

“Africa. I saw the distant land, my light. Belonging only to those who fecundate her: within me, and not I in her. The tribes waged war for control over salt; nations rise to learn its flavor. May the laborers of night also drink from this fountain of morning. Another land beckons. It is Africa, yet it is not. For me it was a silent land. Listen. Everybody dances, in the righteousness of his own body and voice, in honor of the eternal fire.” –Glissant

Glissant’s use of the term “black salt” can be interpreted as a desire to keep all that is African far from assimilation and as pure as it can be given its circumstances. His reason and hope were that the true nature (not the perceived nature) of Africa would reveal itself in its people, and that other races too would see the important contributions Africa has made to all of humankind.

In *Black Salt* and other poems of the collection, Glissant describes how seafoam collects and deposits the salt around the borders of the islands. The symbolism of the salt ring preserves everything that has happened there. The history should be preserved, cherished, and every effort should be made to understand what has happened there. The salt preserves as well as conserves, and curates, and it holds everyone accountable.

I believe this black race, reanimated into these United States was a black race born in the sea.

The experiences of these first people who suffered the first wave of captivity should be acknowledged as the precursor to systemic racism widely practiced in the United States even until today. Colonists who were successful with assimilating slaves on these Caribbean islands served as the blueprint for “the business of slavery” in North and South America. I also believe these oppressed and manipulated people whose descendants still suffer through the

lasting effects of systemic racism will find a much deeper and profound history that awaits them. However, there is missing information that will be able to answer the question of “why”. Why the blacks? Why the west coast of Africa? Was it because the east coast peoples of Africa wised up and resisted the Arabs' and Moors' captivity spree and became monolithic societies which prevented them from being taken from their homes and enslaved? Are these first east coastal events and reasonings of the "righteousness" of enslavement of peoples what the European colonists based their ideals on? Why do any of these African people deserve a life of captivity and relocation in a foreign place? More importantly, why does their history and origin become ignored and omitted from the books of great deeds of mankind? Is it because the history of enslaving people is that shameful? History would make one believe that colonists formed this new black race from the ground anew. Formed him from new dirt and breathed a breath of life into him as if they were an emissary of the gods if not God themselves.

With Africa being the birthplace of humankind surely there is some credit to be gleaned here especially in the areas of intelligent contributions to civilized society and more importantly human compassion; the 2 biggest contributions to *Civilization*.