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TEN

Literary festivals as Co-Creation? Challenging territorial stigmatisation in alternative ways

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Introduction

This chapter takes a comparative approach to two initiatives, one from the Global North and one from the South, that have been developed by writers to bring literary events to peripheral neighbourhoods. The Dictée des Cités, a spelling competition organised by Rachid Santaki in French cities since 2013, and the Literary Festival of the Urban Periphery (FLUP), curated by Julio Ludemir and Écio Salles in Rio de Janeiro's favelas since 2012, were not conceived as Co-Creation events but are founded on similar principles and processes insofar as they promote art and creativity in marginalised urban areas and seek to challenge the perception of these neighbourhoods as places devoid of the production and consumption of literary texts. The aim of this chapter is therefore to compare the two artist-driven events and explore their respective strategies to engage with local communities and broader audiences. Based on interviews and ongoing dialogue with the organisers of both events, the chapter seeks to tap into their extensive experience of knowledge production with communities to see what Co-Creation can learn from their practices and how it can inspire them in return. A secondary aim is to evaluate how collaborative literary events adapt to specific local challenges in the Global North and South.

Chikako Mori (2012) sees the persistent overlooking of scriptural practices in the urban margin as a deliberate denial of high-brow cultural forms in stigmatised areas. She reminds us that French banlieues are often represented in public (political, media and academic) discourses as places that fall short of a written culture recognised and validated by the establishment. According to Mori, the non-recognition of banlieues as places of reading and textual production comes from a desire to reaffirm a longstanding divide between high- and low-brow cultures, based on the understanding that writing is not quite a cultural practice like the others, insofar as it has always been perceived and used to mark the line separating 'us' and 'them', both inside the Hexagon (fight against regional languages) and outside (colonial ideology): in this representation some are perceived as 'literate', 'civilised', 'enlightened', 'masters of themselves' and others as 'uneducated', 'barbarians', 'obscure', 'uncontrollable' (Mori, 2012: 75 *author's translation*). This observation is also confirmed by Bettina Ghio (2016), whose research highlights that French rap artists' complex relationship with and contribution to high-brow literature is generally ignored, or by Keira Maameri, whose 2016 documentary, *Nos Plumes (Our Pens)*, shows how bestselling French novelists having postcolonial and banlieue roots like Santaki himself continue to be marginalised by mainstream literary institutions.

Similarly, from the earliest days of samba, Brazilian favelas have consistently been associated with popular musical genres rather than with a vibrant literary scene (Maddox, 2014). In recent years, favela youths have been actively engaged in different musical movements from hip-hop to AfroReggae. According to Patrocínio (2013), these contributed to inspire the emergence of an avant-garde literary movement called 'Marginal Literature' in the peripheries of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro since the 1990s. Hip-hop was also instrumental in providing peripheral youth with

alternative identities, feelings of self-affirmation and ‘a sense of protest, creating a counter-discourse, erasing hegemonic discourses and producing an interstice between centre and periphery’ (Patrocínio, 2013: 107, *author’s translation*). However, in spite of their participation in literary production, favelas just like banlieues continue to be referred to as ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ and depicted in opposition to the formal city perceived as ‘civilised’ (Maddox, 2014: 466).

This chapter will systematically compare the two festivals’ attempts to shift the image of peripheral urban areas in France and Brazil from ‘zones of non-writing’ (Mori 2012) to places of written culture. The first section will explore their similarities and differences. The second section will place them in the Global North/South divide to shed light on their different participation in knowledge production. The final section will compare the two events’ ethos, aims and strategies with those of Co-Creation. The conclusion will discuss how Co-Creation projects and socially engaged literary festivals could learn from each other.

Destigmatisation through art in two literary festivals

La Dictée des Cités (the Dictation of the Periphery) was launched in 2013 by writer and journalist Rachid Santaki in collaboration with community activist Abdellah Boudour, president of the association *Force des Mixités* (Strength in Diversity). Santaki, who lives in Saint-Denis, Greater Paris, is a journalist, essayist and novelist, author of several scripts and crime novels set in the area. As an engaged writer, he seeks to “be active beyond writing books, to play a role in society, to take the books outside the library” (Santaki, 2019) using strategies ranging from pasting posters in the street to promote his novels to teaching creative writing in prisons or launching cultural initiatives.

The Literary Festival of the Urban Periphery (FLUP) was also founded by writer, journalist, novelist and cultural producer Julio Ludemir and Écio Salles, a poet, essayist, former Cultural Secretary of the municipality of Novo Iguaçu and one of the coordinators of cultural group AfroReggae. The festival was established in 2012 as a counter-event to Brazil’s most prestigious book fair, the International Literary Festival of Paraty (FLIP) which has been held annually since 2003 in the seaside town of Paraty. The FLUP has both challenged and extended the international festival model adopted by the FLIP (Heyward, 2017) by seeking to make literature accessible to all, reaching out to the over one million people living in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas (Perlman, 2013: 52).

Both the Dictation and the FLUP are itinerant events with strong community roots, although they both have experienced important mutations over time. The first Dictation was an outdoor event organised in May 2013 in Clichy-sous-Bois (Greater Paris) before spreading to other banlieues around Paris. Later it was held in other cities across France and was even exported to Italy, Belgium, Cameroon and Morocco (Boucher, 2019). Its size expanded from an initial average of 40 to 200–400 participants (Dictée Géante website). In May 2017, the event reached its 100th edition in Bagnolet (Brancato, 2017) and earned Rachid Santaki the rank of Knight of the National Order of Merit. The Dictation’s 200th edition was celebrated at the Elysée Palace in 2019. A record 1473 participants were registered in March 2018 when the largest dictation ever held took place in the iconic sporting venue Stade de France. According to Santaki “it was something incredible because so many things happened around this simple exercise we all had at school but never outside it” (Santaki, 2019). To reflect its mutations, the event changed its name from *La Dictée des Cités* to *La Dictée pour Tous*

(Dictation for All) and to *La Dictée Géante* (Giant Dictation). For the organisers, this transition meant an increased potential to connect to more diverse audiences but also a shift in focus:

“In fact, the first version of the dictation was staged in the neighbourhood and was perceived as an event in the periphery. [...] It was a way to respond to the clichés, to show that banlieue residents liked dictations just as much as people in the centre but as a side effect it contributed to enclosing participants in the margins and seemed to suggest that people in the periphery had their own dictation. [...] Things changed since as soon as we took the dictation out of the neighbourhoods, it actually allowed people to mix. [...] Today, organising a dictation and bringing all the audiences together allows for a neutral meeting ground. I think that the dictation has made it possible to create a bridge between these publics which do not necessarily meet. But there are so many differences between these audiences that the dictation is just one meeting point, other instances of sharing and transmission need to be invented to go even further.” (Santaki, 2019)

Similar to the Dictation, the FLUP is also a nomadic event. The first five editions took place in different Rio de Janeiro favelas: Morro dos Prazeres in 2012, Vigário Geral in 2013, Mangueira in 2014, Chapéu Mangueira in 2015, Cidade de Deus in 2016, and Vidigal in 2017. Yet in 2018 the festival broke with this tradition by moving to the Valongo Wharf, a UNESCO world heritage site where enslaved Africans were traded, while the 2019 edition was held at the Museum of Art in Rio (MAR). Initially called FLUPP (the Literary Festival of the Pacifying Police Units), the festival progressively distanced itself from the police pacification process that started in 2009 by moving from pacified favelas to an unpacified one in 2013 and by “freeing itself from the UPP [Pacifying Police Unit] brand after the decline of the pacification policy” (Ludemir, 2019) by changing its name to the Literary Festival of the Urban Periphery. The change of location from favelas to cultural institutions in the city centre was simultaneously motivated by the difficulty of negotiating with a range of new stakeholders in a different favela every year and the desire to draw attention to racism, sexism, homophobia, the legacies of colonialism and slavery, reminding audiences that ‘the idea of the “periphery” in this festival extends beyond the geographical sense to include communities and identities that are marginalized in society’ (El Youssef, 2017).

While the two events share similar goals, they use different strategies to reach these. Dictations are one-day events based on classical literary texts which are read out loud and have to be spelled by the participants. This school exercise traditionally used to test students’ spelling skills has been turned into a game to attract wide audiences to literature, reconcile postcolonial populations with the French Republican school system which they often resent and demonstrate that “the French language belongs to all and can be enriched by the participation of others and adopt different forms according to the context” (Santaki, 2019). The FLUP’s annual programme, on the other hand, unfolds over five consecutive days and includes round table discussions, activities for children, performances and other celebratory moments. The festival’s main innovation, however, is the ongoing rather than one-off engagement with the host communities which helps build relationships, involve local actors and stakeholders, create a community of readers, challenge the stigmatisation attached to the urban

margins, and ultimately to nurture a new Brazilian literature from below through discovering and forming new talents. According to Heyward:

The FLUP engages a territory in a year-long, bottom-up creative process before conducting tailored writers' and readers' workshops over a series of months. [...] The community consultation and co-creation process is key to developing ongoing relationships with residents and integrating a variety of genres and tools in the festival's programming. (Heyward, 2017: 1)

Thus, both the Dictation and the FLUP use artist-initiated events based on literary texts to engage with mixed audiences and dispel preconceptions about peripheral populations. Their differences lie in the varying depth and length of this involvement and its more or less creative nature as well as some structural dissimilarities caused by the North-South divide.

Literary festivals in the context of the Global North-South divide

Although France and Brazil occupy different positions in the global economy, their present-day social, educational and cultural inequalities are deeply rooted in the discriminatory practices of colonisation leading to lasting divides between educated elites and stigmatised postcolonial populations in both countries. Due to the accessibility of books and higher literacy rates, the percentage of regular readers in France is much higher: 91 per cent (Pech, 2017) as opposed to 56 per cent in Brazil (Failla, 2016). According to Mustafa Dikeç (2017), the current stigmatisation of French banlieues is shaped by a strong colonial legacy, a persistent imaginary based on distinctions between populations and civilisations believed to be superior or inferior:

The Republic is at once the product and the producer of racialized social relations through its public policies and official discourses. [...] The working-class *banlieues* of France bear the weight of this colonial legacy. [...] Through policies and discourses, the State perpetuates, indeed reproduces, forms of colonial domination in the banlieues. (Dikeç, 2017: 104)

This legacy explains that in the country that achieved the world's third highest literacy rate in 2002 (0.987 against 0.905 in Brazil, EFA 2002), an important divide persists between the populations of metropolitan centres and the residents of low-income banlieues. The latter have distinctively lower literacy rates, higher numbers of non-native speakers of French, weaker school performances and higher concentrations of students experiencing difficulties. A recent study on illiteracy revealed that in 2011, 27 per cent of the population aged 18–65 in the so-called 'sensitive urban zones' or ZUS experienced difficulties when reading and writing, compared to only 11 per cent of those living outside these areas (Rapport de l'Observatoire national des zones urbaines sensibles, 2013: 133). Since 1981, schools in these areas have received extra support from priority education policies enabling them to reduce their class sizes, offer higher remuneration for teachers and allocate extra time for small-group activities. A reform in 2017 transformed the so-called ZEPs (Priority Education

Zones) into Priority and Reinforced Priority Education Networks (REP and REP+) and extended the scheme to 1095 geographic areas encompassing 21 per cent of public school students aged 11–15 in about 8000 schools across France. Yet, according to a government report published in February 2018 (Rosenwald, 2018), both REP and REP+ areas still have a significantly higher percentage of socially disadvantaged students whose parents are either unemployed or manual workers and these students have a considerably lower competency in the French language: 15-year-old students entering the sixth and final year of college tested at the beginning of the 2015–16 academic year scored only 60 per cent against 83 per cent in schools outside REP areas (Rosenwald, 2018: 2).

While these statistics explain why French banlieues are seen by some as ‘zones of non-writing’ (Mori 2012: 75), other studies (Van Zanten, 2001, Caillet, 2005, Beaud and Mauger, 2017) highlight the existence of a prevalent ‘anti-school sentiment’ in these areas (Beaud and Mauger, 2017: 35). For example, during the 2005 riots several schools were torched (Dikeç, 2017). Banlieue residents’ mistrust toward the Republican education system is rooted in a complex range of factors: racially and socially biased practices targeting students of postcolonial origin (Beaud, 2002); curricula promoting colonial values; anti-Muslim policies culminating in the banning of the headscarf in French schools since 2004 (Dikeç, 2017); and the orientation of children of immigrant or working-class parents towards vocational training at an early age, which impedes their social mobility while maintaining former hierarchies (Van Zanten, 2001).

Brazil’s marginalised urban population is similarly linked with colonial history. The abolishment of slavery in 1888 brought significant numbers of freed slaves from around Brazil to Rio de Janeiro in search of affordable housing (Freire Medeiros, 2013). Freire Medeiros suggests that ‘in the absence of public policies capable of providing housing for those in need, [favelas] emerged as a solution based mostly on the self-construction of homes in territories where building was formally forbidden – areas beyond the reach of the formal real estate market’ (Freire Medeiros, 2013: 57). From their inception, favelas were configured as the ‘space of the poor’, both geographically and culturally, and by the 1920s they were durably associated with samba and carnival. Although these products of Afro-Brazilian counter-culture were integrated into the national culture and identity by the regime of Getúlio Vargas in the 1930s (Yúdice, 2003), the economic and social marginalisation of favela residents continued throughout the Brazilian dictatorship from 1964 till 1984, and even after the democratisation that started in 1985. Perlman (2013) notes that the arts have played an important role in the resistance to marginalisation in Brazil too:

In the wake of the return to democracy, community groups, federations of community groups, and non-profits working in favelas flourished. Some of these promoted the rights of citizenship and attempted to correct past social injustices. Others were organized around cultural activities such as theatre, dance and filmmaking, sports [...] or around reclaiming weak or even lost racial or ethnic practices. (Perlman, 2013: 151–153)

Perlman argues that the distinction between the worthy in-group and the unworthy out-group remains strong in a country where 34 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line and the top ten per cent of the population earn 50 per cent of the national income, while the poorest 20 per

cent earn 2.5 per cent of the national income (Perlman, 2013: 48). She suggests that although racial and spatial stigmatisation remain strongly interlinked, the fact of living in a favela remains more stigmatising than people's skin colour. The criminalisation of favela residents in the fields of the media, local administration and public policies reinforces this stigmatisation (Lacerda, 2015) and the fight against drug trafficking is frequently used as a pretext to justify aggressive policing that denies the residents' human rights.

Ireland (2008) states that the distribution of quality education among the Brazilian population is one of the most unequal in the world and functional illiteracy rates remain high (Ireland, 2008: 718). This mainly affects the elderly, the indigenous and black populations as well as those living in rural areas and in the North-East of Brazil. Besides the important socioeconomic disparities that make books unaffordable for many, the main obstacle to reading is illiteracy. In 2006, Brazil registered over 13 million illiterate youths and adults, representing 10.38 per cent of the country's population (Rodrigues Mello and Marini Braga, 2018). As a result of the ambitious adult literacy programmes introduced under the Lula presidency, this number was reduced to 11.8 million people (7.2 per cent) in 2016 and 11.3 million (6.8 per cent) in 2018 (Indio, 2019). According to Julio Ludemir, the FLUP has capitalised on the success of these education policies to train new readers and authors (Ludemir, 2019).

Despite some similarities regarding the territorial stigmatisation, racial discrimination and educational disadvantages experienced by banlieue and favela residents, there are also important structural differences between the Global North and South. While most researchers agree on describing class and race issues in Brazil as a 'social apartheid' (Resende, 2009, Lacerda, 2015), references to a 'postcolonial urban apartheid' in France remain sporadic (Silverstein and Tetreault, 2006, Tchumkam, 2015). In French banlieues, governmental, regional and municipal structures are in charge of running schools, community centres, libraries, theatres, houses of culture and cultural events. In Brazil's favelas, most cultural institutions are maintained by the efforts of local and foreign associations, volunteers and NGOs. The neoliberal turn of the 1980s, which in the Global North resulted in the retrenchment of the welfare state and 'the reduction of state-subsidised social services, the lowering of wages and the evisceration of labour rights' (Yúdice, 2003: 82), had a somewhat different effect on the Global South where the welfare state has never been fully developed and unskilled labour has been less affected by unemployment (Perlman, 2013: 159). In both parts of the world, however, it has triggered a turn to civil society, transforming culture into the main arena of progressive struggle led by the most innovative actors (Yúdice, 2003: 88).

North-South differences also prevail in the domain of knowledge production and epistemology understood as the critique and validation of scientific knowledge. As previously argued in the introduction, the epistemologies of the North have attracted significant criticism in recent years for their 'pretence to be the planetary centre and the desire and design to homogenise the world to its image and likelihood' (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 194). Due to the unequal relations of power, they succeeded in imposing the mirage of their universal validity upon the totality of cultures colonised (Quijano, 2010). However, with the rise of decolonial theory, the embodied and technically and culturally intrinsic social practices of Southern epistemologies born from the struggle against capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy have been increasingly recognised and the necessity of decolonising Eurocentric ways of knowledge production has been gaining ground (Santos, 2018). FLUP's efforts to collect and conserve favela residents' practice-based knowledge and oral memories

in events like the 'Feijoada da Memória' (Memory Meal) which will be discussed in the next section can be considered as part of decolonial strategies aiming to erase hierarchies between Northern and Southern ways of knowledge production.

Finally, the North-South divide is also encapsulated in both events' different access to public funding and national and international institutional validation. The Dictation mainly relies on national and municipal funders including France Culture, the Centre of National Monuments, municipal and regional councils and ministries (La Dictée Géante website), while since the decline of state support the FLUP receives most of its financial support from private sponsors (such as Ford) and foreign institutions (among others the Open Society Foundation, the French Institute, and the British Council) (Ludemir, 2019). The Global North is also known for concentrating the most prestigious literary institutions, publishing houses and globally-known literary prizes (Casanova, 2007) which act as instances of legitimation by validating new writers and introducing them to global audiences. The London Book Fair's International Excellence Award awarded to the FLUP in 2016 is a good example of the international power of legitimation which is still mostly held in the Global North.

The literary festivals through the Co-Creation lens

This final section will assess the two events' aims, ethos and strategies through the lens of Co-Creation. According to the definition championed in this book, Co-Creation is a method of collaborative knowledge production that relies on socially engaged artistic and cultural practices to provide communities with opportunities for self-understanding and resistance to the dominant social imaginary. Co-Creation brings together artists, researchers, residents and stakeholders from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to generate tangible and intangible, creative and intellectual outcomes relevant to the community. Arts practice is embedded in Co-Creation workshops in which all actors are recognised as equal participants actively taking part in both the creative process and the knowledge production which are inseparable from each other. A deeper understanding of different perspectives on the neighbourhood, the divided city and social justice emerges from the process spontaneously as a by-product of the engagement with art used as a leveller to enable different voices to be heard.

Like Co-Creation, both festivals use literature to destigmatise disadvantaged urban audiences and build capacity by engaging participants in arts-based practices. Co-Creation generally works with small groups of participants and seeks to develop strong, trust-based relationships between them through collectively set goals, discussion and time spent together, shared creative and bodily experiences and communal meals. The two festivals, however, seek to reach out to broader audiences in timeframes that are often too short to establish such solid links. Dictations are one-off events that attract 200–400 participants on average and promote a limited engagement with creativity insofar as the activity they promote consists of reading and writing out extracts of classical texts. Original texts are only produced on special occasions, such as for World Refugee Day in June 2019 when Rachid Santaki set up a wall "on which each participant wrote words and expressed, in the form of drawings, their ideas but also their feelings" (Santaki, 2019). According to Santaki, the Dictation is less about creativity and capacity building than about bringing together schoolchildren, middle school and high school students, adults, people with disabilities, learners of the French

language, and institutions involved in the fields of education, culture and sport who would not meet otherwise. Santaki insists on equality between participants:

“The Dictation provides means for all participants to be equal when it comes to words. It is above all an event about the French language that can be enriched by the participation of others and adopt different forms according to the context in which it takes place.” (Santaki, 2019)

However, participants are unlikely to be equally involved in the literary activities as these are not co-designed by them: the texts that are read are chosen by the organisers without consulting the participants and thus the divide between those who dictate and those who participate in writing out the dictation remains unchallenged.

As a larger-scale event, the FLUP brings together several thousand participants for five days each year. It also includes a series of creative workshops run by artists and academics over a number of months leading up to the festival. Workshops like the ‘Laboratory of Black Narratives for the Audiovisual’ run in partnership with TV Globo are quite similar to Co-Creation workshops in that they produce creative outputs and help young people from the urban periphery to develop their creative skills and self-esteem. For organiser Julio Ludemir, the FLUP’s greatest achievement is having launched over 200 writers from the periphery of Rio, among them bestselling novelist Geovani Martins from Rocinha, poet and cultural producer Vivi Salles from Cidade de Deus, and internationally recognised writer and filmmaker Yasmin Thayná from Nova Iguaçu:

“The first two editions of the workshops resulted in the creation of 56 original stories for television, several of which have been accepted for screening. In August and October 2018 we organised poetry slam workshops in 14 public high schools in Rio de Janeiro. By 2018, we organised four workshops leading to the publication of five books and 25 original audio-visual documents, a politically engaged fashion show which drew attention to the killing of black youths by the state and a documentary about the first generation of black professionals arriving to the job market after passing through the quotas. Achieving this was a challenging process for which significant human and financial resources were mobilised.” (Ludemir, 2019)

Similar to Co-Creation, the FLUP engages academics, artists, communities and stakeholders in collective creative processes and shared bodily experiences by bringing together disadvantaged and more privileged audiences to spend time together in favelas. Its workshops have resulted in the publication of several collective volumes but unlike Co-Creation, these activities are not co-designed by the participants and researchers are largely absent from the creative process. It is important to note that while scholars have been regularly involved in teaching creative writing and filmmaking on FLUP workshops, they do not contribute to these as researchers.

While research and long-term engagement with the same community are less central to FLUP than Co-Creation, forms of shared understanding may nevertheless arise from the regular workshop activities in which artists, academics and other participants share ideas and work together towards a shared goal. Engagement with communities' local and orally circulating or embodied knowledge has been nevertheless central to FLUP's repeated attempts to reassemble oral history and community memory. For example, the 'Feijoada da Memória' (Memory Meal) introduced in 2015 in Babilônia brought together the favela's founders with the younger generations and resulted in a comic strip exhibition based on the history of the inhabitants. In Cidade de Deus, FLUP co-produced a book celebrating 50 years of the favela and in 2017 in Vidigal they staged with local partners a 'Memory Competition' for children and adolescents (Ludemir, 2019). These events are just a few among the many FLUP initiatives that encourage the inclusion of Southern epistemologies through the valorisation of oral narrative modes. Oral culture and spoken word practices inspired by African griots and hip-hop artists from the Northern urban periphery have also been celebrated through the FLUP Slam Battle, which, according to Julio Ludemir (2019) has been offering a platform for youth from Rio de Janeiro's margins to voice their indignation over homicidal security policies and racial and social discrimination. These arts-based practices aimed at abolishing extant hierarchies between oral and written forms of expression are strategies that could be adopted by Co-Creation seeking to engage with knowledge emerging from social struggle in the Global South (Santos, 2018: 13).

Through arts practice, Co-Creation encourages communities to critically engage in 'questioning unexamined beliefs [...], disarticulating the existing common sense and fostering a variety of agonistic public spaces' as advocated by Chantal Mouffe (2013: 95). Therefore, Co-Creation workshops can be considered as 'agonistic' interventions insofar as they promote democratic processes and encourage political adversaries to respect each other's discordant viewpoints. By bringing together scholarly and embodied 'ways of knowing' arising from academic and non-academic perspectives and from both Northern or Southern epistemologies, a shared Co-Creation develops an agonistic understanding of the city which can be translated into actions that can lead to practical and potentially transformative change. Co-Creation aims to harness participants' capacity to challenge and dismantle multiple stigmas attached to disadvantaged neighbourhoods using 'complicated gestures of rewriting, strategies of decontextualizing' (Rosello, 1998: 18). This aim is shared by the two festivals although they challenge negative perceptions of the urban periphery to different extents, using different strategies. While both demonstrate that both banlieues and favelas are places fit to host high-brow cultural events, only the FLUP seeks to promote new aesthetics emerging from the margins. By focusing on classical texts and spelling rules set by the famously conservative French Academy, the Dictation shows respect to literary conventions, institutions and canons validated by the establishment. On the contrary, by launching and endorsing new writers, the FLUP contributes to shaping alternative canons while simultaneously establishing itself as an alternative instance of literary validation. The efficiency of this strategy can be measured by the FLUP's recent success of imposing its ethos on other festivals. For example, its efforts to increase the number of female invitees, to include indigenous and black writers, to honour marginal writers such as Lima Barreto in 2016 and to draw attention to racism by introducing FLUP Preta (Black FLUP) in 2019, have been imitated by the more traditional FLIP literary festival and have resulted in the emergence of new national trends (Ludemir, 2019).

Finally, both literary events and Co-Creation seek to promote the inclusion of peripheral populations, although their ambitions in this respect vary. Rachid Santaki admits being sceptical about the Dictation's potential to challenge negative stereotypes:

“With the Dictation, I don't think we have changed the image of the banlieue and I don't believe that an event can change the image or the stigmas of the periphery. I rather think that I surprised audiences who did not imagine that the French language concerned everyone, including people living in the periphery but I did not change the perception of those who believe in the clichés.” (Santaki, 2019)

Julio Ludemir advocates a more radical approach inspired by affirmative action that promotes the participation of marginalised groups, in particular women, black and indigenous populations and the LGBT community. Despite the obvious differences between the French and Brazilian contexts, both festivals aim to bring art and literature closer to underprivileged communities and open up a space for public participation through active engagement with literary texts. Although Co-Creation is more focused on producing in-depth knowledge at the neighbourhood level, it may struggle to build such extended networks and raise such high levels of media attention due to its limitation to single neighbourhoods.

Conclusion

The literary events promoted by Rachid Santaki and Julio Ludemir are artist-initiated, participative projects that celebrate the margins and promote the inclusion of disadvantaged groups into the mainstream city and society. They highlight the importance of artists as initiators, organisers and promoters of multi-partner events which bring together several Co-Creative elements (being respectful, ethical, plurivocal, and sometimes also embedded, aware and creative) while others (being equal, trust-based, shared, occasionally also embedded, aware and creative) are missing. Just like Co-Creation, these events are founded on the ideal of equality and inclusivity and share Co-Creation's interest in marginality and arts methods. They may, however, lack some other key elements such as research practices involving academic partners, the explicit focus on knowledge production and dissemination, and the active production of artistic outcomes which plays a more central role in the FLUP where new literary works are produced, than the dictation where literary works are mostly consumed.

The comparative analysis of both events showed that, while organising touring events such as in the FLUP may be more time-consuming than setting up Co-Creation workshops with a more steady focus on specific small communities, they may benefit from a greater visibility which enables them to change national canons, pressure institutions into becoming more inclusive, produce new inclusive spaces for participation, generate new audiences and enable marginal voices to emerge and to be heard. Such events have the potential to attract significant public attention to urban and social margins and challenge stigmatising discourses about 'the periphery' perceived as areas of 'non-reading', places devoid of high culture. However, arts-based events that are not rooted in a specific

community and do not rely on scholarly research and partnerships with academics and community activists are also more vulnerable due to their greater dependence on the organisers' individual efforts, charisma, availability, and commitment. Academic collaborators bring to Co-Creation projects not only symbolic legitimation and knowledge validation but also potential sources of funding and a greater degree of institutionalisation that can be key to make projects sustainable. Co-Creation, in return, needs to learn from the engagement of literature-based events with embodied knowledge and oral forms of expression which have been particularly prominent in FLUP's practice. This can help Co-Creation go further in the inclusion of Southern epistemologies in knowledge production.

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