

**RECENSÃO DE *DECOLONISING ENGLISH STUDIES FROM THE SEMI-
PERIPHERY***

DE ANA CRISTINA MENDES (2023)

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Some of us rather complacently thought that the old days of learning English through the adventures of a blond John, with an obedient Mary in tow, having tea and scones after visiting the Tower of London, were long gone. Academia, to be fair, was never this simplistic, and efforts to go beyond the canon have yielded a peppering of diversity in most curricula. More enlightened times, or so we thought.

Yet, recent political and social events have undoubtedly led to some added soul-searching amongst those who teach, learn and research English Studies in general and English Literature in particular. *Decolonising English Studies from the Semi-Periphery*, by Ana Cristina Mendes, is therefore a most welcome contribution to the debate of *what* to teach and *how* to teach within English Studies departments. Importantly, it adds to the mixture the question of *who* is teaching and learning, by addressing extensively the often glossed-over issues of Portugal's colonial past and its "semi-peripheral" present.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first, the author offers an exhaustive, well-rounded, thoughtful overview of the theoretical underpinnings of the issues

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pertaining to cultural studies and the need to decolonise them. Mendes also makes the compelling argument that changes towards a more diverse and inclusive curriculum often result in a somewhat cosmetic makeover and do not necessarily address the deep-seated, ingrained, skewed views of yore.

The second part deals with pedagogical proposals for decolonising the curricula, and constitutes a good balance to Part I, more scholarly in nature. Crucially, the proposals are firmly anchored in the vast teaching experience of the author, and are indubitably all the more interesting by having been the object of the author's self-reflection and the scrutiny of several groups of students.

All in all, *Decolonising English Studies from the Semi-Periphery* is an insightful, thought-provoking book that will be of interest to teachers and students who feel healthily haunted in these times of epistemological, cultural and existential turmoil.