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Embodying the Social: Desire and Devo(r)ation at the Teatro Oficina

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Recent critical perspectives on embodiment have noted the social and political force of bodily presence (Butler 2015; Casanova and Jafar 2016), instantiated in a myriad of political movements, from Occupy, to street manifestations, to political theatrical performances (Toraldo and Islam 2017; Haug 2013; Taussig 2012; Graeber 2007). Indeed, bodily presence, especially in its collective and dramaturgical forms, performatively functions to demonstrate the immediacy, the vulnerability, and the affective intensity of subjective experience (Butler 2015; Butler and Anthanasiou 2013). The affective power of such performances lies in their unashamed demonstration of the embodied essence of human existence and the need for mutual recognition as embodied, affective beings. Departing from universalistic conceptions of abstract rights, such movements have taken advantage of the fact that the most basic forms of solidarity lie in the common fact of living in a body that desires, suffers, and needs others. Organizing such bodies so as to express this unescapable situation can provide organizations with deep social and political resonance.

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The idea of social action as embodied, affectively-laden organizing draws extensively from performance studies (e.g. Schechner 2014; Dolan and Wolf 2014), where the political power of theater and performance has been adapted by feminist, LGBT, environmentalist, and subaltern studies scholars and practitioners to constitute a performative politics of social movements. Organizational scholars have begun to acknowledge the critical philosophical undercurrents of such movements, but few works explore their organizational practices (e.g. Beyes 2015), particularly those that have used performance self-consciously as an organizational strategy (e.g. Simpson et al. 2015; Beyes and Steyaert 2006; Schreyogg and Höpfl 2004). Performance studies has moved beyond the theater stage into the street, the factory, and the internet. Yet theater groups themselves have also moved into these spaces, bringing performative perspectives into civil society (Beyes 2015). The current chapter uses the case of a socially engaged, avant-garde theater group to illustrate how principles of embodiment and affect can be used creatively to establish an organizational politics of the body, in its dimensions of affective intensity and participative presence.

Specifically, I discuss the Teat(r)o Oficina Uzyna Uzona (here referred to by its commonly used name “Teatro Oficina”), a contemporary theater based in São Paulo. Teatro Oficina has attracted critical acclaim since its founding in 1958, including being rated by *The Guardian* in 2015 as number 1 of the “10 best theaters” worldwide.¹ Teatro Oficina is known for its “anthropophagic” style, an ironic, visceral, and aggressive re-adaptation and hybridization of classic and modern sources to allegorize contemporary Brazilian society and politics (Islam 2012). Using tropes and rituals adapted from Brazilian Amerindian contexts, mixed with modernist critical theater, including influences from Brecht, Stanislavski and Grotowski (Sousa 2013), Teatro Oficina engages in direct social action through its theater, including political manifestos, street actions, and parodies (Patriota 2003). Teatro Oficina is iconic of the potential of the affective body to organize across social groups through celebrating libidinal connection and participative presence.

Our exposition, drawn from a wider qualitative study of Teatro Oficina, addresses three themes related to how the organization uses embodiment and affect to create the possibilities of social and political

voice. First, I explore Teatro Oficina's "anthropophagic" focus on desire of the other, how desire is performed both through spectacle and through the invocation of different cultural traditions in its productions. Second, I describe the staging and performance strategies of Teatro Oficina, emphasizing presence over representation, using the visceral in a ritualistic way to create a sense of collective immediacy that grounds solidarity. Third, I discuss how Teatro Oficina's approach overflows the stage into the street and the city, engaging in a performative urban politics that challenges land-speculative developments in the surrounding neighborhoods, offering a cultural alternative to the neoliberal politics of the contemporary megapolis.

Organizing, Embodiment, and Affect

Recent organizational literature is marked by a resurgence of interest in affective, aesthetic, and embodied aspects of organizing (Pullen and Rhodes 2015; Vachhani 2014; Küpers 2013; Thanem 2004), particularly in its relation to processes of social mobilization and resistance (e.g. Thanem 2012). Combining the aesthetic and affective aspects of organizational collectives with their collective mobilization possibilities, such approaches are able to emphasize embodiment in both its experiential and political dimensions (Beyes 2015). Such a combination makes the personal political, and resonates with social movements emphasizing the politics of embodiment and desire.

A key problematic in the politics of embodiment and affect involves the relationship between bodies and materialities, on the one hand, and the organizations of meanings and discourses, on the other (Oliveira et al. 2017). Conceived of in terms of building common meanings and beliefs, organizing involves discursive spheres where individuals communicate and align their worldviews. Discursive views see organizing as a process of building common *representations*, and discourse is a means to achieve such representations. Organizational concepts such as organizational culture, sensemaking, and identity have often used alignment of meanings, categories, and symbols as the building blocks of organization through common representations (e.g. Ashforth et al. 2011).

Embodiment perspectives, while not denying the importance of discourse and symbols, move beyond representation to examine the visceral and experiential aspects of organizing (Pullen and Rhodes 2015; Küpers 2013). Organizing around the body holds specific challenges and opportunities for organizational scholars, who have recently begun to consider how bodies are presented (Warhurst and Nickson 2007), surveyed (Ball 2006), and cared for (Gherardi and Rodeschini 2016) as aspects of organizing. How bodies are conceptualized (e.g. as material, symbolic, lived) varies across this literature, and much theoretical work remains to be done as to how to best include bodily and embodied experiences into organizational theorizing.

Politically, the movement from discourse to affect and embodiment has become important in a world where taken-for-granted common meanings are no longer available (cf. Fraser 2014). Visions of a public sphere of common intersubjective meanings, often linked to the democratic nation-state (e.g. Ramos-Zayas 2011), have given way to a world of interconnected identities, bodies, and forms of life. In a cosmopolitan world, it is necessary to imagine co-habitation among actors who are unlikely to share common representations, and where homogeneous worldviews are neither likely nor desirable. In such a world, recognition and respect for difference, rather than common ground, become conditions for politics (Hekman 1992). Both in terms of identity-based politics spanning across gender, culture, and ethnic identities, and in terms of relation to non-human entities which whom humans share natural ecosystems, a “cosmopolitics” based on bodily presence rather than discursive alignment is an increasingly pressing need in social and political theory (Watson 2011; Paulson 2006; Latour 2004).

Consequently, recent organizational perspectives on embodiment have focused on such issues as heterogeneity (Vachhani 2014; Thanem 2006) of bodies, particularly in the relationships between bodies and the ethics of the other (Pullen and Rhodes 2015; Islam 2015). For instance, Vachhani (2014) discusses how the maternal body, in its very physicality, poses a challenge for “normal” conceptions of organizational actors (see also Fotaki 2011; Gatrell 2011). Kenny and Fotaki (2015) argue that focusing on the body, rather than leading to an individual solipsism, can promote a relational view of inter-corporeality whereby the bodily depen-

dence of humans on each other becomes a basis for ethics. The intercorporeal aspect of bodily politics is particularly salient in embodied theorizing in the Latin American context (Viveiros de Castro 2009; Nunes 2008; Vilaça 2002), where complex relationships involving sexuality, nature, and colonial domination, on the one hand, and the lack of a historically institutionalized democratic discursive public sphere (e.g. Borón 1999), on the other hand, create an institutional environment well-suited for embodied approaches to cultural politics. Although such perspectives are varied in their historical forms (e.g. Rosa 2015), the current chapter focuses on a Brazilian tradition referred to as “anthropophagic” (e.g. Azevedo 2016; Rolnick 1998; Andrade 1990) in thinking about corporality, desire, and cosmopolitan politics. The anthropophagic approach to organizing, which has appeared in recent organizational literature, is rarely explicitly adopted as a theme by organizations, but has been used by scholars to describe Brazilian approaches to organizing (Prado and Sapsed 2016; Islam 2012, 2015; Wood and Caldas 1998). In the current case of the Teatro Oficina, however, the organization explicitly refers to itself as “anthropophagic”, drawing reflexively on writings around this tradition, and thus providing an ideal case for examining anthropophagic approaches to organizational embodiment.

In short, bodies and affects provide particular possibilities for thinking about organizing that are distinct from those emphasizing meanings and representations, and scholarship is proliferating in order to understand the range of these possibilities. Anthropophagic organizing is one approach particularly centered around bodies, relations, and desires, and is worth exploring theoretically and empirically. Below, I elaborate on this perspective in order to better understand its application in the Teatro Oficina.

United by Anthropophagy: Organizing Between Bodies

The anthropophagic moment in Brazilian modernism is an ironic, viscerally oriented artistic movement with multiple layers of meaning (Islam 2014), founded by Oswald de Andrade with the founding document

Manifesto Antropófago along with the magazine *Revista de Antropofagia* in 1928. Based on a “concept of life as devo(ration)” (Andrade 1954), the concept of anthropophagy was a reappropriation and resignification of the European colonial stereotype of Brazilian cannibalism. Drawing from the idea that this stereotype was based on the negative image of Brazil as a land of sexual desire, uncultured nature, and irrational chaos, the anthropophagic movement reappropriated these elements as a critique of the hyperrationalism of “Cartesian” Europe. Thus, the anthropophagic movement was from the beginning a movement against European logocentrism and a celebration of embodiment and desire (Campos and Wolff 1985).

This focus on embodiment is evident from the irreverent and celebratory tone of the “manifesto”, with overtones of both artistic and political activism. For instance, Andrade writes “what knocked over the truth was clothing, the impermeable between the interior and the exterior world”. Celebrating sexuality against “external inquisitions”, the manifesto uses an inverted psychoanalytic imagery with surrealist overtones to respond to European avant-garde movements with a voice from the South:

The struggle between what would be uncreated and the Creature – illustrated by the permanent contradiction of man and his Taboo. Everyday love and the capitalist modus vivendi. Anthropophagy. Absorption of the sacred enemy. To transform him into a totem.

Instead of the image of the cannibalistic savage as inferior to the civilized European, the cannibal is seen as the origin:

We want the Caraiba revolution. Greater than the French Revolution. The unification of all effective revolts in the direction of man. Without us, Europe would not even have its poor declaration of the rights of man.

What is interesting in these inversions is the simultaneous appropriation and subversion of European civilization, usually with a visceral metaphor, that at once harkens and inverts European heritage while “digesting” it with a Brazilian articulation: “Tupi or not Tupi – that is the question”. This visceral sense of both unity and inversion viewed the

body as both desiring and in flux, and identity as relational and embodied (Conklin 2001). It was drawn, indirectly, from an indigenous mythology in which physical species and their bodies were subject to transformations in identity based on subject position, a view described by anthropologists as “Amerindian Perspectivism” (e.g. Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2009).

It is not the purpose here to expand on this tradition (cf. Islam 2012); however, some conceptual keys to the movement can be outlined. First, the use of the body as a source of vitality and rebellion, as well as a longing for unification through bodily contact, that is, the body not only as difference but also as contact. Second, the ironic and often humorous use of bodily metaphors of devouring to invert power positions between the colonized indigenous subject and the colonizer, and the irreverent appropriation of dominant (often religious) symbols for subversive ends. Third, the ambivalence of identity at the level of language and body (Tupi or not Tupi?), where self and other interpenetrate but are not the same.

The anthropophagic movement, although earlier historically, was a key source of cultural inspiration for the later counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s in Brazil (Veloso 2004), and was fundamental for setting its tone both in terms of visceral explicitness, of sexual liberation, and of the ambivalent relation to the foreign and to popular culture (Dunn 2001, 2016). These themes would become organizationally central to the Teatro Oficina, in structuring its organizational identity, relation to its theatrical production, and political posture vis-à-vis the rapidly gentrifying São Paulo megapolis within which it would become an important cultural actor.

Illustrative Case Study: Teat(r)o Oficina Uzyna Uzona

The Teatro Oficina provides a historically important and self-reflexive example of how anthropophagic thinking can be organizationally embodied. To illustrate how anthropophagy allows new ways of thinking about embodiment, desire, and relational ethics that have organizational

implications, a brief introduction to the theater organization and the different facets of its anthropophagic approach is useful.

The Teat(r)o Oficina Uzyna Uzona was founded in 1958, and created a strong reputation in the 1960s and 1970s for its countercultural productions. One of several politically charged theaters of the period (the most famous perhaps being Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed), associated with the Arena Theater in São Paulo, Teatro Oficina formed part of an emerging Brazilian artistic avant-garde that was increasingly discontent with dictatorial turn in Brazilian politics and the moralistic conservatism of the dominant culture. Drawing on theatrical influences from Europe, from Brecht to Artaud to Stanislavski (Sousa 2013), Teatro Oficina also "devoured" these in their attempt to theorize in a Brazilian style that reflected the chaotic reality of São Paulo in the period (Della and Carvalho 2013).

The company's leader, José Celso Martinez Correa (known as Zé Celso), spent time in exile during the most brutal years of the military regime, a time during which many of the group's members were tortured and imprisoned. The reconstruction of the group over the late 1970s and 1980s culminated in a new, spectacularly innovative theater space by architect Lina Bo Bardi, inaugurated with shamanic rituals and sanctifications of the new ground. This site was to become the center of a decades-long battle over the future of the land as a cultural (and sacred) center of ritual and theater versus ongoing projects for gentrification and real estate development by the business mogul Silvio Santos (Campbell 2011). This political battle would itself be devoured and reappear as foundational to Teatro Oficina's artistic productions, as the struggle for its own existence was enacted in myriad ways on its stage and in its rituals, with figures of Santos depicted with a historical parade of brutal figures from the colonial period onwards.

The connection to the anthropophagic movement, although common throughout the Brazilian counterculture of the period, was particularly explicit in the Teatro Oficina, and the world of Oswald de Andrade was central to the theater (Della and Carvalho 2013). For instance, Andrade's play *Rei da Vela*, written in 1933, was left unproduced on stage until its first staging by Teatro Oficina in 1967, a production which became the landmark moment in the theater's history and also a

historic event in the history of Brazil's artistic reaction to the military dictatorship and a founding moment in the counterculture. As Della and Carvalho (1933) argue, the position taken in this gesture amounts to both a critique of violence, and a tacit critique of local resistance in the period, by means of an anthropophagic move, which critiques both external imperialism and internal collusion by confounding the identities of interior and exterior.

While a complete history of Teatro Oficina and its place in the anthropophagic movement is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is useful as an illustration of anthropophagic organizing in terms of its embodied and affective elements. These involve the notion of desire of the other, a fundamental aspect of anthropophagic thinking as laid out in historical anthropology, modernist interpretations, and tropicalist counterculture (Islam 2012). Second, Teatro Oficina's approach to embodiment highlights the notion of bodily presence in its "vibration" and "contamination" (Rolnick 1998); it is a theater emphasizing presence over representation, and participation over spectatorship and the intercorporeal interaction between actors and audience also reflect an element of anthropophagic thinking. Finally, Teatro Oficina's treatment of its own theater space and land, in its ongoing struggle with land developers, speculation, and gentrifications, gives a clue as to the social and political possibilities of anthropophagic thinking, both in terms of possible new organizational approaches and in terms of possible dangers of this approach and its potential for appropriation and/or political capture.

Anthropophagic Desire: From Taboo to Totem

The performances of Teatro Oficina, as well their everyday practices of producing theater, focus centrally on desire, aggression, intimacy, and other powerful emotions related to the complex intertwining of self and other. The anthropophagic aspect of this desire lies in its juxtaposition of bodies, collective identities, and emotional intensity, often directed as recounting current or past historical traumas. Campbell (2012, p. 289) describes this aspect as the "vibrant, carnavalesque re-appropriation of Brazil's troubled and often brutal past". By aggressively enacting social

life in ways that bring out its libidinal core, Oficina's productions lay bare the raw nerve of cultural passions, conflicts, and desires.

The use of scenes of bodily intensity and desire allow productions to recast complex historical moments in Brazilian history in terms of a history of mutual desire and aggression, in line with the anthropophagic ambivalence of bodies described above. This may be illustrated with a scene from a production of *Os Sertões*, a remake of a classical Brazilian text of the same name by Euclides da Cunha (cf. Campbell 2011). In a section entitled "Genesis of the Brazilian people", the figure of Princess Isabel is shown in an orgiastic scene of marital infidelity with an entourage of African slaves. Princess Isabel, known in Brazilian history for the abolition of slavery, is here depicted in a complex mixture of desire, power, and bodily entanglement, both betraying her husband and the patriarchy but also reinforcing the subaltern status of the slaves, who remain in shackles during the orgy (Campbell 2011).

This example illustrates a persistent tendency in Teatro Oficina to allow, and even provocatively exploit, contradictory ideas. This principle extended to the tolerance, and even embracing, of antagonistic figures in the theater itself, during shows, and to allow these contradictions to inform the performance. Lima (2002) recounts an example where, during an open rehearsal for *Os Sertões*, an unknown figure joined the collective celebration, and began to drunkenly and aggressively interrupt the harmonious ethos of the group. As some began to question the figure's presence, and started to ask him to leave, Zé Celso held them back, saying "Let him, let him, it's the Exu of the moment" (Lima 2002, p. 136). Exu, an Afro-Brazilian deity sometimes compared to the devil, sometimes to the Greek Dionysus, is a trickster figure representing desire, sexuality, and exchange; his frequent appearance at Teatro Oficina is a marker of the ambivalence of desire and corporality in the theater, as well as the intermixing of European and African traditions in its philosophy.

Similarly, the transformation of self and other through desire, fundamental to the anthropophagic movement, is seen in specifically cultural and political terms by Zé Celso. Writing in his blog about the performance of the piece "Anthropophagic Macumba", Celso writes:

Oswald [de Andrade] counsels us to go directly to the TABOOS to transform them into TOTEMS. Around what is prohibited, to invert it and transform it into a Fountain of Freedom and New discoveries about Human Biodiversity. Macumba is the source of much prejudice, but it transports us to a different human relation, away from the bureaucracy of relationships that are hypocritical, tedious, mommy-daddy, cerebral!⁹

He had been asked about the reason he chose the name “Macumba”, a term derived from an Afro-Brazilian tradition of magical spell casting. Combining this tradition with the anthropophagic ritual, and using this hybrid to make a commentary around contemporary human relations, imagines new forms of collectivity by identifying with the clandestine, unconscious collective force of taboo Brazilian society (turning “taboo” into “totem”).

Stages of Occupation: From Representation to Presence

While the emphasis on desire as a way of performing the interrelation of identities is emblematic of the anthropophagic movement, a second foundation of Teatro Oficina’s approach is its orientation to presence. Eschewing classical theatrical representation, the theater’s rehearsals and productions work to create a sense of “being there”. Both material and symbolic, these productions are heavily ritualized, where ritual works to imbue artifacts and actors with meaning while acknowledging and venerating their materiality. Actors described rehearsals as involving many hours “ritualizing” objects, to take them out of their “objectified” status as props or instruments and to re-enchant them for use during performances. For instance, plants to be used in performances would be ritualistically replanted; mud to be used in a play would be collectively rolled-around in to prepare actors to engage with it. These objects were described not as tools of representation, but as living entities that exerted power of presence during the collective works.

Also aimed at avoiding the objectification of representation and promoting direct presence, actors would hail audience members directly into

the action of the scene, and constantly break theatrical conventions of representation. Teatro Oficina is famous for “breaking the fourth wall”, bringing spectators on the stage, mingling with, touching, and even erotically engaging with spectators in an attempt to create a collective energy and overcome the passivity of spectacle (cf. Islam et al. 2008).

In terms of spatial layout, the Teatro Oficina is built in a unique style emphasizing movement and flow over stasis and representation. Designed by architect Lina Bo Bardi, the extremely thin “stage” area is virtually indistinguishable from the audience seating, which climbs up the side wall and gives easy access between actors and audience. The heavily horizontal shape implies a corridor, or a runway, leading from the street outside to the empty lot opposite the theater, a design described as a “Carnaval-Sambadrome” (Stevens 2015). This structure makes moving from street, to theater, to nature, very easy, and has become the bases for many performances which spill out of the theater into the surrounding neighborhood, or alternatively, into outside rituals in the open lot area.

Writing in his blog, Zé Celso explains how the spatial layout creates an embodied relation with the public, “We don’t spend that time ‘in front of the public’...but *with* the public, that surrounds us in the seating, from which it can come, act, and macumba together with us”.³ This inclusion is increased when the actors and public physically leave the theater together, as in “*Macumba Antropófaga*”, where collective marches in the street entangle the actors with the audience. Such techniques also have an “occupy” dimension, where at times it is difficult to distinguish between theater performance and a political rally, particularly in the many cases in which the performances take political allegories that directly relate to ongoing current events.

Campbell (2012) describes how the focus on embodied presence, as opposed to representation, changes the way that historical phenomena can be experience, particularly regarding moments of violence or trauma. Contrasting Oficina to Hirsch’s “aesthetics of postmemory”, Campbell notes that representations of historical violence often focus on mourning and re-building lost pasts that have become dispersed in diasporic movement across time and space. By contrast, Teatro Oficina spectacularizes Brazil’s traumatic past through a reincarnation of memory that is affec-

tively charged and erases the division between present and past. As Campbell (2012, p. 289) explains of *Os Sertões*, it is a:

participatory, sensorially potent and libidinally charged poetics, which fetishizes the corporeality of both actors and spectators alike. This emphasis on the immediate jouissance of bodily presence, on the mercurial transformative nature of the live event, already characteristic of theatre as a medium, contrasts directly with the play of indexicality and absence, of “irreplaceable loss and interminable mourning”.

In short, by acting on the place of presence over representation, boundaries between inner and outer, past and present, are blurred, and the separation implied in mourning is replaced by the reincarnation of anthropophagy. While the roots of Brazilian indigenous anthropophagy as a funerary ritual are beyond our scope (see Conklin 2001), its use as a theatrical modality signals a radically embodied way of narrating a past of political struggle and brutality, and a participatory mode of living history through collective enactment.

In the Corridor of the Big Snake: Embodied Spaces and Urban Occupations

As noted above, the architectural design of the Teatro Oficina embodied an anthropophagic approach to collective action; beyond the design, however, the site of the theater itself has been an ongoing locus of political organizing over the past decades (e.g. Stevens 2015; Lima 2001). Since the early days of the theater, Teatro Oficina's location in the central and underdeveloped neighborhood of Bixiga has created controversy over land use and gentrification in one of the densest urban landscapes in Latin America (Stevens 2015).

Since the 1980s, Silvio Santos, one of the largest media executives in Brazil (Caldeira 2000), has aimed to use the surrounding area for land development, including residential blocks and a shopping mall. His group, Grupo Silvio Santos, is a conglomerate of with the business Sisan, is the real estate arm, and is one of the most powerful business groups in

the country. During the reconstruction of the theater beginning in 1979, Santos' group began clearing the surrounding neighborhood for development, but was unable to demolish the theater, because of its status as a heritage site; the subsequent political battle over this appellation has been ongoing, with different administrations reinstating and removing this legal protection. Its blockage of the land development proposed by Sisan has given Oficina a status as a counter-power and a force against neoliberal urbanization, and has protected one of the few open spaces in this region (Stevens 2015). In parallel, in 2002, Teatro Oficina initiated the Movimento Bixigão, its own urban project which included local children in theater education, circuses, and educational projects. In parallel, it initiated counter-imaginings of the downtown area, drawing on Oswald de Andrade's thought. For instance, an "Anthropophagic University" was created, with the goal of spreading an alternative "knowledge-power" complex based on countercultural ideas (Trois and Colling 2017). Zé Celso described plans to create a cultural corridor running from the Theater downtown, which would be called the "Big Snake", echoing an indigenous mythology figure, as well as a green patch that would serve as an "urban jungle" (Stevens 2015). Although the completion of such a large project in the center of a dense megapolis was largely unrealistic in practical terms, its existence as a counter-hegemonic imaginary had important value in challenging dominant view of politics in the city.

In parallel, the fight to protect the site of Teatro Oficina began to take different embodied dimensions. For instance, the slogan "demarcate Tekoha" was used to describe the land, another indigenous reference. Where "demarcation" refers to the federal land entitlements given to indigenous groups to self-govern autonomously, "Tekoha" is a Guarani term that at once signifies a Guarani village, and the kind of place in which it is possible (and outside of which it is impossible) to be Guarani. This untranslatable term equated the ontic status of the collective with its connection to a certain land, a notion alien to the commodified use of land as real estate.

Finally, during this period, Silvio Santos became a key figure in the imaginaries of the company, and also was portrayed throughout the productions in ironic and critical ways. At the same time, as the directors of Teatro Oficina explained, he was a "theater-man", a television star that

was also in the business of spectacle. As such, the struggle between the Grupo Silvio Santos and Teatro Oficina was allegorized as a struggle between two visions of spectacle, the first, the commodified and televised spectacle that dominated Brazilian mass media, and the second which drew its identity anthropophagically by devouring, challenging, and contesting this power from the margins. In this way, the opposition to Santos was not a simple binary between “good” and “evil”—rather it was a struggle between modes of being where predation was symbolically reappropriated by the company and represented through artistic creation, public demonstration, and architectural constructions.

To sum up, the anthropophagic approach of Teatro Oficina is evident at multiple levels. At the level of self-other relations, visceral, affective bonds are constitutive of a relationality marked both by intimacy and by struggle. At the level of immediate locality, a focus on representation is replaced by a focus on presence, embodied in the local architecture and its practices of participation and breaking down of boundaries between actor and audience. At the level of the wider political context, an ethic of continuous struggle, linked to the land and the simultaneous embracing and devouring of enemies, gives a twist to contemporary perspectives on urban politics. Each of these levels is anthropophagic in its viscosity, its simultaneous intimacy and aggression, and its muddling of identity boundaries.

Discussion

The Teatro Oficina presents a form of collective organizing in which embodiment, affect, and desire become deployed at different levels in order to support the anthropophagic vision of a countercultural artistic organization. While situated within a theater organization in the Brazilian context, the case holds insights that could be applied more generally to understandings of bodies and affective experiences in organizing. As a concluding discussion, it is worth elaborating and extending some of these insights, and speculating on how they could be brought to bear on future organizational research.

Embodiment and Desire for the Other

An ongoing danger for conceptions of embodiment is that they become reduced to considering individual bodies in their difference, leading to a biological solipsism and also opening the possibility for individualized bodily control (Foucault 1998). Much more interesting conceptually, as well as ethically, are conceptions of embodiment that see the body as fundamentally open, relational, and interactional in character (e.g. Kenny and Fotaki 2015; Diprose 2002). Rather than an ontology of commonality via language and individual separation via bodies, such approaches would consider the body in its ability to cohabit with other bodies and to exhibit forms of “corporal generosity” (Diprose 2002), that is, affective and pre-reflective ways of co-habiting that allow identities to be constituted relationally. How do anthropophagic conceptions of the body fit into such conceptions?

First, the relational aspect is built into anthropophagic conceptions, so that bodily exchange is fundamental. The aggressiveness implied in the cannibalistic metaphor, however, belies a simple conception of generosity as self-giving or sacrifice. Rather, bodily interaction is struggle, but an intimate struggle, though which identities are co-constituted; sameness and difference are then part of an inter-corporeal dialogue rather than divergent possibilities, and the one implies the other. The concept of “desire” and “vibration”, replete throughout the anthropophagic literature, is emblematic of this tension. Bodies are lacking, and this lack seeks exchange with other bodies, yet what is sought is not union or mimesis of these bodies; as Veloso (2004) describes, “We, Brazilians, should not imitate, but devour new information”. What anthropophagy thus contributes to relational notions of embodiment is a sense of struggle and danger. Intuitively, this contribution should not be taken as unproblematic.

What is positive about such visions is that they avoid romanticizing the body, nature, or affect, a chronic difficulty in discussions over the body (cf. Washburn 2003). This is particularly the case in contexts where imaginaries of natural bodies are juxtaposed with indigenous people living within a reified concept of “Nature”, such is the case with Brazil (e.g.

Nunes 2008), and where Nature is culturally projected into a distant and pre-modern past (cf. Appadurai 1990). The resulting turn to the body may be a nostalgic gesture reflecting an absence in the present, to paraphrase Jameson's (1989) characterization of late capitalist culture. Rather than laying a foundation for a more inclusive and holistic humanism, such "new age" perspectives may reify an impossible sense of harmony, and thus drive the very sense of lack and desire that yearns for a "simpler life". By tinting this nostalgic past with an ironic admission of appropriation, making desire itself part of the past (and not a present yearning for the past), anthropophagy may avoid some of the pitfalls of romanticism that seem to follow the revaluing of the body.

On the other hand, what would be the terms of an ethical cannibalism? Accepting that bodies are fundamentally interrelated, that they are not romantically unified but drawn in lines of struggle with and for each other, how could such struggle be organized so as to promote mutual self-creation, as opposed to domination? The cannibal metaphor may be ironic, but it risks opening up a problem of brutality that it does not know how to resolve. On the theatrical stage, the enactment of social brutality is one thing; even when the "fourth wall" is broken and the audience participates in the banquet, the show does not go on forever. But can anthropophagic organizing, once spilled over into wider cultural enactments, sustain the inter-corporeal struggle without degrading into a struggle for domination? The ethics of anthropophagy require nuanced development so that the nature and uses of this metaphor, and its possibility to be realized materially, are carefully considered.

Organizing Presence Versus Organizing Representation

A second set of principles around the Teatro Oficina case involves the role of representation in its relation to immediate presence. The issue of representation is clearly central to any theater organization, but how organizations represent reality through symbols and language is important more broadly. Yet Teatro Oficina engages in practices turned toward creating an immediate sense of presence among actors and audience members. Their

focus on ritual is also a focus on immediate experience, a sense of “being there” during the happening of a pivotal event. Their shows are often seen just as much as monumental events as they are as dramaturgical representations, and often these boundaries are muddled as the show spills into the surrounding streets or occupies public spaces. Where they use symbols, these are thoroughly “ritualized”; plants are replanted; mud is rolled in and felt during rehearsals; objects take on quasi-magical qualities that are more about transubstantiation than about representation.

Embodied organizing emphasizing presence over representation could similarly focus on ritual, lived experience, and participation. Although the “practice turn” in organizational theorizing (e.g. Rennstam and Ashcraft 2013) moves in the direction of embodiment, organizational scholars still know little about how interaction in its “immediate” enactment differs from interaction in its representational function, that is, how the experience and enactment of organizational life unfold differently than its discursive focus on organizational values, meanings or objectives. Similarly, a focus on “ritual” in organizations (e.g. Dacin et al. 2010; Di Domenico and Phillips 2009) has tended to focus on what ritual means, rather than how it is phenomenally lived by actors in its performative creation of events having a social reality in themselves. Moving practice and ritual perspectives more toward embodiment would mean seeing such perspectives less from an interpretive lens and more in terms of their reality-constituting function.

Finally, in terms of methodology, the nature of interaction and participation in organizations from an anthropophagic perspective can position practice over representation. Methodologically, it can do this by focusing less on the thematic interpretation of organizationally produced texts and more on the objects, artifacts, and embodied interactions within organizations. This would imply less interview-based and archival methods and more ethnographic engagement, participation, and reflexive experiential methods within organizations. The anthropophagic approach is literally a way of “going native”, while maintaining irony, a reflexive ability to subvert meanings, and an openness to “devour” and remix cultural elements. Methodologically, anthropophagic ethnography would hybridize spectator and actor, without reducing one to the other.

Political Potentials and Pitfalls of Embodied Organizing

In terms of its emancipatory potential and a social and political mobilization approach, the anthropophagic movement is ambivalent in a way that may be informative for many movements of the “new” or “cultural” left. Historically, Teatro Oficina was both countercultural, being oppositional to the military dictatorship, and reticent to engage in the more radical struggles of other groups such as those associated with Boal’s Theater of the Oppressed (Mostaço 1982). Putting aesthetics over politics allowed the company to continue in the face of political pressure, although ultimately the repression of dictatorship came down on it as well. Further, the position of the Oficina as regards its social composition is mixed and complex. Enacting and valorizing Amerindian myths and rituals, the organization yet maintains little direct dialogue with indigenous groups. Supporting and including socio-economically disadvantaged populations in its surrounding neighborhood, and presenting class and racial politics in progressive ways in its productions, yet Teatro Oficina is largely frequented by a university-educated cultural elite and draws on philosophical and international cultural sources out of reach for popular audiences. Further, while it struggles against the real estate development in the area, and is outspoken in its opposition to land speculation and the corporate domination of the center of São Paulo, as an internationally famous theater company, it constitutes a key attraction of the neighborhood and an agent of cultural gentrification in promoting a bohemian and artistic core in the region.

These ambivalences parallel the ambiguous identity of the anthropophagic approach—the cannibal, as both colonized victim and aggressive predator, is positioned ambivalently in a politics of domination. Neither resister nor colonizer, the anthropophage draws on the identities of both and is thus politically ambidextrous. What this means for critical organizational scholars looking to the movement for inspiration is uncannily familiar. Is anthropophagy “decaf” resistance (Contu 2008), that is, performing a critical gesture while ultimately being complicit in hegemony? Does it reflect a “new spirit” of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello

2005), countercultural in posture but ultimately compatible with the capitalist world of production around it? An important area for future exploration, therefore, would be to examine what kinds of social processes support or undermine the critical and social-transformative possibilities of organizations such as Teatro Oficina, and how the nuance of their approach can be successfully articulated together with an activism that is able to promote social transformation.

Conclusion

To conclude, embodiment, affect, and interaction provide possibilities for rethinking organizations that recognize the limits of logocentrism, representation, and discourse. At the same time, the former concepts are themselves heterogeneous and nuanced, presenting ambivalences for organizing that require sustained scholarly attention. By illustrating how Teatro Oficina has self-consciously adopted a particular formation of these concepts, in the notion of anthropophagy, the current chapter seeks to contribute to an ongoing discussion of when, where, and in what forms the body and its lived experience become the principle foundations of organization. As the Teatro Oficina shows, rather than simply resolving previous organizational tensions, these terms bring in new sets of tensions that need to be addressed in scholarship and in practice. As an artistic organization whose business is performance and enactment, these are questions deeply penetrating the daily activities of organizational members. Their insights, as well as the limitations of this approach, are worth following as scholars attempt to explore of the same questions in their scholarly work.

Notes

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/dec/11/the-10-best-theatres-architecture-epidaurus-radio-city-music-hall>
2. <https://blogdozelso.wordpress.com/2012/08/24/entrevista-ao-sesc-sobre-a-turde-macumba-antropofaga-pelo-interior/>
3. Ibid.

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