

Circe

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to Marilena Vita

*...we reached the Aeaeian island next, the home of Circe
the nymph with lovely braids, an awesome power too
who can speak with human voice.*

*Homer, Odyssey - book 10
(translation by Robert Fagles)*

Exactly fifteen minutes long, Circe is an experimental short film, for one or two projections, made in 2019 and dedicated to the Italian artist Marilena Vita.

Circe operates good and evil, love and war, which are nothing but the two fundamental laws of thermodynamics: aggregation and disaggregation - as I had already worked on in my 2008 *Dante* opera.

In Greek mythology, Circe was a beautiful goddess of magic, sometimes considered a nymph or even a witch. She was daughter of Helios the Sun, and Pereis, one of the Oceanids - daughters of Ocean, god of waters and virility, and of her sister Tethys, goddess of power and female fecundity of the seas, in turn daughter of Uranus and of Gaia, heaven and earth. Thus, in her genealogy, Circe is Sun and Ocean, male and female, sky and earth - the two forming forces of the world; quality number two, an essential element of the concrete existence of everything.

In his fabulous *Odyssey*, Homer recounts the desperate landing of Ulysses on the mythical Aeaeian island, returning from Troy. Would be Ischia this island?

He realizes that on the island there is just a palace. He sends Eurylochus and twenty-three men to find out if they would be received with hospitality or not. Suddenly men were surrounded by terrible wild beasts, lions, tigers. Those beasts had been domesticated by the island's powerful inhabitant: Circe. In fact, they had been human beings transformed by her into animals.

There is a beautiful female chant coming from the palace. Eurylochus asks who is. The beautiful goddess appears and immediately invites

everyone in. Suspicious, Eurylochus stays away. Men eat and drink, having fun like never before, and suddenly Circe turns them into pigs.

Eurylochus runs away and warns Ulysses, who immediately leaves to save his comrades. On the way he meets a young man: Hermes, a god who is messenger of the gods, transfiguration of Toth - Egyptian god of writing and knowledge. The young god tells him how to survive the fabulous and beautiful goddess.

Ulysses saves his companions and lives a year with the beautiful goddess - before setting off to meet the mermaids where it is believed had happened at Punta Campanella, between Sorrento and Positano.

The word *Circe* has its remote etymological origin in the Indo European **kikre*, which generated the Greek word *kirkos*, circle, ring.

In a certain way, the two projections are not only related to number *two*, but also creates a kind of circularity.

Circe is the love that turns into the nonhuman, the devastating passion that sometimes turns into war. How best to understand the ideological or religious passions that have, over thousands of years, produced wars and devastation? With humans turned into sheep, into pigs for slaughter?

And here, the figure of Ulysses - guided by Hermes - takes on a new dimension: the prevalence of love over war through knowledge.

The music I chose for the film is a 1992 composition of mine. It's called Meridian. In astronomy, *meridian* is an imaginary circle made in a plane perpendicular to the celestial equator. In geography, it is an arc that joins the south pole to the north pole. Also here, we have the number *two*.

Another relevant factor is that both film and music operate the relation between our prefrontal and hippocampus neuronal sectors in perception, cognition, and in the formation of the working memory. Since both work on the limits of those neuronal operations, each person watches the movie and listens to the music differently. Thus what one sees or hears is ultimately an "image" of him or herself.

Here, aggregation and disaggregation are present while process of both movie and music.

Also interesting is that the composition Meridian was entirely elaborated with the sounds of static electricity from a vinyl record.

Thus, in a certain imaginary sense, the circle of the old vinyl disc is also the circle of Earth - the etymological root of the word *Circe*.

Marilena Vita is an important Italian artist who works on photography, performance, video and painting. Her works operate a deep imaginary, almost oneiric universe, frontier between the surreal and the most concrete reality. Thus, she questions what we think, what our thoughts are, our deepest inner self through concrete things and moments.

About her, my very dear friend Dario Evola said: art and life as a game of the possible.

Marilena and I first met through Lucrezia De Domizio, Baroness Durini, in Bolognano, Italy, several years ago, at a moment dedicated to the work and thought of Joseph Beuys.

In 2019, I dedicated *Circe* to Marilena Vita - a film for performance, with the music *Meridian*, from 1992. She created a magical performance with the film - both film and performance had their world premiere at the Light Art Biennale in Mantova, Italy in May 2022.