

symbolic imagery. (See Figure 5.)



Figure 5. Film clip: *Hate*

Previous scenes of turmoil were filmed with the actors positioned in gateways and leaning against door posts; in the end we see Dea comfortably seated in her lounge, drinking the coffee her mother brings and shares with her while reflecting on a “cure-all” and survival of traumatic events. “One has to do things oneself” and “Everything is within me” are the final words spoken in the film. (See Figure 6.)



Figure 6. Film clip: *Final Words*

Having severed her relationship to her cheating husband, erotic rival and complaining children, Dea regains a sense of calm and a (complicated) peace, even while we are left to wonder how this catharsis translates into the future of her lived relationships.

In an interview about *Sleep of Reason*, Stöckl states that she found it important to show that women are capable of rage, revenge, and hatred in ways that are not usually acknowledged.

I believe that women's fantasies of survival, or revenge fantasies, are no different than men's. But we are raised to learn: I am nice. I am gentle. I am really not capable of aggression, and I can really only sit there and cry when I am upset by something. ... If as a woman you want anything in this life, you have to fight like a man; if you do it by the same means is an individual decision. . . . What is radical about Dea is that she maybe understood something: if it has to be that I am getting separated, then this separation has to be final. And in life only death is final. Everything else can somehow become subject to making up. For me film is the only medium, besides literature, where you can be radical without retribution, because everyone has enough movie experience to know: this death that I am witnessing is a fictional one and not real. . . . By dreaming it, Dea really kills her husband, her children and her rival. We must have the courage to really imagine what we want. (Richter & Künzel, 1998, pp. 62-63)

Her films' characters often engage in fantasies of revenge or represent reality through dreams, pointing to the importance Stöckl attributes to such psychic and cathartic processes of projection for women's healthy identities and lives. Maybe similar to the ancient Greeks, Stöckl values strong and passionate emotions as sign of depth of character. And yet, her female characters are never predictable and are always multi-dimensional. Their complexity calls upon the viewer for introspection and reflection. Stöckl's characters neither offer nor do they promise any easy answers to questions of women's nature, psychic makeup, erotic relations, or political futures.