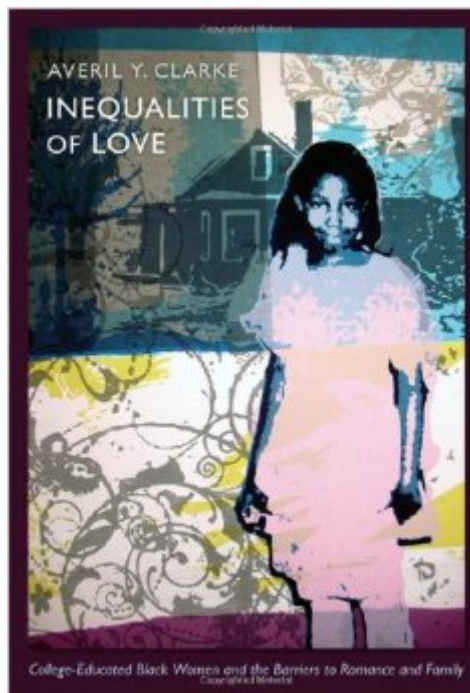


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Inequalities Of Love: College-Educated Black Women And The Barriers To Romance And Family (Politics, History, And Culture)



Synopsis

Inequalities of Love uses the personal narratives of college-educated black women to describe the difficulties they face when trying to date, marry, and have children. While conventional wisdom suggests that all women, regardless of race, must sacrifice romance and family for advanced educations and professional careers, Averil Y. Clarke's research reveals that educated black women's disadvantages in romance and starting a family are consequences of a system of racial inequality and discrimination. The author analyzes the accounts of black women who repeatedly return to incompatible partners as they lose hope of finding "Mr. Right" and reject unwed parenting because it seems to affirm a negative stereotype of black women's sexuality that is inconsistent with their personal and professional identities. She uses national survey data to compare college-educated black women's experiences of romance, reproduction, and family to those of less-educated black women and those of white and Hispanic women with degrees. She reports that degreed black women's lives include less marriage and sex, and more unwanted pregnancy, abortion, and unwed childbearing than college-educated white and Hispanic women. Black women's romantic limitations matter because they constitute deprivation and constraint in romance and because they illuminate important links between race, class, and gender inequality in the United States. Clarke's discussion of the inequities that black women experience in romance highlights the connections between individuals' sexual and reproductive decisions, their performance of professional or elite class identities, and the avoidance of racial stigma.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The author compares college-educated Black women to non-college Black women, degreed white women, and degreed Latinas in terms of contraceptive use, dating, reproduction, etc. By discussing Latinas, the author breaks the oft-condemned Black-white paradigm. But do note that Asian women don't come up here. The author uses statistics to ask why degreed Black women have as many (or as few) children as their non-Black degreed counterparts, but are married at far, far smaller rates. I'm interested in this topic as an Afrocentric militant. However, this argument is largely numbers-driven and may frustrate many casual readers. I was first introduced to this book from an Internet article that made the point that while First Lady Michelle Obama is happy married, many a degreed African-American woman is not. The article praised this author's book, but summarized it in a more succinct, interesting fashion. Because this topic is old-hat to many folk, they may not put up with this dry text and its 300-plus pages. "Waiting to Exhale" never comes up in the book, but it may be in the back of many readers' minds. This book made me think about two high school male friends I have. One of my friends had a Black girlfriend in college and she made him the center of her world. When he broke up with her, she was just destroyed by it. As she was crying in front of me, I was forced to ask her, "Girl! Did you go to college to get your M.R.S.!?!?" On the other hand, a different friend's girlfriend broke up with him a year after college. She assumed that if she had him during college, she'd get a man like him or better once she returned to the big city in which we all live. However, that didn't happen, for "Waiting to Exhale" reasons.

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