



**Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, ca. 1990.**

“The vague feeling that the end of the world had been reached, in the geographical sense, removed whatever element of adventure and perhaps blind belief there had been in the discovery of the other. Since the beginning of this century the shrinking of unexplored regions on the map of the world has made minds less infatuated with adventure, or less sensitive to its beauty, inclining more toward a concern for the truth of human beings. Understanding cultures then became more gratifying than discovering new lands. Western ethnography was structured on the basis of this need. But we shall perhaps see that the verb to understand in the sense of “to grasp” [comprendre!] has a fearsome repressive meaning here.

Contacts among cultures— one of the givens of modernity— will no longer come across the huge spans of time that have historically allowed meetings and interchanges to be active but almost imperceptibly so. Whatever happens elsewhere has immediate repercussions here. Not long ago cultural influences were initially of a general nature, affecting communities progressively; today the individual, without having to go anywhere, can be directly touched by things elsewhere, sometimes even before his community, family, social group, or nation has been enriched by the same effect.”

(p.26)