

# A Tale Never Loses in the Telling: Challenging Hegemonic Worldviews and Decolonizing the EFL Classroom

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# Context

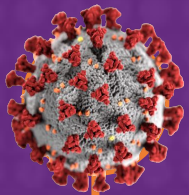


- The Laboratory School is a branch of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ).
- Located in an expensive neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, but diverse and democratic.
- Affirmative action: quotas for Black, Indigenous, disabled and low-income students.
- Diversity and inclusion are core values of the institution.



# Paving the Way for Online Lessons

**March 2020**



Covid-19  
Outbreak in  
Brazil

**June 2020**



Online meetings  
with students and  
contact via  
telephone.

**September 2020**



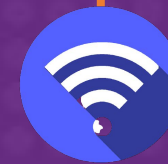
Lessons are  
resumed  
remotely.

**April 2020**



Non-mandatory  
Asynchronous  
Activities

**September 2020**



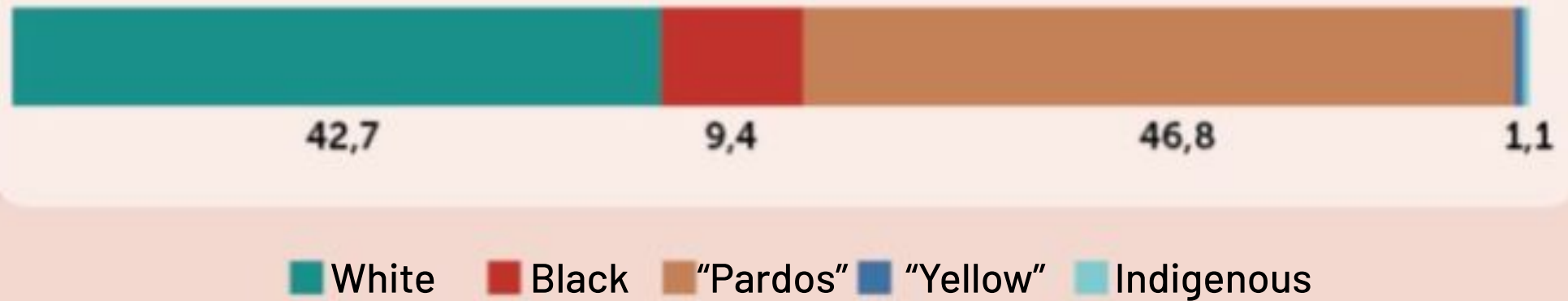
Grants for students'  
equipment and  
internet purchase, as  
well as social aids.



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# Brazilian population

Race or Colour of Residents (%)



Data retrieved from the **2019 Census** of *The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics- IBGE*

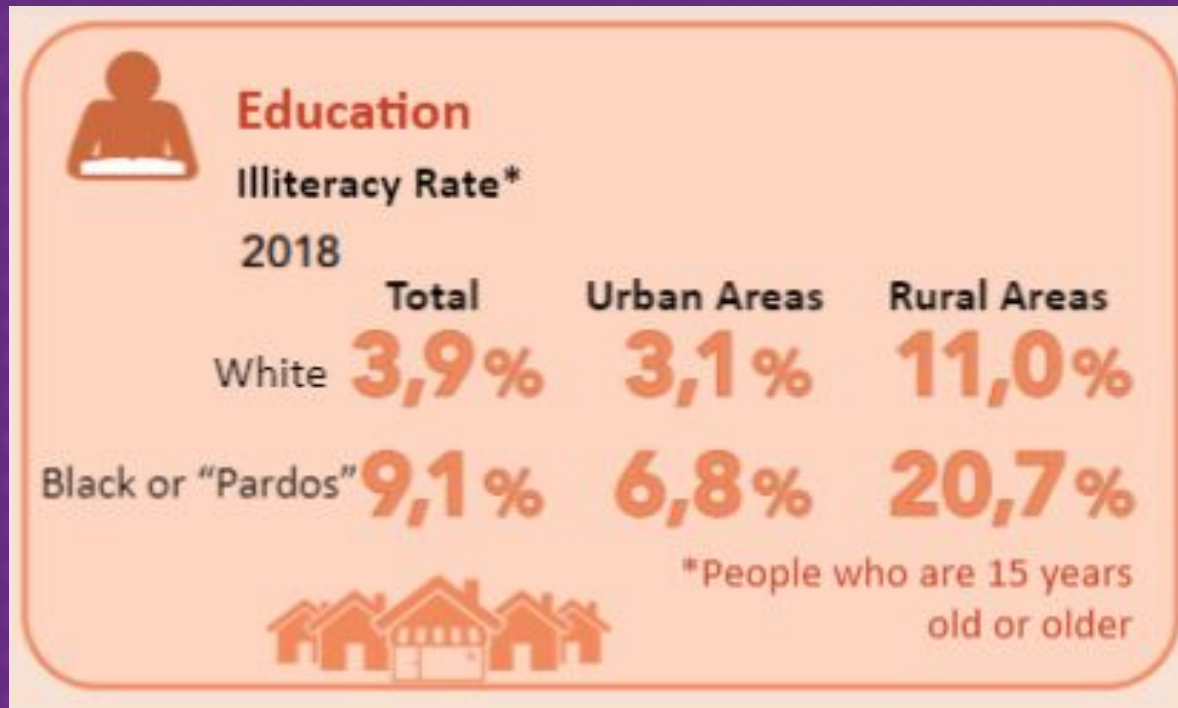


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Available at:  
<https://educa.ibge.gov.br/jovens/conheca-o-brasil/populacao/18319-cor-ou-raca.html#:~:text=De%20acordo%20com%20dados%20da,1%25%20como%20amarelos%20ou%20ind%20C3%ADgenas>

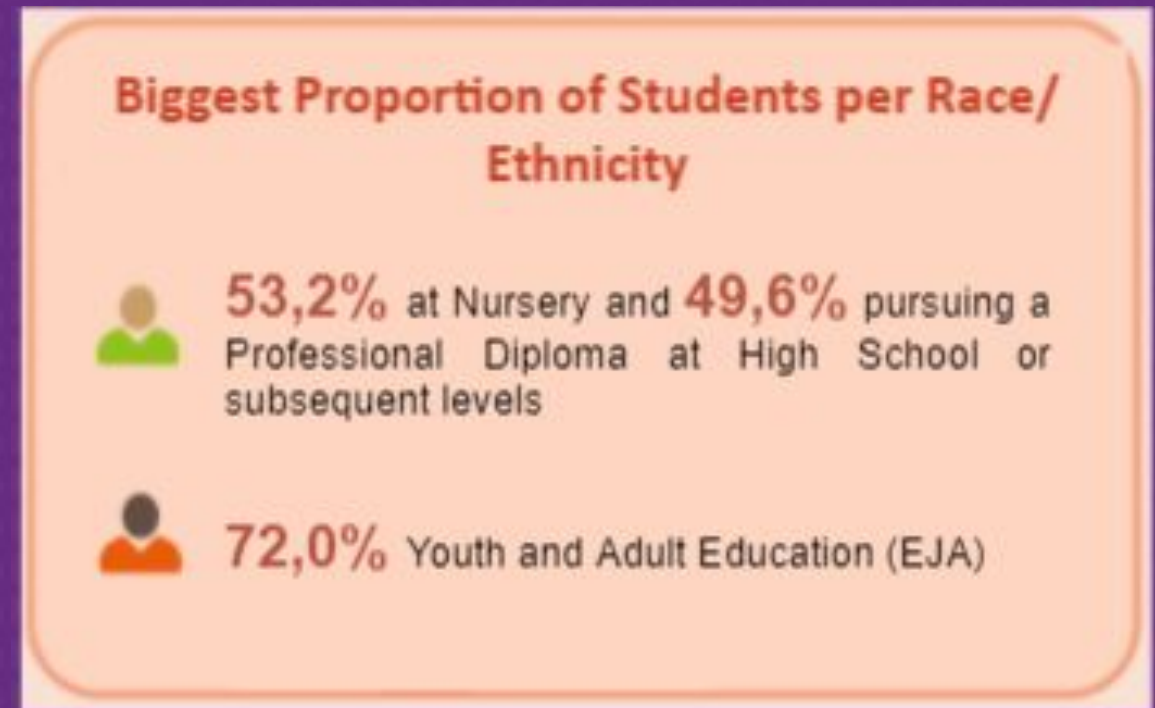


# Race and Education



Data retrieved from “**Social Inequalities per Colour or Race in Brazil**” by *The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics- IBGE*.

Available at:  
<https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/index.php/biblioteca-catalogo?view=detalhes&id=2101681>



Data retrieved from the **2020 School Census** of *The National Institute for Educational Studies and Research*, linked to the *Ministry of Education*.

Available at:  
<https://www.gov.br/inep/pt-br/areas-de-atuacao/pesquisas-estatisticas-e-indicadores/censo-escolar/resultados>



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# What Is Race? What Does It Do?

Not biological, but a  
sociological construct  
(Du Bois, 1915;  
Woodward, 2000).

Creates  
dichotomies,  
such as raced  
and unraced  
(Woodward,  
2000)



Benefits some;  
marks out others  
(Woodward, 2000).

Outcome of  
structured and  
institutional practices  
(Almeida, 2019).

**What does race have  
to do with ELT?**



# Race and Challenges for ELT in Brazil

1

**Asymmetric power relations**

Focus on British and American varieties and white male authors.

2

**Eurocentrism**

Europe as a privileged locus in terms of knowledge construction.

3

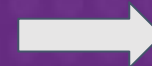
**Epistemicide**  
(Santos, 1999; Carneiro, 2005)

The obliteration of knowledge produced by a given population.

4

**The myth of a racial democracy**

Pervasive belief in a peaceful miscegenation.



Language and literature are not neutral nor axiomatic.



They are concepts under dispute.

(VOLÓCHINOV [1929]2017)



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“to say race is **socially constructed** is not to imply it is a delusion; false as they may be, ideas about race have nevertheless had very **real effects on people's lives.**”

Ania Loomba (2002, p.76)



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# What does decolonizing ELT mean?

## Grammar of Decoloniality

which invites educators who are not considered native speakers to design their own **social historically oriented materials** and train new teachers focusing on **local agencies**. (Kumaravadivelu, 2016 apud Mignolo, 2010).

## Critical Race Literacy

designs **pedagogical initiatives thoughtfully constructed to unveil racism** and **promote awareness** on how discourses (written, verbal or visual) have forged and sustained social injustice (Ferreira, 2014).

## Digital Literacy

the ability to understand and use information in **multiple formats** and submit it to **critical evaluation** (Gilster, 1997).



# Decolonizing Reading Experiences: Which obstacles lie ahead?

01	Faith in universality	Western as a byword for universal (Little Jr., 2021).
02	A dangerous single story	Underscoring only one facet of Literature, usually the one centered in the North (Chimamanda, 2009).
03	Prejudiced take on Literature	Such approaches to the teaching of reading naturalize Literature as a European construct.



**Should we cancel the literary canon?**



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# If decolonial ELT does not cancel the canon, what does it do?





### Age bracket and levels:

11 to 12 year-old students  
of 6th and 7th grades.

Screen time limited to 3  
hours a day (*Brazilian  
Society of Pediatricians,*  
2016)

## Project *A Tale Never Loses in the Telling*



### Co-teaching:

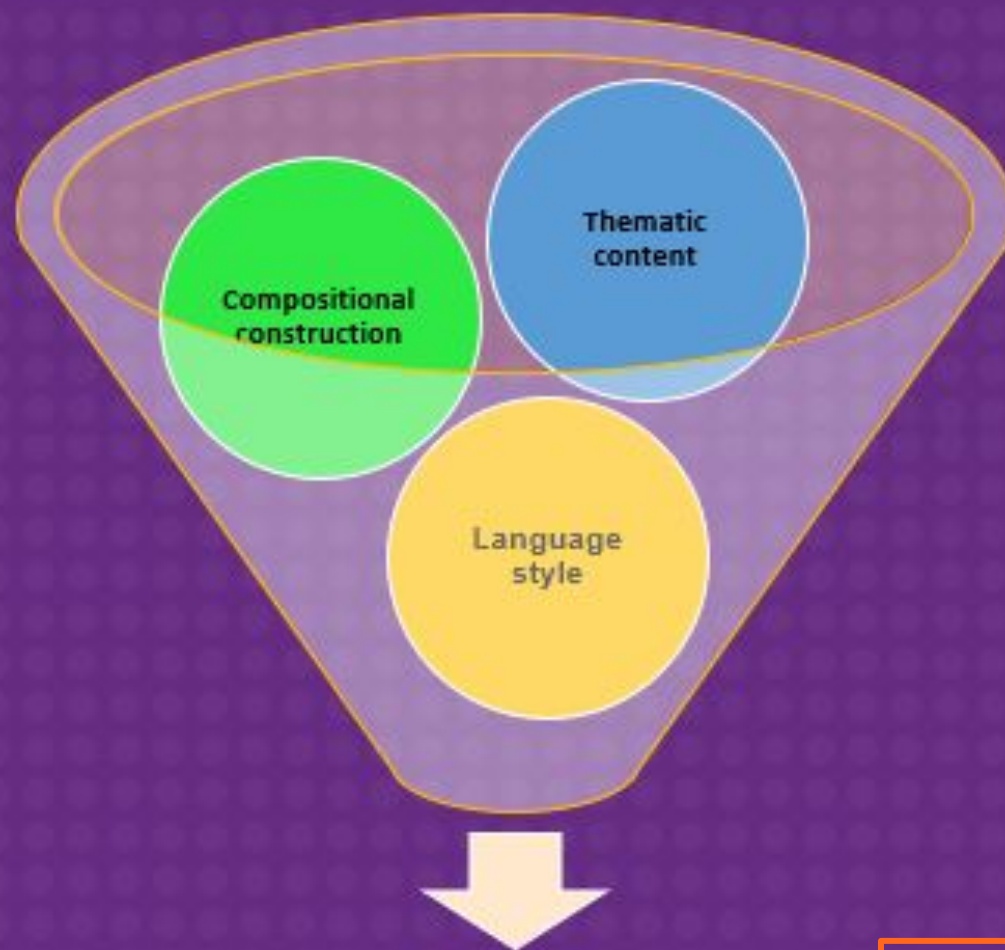
“the distribution of  
responsibility among  
people for planning,  
instruction, and  
evaluation”.  
(Cushman, 2013)

### Transdisciplinarity:

English, Portuguese, French, Music,  
Drama, Visual Arts and History.



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## Discourse Genres

(Bakhtin, 2003 [1979]  
apud Tilio, 2017)

Myths, poems, songs, tales,  
historical documents of  
different parts of the world.



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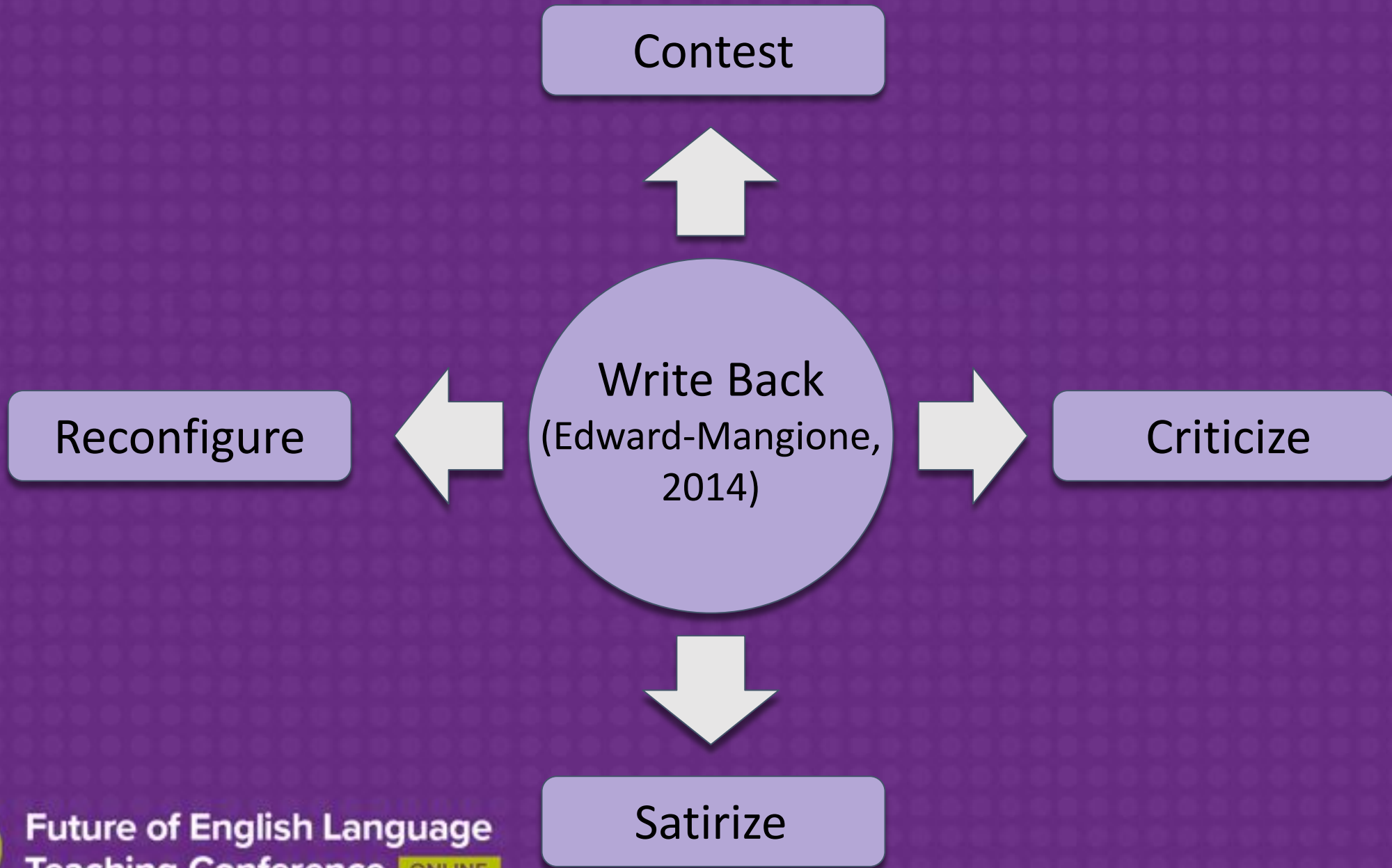


# Some Texts



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# Designing our materials

## “Critical Sociointeractional Literacy” (TILIO, 2017)

01

Learning

“The ability to act in the world” (TILIO, 2017; p. 73)

02

Teaching

“Education of citizens capable of acting socially” (TILIO, 2017; p. 73)

03

Language

Multimodal and multicultural, interpreted through “multiliteracies” (Cope; Kalantzis; 2000, Kalantzis; Cope, 2012, The New London Group, 1996).

04

Criticality

Pedagogical initiatives based on “problematizing practices” of “engagement with difference” (PENNYCOOK, 2004; p. 798).



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# Contextualizing *The Tempest*

What types of **adaptations** are these?

~~manga~~ – ~~book cover~~ – ~~illustration~~ – movie – play



manga

2007



illustration

1803



book cover (of play adaptation)

1969

What types of **adaptations** are these?

~~manga~~ – ~~book cover~~ – ~~illustration~~ – ~~movie~~ – play



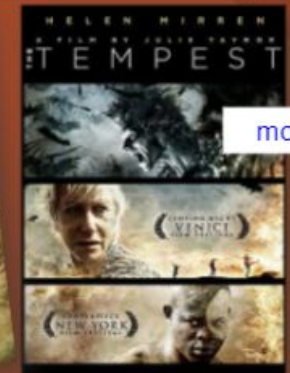
play

1988



book cover

2013



movie

2010

Analysis of different discourse genres and adaptations of *The Tempest*.



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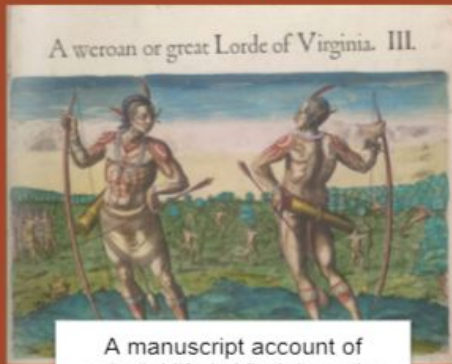


# Contextualizing *The Tempest*

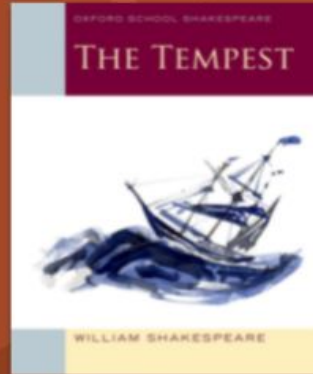
## Possible inspirations for “*The Tempest*”:



William Strachey's report of a **shipwreck** off Bermuda in 1609



A manuscript account of colonial life in Virginia and a dictionary of the indigenous Powhatan language



Source: <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/the-tempest-and-the-literature-of-wonder>

- What is a “literature of **wonder**”?



Source: <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/the-tempest-and-the-literature-of-wonder>

Introduction to the “literature of wonder” and socio-historical context of the play.

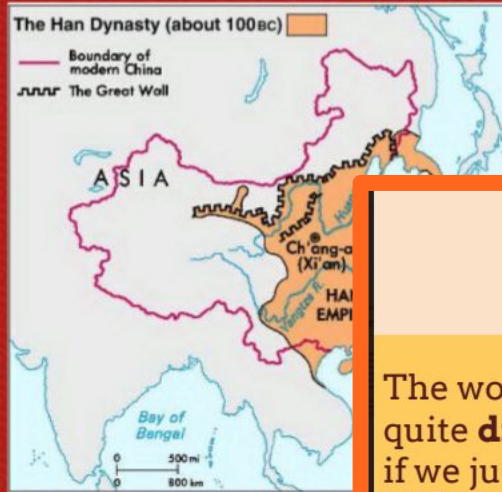


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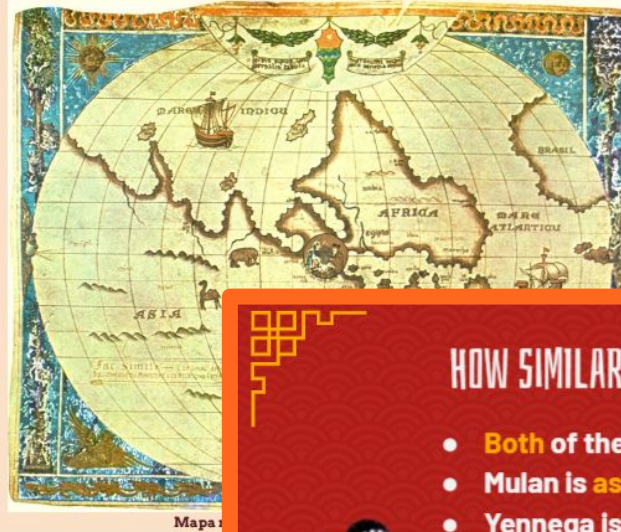
# Comparing *Yennega* and *Mulan*

## ANALYZE THE MAP

- What place and period does it show?
- How is it divided?



The world can be quite **different** if we just **look** at it **differently**



## HOW SIMILAR ARE MULAN AND YENNEGA?

- Both of them are...
- Mulan is **as... as** Yennega.
- Yennega is..., **but** Mulan isn't.



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# Getting to know Lupita Nyong'o

What does this image show?



True or False?



a) (✓) She liked the story of Cinderella.

"Some of my favourite books when I was growing up were Cinderella and Thumbelina and Beauty and the Beast and Rapunzel..."

b) ( ) There ~~was~~ <sup>wasn't</sup> a lot of diversity in books when she was a child.

"... these were all women with light skin and blond hair and so... I thought that in order to make it into the pages of the books you had to be light."

c) (✓) When she was a child, she drew her family with light skin.

"One of the first times I drew my family I drew them with light skin."



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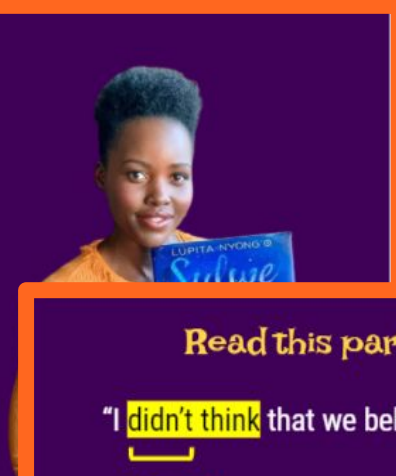


# Getting to know Lupita Nyong'o

## Why did the author decide to write the story?

"I thought that in order to make it into the pages of the books you had to be light. So, in fact, one of the first times I drew my family I drew them with light skin. I used the cream coloured crayons and not the dark ones, because I'd never seen... I just didn't see that in books, so I didn't think that we belonged in books. So, again: I wrote this to give dark-skinned kids a chance to live in the world of imagination and magic."

(Lupita Nyong'o)



## Read this part again.

"I **didn't think** that we belonged in books."

did + not

(Lupita Nyong'o)

└─ auxiliary verb

- Is it in the affirmative or in the negative form?
- What's the structure?

Did **not** + main verb in the infinitive form  
Didn't



## What does this image show? How is it related to Lupita's life?



Source: <https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2011/12/08/white-privilege/> Accessed on December 5, 2020.

Is there a similar expression in Portuguese?

What effects can it have on children?



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# Comparing *Sulwe* and *Lady, Lady*



**#blackgirlmagic:** “created by CaShawn Thompson to celebrate the beauty, power and resilience of black women.”

**(Julee Wilson, 2016)**

Available at:

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-is-black-girl-magic-video\\_n\\_5694dad4e4b086bc1cd517f4](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-is-black-girl-magic-video_n_5694dad4e4b086bc1cd517f4)

“Lady, Lady, I saw your face,  
**Dark as night withholding a star . . .**  
The chisel fell, or it might have been  
You had borne so long the yoke of men.”

**(Anne Spencer - 1882-1975)**



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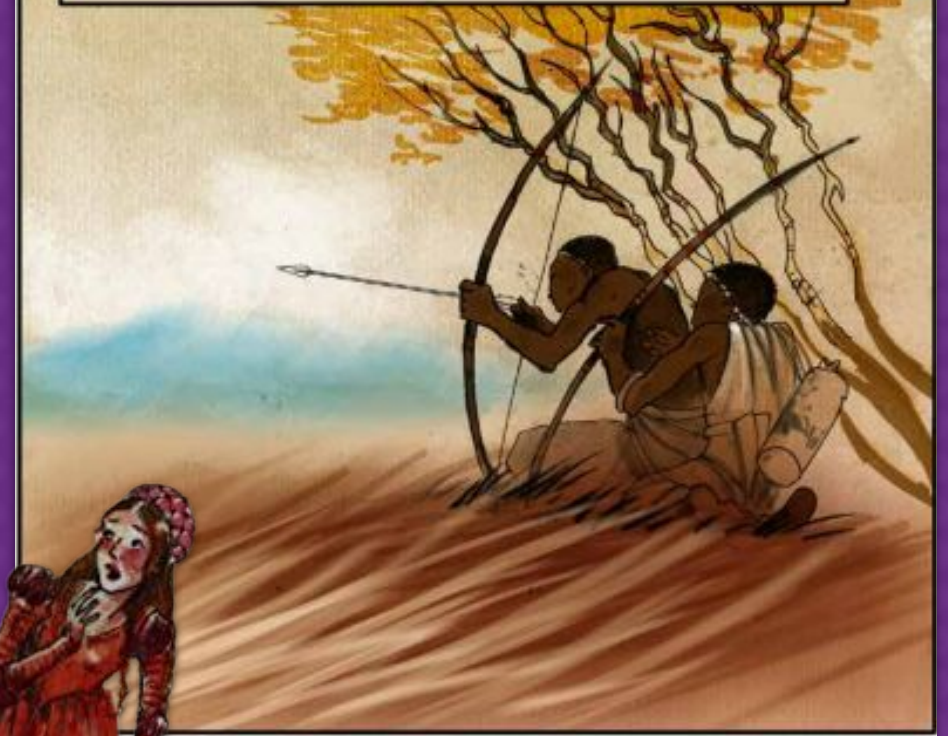


# Comparing *Desdemona* and *Yennega*

- What challenges do they face?
- What is the role of their fathers in each story?
- Which character is more similar to the princesses of traditional fairy tales?
- How similar are the endings?



Yennega subsequently returned to the forest in Bitou and lived there happily with her husband.





# Getting to know *Nairobi Heat* and Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ

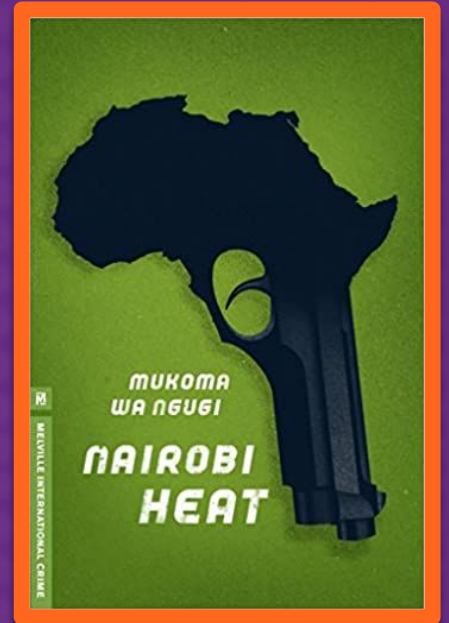
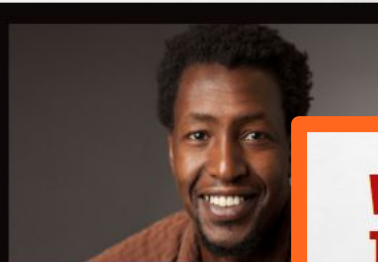
## POPULAR AUTHORS

- WHO ARE THE MOST FAMOUS AUTHORS IN THE WORLD (DEAD AND LIVING)?
- WHO ARE YOUR FAVORITE AUTHORS?
- WHICH AUTHORS DO YOU KNOW?
- WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?
- WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

## MUKOMA WA NGUGI ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### NOVELIST, POET AND LITERARY SCHOLAR

Mukoma Wa Ngugi is an Associate Professor of English at Cornell University and the author of *The Rise of the African Novel: Politics of Language, Identity and Ownership*, the novels *Mrs. Shaw*, *Black Star Nairobi*, *Nairobi Heat*, and two books of poetry, *Logotherapy* and *Hurling Words at Consciousness*. *Unbury Our Dead With Song* (a novel about competing Tizita musicians) is forthcoming from Cassava Republic Press (Fall of 2020).



## WHAT DECOLONIZING THE MIND MEANS TODAY?

MY FATHER QUALIFIED FOR THE AFRICAN WRITES OF ENGLISH EXPRESSION CONFERENCE IN 1962 WITH ONLY TWO PUBLISHED SHORT STORIES, BUT NEITHER SHABAN ROBERT, THEN THE GREATEST LIVING EAST AFRICAN POET WITH SEVERAL WORKS OF POETRY AND PROSE IN KISWAHILI, NOR CHIEF FAGUNWA, THE GREAT WRITER WITH SEVERAL PUBLISHED TITLES IN YORUBA, COULD POSSIBLY QUALIFY."

THE 1962 CONFERENCE REPRESENTED A MAJOR CONTRADICTION: EUROPEAN LANGUAGES HAD BECOME THE VEHICLES FOR AFRICAN LITERATURE. THE TERM "AFRICAN LITERATURE" MEANT **AFRICAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH, FRENCH OR PORTUGUESE**. THOSE WRITING IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES HAD TO JUSTIFY THEIR USE OF THEIR MOTHER TONGUES. IN NIGERIA, ONLY "ONE PERCENT" OF THE POPULATION COULD BE ABLE TO READ WOLE SOYINKA'S *DANCE OF THE FOREST*.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE QUESTION, ENGLISH ALLOWED FOR **COMMUNICATING ACROSS DIFFERENT AFRICAN LANGUAGES** WHILE ALSO **REACHING WIDER AUDIENCES IN THE WEST**. IT WAS **THE LANGUAGE OF POWER**.

AND **ENGLISH COULD BE AFRICANIZED** SO THAT IT CARRIED **AFRICAN EXPERIENCES**.

[MUKOMA WA NGUGI: WHAT DECOLONIZING THE MIND MEANS TODAY • LITERARY HUB \(LITRUB.COM\)](https://lithub.com/mukoma-wa-ngugi-what-decolonizing-the-mind-means-today/)



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# Expected Outcomes

## Acknowledge

that Western societies (as well as their literary and artistic works) are rooted in a long tradition of racialized **violence, inequality** and **epistemicide**.

## Engage critically

with discourses on race in the **literary worlds** we explore and in the **social world** we inhabit.

## Promote change

playing our role in the construction of **a egalitarian society**.



# Food For Thought

- To what extent do you think **didactic books** in your country promote **diversity** and **critical literacy**?
- How can you **educate yourself** on those themes and widen your own knowledge?
- How could you **adapt and create materials** in order to foster critical literacy on decolonization?
- Is it possible to work with educators who teach **other subjects** in your context?







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**Thank you!**



## This session has now ended

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Thursday 1 July, 2021

Find out more: [learn.trinitycollege.co.uk/discover](https://learn.trinitycollege.co.uk/discover)



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