

The fates in greek mythology

Life



The Greeks had several different deities that each represented different parts of their culture. For example, the Greeks had a goddess of wisdom and war, Athena. Each of their gods were important parts of their society. In the time period, that can be traced back to the origin of these Greek gods and goddesses, there was unrest between the Greeks and other peoples. It therefore makes sense that there would be some higher power guiding and fighting with them on the battlefield, leading them to victory. Some of the most interesting figures from ancient Greek mythology are The Fates.

The Fates were three elderly women often seen cloaked in white, who were responsible for the fate of all humankind and the gods. Their task played on the irony of “ hanging on by a thread.” Each life to them was a thread and they were in charge of how long a person lived for. When The Fates deemed a life was over the thread was cut. Their names were Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. Clotho created the thread at birth. The next is Lachesis, who measured the thread. The last Fate was Atropos, who was known as the most terrible of the three because she decided when the thread was ready to be cut and ended the person’s life. The number three, the number of Fates, also has a deeply religious connection. The number three in a religious sense, is used to represent divinity, and perfection. In the Bible, the number three represents the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three parts of God that in Christianity are believed to guide a person through their life. The ancient Greeks had the 3 Fates: Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who guided a person’s life. The creation of these figures illustrates the ancient Greeks curiosity about life and their desire to explain its course and their demise.

In modern society, there are a number of people who believe in the idea of fate because there are those who believe in the idea of free will. They do not subscribe to the idea of a predetermined life or set of tasks to accomplish in a life time. In the time of the ancient Greeks, there was no advanced technology like there is today. The internet and computers used to simply look up information did not exist. The Greek gods were created to explain phenomena that surrounded their everyday lives. The most pressing concept that needed an explanation in Greek life, was that of fate, death, and how to lead a life full of happiness. Everything they believed in was thought up and designed by the environment that surrounded them. For example, there was a story about Athena, the Greek goddess of war and intelligence, who created spiders after starting a dispute with a local girl and punishing her for winning by transforming her into a spider.

The most unknown part about life for the ancient Greeks was their humanity. They created the figures of The Fates to give illustration to their curiosity about who controls their length of their lives, how misery and suffering was allotted for each person, and how one's destiny was decided. To the ancient Greeks, The Fates were a way to truly idealize the unknown in their lives, destiny. The Fates were so powerful that even the other gods could not argue with their decisions thus illustrating the idea that fate was unable to be changed. It was irreversible. They believed that each individual had a predetermined destiny. The Fates were in charge of controlling that destiny unlike the idea today of free will and the opportunity to make one's own decisions to create their own path and not follow the rules set by some unknown power. The ideas of unescapable fate and destiny exist in our

society today. Many believe that fate is predetermined while others hold close the ideal that anyone can change their own destiny. No one is in charge of it but themselves. The modern day take on fate is the concept of free will. Free will for example, believed as a gift from God in Christianity, is the opposite to fate. Free will is the concept that we control our own lives and fate is irrelevant in the scheme of life. Although free will is widely accepted, there are still modern superstitions that relate back to the Greek idea of fate. One such example is knocking on wood. This is the idea that when something bad is done, knocking on wood will stop the consequences of tempting fate. Interestingly, one can find these ideas in literature.

In the book *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley, one of the biggest debates is about the ending with Frankenstein's death. The main argument about the ending is based on the idea if Frankenstein's fate was doomed from the beginning or if all his decisions to create his monster and essentially abandon it, his free will, determined his death. In the terms of the ancient Greeks, they would believe that The Fates had controlled Frankenstein's life. It was inevitable that he would meet his death at the hands of his own creation. In current terms, others would believe that Frankenstein's demise was a result of his own decisions and there is no fate in his death. Thus it was his free will.

The idea of fate and free will are common sense in our modern-day society but each of their individual interpretations are open for debate. The gods of ancient Greece reflected different parts of their culture. The Fates, a group of highly revered figures in ancient Greek mythology, reflected the Greeks desire for an understanding of life and fate. The group of the three elderly

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ladies: Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, were considered the wisest of the ancient Greek figures because they ruled over all humankind and the gods. Whereas in modern-day society, many do not subscribe to the idea of a predetermined fate but rather to the ideal of free-will where one's own decisions are theirs to make.