

LOVE AND GLOBALIZATION

Transformations of Intimacy
in the Contemporary World

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A Fluid Mechanics of Erotas and Aghape Family Planning and Maternal Consumption in Contemporary Greece

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A decade ago when I was living in Athens, I was having dinner with a Greek friend when conversation turned to the topic of romantic relationships: "From my perspective," Moira said, alluding to her divorcée status and contrasting her 40 years to my 25, "it's more difficult for women today. Now that we [Athenian women] have the freedom to live on our own, more educational and occupational opportunities—now we don't know what we want. No one knows how to live in today's society." The question of how to live and love amid social and economic "Europeanization" was at the center of ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in Athens between 1993 and 1995, exploring the impact of global forces on middle-class women's reproductive subjectivity (Paxson 2004). Such forces materialize in family planning rhetoric that routs personal choice and rational action as a vehicle for properly modern subjectivity. They crystallize too as new opportunities and demands for consumerism. This chapter traces how two quite different sorts of transnational trends—public health campaigns developed in Britain and the United States to promote safe sex worldwide, and the decentralized, market-driven consumerization of motherhood—have generated friction within local Athenian "structures of feeling" concerning sexual relations and parental responsibilities. Stories of romantic and maternal love, I argue, are telling of how local communities selectively realize and rechannel globalizing influences. The ways people talk about their experiences of and hopes for love scale the individual to household and family, and to community and nation. Tensions between ideologies and experiences of love lie at the heart of women's visions of a modern, gendered subjectivity that remains recognizably Greek.

To comprehend how Athenians perceive social change and, through the language of love, reflect critically on it, we must disaggregate *love* into the Greek notions of *erotas* and *aghape*. *Erotas* and *aghape* are not merely Greek words for "love," nor do they point us to fixed ideologies of affective relationships. Rather, I take the terms to constitute what Raymond Williams calls "structures of feeling"—*erotas* and

aghape are cultural hypotheses that both Athenians and I use to understand "meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt," as well as the relationship between these "feelings"—"elements of impulse, restraint, and tone"—and more formally held systematic beliefs about, say, marriage, romance, sexual agency, and motherhood (1977:132). Erotas—passionate, physical love that Athenians described to me as "crazy" and "fleeting"—is distinct from aghape, an enduring love epitomized by a mother's care for her child, and also increasingly present in cultural scripts for romance. Erotas eclipses or transcends the self; when you're "in erotas, you can think of nothing," one unmarried 40-year-old woman said to me. In time, though, erotas may mature into aghape. Aghape makes porous the boundaries between self and other and is characterized as a sort of mutual dependency. Adult siblings may say, "We are in love with one another" (*aghapiómaste*), to indicate how involved they are in each other's daily affairs. But these local meanings of love, of erotas and aghape, are unsettled.

In the first half of this chapter, I address how in the sphere of heterosexual relations citations of romantic love—of the erotas that can transform into aghape—are challenged by imported family-planning and safe-sex campaigns. By the 1980s, the abortion rate had climbed to as high as three times the live birth rate and, by the end of the century, the national total fertility rate was among the lowest in the world, at 1.28 children per woman of reproductive age. Amid national anxiety over demographic decline, nongovernmental and state-sponsored family planning initiatives have largely aimed at reducing the abortion rate by encouraging the use of condoms and medical contraceptives, primarily the pill and intrauterine devices. To do so, family planners' rhetoric has redefined the role of "love" in sexual relations—to change the meaning of erotas. This strategy has not worked out as planned. To show how family planners operate on erroneous assumptions about Greek culture, I juxtapose local visions of erotas and their implications for premarital and marital sexual expectations with public health assumptions about a "culture" of intimacy that family planners believe impedes people's rational use of medical contraceptives. Nevertheless, in forwarding imported models of love and responsibility, family planning rhetoric does contribute to a new turbulence in how Athenians speak of heterosexual relations.

In the second half of this chapter, I turn to how the aghape of maternal practice is both central to and newly problematic for women's subjectivity in a consumer age. Compared with family planning attempts to encourage the adoption of prophylactic mentalities through new meanings of love and responsibility, consumerism, at least among the middle-class women I met, enjoys a smoother path of incorporation into longstanding values and virtues of maternal sacrifice. In both cases, erotas and aghape offer Athenians a distinctly Greek vocabulary with which to call into question some of the cultural and social transformations implicit, if not fully realized, in biomedical visions of the sexual subject and in the consumerization of maternal care. Using the metaphors of fluid mechanics, I conclude with some thoughts about what attention to love might teach us about global flows.

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Erotas in the Time of Prophylaxis

Greek romantic ideology suggests that erotas “happens to” men and women and is to be valued precisely because it defies human will. As 40-year-old Phoebe, an office administrator, spoke to me of romance:

What’s the difference between aghape and erotas? Erotas, with the meaning of sex, or of passion that you can feel first for an individual, is passing. Aghape is something that stays forever. I believe that as you set out in your relationship with an individual, you start out first with erotas, this attraction that exists between two persons, and then either it will fade, it will never become anything else, or it will be followed by aghape and this lasts, certainly, for all the years of your life.

While erotas may lead to marriage, by its very nature it fades. Greeks have not always expected erotas to endure in marriage. Prostitution and a gendered double standard concerning extramarital affairs—including sexual encounters between men—have been built into the architecture of the “classic Greek family.” In the recollected agrarian past, when marriages were often arranged by a young couple’s parents through a marriage broker, expectations for marital relationships were oriented toward economic collaboration, including the reproduction of heirs, rather than erotic or emotional fulfillment. The Greek word for spouse, *sizygos*, means “under the same yoke.” While husband and wife shared common burdens, “the father was the chief,” as one woman in her seventies put it to me. His patriarchal authority was never openly questioned, although, as Ernestine Friedl (1967) has pointed out, that never precluded women from manipulating events behind men’s backs. Nonetheless, only a “fortunate” couple enjoyed a relationship of aghape.

As elsewhere, urbanization, industrialization, and the commercial consolidation of agriculture, alongside women’s increased educational opportunities and imported models of “love marriages,” have led to social criticism, championed by the Europeanizing Greek state, of traditional dowry arrangements and arranged marriages (see Hirsch 2003 for a comparative discussion). More and more since the 1980s, with couples dating and marrying “for love” rather than because their families have arranged their marriage, Athenian women and men have come to expect the erotas of attraction to mellow into a marriage of aghape and *filia* (the love of friendship). According to 25-year-old Eva (two years before becoming engaged to a man from her natal village in northern Greece), “After erotas comes aghape. When I’m in erotas [*erotevmeni*] I have a passion for this man. I like him. I want him [sexually]. Then after a while I believe that the passion and my erotas will continue to exist, but aghape will prevail.” If it does not, no-fault divorce—introduced in the 1980s when Greece joined the European Economic Community—is increasingly considered appropriate. My friend Moira divorced because her husband expected her to find pleasure in his pleasures. Phoebe divorced after eight years of marriage because she and her husband “couldn’t communicate.” Erotas for these women failed to flower

into marital aghape. That Greeks view physical attraction and sexual experience as preceding and potentially leading to the enduring love of aghape remains a point of pride for Athenians. Several explained this point to me, contrasting it to a more puritanical way of doing things in America or Britain—Greeks are often amused that Anglo-Americans might wish to “save” sex for their “soul mates,” as though a soul mate could be discovered without erotic experience. In a modern Greek ideology of romantic love, erotas, simply put, is a gamble on aghape.

This notion is conceptually consistent with the most widespread method of pregnancy prevention in Greece, what is called “being careful,” which includes withdrawal and the rhythm method (abstinence during the fertile days of a woman’s menstrual cycle) (Symeonidou 1990; Apostolopoulou 1994; Emke-Poulopoulou 1994). Unlike the pill or intrauterine device, women do not control these methods. Their success depends on the regularity of a woman’s menstrual cycle and the co-operation of her male partner. Withdrawal and the rhythm method can work rather successfully (Greer 1984; Schneider and Schneider 1995), but success requires communication and understanding—precisely those qualities that women I interviewed most frequently cited as elements of a successful marriage; they are qualities of aghape. If women with “not nice” husbands had to resort to repeat abortion, women with “good” husbands who cooperated in “being careful” were spared the “necessary evil” (*anangeo kako*) of abortion.

Middle-aged women explained to me that their mothers and grandmothers “discovered” abortion to limit their families to a responsible size. The upheaval, famine, and urban relocation of World War II and the subsequent Greek Civil War triggered a dramatic fertility decline. Following a decade of war, state industry and an urban civil service grew with seed money from the Marshall Plan. As production moved out of the agrarian household, children were transformed, as one grandmother put it to me, from “hands” useful in increasing family wealth to “mouths” needing to be fed (Shorter 1975; Katz 1990; Greenhalgh 1995). Greece did not see a postwar “baby boom.” In the 1950s, just as abortion was criminalized, doctors quietly took over its practice from midwives, effectively medicalizing abortion as a routine gynecological procedure often described as “bringing on” a woman’s period. For women who already had the number of children they could raise appropriately, abortion offered a behind-the-scenes back-up to the contraceptive methods they knew, including natural sponges doused in lemon juice, but primarily “being careful” (condoms have been associated with prostitution and extramarital affairs). For physicians, abortion became a reliable source of income, tax free because it was an under-the-table exchange of service for cash. A common perception among women today is that for decades, callous doctors withheld from them information about medical contraception to protect this source of income (and the contraceptive pill continues to be associated with cancer, a notion many women say they learned from their doctors). In subsequent generations, younger women who grew up watching their mothers have abortions to limit family size began turning to abortion earlier in their lives, to delay childbearing.

In interviews, while women explained to me that abortion became com-

mon practice within patriarchal marriages that have lacked “communication” and aghape—and because doctors “would pounce on you” to perform them—family planners tended to emphasize a different element of “traditional Greek culture,” a conceptual fusing of sex and reproduction. Family planning advocates, including physicians and health educators, argue that abortion is more culturally acceptable to Greeks than modern contraception because abortion, unlike barrier or hormonal contraceptives, does not disrupt a “traditional” procreative equation between “making love” (*kani erota*) and “making children” (*kani pedhi*). As I see it, family planners, most having trained in the United States or Britain, have adopted a biomedical understanding of “sex” as a discrete act, whereas erotas is fundamentally relational and, moreover, unfolds within a power dynamic that, in heterosexual relations, is deeply gendered (Paxson 2002, 2004). That family planners have mistaken erotas as “Greek” for a biomedical definition of “sex” (that act which leads to conception) has generated static in their prophylactic message.

Believing, anachronistically, that an agrarian-based procreative ethic of sex held sway in Greece well into the 1990s, and that this (rather than, say, patriarchal power dynamics) accounted for why it was taboo for women to talk about sex with their husbands, family planners seek to reframe appropriate sex as prophylactic sex by conceptually separating sex and reproduction. They promote a pleasure ethic of sex—but one that overlooks the cultural logics that transform erotas into aghape. Greek family planning brochures and condom advertisements enjoin women and men to “enjoy life and erotic love” (see Paxson 2002, 2005). The message is to have as much sex as you want, with whomever you want—as long as you make the correct “choice” to use prophylactics. Adults are coached that they will be best able to choose to act appropriately—that is, prophylactically—“in the heat of the moment” if they adopt a modern “philosophy of life”: the conscious exercise of calculated reason to maximize personal interest. As a family planning advocate editorialized in a Greek women’s magazine, to establish prophylactic practice among adolescents, “the meaning of erotas” must include a “profound respect for the body—our own and others” (Doxiadi-Trip 1993:321). But this revises the ideology of erotas. Local understanding has figured the body as the subject of erotas; when one is “in erotas,” one’s body, not mind, exercises agency. In contrast, safe sex and family planning rhetoric works to reframe the body as the proper object of erotic love, serviced by the will guided by one’s mind. An implicit message of safe sex campaigns is “have” sex and love thyself.

On the view of safe sex, erotic pleasure can and should be a matter of mental attitude. A similar configuration of pleasure and subjectivity appeared in the April 1997 American issue of *Glamour* magazine. An editorial column entitled, “How to Make Condom Use a Habit” advised readers, besides carrying a condom with you:

It might also help to think about what kind of person you want to be. Insisting on condom use makes you an advocate on your own behalf and shows that you expect your partner to treat you with respect. Protecting yourself brings

the pleasure of behaving as a responsible adult; it may even move you to a new level of self-respect.

Asked to bring erotas under the umbrella of rational action, women and men are promised they will derive a new sexual pleasure from the knowledge that, by looking out for themselves in protecting against disease and inopportune pregnancy, they are, indirectly, looking out for their loved ones. In this sense, aghape is upheld as a precondition of erotas. No longer the ideal telos of erotas, aghape itself becomes a resource for erotic pleasure.

As I see it, the public health attempt to reformulate erotas suffers from a misguided reading of the cultural role of erotas. Family planners overemphasize the productive, procreative value of sex in so-called traditional Greece. Yes, making love has led to making babies—but not every time. Nadia instructed me about natural uncertainties that, in her view, undermine the scientific rationale for oral contraceptives.

There are women who can conceive only two to three times in all their life, and not because of [secondary sterility following] abortion. It's clearly this fertility of theirs, you understand. Now some scientists admit it and some don't admit it. Whatever the scientific research says, I believe that the woman does not conceive every month during her dangerous days. I know this both from personal experience and from friends, that when you make love one day it doesn't [necessarily] mean you conceive a child. When conceptions are dangerous [i.e., during the fertile days of the menstrual cycle], it happens more easily, this has happened, and it has also happened that you can't conceive a child. I had a friend who birthed a child—she wasn't able to conceive a child for a long time, and she [conceived] the child during her [menstrual] period.

If sex does not necessarily lead to conception, physiologically or conceptually, neither is the cultural or even spiritual value of erotas reducible to procreation; if it were, prostitution and abortion might be less widespread than they are. Viewing sex as a discrete, physical act, rather than an instantiation of a social, even metaphysical, relationship, family planners fail to comprehend that local concepts of erotas, of physical love, encompass meanings far beyond the material consequences of procreation or disease transmission that remain at the center of biomedical public health portraits of what erotas has been and what modern sex should be. In pressing people to see sex as a harmful risk to one's self, family planners neglect to consider how women and men might view sex as a hopeful gamble on aghape.

Steeped in this discourse, young women are responding to new models of romantic love and "proper" sex in ways that family planners never anticipated. For example, desiring both erotas and aghape in marriage, young women beginning a "sex life" prior to marriage may appreciate condoms, withdrawal, and the rhythm method precisely because they are male methods. These women grew up hearing their mothers and grandmothers evaluate "good" and "not nice" husbands on the

basis of whether wives had to resort to repeat abortion to cover over men's lack of sexual control. For them, "succumbing" to erotas without prophylaxis may not only seem appropriately feminine, it may provide a means of testing out their boyfriends: Is this a responsible man, a man who cares, a man whom I could love and who could love me? Contraceptive cooperation can signal the seeds of an aghape desired in a marriage. As Jennifer Hirsch writes of modern-minded Mexican women who also prefer withdrawal and rhythm, "When a woman's husband 'takes care of her' [the Mexican equivalent of the Greek 'being careful'], she experiences in an intensely physical way her husband's commitment to developing a shared, non-reproductive sexuality. . . . These methods make fertility regulation a shared project, the embodiment of a joint commitment to building a certain kind of family and a certain kind of marriage" (2003:261). Here, sex and reproduction are separated, but without the adoption of medical methods of fertility control themselves. Athenian and Mexican women are using "traditional" contraceptives in "modern" ways.

Family planners seem not to recognize how Greek notions of erotas have already been transformed by "modern" ways of feeling and behaving, and thus they naïvely pitch their safe sex message as the one modern way of thinking and doing, contrasting it to what they suppose to be a "traditionally Greek" fusing of sex and procreation. Athenians in the nineties expressed confusion over the mixed messages they were receiving. A safe-sex backlash emerged in the popular media. To illustrate the structure of feeling that the biomedical gaze fails to recognize, let me offer a popular cultural critique to the globalizing imperative of family planning, the 1999 Greek film comedy with the English title *Safe Sex*.

With 1.5 million domestic ticket sales, *Safe Sex* (directed by Mihalis Reppas and Thanasis Papathanasiou) was a Greek blockbuster. I saw the U.S. premiere in 2000 at a Greek film festival in New York.¹ The movie's centerpiece is a dinner party where guests, connected through a sticky web of hetero- and homosexual encounters, debate the philosophical merits of erotas. A man comments, "Erotas overflows marriage" (his wife quips that he was late for his own wedding because he was at his girlfriend's place). A younger man agrees that erotas is "inexplicable," not rational. While "marriage is a social contract" with set rules, he argues, erotas is exempt from this contract: "Only in the bedroom do we not follow rules" of civilization, culture, social norms. To think otherwise is to "be afraid of passion [*pathos*]." Erotas, he insists, resists sexologists' efforts to biologize it as mere libido; erotas is something else, something "spiritual." Pathos, erotas is the stuff of worldly transcendence.

Like all successful satire, the film's dialogue rings true to Greek popular culture. After all, erotic engagement and devotional worship can lead to *ek stasis* (ecstasy)—meaning to be thrown out of one's position, to be driven out of one's wits. Even the Greek Orthodox Church recognizes that erotas is fundamental to human nature, a condition of original, not mortal sin. "A man of God may win an individual and inward control over the condition of sensuality, but ordinary men need the help of kinsmen and the support of institutions in the unequal fight" (Campbell 1964:326). Greeks both embrace and struggle with sensuality as an important feature of humanity. Erotic self-restraint—being at war with one's emotional impulses much like

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Plato's charioteer—is not only a sexy game but a moral test. The ecstatic potential of erotas is undermined, however, by the rational philosophy of prophylaxis. From a local or “traditional” perspective, under certain circumstances, prophylaxis, far from indicating moral responsibility, may be a moral crutch.

Admittedly, an ecstatic view of erotas is an idealized romantic one and it, like the rationalized view of family planners, fails to recognize how erotas, at least the everyday variety that does not lead to *ek stasis*, is produced by and produces double standards for properly gendered behavior. The psychologist Aliki Andoniou (a pseudonym), active in family planning circles, said to me in an interview:

It's still taboo, the issue of sex and having a sex life [*sex ke erotiki zoë*]. It's still exclusively linked to reproduction, not to people's satisfaction. This doesn't mean that it happens in practice [that sex only leads to reproduction] . . . but in their minds . . . the young boys believe that the girls who, let's say, go to bed with them easily, they are worth nothing.

I heard men brag about sexual conquests one moment and label their transitory partners shameless prostitutes the next. In a 1980s survey of 1,200 Athenians, 24.3 percent of men admitted to extramarital sex in past three years while only 5.8 percent of women did (Agrafiotis et al. 1990). (In a final scene of *Safe Sex*, the philanderer from the dinner party is arrested for murdering his wife in a rage of sexual jealousy.) While several professional women told me this particular gender gap was closing—that more women were stepping outside marriage for erotic pleasure or emotional fulfillment—the relative transition in male-dominated societies from a procreative to a pleasure ethic of sex might well be understood in terms suggested by Caroline Whitbeck, that “individualism or what I call ‘the rule of the sons,’ has largely replaced patriarchy or ‘rule of the fathers’ as the structure of the dominant culture” (1990:221). In practice, the ethic of heterosexual egalitarianism, like liberal individualism, remains grounded in a fraternal model of masculinist ideals (Hirsch 2003). But gender still matters. While family planners exhort men and women alike to look out for others by looking out for oneself, Athenian women continue to speak of looking out for oneself by looking out for others (Paxson 2005).

Aghape in an Age of Maternal Consumerism

Nowhere is this feminine ideological imperative—look out for yourself by looking out for others—stronger than in the maternal relationship. Iconographic Christian imagery of sacrificial maternal femininity, viewed by many as the backbone of the “classic Greek family,” offers women an idiom in which to appeal for filial devotion. But here, global forces of market capitalism are clearly transforming women's demonstrations of maternal love. In today's consumer society, maternal suffering is increasingly translated into a consumerist idiom and takes the guise of economic sacrifice. I found that some middle-class Athenian women are finding demands for the material expression of maternal love—the quintessential manifestation of aghape—

potentially compromising of a "modern" self-actualizing female subjectivity, also founded on achieved status claims. Here, the language of *agape* offers women a vocabulary to criticize the gendered obligations of new forms of social reproduction, those activities and relationships involved in the reproduction and daily maintenance of individuals, and that also reproduce the intergenerational social status of families. Increasingly burdened by new consumer demands, some women are seeking alternative models of family love that do not reproduce patterns of ongoing parental sacrifice for which women as mothers are often accountable.

Aghape, at the center of Greek maternal practice, makes suffering a virtue. Distinguishing between *erotas* and *agape*, 35-year-old Niki explained that *agape* obtains "mostly with the mother and the child who is a part of her self, from her body; she had it nine months inside her. [The mother-child relationship] is something different." Greeks describe the fetus as part of the woman's body: the "same blood runs through both." What exists between a pregnant woman and her fetus is an ontology of being-in-relation that exemplifies *agape*. In this sense *agape* is an ongoing, transformative relationship that connotes a Christian sense of selflessness and that, in Whitbeck's (1990) words, designates a "non-oppositional" ontology in which the self is defined not against "the other" but in mutually enabling relation with others.

Childbirth is the dramatic, painful moment marking the beginning of the social, maternal relationship. Women told me they want to feel the pain of birth. Two felt cheated by Caesarean deliveries. Ariadne, who conceived using *in vitro* fertilization, told me in an interview: "I wanted to grow a child inside my belly. I wanted my belly to swell up. . . . I wanted to feel the child get bigger, kick. As I told you, I birthed naturally, it hurt—I wanted to feel the pain to get the pleasure out of it." Far from acquiescing to the pain of childbirth as God's Edenic punishment, Greek women deploy the pain and blood of birth to justify the active social role they will play in their children's lives. Nadia Seremetakis writes, "Women labor, suffer, and endure pain for others. Pain is the concept that determines the social character of women's labor, whether this takes place in the mortuary ceremony or the agricultural and domestic economies. Through pain, Maniat women [in southern Greece] link kinship, the division of labor, agricultural and domestic economies—all male-dominated institutions—into an experiential continuum" (1991:115).

Through suffering, Jill Dubisch suggests, Greek women "demonstrate to and remind others of the difficulties inherent in the performance of their roles" (1995:217). Mothers demand children's respect and gratitude by reminding them, "Look what I suffered for you! My child!" (Dubisch 1995:225–226). I argue elsewhere that Athenian women have made sense of the routinization of abortion in Greece with reference to the praxis of maternal love and self-sacrifice (Paxson 2004). Abortion, they say, is a "necessary evil" that a woman endures to enable her to care properly for children she already has, and to avoid bringing a child into a stigmatized or economically disadvantageous existence (the extramarital birth rate in Greece is around 2 percent of all births).

When women's employment is regarded as prerequisite to raising children,

"good" mothering is described as providing "the best" material goods and educational opportunities for one's children. As Maila Stivens writes of middle-class urban Malaysia, speaking equally to Athens: "To be a modern mother is to be an active consumer under great pressure to acquire all the commodities necessary for the satisfactory performance of motherhood" (1998:63). Today, a mother's success is dependent not merely on producing children who will inherit the family's name and assets but on raising successful children—children with advanced degrees, who speak two or three languages and can succeed in a competitive job market. Athenian parents routinely send teenage children to *frontistiria*, private institutes open after public school hours, to prepare them for the competitive entrance examinations to the state university system. "High-quality" children are produced through the acquisition of academic and cultural capital attained through considered parental consumption. Anna, a 31-year-old administrative assistant and mother of an eight-month-old who is looked after during the day by her mother, told me, "I would *like* to have another child. At least one more. But it's difficult because I'm working, and because now we want to have everything for our children. You don't decide easily to have more children because you want to provide them *everything*." In research conducted in Athens in 1989, a social psychologist I interviewed found that children's private schooling, clothing, extracurricular activities are paid for by women's financial contributions to household economies.

In a consumer society, where choice and personal achievement signal social status, reputation is assessed on the basis of one's consumer "style." A woman demonstrates her moral worth as a mother by receiving recognition from others that she "chooses" to spend her hard-earned money on her children. Consumerism materializes and exteriorizes the self-sacrifice of motherhood. And maternal love is as calculating as it is passionate and moral. Through this sort of love, through the structure of feeling of maternal love, Greek women look out for themselves by looking out for others.

A good mother has always been a giving mother, but in recent years the material measure of maternal devotion has been subject to inflation. Litsa, the working mother of a seven-year-old, offered this analysis:

Earlier, when we went to school we wore uniform pinafores; one would last the year with its tears mended. But now, there's this consumerism. Tomorrow my child will see someone wearing such-and-such shoes and he'll tell me, "Me too!" You'll tell me I should fix it so my kid is not interested in name brands. You'll say I don't *have* to send him to extra classes to do a foreign language—I was the last child of five. What my sister wore one year I would take the next, it didn't matter to us. We weren't bombarded by television. Of course, we have done this to our lives. We are the consumers. Tomorrow at the Supermarket we see something new, we try it, we like it—and there's the good discount—so, it's difficult.

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It's difficult because, in a consumer society, desire is tricky to disentangle from need. An advertisement for a Greek bank credit card appearing in a women's magazine featured a young girl gazing longingly into a bassinet holding a shiny plastic doll and is captioned, "We grew up . . . and our desires became needs." The ad trades on women's naturalized desire for motherhood in order to naturalize need for financial flexibility in an age when consumption is the most direct means in which a woman provisions her family. Such magazines are filled with advertisements for "baby gear" from fashionable maternity clothes to high-end strollers.

But does the child really need the expensive Italian stroller? No. The mother does, or thinks that she does, to demonstrate that the money she earns as a working woman is appropriately spent on her children. The personal, even erotic pleasure of consumerism is legitimated, moralized when women can incorporate it into narratives of maternal self-sacrifice. Moreover, in reconceptualizing consumption as maternal gift giving, the mother displaces the market thinking that went into the purchase of the stroller (easily equal to the price of her monthly salary as, say, a civil servant). In presenting consumption as maternal sacrifice, the mother incorporates new economic practices into "traditional" social relations such that the child (and witnessing adults) believes it is the recipient of sacrificial love, not a modern woman's consumer pleasure.

Some middle-class women, shouldering the burdens of a "double day" and learning the subjective stance of self-determination, are beginning to raise questions, not the moral ideal of maternal love, but about the economic and emotional costs of being a good, "giving" mother in today's society. I heard middle-class women, as they encounter motherhood in a consumer society, voice cultural criticism of the implications of maternal aghape for female subjectivity.

Lela, who works in civil service and whose 15-month-old son is being brought up largely by her own mother and father, who live in an apartment downstairs, said to me:

I do not think that motherhood has changed from the past. That is, the relationship between mother and child hasn't changed. What *has* changed is the position of the woman in society. . . . The woman who works doesn't sit at home and raise the kid, as happened before.

Forty-year-old Nadia, whom I met when she appeared at my doorstep peddling foreign-language tapes, elaborated:

Today's women work. From that moment she also has her personal vigor [*nevro*], her own ambitions, she has many problems, and of course this creates a situation in the home. For example, she would want her husband to help. The Greek man is phallocratic [*fallokratis*]. This means to have been raised to a way of life in which work is made to be either men's or women's. Somehow they don't agree. This creates innumerable problems in a relationship. To put it simply, the woman today is not the woman of the past who stayed under

[*kathotane ipo*] the man. [This] means without voicing her opinion, without voicing her problems, without a lot.

Such statements hint at the friction of modern motherhood in urban Greece: As mothers, women should be self-sacrificing but as modern women, they should be self-actualizing. Athenians, wanting to reconcile being good mothers and good women, struggle to draw a line between virtuous selflessness (*aghape*) and destructive self-compromise akin to what Sara Ruddick (1980) has called "inauthenticity" in maternal thought. The relational ontology of motherhood makes it difficult for women, as Vasso, a social psychologist who teaches women's assertiveness training workshops, complained to me, to separate their own "needs" from those of their children. To be a good mother means to be a giving person. But should a mother really give up her self for her family? Two conflicting demands supported by modern pressures—for maternal self-sacrifice and for women's self-realization—generate a friction.

Searching for a self outside a relational ontology, I heard a few middle-class women—with and without children—voice a counter-hegemonic claim not only that motherhood is insufficient to realize proper womanhood but that motherhood can compromise women's autonomy. Ariadne, a new mother in her early thirties, voiced skepticism of "modern" women's so-called liberation in comparison with her mother's generation: "My mother used to tell me, 'Look, when you become married, then you can do what you want.' And I used to tell her that when I become married I would not be able to do what I want. From then on you 'do' a family. You do what you want when you are single." Now that women's moral worth is evaluated more in terms of maternal behavior than sexual comportment, motherhood may not signal a woman's freedom so much as the loss of it. Narrating shifts in the material conditions of motherhood, Athenian women see their very selves as changing, historically as well as over the life course.

Whereas mothers in their thirties bring a critical reflexivity to their mothering, women in their twenties whose kin-based gender identity remains as daughter rather than mother can recognize the emotional and subjective toll that today's parenting ethic is taking on their own mothers and fathers. Alike, an unmarried graduate student in her late twenties, articulated a pervasive generation gap circa the early 1990s. Speaking of her generation, she explained:

We grew up in a period of economic growth [1970s–1980s]. We learned [what it was like] to have relatively nice houses, to have nice clothes, a car. Unfortunately, however, we reached a point where we got stuck. When the basic wage is around 100,000 [drachmes] and you want a home in a nice area the rent will be 70,000 a month.² This is normal, it's not some absurd amount. You think that you can't live. It's very hard. And if you want everything this is what you do: the parents of a friend of mine used to eat bread and cheese while their kids ate [regular] food [including meat] so they could gather the money to buy a flat.

Aliki's parents are making sacrifices to help finance her advanced degree from a British university. While most of Aliki's college friends continue to live with their parents (in villages or in Athens), her friend Sophia, a record store clerk who also tutors English, explained to me how her own parents feel badly that they cannot offer her more economic support since they had to "abandon" her in Athens:

I live alone. My parents had to go back to the village in Crete. I pay rent, and every month they try to send me what they can, and I see every time I go down to Crete that they worry they can't give me 40,000 a month. If there's a month when they can't send me money they waste 10,000 calling me on the phone to tell me they're sorry.³ If my family were in Athens I wouldn't try to live on my own.

With Greece's productive infrastructure lagging behind its consumption rate, even middle-class Athenians are able to accumulate only what are perceived as the basics—an apartment, a limited wardrobe of decent clothes, a regular diet of meat—with the aid of others, usually their parents or in-laws. A professional woman I know, in her late thirties and single, lives alone in a Halandri (suburban) flat purchased for her by her father, a flat she could not have afforded on her salary alone. As L. A. Rebhun writes (this volume), love is simultaneously expressed through social, emotional, and economic support. Love and interest continuously implicate one another because, Rebhun notes, "both govern affiliation." In these cases, young people recognize the moral system in which their parents operate—based in an era when status flowed from parents to children by way of inherited character and property—while at the same time planning for themselves a life that their parents can barely imagine.

Soula, a 39-year-old clerk who works for a foreign embassy who had her first child just over a year before we spoke, voiced ambivalence in articulating the tensions of socioeconomic change in Greece that are absorbed by family and household relations:

The institution of the family in Greece is still strong. There is still the meaning that "This is my child and I have some obligations." Of course in certain cases I think it gets dragged out a bit, overdone—the kids get married and the parents think that they still have obligations. But there is also the other extreme [which she sees elsewhere in Europe and in the United States] that as soon as the kids turn 18 or 20 that's it, finished. The parents don't have any responsibility, nothing on their plate. I agree with this because at some point the [Greek] parents begin to interfere in their children's life when they grow up, when they get married and have their own families and they have the reins. There are the two sides: the parents who say "We brought you into life and we are obliged to serve you all our lives," and the others who say "We brought you up now you have to take care of us." What I'm trying to say is that there's something that I like and something that I don't like in the Greek family. While it's very tight,

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in certain ways it pulls you apart a little; they want to be continuously together but you can't.

Many of the young adults, my contemporaries, whom I knew in Athens consciously worked to protect their parents' sense of themselves as "good," giving parents. Despina worked a part-time job in the British city where she attended graduate school to supplement her modest scholarship that her parents already supplemented every few months. She told me she "can't" divulge her job to her parents; they would feel that she "had" to take a job because they had "failed" to provide adequately for her, when Despina herself has no such criticism of her parents. These middle-class women in their twenties recognize and respect their parents' need to feel they are providing adequately for their children, revealing a new generation-based (rather than gender-based) rift between the appearance of prestige and the reality of power (cf. Friedl 1967). They negotiate a measure of independence without hurting their parents' feelings because they have not rejected the principle of family solidarity, even as they cultivate a more independent, achievement-based subjectivity. This is love. But it's not self-sacrificing. It is, perhaps, as much a matter of erotas as it is aghape.

Thinking with Love about Subjectivity and Globalization

To speak of familial love in terms of erotas is not the same as speaking of maternal aghape. I heard women—mothers, daughters, single women (often divorcées)—who live alone, whose subjective relations do not conform to the model of maternal self-sacrifice, speak of familial love using the language of erotas. I interpret this as a nuanced criticism of the self-sacrifice implied in feminine aghape, exemplified by maternalism.

Over a bottle of wine at dinner one night, Moira, who teaches modern Greek to foreigners, expressed her distress that the word *erotas* is abused in other languages, reduced to an erotics linked to pornography. This is an injustice to erotas, she declared, quoting Plato's *Symposium*, which she had recently reread (ancient Greek language as well as classical texts are part of the national school curriculum; Moira has a degree in philology). As Diotima schooled Socrates, in Moira's interpretation of Plato's text, erotas is itself a beautiful thing, a relationship that brings one out of one's self with an awareness of one's engagement with the world. Moreover, the transcendental potential of erotas—*ek stasis*—is not limited to physical, sexual eroticism. Moira explained that she could be *erotevmeni*, in erotas, with one of her classes, with a flower, with her cats (one is named Socrates!).

This conversation reminded me of one I had earlier with Phoebe, who, like Moira, was once married but divorced after deciding not to have children. Both women intimated to me that their decision to divorce was prompted in part by a realization that their husbands turned out not to be men with whom they wanted to have children. At the time of our interview, Phoebe, then 40 years old, told me

she still hopes to become a mother. "But," she said, "I believe that within a woman exists feelings of motherhood. And you will see this even in women who haven't had a child, it comes out in their behavior towards an animal, let's say, a dog, or a cat. A special behavior, which seems somewhat like the feeling of motherhood." Phoebe, like Moira, works with students and, I suggest, narrates her subjective experience of this work as akin to mothering, in terms of love.

Phoebe, Moira, and others I encountered speak in terms of a love that embraces *erotas* as well as *agape*. If *agape* can award both virtue and power through the calculated care of others, the power of *erotas* is self-transformative (and see Lorde 1984). One falls in love with one's child, one's class, one's cat—and realizes something about oneself. When one is *erotevmeni*, one thinks and feels differently about one's place in the world. The trick—"risk" discourse in Greece takes the language of gaming (Malaby 2003)—is that *erotas* may lead one astray, away from one's true self (or a self one is happy with), or—one thinks! one believes! one hopes!—*erotas* may lead one to a place of security and self-affirmation. This sort of erotic can speak to the hopes, expectations, and risks of both romantic and maternal love.

Spinning away from my ethnographic data but still holding to the threads of my conversations with Moira, Phoebe, Sophia, Despina, and others, I have toyed with the notion of a maternal love that embraces the ideology of *erotas*, a desire of or for an other that is not viewed as opposite of or oppositional to the self. Caroline Whitbeck has named this a "feminist erotics," based on a feminist sense that "the distinctness of others does not require that they be counted as opposite in character to the self" (1990:211). Maternal love can embrace such feminist erotics. The notion of "falling in love" with one's child, with all the ambivalence and tension and fear and joy this entails, certainly rings true to the experience of many Western mothers.

Erotas and *agape* are good to think with about subjectivity because they speak, in ways that force attention to the mutual constitution of gender, sexuality, and kinship (Yanagisako and Collier 1987), alternately and at once of relationality and self-perception, reputation and virtue—qualities that gain meaning within historically specific configurations of civil society. If love is good to think with about subjectivity, this volume suggests it should also be useful to think with about the impact of global forces on local socialities and structures of feeling. To what extent is this true? We should not assume that "global flows"—of media, of biomedical bodies, of consumption opportunities—inevitably transform in uniform, predictable ways local understandings of love and intimacy. This, indeed, is the fallacy under which many family planning programs operate, in Greece as elsewhere (see Adams and Pigg 2005).

Instead, I find useful Anna Tsing's (2005) recent discussion of global "frictions"—not unidirectional, unimpeded "flows" or "impacts." "Speaking of friction is a reminder of the importance of interaction in defining movement, cultural form, and agency" (Tsing 2005:6). If any social activity routinely generates friction, it's sex. If any discourse is made routinely to articulate people's subjective experience of social friction, it's love. Love, I am suggesting, is not so much itself a potent site of social change as it provides a powerful vocabulary in which ordinary people try

to speak to their subjective experiences, hopes, and fears of social change. Love is "thought as felt and feeling as thought"—but thought that tries to define, articulate "a social experience with is still in process, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic"; it is a frictional "structure of feeling" (Williams 1977:132).

My argument is inspired, too, by Lila Abu-Lughod's essay "The Romance of Resistance," in which she uses "resistance as a diagnostic of power" "to trace how power relations are historically transformed—especially with the introduction of forms and techniques of power characteristic of modern states and capitalist economies" (1990:48, 42). Writing of young Bedouin women who came of age under sedentarism and who "resist" traditional patriarchal codes of feminine modesty by buying lingerie and cosmetics, Abu-Lughod comments, "As the veils they wear get sheerer and these young women become more involved in the kind of sexualized femininity associated with the world of consumerism . . . they are becoming increasingly enmeshed in new sets of power relations of which they are scarcely aware" (50). Such power relations are familiar to Western feminists: women's status and well-being is to some extent reliant on their ability to persuade men to buy them things. But the young Bedouin women do not see this. What feels to them like resistance in relation to the Bedouin camp constitutes, for Abu-Lughod, new forms of subjection in the encroaching world of Egyptian market relations, "a world in which kinship ties are attenuated while companionate marriage, marital love based on choice, and romantic love are idealized, making central women's attractiveness and individuality as enhanced and perhaps necessarily marked by differences in adornment" (50).

Abu-Lughod raises a question for comparative study: "[D]o certain modern techniques or forms of power work in such indirect ways, or seem to offer such positive attractions, that people do not as readily resist them?" (1990:52). Rephrased with the present study in mind: Are Athenian women so seduced by new opportunities to experience and demonstrate romantic and maternal love that they overlook tradeoffs in their exercise of agency, what Kandiyoti (1988) would call the erosion of women's traditional "patriarchal bargains"? My ethnographic answer must be to equivocate. New forms of productive power rarely displace old forms but rather run in parallel, at some moments in mutual reinforcement, at others in cross-cutting tension. They produce friction. "As a metaphorical image, friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power" (Tsing 2005:5). Tsing offers the imagery of a road to conceptualize "how friction works: Roads create pathways that make motion easier and more efficient, but in doing so they limit where we go. . . . Friction inflects historical trajectories, enabling, excluding, and particularizing" (6).

To return to family planning and consumerism in Athens, let me introduce a more watery set of metaphors from fluid dynamics to conceptualize how global flows may meet frictional resistance. New notions of love and responsibility introduced by family planning rhetoric do not flow unimpeded into the stream of Athenian social life but are tossed into turbulence with traditional notions of erotas and aghape. Family planners work unsuccessfully to change the meanings of *erotas* and *aghape* to

align better with Anglophonic *sex* and *love*. Athenians respond with wary skepticism to the liberating promise of safe sex, achieved by "looking out for others by looking out for oneself." Women do not all seem eager to give up the patriarchal bargain of recourse in abortion for romantic promises of self-interested sexual love, even—or especially—when such promises are made by the authoritative voice of a medical system that has been known to be misogynistic, influenced by Western forces that have been known to be paternalistic toward Greek ways of living (Paxson 2004). Erotas and aghape, sex and love spin together in turbulent solution without precipitating out a newly modern, fully "globalized" ideology of sexual agency.

As a standard daily practice, consumerism, however, flows more freely into the slipstream of daily middle-class life, offering women new means of expressing enduring maternal values. Yet here, too, friction is met in the form of a hydraulic system calibrated to the self-other relationships described in terms of erotas and aghape. When poured into purchases for one's child, the self-realizing pleasures of erotic consumption can be balanced by the self-sacrifice of maternal aghape. But for some women, there is a point at which the pressure entailed in earning the economic capital and in gaining the shopping savvy of being a super(mom)-consumer may force out of reach what Audre Lorde (1984)—and my friend Moira—might call the self-realizing potential of the erotic. A mother can go too far. As a resource through which she looks out for herself by looking out for others, her love is not infallible.

The turbulence introduced into sexual relations by family planning is immediate and apparent and therefore easy to resist. The hydraulic cost-benefit dynamics generated by consumerism is—again, at least for the middle classes—delayed, contingent. What begins as a rewarding balance between the erotic pleasure of consumerism and the self-sacrifice of maternal giving can gradually build up enough pressure—on her time, her income—to force open a floodgate through which self-sacrifice becomes self-compromise.

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Notes

1. I have been unable to view the movie a second time to verify quotations jotted down during my initial viewing. I apologize for any inaccuracies.
2. This price would fetch a one- or perhaps two-bedroom flat, depending on the size, the floor (ground versus higher with possible view), and the neighborhood.
3. Relative prices in US\$ as at 1994 are \$174 and \$43. Compared with housing in U.S. cities, housing in Athens is inexpensive, while material goods are exorbitant.

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