how similar is their characterization of romantic love. The love characteristics rated high within each subsample tend to be rated high within all other subsamples, as seen in Table 2.

The concordance between these groups will look especially salient if love characteristics were put into three groups: A: very important; B: important; and C: unimportant. Group A comprises features that got ranks 1–4 for each sample; B: 5–8; and C: 9–14 (see Table 3).

Table 1  
The Means for Each Survey Question for the Four Samples

	<i>U.S. females</i>	<i>U.S. males</i>	<i>Russian females</i>	<i>Russian males</i>
"I will do anything for the person I love"	4.18	4.21	4.41	3.98
"I constantly think about the person I am in love with (when I am in love)"	4.11	4.22	3.64	4.05
"Love rules without rules"	4.07	3.47	3.62	3.48
"Romantic love is the supreme happiness of life"	3.78	3.67	3.71	3.86
"Love is blind"	3.60	3.44	3.61	3.50
"Sex without love leaves sadness in its wake"	3.55	2.96	3.29	2.93
"My love will make my partner a stronger and better person"	3.48	3.53	3.59	3.65
"To burn with love is to be raised to heaven"	3.43	3.25	3.71	3.52
"Love makes fools of us all"	3.32	3.47	2.74	2.98
"Only the immature 'love at first sight'"	2.36	2.37	1.90	2.30
"Love is lust concealed"	2.31	2.61	2.43	2.43
"Love is often the encounter of two weaknesses"	2.05	2.32	2.20	2.39
"Romance without finance is no good"	1.92	2.06	3.03	2.95
"To burn with love is to be cast down to hell sooner or later"	1.70	1.93	2.44	2.48

Table 2  
The Rankings for Each Survey Question for the Four Samples

	<i>U.S. females</i>	<i>U.S. males</i>	<i>Russian females</i>	<i>Russian males</i>
"I will do anything for the person I love"	1	2	1	2
"I constantly think about the person I am in love with (when I am in love)"	2	1	4	1
"Love rules without rules"	3	5	5	7
"Romantic love is the supreme happiness of life"	4	3	2	3
"Love is blind"	5	7	6	6
"Sex without love leaves sadness in its wake"	6	9	8	10
"My love will make my partner a stronger and better person"	7	4	7	4
"To burn with love is to be raised to heaven"	8	8	3	5
"Love makes fools of us all"	9	6	10	8
"Only the immature 'love at first sight'"	10	11	14	14
"Love is lust concealed"	11	10	12	12
"Love is often the encounter of two weaknesses"	12	12	13	13
"Romance without finance is no good"	13	13	9	9
"To burn with love is to be cast down to hell sooner or later"	14	14	11	11

Table 3  
Group Rankings of Variables for Each Question for the Four Samples

	<i>U.S. females</i>	<i>U.S. males</i>	<i>Russian females</i>	<i>Russian males</i>
“I will do anything for the person I love”	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>
“I constantly think about the person I am in love with (when I am in love)”	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>
“Love rules without rules”	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>
“Romantic love is the supreme happiness of life”	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>
“Love is blind”	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
“Sex without love leaves sadness in its wake”	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>
“My love will make my partner a stronger and better person”	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>
“To burn with love is to be raised to heaven”	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>
“Love makes fools of us all”	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>
“Only the immature ‘love at first sight’”	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
“Love is lust concealed”	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>
“Love is often the encounter of two weaknesses”	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>
“Romance without finance is no good”	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>
“To burn with love is to be cast down to hell sooner or later”	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>

In all four samples, most respondents expressed very high degrees of agreement with the following statements:

1. "I will do anything for the person I love";
2. "I constantly think about the person I am in love with (when I am in love)"; and
3. "Romantic love is the supreme happiness of life."

Thus, these statements could be considered as the core characteristics of the cultural model of romantic love common for all four samples. These characteristics refer to altruism (a social factor), cognition (as thought), and emotional fulfillment. They are slightly different from the core attributes posed by bio-behavioral theorists (Shaver and Milkulincer 2006; Kendrick 2006; Fisher 2004, 1992; Fisher et al. 2002; Sternberg 1988; Lee 1998, 1976; Hendrick and Hendrick 2006; Fehr 2006, 1994). Altruism, cognition, and emotional fulfillment incorporate aspects of these researchers' models of romantic love or definitional features they identify with it. As such we claim that these three characteristics are a simpler and clearer model of the three culturally universal features of romantic love.

Of course, a sample of two nations is inadequate for asserting the core features of a universal definition of romantic love; but given how well these features reflect experts' notions of romantic love, we propose that our tripartite model is thus far the best candidate for a universal and pithy definition of romantic love.

The statement "My love will make my partner a stronger and better person" occupies a special position. Both Russian and U.S. males express high degrees of agreement with it, whereas both Russian and U.S. females show only intermediate degrees of agreement. This appears to confront characteristics of two different gender models of love crossing the cultures of the two nations.

Russian males, U.S. males, and U.S. females display only intermediate degrees of agreement with the statement "To burn with love is to be raised to heaven," whereas Russian females tend to highly agree with it. This is the most idealistically romantic statement in the questionnaire and is suggestive of the type of romance portrayed by Leo Tolstoy. This kind of vision of love as a pure good, unhooked and unconstrained by reality, is likely to resonate with Russian female students who have read Tolstoy.

American females highly agree with the statement "Love rules without rules," whereas in all the other subsamples only an intermediate degree of agreement is found. This fits with the individualistic and "cocooning" theme of romantic love in the West, as described by Holland and Eisenhart (1990), Cancian (1986), and Ilouz (1997), that U.S. females view love as a retreat into a "world of romance" that has its own dyadic rules, distinct from social norms. Thus, the U.S. female conception of romantic love foregrounds the uniqueness of the dyad—its individuality—whereas the Russian female version emphasizes



the exultation of love, but an exultation that is not necessarily private, as heaven is populated by more people than merely the couple in love.

One more gender-specific pattern appears with respect to the statement, "Sex without love leaves sadness in its wake," with which most Russian and American females show intermediate level agreement, whereas both American and Russian males tend to strongly disagree. This is to be expected from evolutionary psychology theory, which states that an optimum strategy for reproductive success for males is to mate with as many women as possible, whereas a similar promiscuous strategy is problematic for females, for whom reproductive success in foraging societies is linked to additional support (usually by the father) for their offspring (Regan and Atkins 2006; Schmitt 2005; Schmitt, Shackelford, and Buss 2001; Fisher 2004, 1992). Thus, for females, sex is typically part of their conception of love, but may be independent of love for men.

There are also five statements with which most representatives of all the samples strongly disagree: "Romance without finance is no good," "To burn with love is to be cast down to hell sooner or later," "Love is lust concealed," "Love is often the encounter of two weaknesses," "Only the immature love at first sight." There is, it appears an almost perfect consensus on the opposite ends of the "spectrum"—at the points of most agreement and disagreement. Representatives of all four samples tend to strongly agree or strongly disagree with these statements. The points of intermediate agreement are those cases of imperfect consensus.

There was not a single case where the representatives of one sample agreed strongly on any one statement but where the representatives of any of the other samples would just as strongly disagree with that statement. This seems to confirm the presence of one cultural model of romantic love in Russia and the U.S. for both males and females. The presence of such a model seems also confirmed by the following correlation matrix derived from the data presented in Table 1 (see Table 4).

Table 4  
Correlation Matrix of Survey Responses Between the Four Samples

		<i>U.S. Females</i>	<i>U.S. Males</i>	<i>Russian Females</i>	<i>Russian Males</i>
<i>U.S. Females</i>	Spearman's Rho		+ .9	+ .8	+ .79
	Sig. (1-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001
<i>U.S. Males</i>	Spearman's Rho	+ .9		+ .76	+ .87
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.000		.001	<.001
<i>Russian Females</i>	Spearman's Rho	+ .8	+ .76		+ .92
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.000	.001		<.001
<i>Russian Males</i>	Spearman's Rho	+ .79	+ .87	+ .92	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	

All the samples display very strong and significant correlations among themselves (between .76 and .92). This statistically confirms the impression obtained from our previous analysis that there was consensus between the four samples with which they agreed highly and those with which they disagreed highly. This pattern of agreement provides sufficient grounds to claim that there is one basic cultural model of romantic love common to all the samples. This does not mean that the 14 questions capture the whole of that model, but they do imply that such a cross-cultural model exists.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF DIFFERENCE

Simply because there is a common model of romantic love held by all four samples does not mean that there are no interesting variations between them in the models. For instance, the levels of agreement between the four samples are not quite the same and, further, that there is a direction or pattern to these differences. The strongest agreement is between Russian males and Russian females (+0.92) and between U.S. males and U.S. females (+0.9). The agreement between U.S. males and Russian males (+0.87) and U.S. females and Russian females (+0.8) is weaker, but it is still stronger than the level of agreement between the samples without any national or gender overlap (U.S. females and Russian males [+0.79] and Russian females and U.S. males [+0.76]).

This suggests the presence of specific Russian and U.S. variations on the cultural model of romantic love, as well as female and male variations. Note that these data also suggest (contrary to the impression which the analysis of

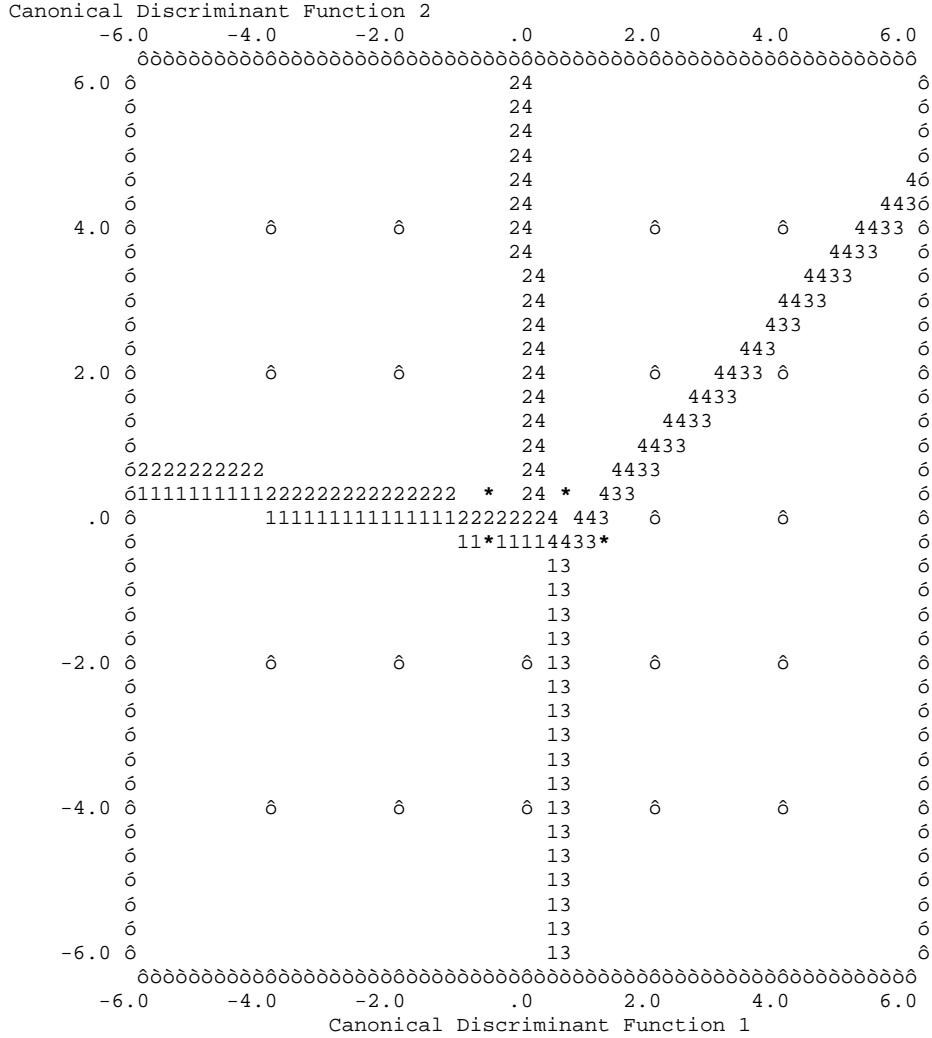
Tables 1–3 might have produced) that the national models of love turn out to be more distinct than those for gender. This is particularly interesting in view of the fact that females are believed to think similarly about romance. In other words, U.S. females have more in common with U.S. males in their conception of romantic love than they do with Russian females, and similarly, Russian males have more in common with Russian females in their conception of romantic love than they do with U.S. males.

Initially we showed how the data suggested a common cross-cultural core of romantic love attributes. Now we suggest that conceptions of romantic love are not homogeneous and that the variations that exist occur in predictable ways—increasing as one moves between nations, genders, and then between nations and gender. But, given the strong sense of a common core, are these differences significant and, if so, what are they? To examine these differences in more detail we performed a discriminant analysis on the data. The results are presented in Table 5 and Figures 1 and 2.

Table 5  
A Discriminant Analysis of the Questionnaire Across the Four Samples

Function	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	.612	82.8	82.8
2	.105	14.2	97.0
3	.022	3.0	100.0

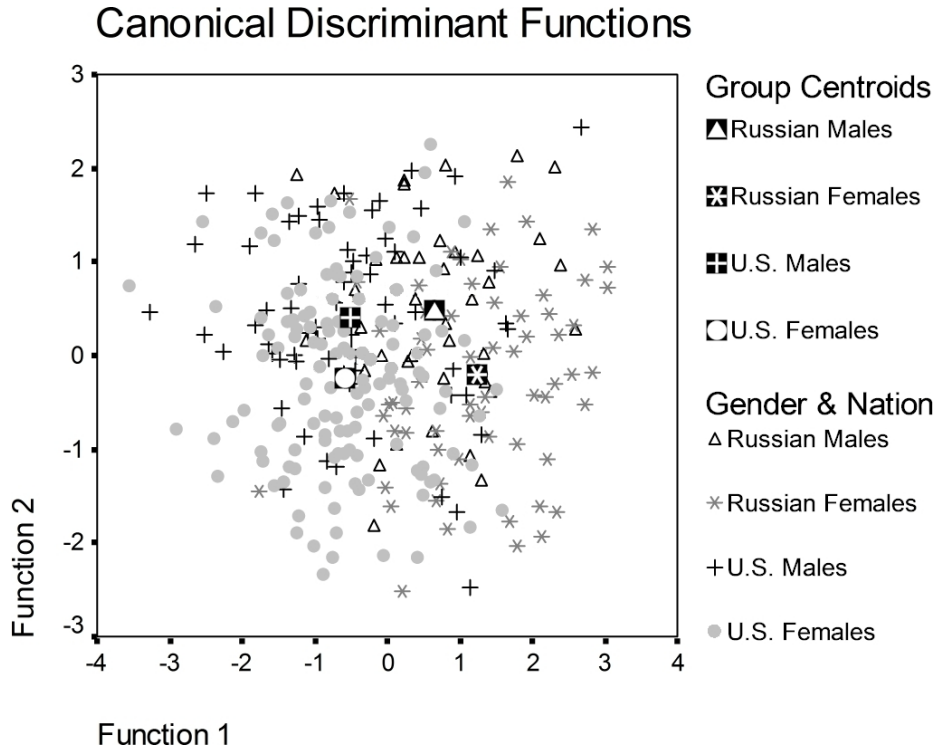
Figure 1  
Territorial Map of the First Two Functions for the Four Samples



Key:

- 1=U.S. Females                      3=Russian Females                      \* indicates a group centroid
- 2=U.S. Males                        4=Russian Males

Figure 2  
Members of the Four Samples and Their Respective “Centroids”



A discriminant analysis detected three functions that are totally incomparable between themselves. The first function explains 83 percent of all variance (i.e., where the common core is located), whereas the second explains just 14 percent of the variance and the third is totally insignificant. This appraisal of functional incomparability is confirmed by the Wilks’ Lambda analysis (see Table 6), showing that function one is the only function needed to explain all the significant discriminations (or variance) between the four samples in classifying the 14 survey questions.

At first glance the classification results do not seem entirely convincing, as only half the original cases were classified “correctly.” On the one hand, this information suggests a very significant (i.e., 50 percent!) overlap between four cultural models of romantic love. On further analysis most of the “misclassifications” do not appear to be real (or total) misclassifications. Indeed, most “misclassified” U.S. females were classified as U.S. (but not Russian!) males, most U.S. males—as U.S. (but not Russian!) females, most Russian males—as Russian (but not U.S.!) females, and most Russian females—as Russian

Table 6  
Wilks' Lambda Analysis of the Questionnaire

<i>Test of Function(s)</i>	<i>Wilks' Lambda</i>	<i>Chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1 through 3	0.5	174.4	42	.000
2 through 3	0.89	35.4	26	.103
3	0.98	6.4	12	.892

The general classification results look as follows (Table 7):

Table 7  
Classification Results of the Questionnaire for the Four Samples

		Predicted Group Membership				Total	
		Nation and Gender	U.S. females	U.S. males	Russian females	Russian males	
<b>Original</b>	<b>Count</b>	U.S. females	63	38	16	<b>13</b>	130
		U.S. males	17	29	<b>9</b>	10	65
		Russian females	10	<b>3</b>	40	13	66
		Russian males	<b>5</b>	6	11	18	40
	<b>%</b>	U.S. females	48.5	29.2	12.3	<b>10.0</b>	100.0
		U.S. males	26.2	44.6	<b>13.8</b>	15.4	100.0
		Russian males	15.2	<b>4.5</b>	60.6	19.7	100.0
		Russian males	<b>12.5</b>	15.0	27.5	45.0	100.0

NOTE: 50 percent of original grouped cases correctly classified.

(but not U.S.!) males. Moreover, when nation was misclassified, then in most cases gender was correctly classified. Only a minority (approximately 10 percent of all cases) may be treated as complete misclassifications (see the bolded cross-diagonal in Table 7). That gender was misclassified much more frequently than nation only further confirms a previous observation that national models of love are more distinct than gender-specific ones.

We now consider the territorial map and combined-group scatterplot (see Figures 1 and 2 and Table 8) in order to describe the predicted pattern of variation in the models of the four samples.

Table 8  
Functions at Group Centroids

Gender and Nation	Function		
	1	2	3
<i>U.S. females</i>	-.581	-.248	-.06
<i>U.S. males</i>	-.510	.413	.185
<i>Russian females</i>	1.259	-.209	.107
<i>Russian males</i>	.640	.479	-.283

The territorial map provides an abstract visual representation of the differences between these four samples. It shows that dimension one (the most significant dimension) distinguishes the “territory” of U.S. males and females (marked by “1” and “2”) from that of Russian females (“3”) and males (“4”). The central area where the numbers “1,” “2,” “3,” and “4” cluster marks the group centroid and shows that there is a common center of gravity marked by four centroids. This is more explicitly represented in Figure 2.

Clearly, the national samples are significantly different in the first (most important) dimension, with Russian samples having more positive values (which turn out to be most evident for Russian females). Note that Russian females differ more from U.S. females than Russian males do from U.S. males. The gender samples show main differences in the second (much less important dimension), with male samples having more positive values. The structure matrix of Table 9 defines those two dimensions.

Table 9  
The Structure Matrix

	Function		
	1	2	3
"Romance without finance is no good"	<b>.52</b>	.17	-.04
"Love makes fools of us all"	<b>-.30</b>	<b>.22</b>	.22
"Only the immature love at first sight"	<b>-.20</b>	.12	-.17
"Sex without love leaves sadness in its wake"	-.11	<b>-.58</b>	-.11
"To burn with love is to be cast down to hell sooner or later"	<b>.35</b>	<b>.40</b>	-.07
"I will do anything for the person I love"	-.19	<b>.31</b>	-.23
"Love rules without rules"	-.04	-.13	-.11
"My love will make my partner a stronger and better person"	.03	.08	.03
"Love is lust concealed"	.02	.17	.51
"I constantly think about the person I am in love with (when I am in love)"	.09	-.13	.50
"Romantic love is the supreme happiness of life"	-.00	.06	-.25
"To burn with love is to be raised to heaven"	.18	-.04	-.19
"Love is blind"	.03	-.13	-.17
"Love is the encounter of two weaknesses"	.05	.14	.16

Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant functions. Variables ordered by absolute size of correlation within function.

Starting with the second dimension, which discriminates mainly between gender-specific models of love, the main difference is produced by the constellation of relatively high agreement on the part of male with the statements "To burn with love is to be cast down to hell sooner or later," "I will do anything for the person I love," and (to a lesser extent) "Love makes fools of us all," and the significantly higher agreement on the part of females with the statement "Sex without love leaves sadness in its wake." What is the difference expressed by the statements linked to males and the one linked to females? We interpret the statements of males to reflect a dialectic between their notion of themselves as dominant in a relationship with a female while, at the same time, that dominance



is undermined by the very nature of a relationship based on pure affect (i.e., love), a domain that is culturally associated with females (Cancian 1986). Thus, these statements may suggest a nature:culture::male:female lens through which males see love relationships (see Ortner 1974). The negative consequences associated with a purely emotional tie are signified by the other two statements. The statement that most discriminates females from males is the one that explicitly separates sex and love with the consequence that sex without love leaves only sadness. This is not the view of males, but is of females, and is the primary discriminating factor between them. Sex without love may still be pleasurable for females, but sadness is believed to be its consequence.

Fisher's (1992) findings on romantic love, gender differences, and reasons why men stray support our results. However, the difference between (gender) samples in the second dimension is only marginally significant. The difference between (national) samples in the first dimension is much more significant; what is more, it is statistically significant beyond any doubt. But what is this difference?

The structure matrix shows that the main loadings are produced by the statements "Romance without finance is no good" and "To burn with love is to be cast down to hell sooner or later," with which Russian respondents tend to agree significantly more than Americans, and the statements "Love makes fools of us all" and "Only the immature love at first sight," displaying the opposite reaction pattern.

It is interesting that while all the samples turn out to be in perfect agreement as regards cultural models of "happy love," the main differences between samples are observable with respect to the models of "unhappy love." While all the samples are in perfect agreement as regards the positive sides of romantic love relations, these are models of its negative aspects which turn out to be significantly different. Russians turn out to be relatively more concerned with the financial respects of romantic relations and the emotional hardships in connection with falling out of love, whereas Americans seem to be more concerned with the loss of self-control as a result of romantic love relations.

## CONCLUSIONS

There have been few studies that have attempted to discover the common core of cross-cultural features comprising romantic love. We used a questionnaire of popular quotes based on characteristics described as general features of romantic love by Fisher et al. (2002) and by other specialists on the subject. The discriminant group analysis of the 14 questions showed that the eigen value of the first factor was .612 and accounted for 82.8 percent of the variance. This demonstrates that the four samples share a cultural core of affective features

that comprise their conception of romantic love. The common affective core for Russian males and females and U.S. males and females consists of three characteristics—altruism (a social act), intrusive thinking (cognition) and supreme happiness (emotional fulfillment). Though this study consists of only two nations, we posit that this core should be common with Euro-Americans and may even exist universally. These claims need be tested. Of course, there may be other characteristics that were not included in the 14 questions, but it is hard to imagine that the high correlation across these two cultures of all the features, and particularly the three features, is limited to these two large and culturally influential nations. It is improbable that these national cultures share a common core of characteristics peculiar to them and that there is still a cultural universal set of characteristics that were not identified by the 14 general questions. This is particularly so, as the questionnaire was constructed to recapitulate and test features reported to be associated with romantic love by major love researchers. Further, it seems that these characteristics can serve as a simple and clear model of the three culturally universal features of romantic love.

Variations exist across gender and national cultures. The correlation between U.S. males and females is .9 and the correlation between Russian males and females is .92; the correlation between U.S. and Russian males is .87 and the correlation between U.S. and Russian females is .8. The correlation between Russian males and U.S. females is .79 and between Russian females and U.S. males is .76. From this one can conclude that the greatest correlation is within national cultures. Second is the correlation between genders; and the lowest ranked correlation is where there is no national or gender overlap. Gender differences were found on the relationship between sex and love, with both Russian and U.S. males able to separate them, and Russian and U.S. females more likely to see them as connected, so that sex without love is more problematic for females than for males. Females also tend to see romantic love as a primary motivational force, with U.S. females strongly agreeing with the statement "Love rules without rules," and Russian females strongly agreeing with the statement "To burn with love is to be raised to heaven." Both are highly idealistic, transcendental types of statements and are strongly suggestive of why females agree with the statement "Sex without love leaves sadness in its way," and males, from both cultures, disagree with the statement.

Although the correlations strongly suggest that national culture has greater importance than gender for cultural models of romantic love, not all the correlations are very high and statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). Therefore, we conclude that there is a core model of romantic love that subsumes cultural and gender differences, but further cross-cultural research should be done to extend our findings to other national cultures.

## NOTES

1. Support for this research was provided by a grant from the National Science Foundation.
2. The authors' ethnographic work in Russia, Lithuania, and Macedonia indicate that in all three countries the notion of romantic love as unreal, temporary, and a period of "craziness" is extensively cited by informants.

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