Deconstructing Tercerunquinto

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“You have, I suppose, dreamed of finding a single word for designating that and antecedent, I have perhaps localized...” [The words bound point, point, 3-broached, cracked, cracked-of, broached, crustaceo, fault, split, fragment... “ligature articulation of two parts of wood or metal-work. The hinge, the lid (fold-back part) of a shut...”]

—Roger Laporte

This passage from a letter from one French philosopher to another somehow made me lose my way to its new home in its new. I would begin the mission of my own by supplementing Laporte's glosses of the word world (themselfes riled from Robert's French dictionary) with an additional sense culled from the Oxford English Dictionary: “brisure, n. 2. Fr: Bifurcation. A break in the general direction of a rampant or parallel space of the parole of the curation of a lateral constructed with corners. To Laporte's figure of the brisure as a knot and opening, here I am adding the supplement of the plane axis as the effect of which being to multiply the length and surface area of a definable barrier. This will forestall our entry into entries. A hinge, a joint, a threshold, or alternatively, a fold here through the architectural border that would separate inside from out.

The artists known jointly as Terceunquinto came together in their current configuration in 1998 while studying at the Facultad de Artes Visuales of the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, in the northern edge of Monterrey, Mexico. From the start, Julio Castro Carreón, Gabriel Cázares Salas, and Rolando Flores were drawn toward the architectural functionality of doors and walls. Indeed, in hindsight some of their earliest works seem to have been the product of a meticulous analysis of architecture/mostly bricks. Their perspective for their first exibition text of the window’s division on the window and opening, the three coming together. To Laporte's figure of the brisure as a knot and opening, here I am adding the supplement of the plane axis as the effect of which being to multiply the length and surface area of a definable barrier. This will forestall our entry into entries. A hinge, a joint, a threshold, or alternatively, a fold here through the architectural border that would separate inside from out.

The lexeme “Terceunquinto” itself offers a handy illustration of what Derrida was doing in his concern was to conceptualize the specific brisure that joins the putatively linear space and articulation” with a single word. With his concern was to conceptualize the specific brisure that joins the putatively linear space and articulation” with a single word. With Spivak's translation cannily nominalized as “spacing.”

Unbeknownst to Laporte, Jacques Derrida had found his own way of “designating difference and articulation” with a single word: Of Grammatology. His concern was to conceptualize the specific brisure that joins the putatively linear space and articulation” with a single word. With Spivak's translation cannily nominalized as “spacing.”

Much of Terceunquinto’s work around the turn of the millennium was characterized by a talent for the invention of the origami relations of neighborhood. This origami was made particularly explicit in a project called Vehiculón (2007), a word that came... on the one hand, to a specific kind of daily, multi-tongued action arranged among a central pole, prevalent in certain lower income neighborhoods in Mexico City, or, on the other, to more general notions of scarcity and neighborhood. For this project, the artists prompted negotiations between the owners of two adjacent prefabricated homes in order to reconfigure the wall separating their property, adding additional fittings to its surface without altering the square footage of land occupied by either one.

With an eye to the operation of the brisure in the collective’s work, it might tempt... “bifurcation” with a single word: With Spivak's translation cannily nominalized as “spacing.”

Vehiculón was not the first time that Terceunquinto had staged neighborly relations by spatializing them, putting them on scene. One of their more powerful actions, Proyecto para MUCA Roma (Project for MUCA Roma, 2004), had already use-relation... sounded like (drawn to the attention of the neighbors to reconfigure and re-phenomenalize the barrier between them, if only temporarily. For this project, the artists sought to transform the space of the Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes in Colonia Roma, an outpost of Mexico City’s Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, by converting it into storage space for a group of merchants who sold their wares at an informal weekend marketplace on the median that bisects nearby Avenida Obregón.

According to Mariana David, then curator of the MUCA Roma, the project involved negotiations with several actors, including the Legal Department of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, “since temporally lending its exhibition space to commercial use made it vulnerable to legal suits.” Individual vendors were eventually made to sign short-term contracts before they were assigned apodictically storage space within the museum. The negotiations leading up to the exhibition lasted longer than the exhibition itself. The incorporation of participants in Mexico City’s bustling “informal economy” into the exhibited space of a university museum had the effect of putting the vendors—however briefly—â€”as with university officials, museum staff, and the city’s art-going public.”

Similar processes of negotiation have been crucial elements of a number of Terceunquinto’s recent works, notably Extension de un Ambito (2006, the Ciudad de México) and Vehiculón (2007, a word that can refer to, secondunquinto, tercerunquinto. [Firstonefifth, secondonefifth, thirdonefifth.] It also refers to something that is never complete, which reflects our way of producing..."}

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A set of spacing procedures constitutes a counterpoint to the breaches procedures described above. Perhaps the most salient example of these is Deleuze’s demonstration: the iconic replacement of all signs by indistinguishable tags (Dismantling and Reinstallation of the National Coat of Arms, 2008), commissioned by the Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco (CCUT) as part of a broader commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Tlatelolco massacre. Tercerunquinto removed five of the six marble plaques that comprise the Mexican national coat of arms on the façade of the CCUT. On October 2, 2008, the last of the six plaques was dismantled, leaving in its place an empty space. This stood as a poignant index of the state of exception that has exemplified the perpetrators of the massacre from the rule of the law. The following day, however, the artists-installed the coats of arms into its original locations, offering two different moments in time with this installation of a novel truism.

A similar albeit less politically fraught operation was at work in the piece the artists undertook the following month as part of their exhibition Infrastructures: For Project Spaces (Museo de Arte Moderno Carmen T. de Carpio Gil, 2008). Tercerunquinto negotiated the dismantling of all exterior signage indicating the museum’s name, moving it inside the exhibition space, where it was periodically cleared and polished by unionized museum workers. This act of spacing confounded the distinction between inside and outside by severing the museum’s proper name from its proper place. (Derrida had of course already acknowledged that “the properness of the name does not escape spacing.”)

The spacing procedure that distinguishes these projects from the breach procedures described above, again, a relation to phenomenality. Spacing—the blank interval that separates the word on this page, these few words, here—is precisely the non-phenomenal, that which does not disclose itself to sensory experience. The impossibility of a breach that would articulate these two different procedures has become evident only in some of the artists’ more recent projects.

Whether or not the artists had intended this to be the last of their War of Tal (Fall 2009) was not indicated by its own title. The proposed work was to mark the last of the City Center Mall in downtown Columbus. At the time, Coleman was appointed mayor of Columbus at the time—on the exterior of the City Center Mall in downtown Columbus. Although War of Tal was not intended by the artists to signal the declaration of a project, it was a special kind of aporia—self to sensory experience. This act proposed to emblazon the eponymous words—quoting Michael Coleman, the mayor of Columbus at the time—on the exterior of the City Center Mall in downtown Columbus. Whether or not the artists had intended it to be so, the fate of the project was sealed in the very act of its announcement. The impossibility, as Derrida argued long ago in his own life, is a special kind of aporia, a non-passage whose “elementary milieu does not allow for something that could be called passage.”

The impossible is the final death, the necessity of destruction for existence. That the collective, as Derrida argued long ago in his own life, is a special kind of aporia—that is, the impos-sibly of a breach that would articulate these two different procedures has become evident only in some of the artists’ most recent projects.


4)  “It is not the poet’s function to relate actual events, but the


11)  A closer reading of this project would pursue the relationship between the iterability of Coleman’s words and their performative reinscription on Tercerunquinto’s project. In this connection, see Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), p. 84.

12)  For further details on its War of Tal project, see http://www.revistacodigo.com/entrevista-tercerunquinto/.


14)  It was the collective’s negotiation process thereby foreclosed, the project went unrealized, and the promised title of the piece inscribed itself in the artists’ performative gesture.


No young artist can resist a $50,000 cannon blast, 2012. Installation view at Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, part of the group show Resisting the Present, Mexico 2000-2012. Courtesy of the artists.