

The enigma of desire

Clotho is spinning the thread of life
Lachesis measures the thread of life
Atropos cuts the thread of life

The three mysterious moirai of the Ancient World, daughters of Ananke (necessity), were the mistresses of human destiny.

In her new film, **Bound**, Kalliopi Lemos attempts a different reading of the ancient myth, the three white robed female moirai becoming here three black suited men, as a kind of photographic negative of their mythical image and identity.

But what was the actual task of ancient moirai? Controlling our fate or just *pushing* us towards certain directions? Is life a set route to a predetermined end, designed by metaphysical forces? Or do we have, if not an absolute, at least a kind of control of our destiny?

Beyond any dialogue between free will and life predetermination, Lemos focuses, once more, on the depths of female psyche. What is examined here is woman's fate, as the real issue that is revealed gradually throughout the film is whether, even in a world of free will, woman has control of her destiny.

As her recognizable artistic practice, Lemos is creating here her own contemporary metaphorical mythos: Three men of different ages, sitting over baskets with white linen strips, consist the poetic metaphor of fate. Not a metaphysical fate though, but a realistic one, a fate imposed upon woman by society and man's desire.

The woman's (self-)construction as an object of desire, dressed in expectations and obligations, is represented by the white strips, with woven words of Sappho's poetic fragments on them, that are gradually wrapped around the female protagonist's body. The poet's words, traveling through time, construct an imaginary line that connects woman's eternal longings, limits and claims. In Lemos' multifunctional symbolic universe, these all white and delicate objects of spirit and innocence, apart from Clotho's thread connotations, could be related to a wedding dress or/and bandages. The woman is bound by man's desire.

The track through which Lemos is developing her artistic investigation into women's boundaries, is the discourse of love.

A unique dialogue between Anne Carson's poetic contemplation and Roland Barthes' deconstructional, yet affirmative, hermeneutic of Eros' words, accompanies the film.

There is an obvious and intentional contradiction between their views. Carson describes the way the elusive feeling is caught in poetic words (beginning from desire to reach the words), while Barthes tries to catch the schema that dictates the feeling (beginning from words to reach the desire). This way, as text is following image, one more metaphor takes shape:

Men control women just like love's discourse controls human desire.

If woman incarnates (stereotypically indeed) desire, then the three men-moirai figures, wrapping slowly and silently her body, become the omnipotent *logos*, love's rhetoric dictated by man over the ages.

Through this spectrum, **Bound** sets an elegant intellectual game between desire and its poetics.

Could it be a parable of the woman's destiny, bound by forced choices and expectations? Or is it desire per se, 'bound' by an imposed complex desire's discourse? That is the artistic enigma.

Text by Gelly Gryntaki