



Abstract for:

***Diasporic Entropic Diremption and the Cross-Cultural Cross***

group exhibition

with the participation of:

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Cathouse Proper at 524 Projects, 524 Court Street, Brooklyn (2nd fl. enter Huntington St)

Thursdays-Sundays, 12-6pm

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According to G.W.F. Hegel, diremption is the source of the need for philosophy. A seldom used word in English, *diremption* means a self-tearing apart, or a whole that is, in its essence, always already divided. The word is brought to bear by Hegel on human consciousness; the individual is self aware due to this essential division, *viz.*, one reflects upon one's self both as subject and as object due to diremption.

One of the hypocrisies of the European enlightenment/colonization era was the duplicitous metering of what was asserted as a standard, universal human consciousness. For example, most basically, the people of sub-Saharan Africa were dehumanized by European interests in order to justify the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The Slave Trade set in motion a cultural entropy. Two differently ordered continents, Africa and Europe, converge (albeit unequally) and, like the thermodynamic law itself, the two distinct systems break down as they incorporate each other moving towards a mixed-cultural stasis, or newly defined system, *i.e.*, (combined with other cultural entities) the Americas.

Therefore, a parallel can be drawn in which diaspora is to culture what entropy is to thermodynamic systems. However, at the most basic level diremption's steady division continues to rile entropy's desired stasis, producing an ever-changing cultural self-consciousness.

Yet how dissimilar were the two systems of sub-Saharan Africa and Europe? The cultural forces of power, trade, and empire were all at play on both continents when the Portuguese arrived in their sailing ships to the Kingdom of Kongo on the western Atlantic coast of Central Africa in 1483 C.E. Emblazoned on the sails of the Portuguese's caravel ships was the sign of the cross, specifically the "Order of Christ" cross.

Recent scholarship has been steadily deconstructing notions of the Christian cross such that it can now be safely hypothesized that the Portuguese, rather than bringing the sign of the "true cross" to the Africans, as they believed they were doing, in actuality, were returning their cross to its source. African cross imagery not only predates the arrival of Europeans but, through various cultural channels, very likely influenced early Christianity's development of beliefs regarding death and resurrection, which later became associated with the crucifix.

The cross-cultural cross is both a symbol of and bridge through diasporic entropic diremption.