

Critic text by **Silvia Litardi** about **Mediterraneo**

Minutes slowly roll by, falling drop-by-drop into an empty glass placed at the frame's centre. The pace-setting artist's voice, a woman's voice, repeats "Mediterraneo, Mediterraneo, Mediterraneo, Mediterraneo, Mediterraneo, Mediterraneo..." for twenty minutes.

An hypnotic image, magnified by the drop filling the glass and raising the liquid's level. The initially crystal-clear, neat voice imperceptibly tires, breaks down, chokes, and finally drowns. The video itself starts by displaying quite distinct objects: the glass (the container), water (the contained), and the voice. In the process, the water level raises, the voice and the word crack, and the association between glass and mouth - the cavity through which the body swallows the life's lymph - materializes.

The metonymic migration of meaning from and to two related forms acquires more and more pregnancy as the given *sign* takes on other signs: the basin "containing" the sea, the boat "containing" the sailing men....The vocal rhythm is obsessive, with its endless iteration of the same word: a mantra, a vibrating dirge akin to a fluid surface; the word, iterated like a string of scarcely dissimilar pearls, outlines a circular ordering, somewhat like the in-and-off waters trajectories described by ancient oars pushed by human muscles under the lead of monotonous drums. Ships ploughed the waves by the bodies' strength, more than by winds, to get to the sides of that basin which since only a few centuries ago is now recognized as an enclosed sea.

Sea, which swallows and ejects, thieves and returns. Physical erosion shapes the coasts it laps upon, a metaphor for the cultural, social and political impact on the people living along them. Far from being just an individual echo, the voice articulating "Mediterraneo" is a chorus generating space, rather than a source of narration, or a world's description. It's an atavistic space, resembling Edouard Glissant's matrix-abyss: "the people having experienced the abyss do not boast of being elected. They don't think to generate the powerfulness of modernity. They live the relationship, they cultivate it, as the abyss' oblivion takes root and the memory strengthens. [...] It may be said that the abyss' experience is what we share the most"¹. In the "poetic of depth"² at which this work aims, the explorations of the inner and the environmental spaces do tally with an extremely effective synthesis through which the submerged image of an archaic collective memory surfaces.

Anna Raimondo's research moves from the topics placed under the *gender, cultural and postcolonial studies* heading in the Anglo-Saxon countries; but "Mediterraneo" is a step ahead, looking towards the so-called "traveling cultures"³, James Clifford's successful formula for cultures resulting from an open process of endlessly changing

phenomena. In the video, this openness transpires through the water's overflowing and the feeling of copiousness it embodies: water generates spaces and fertilizes them.

¹ Édouard Glissant [1990], *Poetica della Relazione*, Quodlibet, Macerata, 2007, p. 22

² op. cit., p. 34

³ James Clifford [1999], *Strade. Viaggio e traduzione alla fine del secolo XX*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2008