**Shifting the Genre**

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Representations of Transatlantic Slavery in English Secondary School History Textbooks

**Student number:** 2106062

**Unit code:** POLI31555

**Supervisor:** Joe Lin

**Academic Year:** 2024/2025



This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of BA in Politics and Spanish.

I declare that the research contained herein was granted approval by the SPAIS Ethics Working Group.

Dedication

To the Sunningdale girls, and to Tamara, Freya, and Ari.

Also, to all my best teachers – past and present.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Joe Lin, for his time and guidance throughout this project, as well as David Rawlings of the School of Education for his insight on decolonisation within history teaching.

Abstract

Calls to decolonise education were intensified in the aftermath of the 2020 Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), informed by Fairclough’s approach and considering multimodal elements, this research investigates how history textbooks have responded to these increased calls for decolonisation. The research examines the portrayal of the beginnings of the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people. While existing literature has focused on Eurocentrism within portrayals of the British Empire, this dissertation uniquely considers textbooks in which the British Empire is not the central topic. This approach helps to determine whether decolonisation efforts are being pursued across the curriculum, including where Empire is seemingly a peripheral or secondary theme.

The sample consists of six textbooks, split into pre-2020 and post-2020 publications, allowing for a comparative analysis of how decolonial strategies have been implemented in response to the BLM movement. The findings indicate a genre shift in recent publications, particularly from Oxford University Press (OUP), where linguistic, structural, and visual strategies are utilised to form a more reflexive and decolonial depiction of the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people. However, this shift is inconsistent, with the earlier publications in the sample reinforcing Eurocentric narratives, rendering alternative histories invisible. Through its analysis, this dissertation provides a model for decolonial strategies in textbook production, highlights the importance of multimodal analysis in textbook studies, and emphasises the value of sustained consideration of the role of didactic materials in the pursuit of a decolonised and inclusive education.

**Word Count:** 9997

Contents

**Chapter 1: Introduction 6**

* 1. – Aims 6
  2. – Research Significance 7
  3. – Structure 9

**Chapter 2: Decolonising History Education: The Current State 9**

2.1 – The Call for Decolonising (History) Education 9

2.2 – Barriers to Decolonisation 11

2.3 – The Role of Textbooks in Shaping Historical Narratives 12

2.4 – Research Gaps and Dissertation Focus 13

**Chapter 3: Methodology 15**

3.1 – Theoretical Framework and Critical Discourse Analysis 15

3.2 – Research Questions and Methodological Approach 16

3.3 – Thematic and Analytical Approach 17

3.4 – Ethical Considerations 18

3.5 – A Note on Terminology 19

**Chapter 4: Analysis 19**

4.1 – Eurocentric Language and Lexical Framing 20

4.2 – “None Left!”: Rethinking the Exclamation Mark 21

4.3 – Agency, Responsibility, and Transitivity 22

4.4 – The Politics of Explanation 23

4.5 – Visual Representations and the Power of Portraiture 24

4.6 – Silences and the Question of Inclusion 26

4.7 – Interdiscursivity and (the Absence of) Competing Narratives 27

4.8 – Textbook Production and Ideological Influences 28

4.9 – Genre Shift and Sociocultural Change 29

4.10 – Conclusion 31

**Chapter 5: Discussion 32**

5.1 – Persisting Eurocentrism and Emerging Shifts 32

5.2 – From Neutrality to Reflexivity: Authorial Voice and the Politics of Knowledge 34

5.3 – Who is Represented and Remembered? Visuality, Voice, and Historical Agency 36

5.4 – Constraints and Possibilities of Textbook Production in a Marketised System 37

5.5 – Is a Genre Shift Really Underway? 38

5.6 – Summary and Forward Look 39

**Chapter 6: Conclusion 39**

Bibliography 42

Appendix 48

Chapter 1: Introduction

The 2020 Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests propelled the subject of decolonisation into the mainstream. For education, this came with calls to decolonise the curriculum and increased awareness of how racial and ethnic minority students might be disadvantaged in the school system due to persistent structural racism. However, the conversation surrounding decolonisation within education predates 2020. Significantly, the Rhodes Must Fall movement of 2015 represented an important moment internationally in the struggle to decolonise education. Regarding the subject of history in particular, how colonial history is taught is often cause for disagreement or controversy. The history curriculum is similarly a point of controversy. Since the introduction of the 2014 national curriculum, designed by Michael Gove as Education Secretary, critics have argued it represents “monochrome” Britishness which has “placed ethnic minorities firmly on the margins of British history” (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017:478,490). Although textbooks are created independently from the government, they are nevertheless based on this curriculum. This dissertation, then, focuses on how this discourse on decolonisation – intensified by the BLM movement but crucially present pre-2020 – has informed representations of colonialism in English secondary history textbooks.

*1.1 – Aims*

This study seeks to explore the role of decolonisation in shaping the representations of British colonialism in English secondary school history textbooks. This will provide a deeper understanding of the current state of history teaching in England as it relates to decolonisation. The focus will be on portrayals of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery within textbooks published since the curriculum’s introduction in England in 2014. The research therefore aims to address the following research questions:

1. How are Eurocentric narratives of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery represented in English secondary school history textbooks?

2. How has the process of decolonisation influenced the representation of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery in English secondary school history textbooks?

The study focuses on Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 4 (KS4) history textbooks published since the introduction of the 2014 national curriculum in England. By addressing these objectives, the findings aim to provide practical insight for history teachers and anyone who may contribute to producing didactic teaching materials such as textbooks.

To achieve these aims, the research adopts the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), informed by Fairclough’s approach, to allow for an in-depth exploration of the role of decolonisation in textbooks (1995). Ultimately, the dissertation aims to contribute to the pursuit of a decolonised teaching of history in the UK and beyond.

*1.2 – Research Significance*

History is a subject which particularly necessitates decolonisation because colonisation itself was a historical process. How this decolonisation is approached is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, history is facing the potential for a crisis regarding a lack of engagement of non-white pupils with the subject. Presently, history stands in good stead in terms of popularity as a school subject: it is the fifth most popular A-Level subject and the first most popular optional GCSE subject (Royal Historical Society, 2024). However, these statistics fail to demonstrate the comparatively low numbers of minority ethnic students pursuing history in higher education, or the resulting lack of minority ethnic history teachers. As Szabó-Zsoldos explains, “as the National Curriculum provides no room for Black history, history classes cannot spark the interest of the growing number of BAME [Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic] pupils and students” (2023:521). For history to maintain its position as a widely studied subject in an increasingly diverse Britain, this lack of engagement of non-white pupils must be addressed.

Secondly, decolonising history has implications for national identity. Take Britons’ understanding of and views towards the British Empire: in 2014, the year when the current curriculum was launched, 59% of people in Britain thought that the empire was something to be proud of (YouGov, 2014). Those who feel this way would perhaps criticise a seemingly ‘biased’ teacher who portrays the empire as the violent, oppressive force that it was and might therefore represent an obstacle to the decolonisation of history teaching. This dissertation aligns with Mansfield’s assertion that the teaching of the British Empire should be “approached from a historical methodology of criticism and analysis rather than one of moral revulsions” whilst equally affirming the need for decolonisation in the first place (2022:368). Therefore, how textbooks represent the British Empire shapes how the next generation of Britons perceive their country, and in turn, will inform the national narrative in the coming decades.

The analysis of textbooks is also significant because textbooks are standardised sources of information used by students and teachers alike. Focusing on the role of decolonisation in the representations of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery seeks to evaluate the ability to teach an inherently ‘colonial history’ in a decolonial way. In this way, the focus on textbooks represents an intentional decentring of the curriculum in this discussion since it acknowledges the possibilities to ‘work around’ a constraining curriculum. This is practically useful for current history teachers who wish to decolonise their teaching without having to wait for changes to the curriculum that may never materialise, or may be judged insufficient when they finally arrive.

*1.3 – Structure*

This dissertation is structured into six chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the current literature surrounding decolonisation in history education. Chapter 3 explains the research design and methodology, justifying this approach with reference to the research questions. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the Critical Discourse Analysis, informed by Fairclough’s approach. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of these findings in the context of the research questions and current literature. This dissertation is finally concluded in Chapter 6, presenting a summary of key findings and implications as well as highlighting areas for future research.

Chapter 2: Decolonising History Education: The Current State

The discourse on decolonising history education has become increasingly prominent in academic and public debates, especially in response to wider international calls for decolonising education. This chapter examines the current state of history education in the UK, presenting key discussions on its necessity, barriers to its implementation, and the role of textbooks in shaping historical narratives.

*2.1 – The Call for Decolonising (History) Education*

Globally, scholars recognise the need to decolonise education. Decolonising the university, for example, has been a component of discussions for several years (Mbembe, 2016; Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancıoğlu, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Connell, 2022). The Rhodes Must Fall movement in South Africa brought increased attention to this discussion and its Oxford counterpart provoked “a national debate about how British institutions teach and memorialize the country’s imperial past and deal with racism in the present” (Chigudu, 2020:310). Scholars acknowledge that different national contexts result in different processes of decolonising education. For previously colonised countries, formal education was often something enforced onto them by their colonisers. Decoloniality of knowledge, then, has also been widely discussed, although more so in previously colonised countries than in previously colonising countries (Ribeiro, 2023; Santos, 2014). For those calling for the decolonisation of education within the UK, the region’s role as a former coloniser must be recognised, not to dissuade attempts to decolonise, but to highlight that in the UK, decolonisation is necessarily self-reflective and thus implicates feelings towards national identity in a way that differs from formerly colonised countries.

In the UK context, the need to decolonise history education is largely undisputed within the literature, and is often considered self-evident (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Doharty, 2018; Moncrieffe, 2020; Mansfield, 2022; Lidher, Bibi & Alexander, 2023; Nagre, 2023; Szabó-Zsoldos, 2023). However, scholars acknowledge that translating this need into practical change remains a significant challenge. For example, Doharty highlights the microaggressions faced by Black students when being taught Black History, arguing that these are “legitimated by systemic racism *within* the very construction of the Key Stage 3 History curriculum” (2018:125). Doharty attributes this to the way in which Black History is “engaged with only where it serves a function”, such as engendering empathy or social cohesion, rather than being seen as deserving of attention and study in its own right (ibid). Similar concerns regarding the disengagement of Black and other minority ethnic students from history, and an attribution of this disengagement to the often-criticised national history curriculum, are echoed elsewhere (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Mansfield, 2022; Szabó-Zsoldos, 2023). Challenges persist even when the literature demonstrates that the need to decolonise has started to be addressed. Lidher, Bibi and Alexander’s article notes a disconnect between the increased teaching of decolonising practices in teacher training courses following the BLM movement and the application of this in the classroom (2023:2210, 2203). Collectively, these studies underscore a broad consensus within the literature on the continued need to decolonise history teaching in the UK.

*2.2 – Barriers to Decolonisation*

Positioned in existing literature as an obstacle to this need for decolonisation, criticisms of the current English history curriculum are widespread (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Mansfield, 2019 & 2022; Szabó-Zsoldos, 2023). This comes in conjunction with reflections on how the curriculum would benefit from increasing the diversity of topics within it (ibid). Scholars argue that the history curriculum in England is too Anglo-centric, with a focus on Britain’s “island story” which marginalises global history (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Department for Education, 2014). Mansfield criticises the ‘flexibility’ of the curriculum and, alongside others (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Doharty, 2018), supports making teaching the British Empire compulsory (2022:362). Mansfield highlights the potential positive impact of considering school demographics when making curricular choices, although ethnic minority teachers can face pushback against their efforts to diversify what is taught (2022:363). Alexander and Weekes-Bernard similarly criticise the curriculum for being “partial” and representing a “largely exclusionary, monochrome and defended ‘Britishness’” (2017:481,490). These critiques underline the attention the curriculum has received in the literature as an obstacle to pursuing an inclusive and representative teaching of history in the UK.

There is also a general consensus regarding the need to include topics of Black History aside from just slavery and post-war migration, which are currently the most common in schools (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Doharty, 2018; Szabó-Zsoldos, 2023). This can be seen as a call to ensure that Black people are not exclusively depicted as victims in history. Similarly, teaching of the British Empire should acknowledge the agency of colonised people (Mansfield, 2022:369-371). There are slight divergences in the literature regarding exactly how the subject of the British Empire should be taught. McDermid & Foster, for example, highlight the potential issues that can arise when pursuing ‘balance for the sake of balance’ in representations of the British Empire, such as creating the impression that “this is a simple binary issue […and] that there are an approximately equal number of valid and convincing arguments on both sides” (2024:13). Meanwhile, Mansfield highlights that until the twentieth-century, having an empire was unquestioned and thus it would be best for national identity to not teach the Empire from a viewpoint of “moral revulsion” (Mansfield, 2022). This demonstrates that how the British Empire is taught remains a complex question even within a literature that accepts its importance.

*2.3 – The Role of Textbooks in Shaping Historical Narratives*

Given the challenges of curricular reform, examining the role textbooks play in shaping historical narratives is crucial. Interestingly, textbooks garner far less attention than the curriculum itself in the existing literature, even though textbooks are an important medium through which teachers *deliver* the curriculum. Nagre seeks to redress this underrepresentation in an article which analyses textbooks to evaluate to what extent they reproduce Eurocentric narratives (2023). The article concludes that there is indeed a “persistence of colonial, national, and Eurocentric narratives in contemporary pedagogical discourse” (2023:18). A comparative analysis of textbooks from the 19th century and modern textbooks found that there has been progress in ridding textbooks of colonial narratives and explicit pride in the British Empire, but in agreement with Nagre finds that some modern textbooks do still depict the Empire in a glorified way (McDermid & Foster, 2024). Næsguthe similarly finds that, although KS3 history textbooks don’t all portray the same “version of British imperial identity”, they do “reflect the deeply fragmented and varied opinions regarding the British Empire”, with some persistent overly positive portrayals (2024:44).

*2.4 – Research Gaps and Dissertation Focus*

Even within the literature focusing on textbooks, there is a gap to be addressed: most have focused on depictions of the Empire within textbooks dedicated to exactly that topic (Nagre, 2023; McDermid & Foster, 2024; Næsguthe, 2024). This dissertation, in contrast, will focus on representations of Empire *outside* of units which are dedicated to the topic. This will mostly be done through an analysis of textbooks centred on Elizabethan and Restoration England, although one KS3 textbook is focused on precolonial African Kingdoms. This is useful because it can be assumed that for textbooks explicitly dealing with Empire as their focus, its authors have consciously considered how they are depicting Empire and engaged with the question of decolonisation. Focusing on other units will reveal whether the decolonisation of history textbooks is an all-encompassing process, as it should be, or whether it is only given sufficient attention when Empire is the central focus.

In addition, whilst other research has analysed textbooks in relation to depictions of the British Empire and Eurocentricity (Nagre, 2023; McDermid & Foster, 2024; Næsguthe, 2024), the temporal split in this dissertation’s sample presents a unique opportunity to explore how depictions have changed *over time*, whilst still under the *same* national curriculum, since they are all published post-2014. This curricular consistency allows other variables, such as publishers and developing sociocultural influences, to be considered in sufficient detail.

The literature has dedicated much attention to the curriculum, which has produced valuable insights into how it hinders a decolonial and inclusive history education. However, too much focus has been given to only one element of the educational ecosystem. The government designs the curriculum, which then informs textbooks and teaching materials; these, in turn, shape teacher’s lessons and activities, ultimately influencing how teachers deliver these lessons. Greater attention should be given to the subsequent links in this chain in relation to decolonisation. Teachers, for example, not only influence the use and impact of textbooks in delivering decolonised education, but they also have the power to redress potential flaws in textbooks with their own expertise. Whilst there has been attention given to the concept of ‘teacher agency’ (see Pantić, 2022; Andreoli, et al., 2024; Nezhad & Stolz, 2024), employing this concept alongside decolonisation would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how structural factors converge in the classroom.

This dissertation focuses on textbooks because, like the curriculum, they are standardised, but unlike the curriculum, they are designed by *historians*, not politicians. Furthermore, there is value in understanding how textbooks can still pursue decolonisation even while changes to the current Eurocentric curriculum are purported to not be a priority of the government. This dissertation stresses the importance of maximising existing opportunities, even when broader curricular reform is absent. Furthermore, the focus of this dissertation on decolonisation within secondary schools aligns with a larger aim to bridge the gap between secondary history education and history in higher education. As Mansfield laments, “there is such a disconnect between education and higher education within the discipline of History”, with university history, unlike secondary history, “desperately endeavouring to throw off the yoke of Eurocentrism” (Mansfield, 2019:47). The conversation regarding the decolonisation of all subjects, not just history, is also currently far more established in higher education than secondary. This dissertation, then, constitutes a small step in beginning to address this disparity and explore how decolonisation can be pursued *prior* to higher education, of which not everyone chooses to complete.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach taken to examine the representation of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery in English secondary school history textbooks. The theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis is established, and this methodological approach is justified by consideration of the research questions. The textbook sample is presented and justified and ethical considerations are reflected upon.

*3.1 – Theoretical Framework and Critical Discourse Analysis*

According to Foucault, discourse is a system of knowledge and power that shapes and is shaped by societal norms (1972). Fairclough’s model of CDA interrogates discourse on three levels: textual, discursive, and sociocultural (1995). This allows for a comprehensive analysis of how language both constructs and reflects discourse. Building on this approach to CDA, this dissertation will examine how language within history textbooks can reinforce dominant ideologies such as those relating to the British Empire and colonialism. Equally important as language in this context, however, are the images, historical sources, and illustrations which are all central parts of modern textbooks. Given this interaction between text and image in the construction of historical narratives, this study will employ a *multimodal* discourse analysis. This approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of how visual elements might support or challenge the textual representation of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery and colonialism.

Klerides proposes two lenses through which to view textbooks theoretically: ‘textbooks as a genre’, and ‘the textbook as discourse’ (2010). However, this dissertation will align with Höhne’s emphasis on textbooks which, “stemming from discourse theory, media analysis, and the society of knowledge”, emphasises the “constructedness” of textbooks (Bock, 2018:61). Furthermore, unlike Klerides, this dissertation will not uphold the false dichotomy of ‘textbooks as a genre’ and ‘the textbook as discourse’. Rather, this dissertation will emphasise the relationship *between* discourse and genre, arguing that discourse influences not only the *content* of textbooks but also influences what is demanded of the textbook genre itself. This highlights how textbooks are designed in response to the wider context in which they are made, including the ideological forces involved in shaping historical narratives.

*3.2 – Research Questions and Methodological Approach*

In order to answer my research questions of *(1) How are Eurocentric narratives of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery represented in English secondary school history textbooks?* and subsequently *(2) How has the process of decolonisation influenced the representation of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery in English secondary school history textbooks?* A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of a sample of history textbooks has been carried out. CDA is an appropriate methodological tool for this research because it enables the exploration of how the content and design of textbooks reflects or challenges power dynamics and ideologies in education. CDA provided a framework to critically engage with the language, sources and images in textbooks, allowing for analysis of the role of colonialism and Eurocentrism in shaping the representation of historical events and processes. This critical approach will demonstrate how portrayals of history are shaped by societal forces and provide insight into how textbooks have the ability to influence the broader climate surrounding post-colonial history education in Britain.

The study is qualitative, and 6 textbooks have been selected to analyse. In the sector, Hodder (now part of Hachette UK) and Oxford University Press (OUP) are prevalent, and so it was crucial to include textbooks from these publishers in order to provide insight into what is used most across England (Oxford University Press, 2025; IbisWorld, 2024). All the textbooks were published after the current curriculum was introduced (2014).

*3.3 – Thematic and Analytical Approach*

The thematic and analytical approach utilised in this research is designed to explore how textbooks represent the beginnings of the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people. The textbook sample, presented below, includes textbooks focused on the Elizabethan Era, Restoration period, as well as one title on pre-colonial African Kingdoms. Each textbook includes some discussion of the inception of Transatlantic slavery, making them appropriate for analysis in this research. Whilst half of the sample are not recent publications, they continue to be used in schools, as textbooks are generally only replaced when curricular change necessitates it.

By analysing the representation of the Transatlantic trade in this sample, this research explores how empire is represented in relation to broader discussions of decolonisation. The chapters selected for analysis in each textbook were chosen according to their relevance to the themes of race, power, and coloniality, providing a clear framework for the subsequent thematic analysis. Throughout the analysis, textbooks are often grouped into ‘pre-2020’ and ‘post-2020’, both to simplify reference and highlight relevant differences occurring around the 2020 split, when calls for decolonisation reached their height following the BLM protests.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year of Publication** | **Title** | **Key Stage** | **Publisher** |
| 2014 | Renaissance, Revolution and Reformation: Britain 1509-1745 | KS3 | OUP |
| 2016 | Elizabethan England, c1568-1603 | KS4 | Hodder |
| 2016 | Restoration England: 1660-1685 | KS4 | Hodder |
| 2022  [digital version] | Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88 | KS4 – Foundation Level. | Hodder |
| 2022 | Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88 | KS4 | OUP |
| 2023 | African Kingdoms: West Africa | KS3 | OUP |

*3.4 – Ethical Considerations*

Since CDA is secondary research analysing publicly available textbooks, this research does not have to consider the ethics of involvement of human participants or sensitive personal data. However, this is not to say that ethical considerations are not part of CDA. In fact, as one scholar puts it, “CDA is primarily ethical” (Graham, 2018:202). That is, it is a methodology concerned with ethics. For some, this is a limitation of the approach – indeed, “CDA is inevitably involved in debates and arguments about [what constitutes a ‘social wrong’…] all the time” (Fairclough, 2010:531). However, when one takes a reflexive approach, acknowledging the normative assumptions involved in the construction of a CDA, the strengths of the methodology are revealed.

As a researcher, my own positionality informs my analysis. Being committed to decolonisation and having an awareness of the harmful legacy of British colonialism, I recognise that these values influence my interpretation of the textbooks. Reflexivity is important because it ensures transparency and acknowledges how subjective perspectives may shape research findings. It also ensures the responsibility of the researcher to acknowledge personal biases and make them transparent in the research process. This attention to power dynamics is crucial, and as the researcher, I pursued an analysis which critically engaged with the role of power in historical narratives and their representations in history textbooks.

*3.5 – A Note on Terminology*

In this research, a variety of terms are used to describe what is commonly referred to as the ‘slave trade’, including ‘the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people’, ‘the Transatlantic trade’, and the ‘slave trade’ within quotation marks. This variety is deliberate, and reflects ongoing discussions about how terminology can strip agency from marginalised groups or be insensitive (see for example Burns, 2023). However, the variation also illustrates that there is not yet – and perhaps never will be – a universally agreed upon term, and indeed with time, new terms may appear in popular use which are deemed more acceptable.

Chapter 4: Analysis

This chapter explores how history textbooks reinforce or challenge dominant historical narratives regarding the beginnings of the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people. Building on Fairclough’s approach to CDA as outlined in Chapter 3, it analyses how linguistic and visual choices such as transitivity, terminology, genre and images influence engagement with the concepts of race, power, agency and coloniality. The analysis is structured thematically and considers both the textual level as well as discursive and sociocultural developments. CDA’s limitations are addressed, particularly through the consideration of multimodal elements. The sample reveals an increased reflexivity of textbooks and a tentative genre transformation, particularly in recent OUP publications, although it also demonstrates enduring Eurocentrism and selective ‘silences’. Through relating textual features to broader pedagogical and sociopolitical developments, including the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests and other decolonial movements, this chapter argues that the textbook genre is experiencing a significant, although not yet fully realised, shift, with implications for how historical knowledge is constructed, contested, and consumed in the classroom. It should be noted that, although the later OUP publications are disproportionately cited in this chapter, this reflects their more explicit engagement with decolonial strategies and greater richness in relevant textual and discursive features, rather than authorial bias.

*4.1 – Eurocentric Language and Lexical Framing*

**Appendix A** demonstrates how most textbooks in the sample reinforce Eurocentric narratives of ‘discovery’ and ‘exploration’ in depictions of the Elizabethan and Restoration periods. Terms such as “discover[ed]” and “New World” appear unquestioned throughout *Renaissance, Revolution & Reformation (*OUP, 2014); *Elizabethan England* (Hodder, 2016); *Restoration England* (Hodder, 2016) and *Early Elizabethan England* (Hodder, 2022). The use of these terms mirrors a Eurocentric perspective which focuses on European agency and marginalises Indigenous and non-European experiences, positioning them as passive bystanders in European expansion. Contrastingly, more recent textbooks, including *Early Elizabethan England* (OUP, 2022) and *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023) avoid these terms or use them in quotation marks. This linguistic shift signals awareness of their controversial nature, implicitly challenging the Eurocentric narratives which underpin their use. This could prompt more critical student engagement with the power dynamics of the Transatlantic trade, fostering a more nuanced understanding of historical agency.

**Appendix B** highlights a shift in the lexical framing of enslaved people in this so-called ‘age of discovery’. Fairclough argues that “domains of experience may be ‘reworded’ as part of social and political struggles” and that “certain domains come to be more intensively worded than others” (Fairclough, 1993:77). The terminology used to describe enslaved people has become one such contested domain. While most textbooks in the sample use the noun “slaves”, *Early Elizabethan England* (OUP, 2022) and *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023) generally opt for “enslaved”. This linguistic choice foregrounds the violence and agency of the enslavers, since the term “enslaved” presupposes the existence of the ‘enslav*er*’ and is seen to emphasise humanity over reducing individuals to property. These language choices demonstrate an increased engagement with critical perspectives on the history of slavery in two of the most recent textbooks in the sample.

*4.2 – “None left!”: Rethinking the Exclamation Mark*

As well as word choice, rhetorical features such as dramatic punctuation also contribute to the problematic framing found within some of the earlier textbooks in the sample. The use of exclamation marks in *Renaissance, Revolution and Reformation* (OUP, 2014) often undermines the seriousness of the topic at hand. For example, the textbook explains that “On one Caribbean island, there were around two million native people when the Spanish took over in 1492. Sixty years later, there were none left!” (p.68). The textbook also describes how “[…] when the settlers ran out of local people to use as slaves, they decided to go somewhere else to find new ones – Africa!” (*ibid*). While the first seems intended to convey shock and the second to engage students, its tonal effect seems incongruous with the importance and solemnity of the subject matter. Whilst historically the exclamation mark has represented both expression of amazement and of “disgust, grief, and anger”, in the world of contemporary punctuation conventions, exclamation marks are increasingly interpreted as demonstrating *enthusiasm*, particularly amongst younger generations, leading to the tonal dissonance within these examples (Lobo, 2021). *Renaissance, Revolution and Reformation* (OUP, 2014) is the only publication in the sample to have used exclamation marks, perhaps demonstrating an awareness of how changing interpretations of punctuation can impact the perceived (in)sensitivity of historical explanations.

*4.3 – Agency, Responsibility, and Transitivity*

Transitivity analysis – here referring to the act of “distinguishing […] whether certain social actors are more frequently represented as agents or patients in material processes” – reveals how the sample textbooks attribute agency and responsibility in their depictions of the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people (Hart, 2014:23). Fairclough argues that transitivity choices shape how causality and responsibility are understood (1993:236). Most of the textbooks position Europeans as the primary agents, using active verbs to emphasise their role in founding the trade. For example, John Hawkins is presented as an active agent: “Hawkins made three voyages to the Caribbean, trading slaves he had captured in West Africa” (p.56), *Early Elizabethan England* (Hodder, 2016). Similarly, the phrasing “the English chose to abandon 92 African people on the shore, leaving them to die or be captured” (p.82) in *Early Elizabethan England* (OUP, 2022) directly attributes intent and culpability. These transitive choices construct a narrative that assigns moral responsibility to Europeans as the drivers of the ‘slave trade’.

While transitive verbs are largely used to demonstrate European agency in order to attribute blame, it is also vital to consider the agency of African people in this exploitative system. Some textbooks do acknowledge the resistance of enslaved people, highlighting their agency. *Early Elizabethan England* (OUP, 2022), for example, states that “Africans began to resist capture and exploitation at the hands of traders”, describing how some people relocated further from the coast or attempted to seize control of ships (p.79). This inclusion highlights African resilience and agency, providing a powerful counter-narrative to depictions of Africans as forever passive victims.

Similarly, *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023) foregrounds African agency, though it complicates the preexisting narrative by highlighting the role of some Africans as *perpetrators* in the Transatlantic trade (“The people of Benin traded goods such as ivory, […]. They also traded people.” (p.57)). *Renaissance, Revolution and Reformation* (OUP, 2014) also briefly recognises the role of African leaders in the trade, making it an outlier amongst the other pre-2020 textbooks and suggests an ideological divergence between OUP and Hodder – a theme explored later in this chapter. These examples challenge the portrayal of African people as a monolithic group sharing the same experience of victimhood and instead more accurately depicts the complexity of their historical roles. Nevertheless, most of the textbooks make no reference to African agency in any way, neither as resisters nor perpetrators, which leads to an unbalanced depiction which thus overemphasises European agency at the detriment of African agency, despite their clear attribution of responsibility through transitive verbal choices.

*4.4 – The Politics of Explanation*

A significant shift in recent history textbooks is how they address – or fail to address – controversial or outdated terminology. **Appendix C** shows that none of the three pre-2020 publications, or the 2022 Hodder textbook, acknowledge the use of terms like “negro”, “superior”, “inferior”, and “uncivilised” in historical sources. The later OUP publications, however, engage critically with these terms, making explicit normative judgements. *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023), for example, explains: “We use quotation marks to show that these ideas are incorrect” (p.10). The use of the first-person plural visibilises the authors’ positioning, allowing students to recognise that the content within textbooks is actively constructed by its authors, and is not merely a neutral presentation of facts. Textbooks that lack this self-awareness risk presenting these historical terms as acceptable to students, with no signposting of the potential harm of their use today. This engagement with language in the later OUP textbooks reflects an ideological position which aligns with broader shifts in the political and educational sphere surrounding discourses of race, power, and decolonisation.

*4.5 – Visual Representations and the Power of Portraiture*

The increased reflexivity within textbooks is also reflected in the *visual* content of the sample. Gabowitsch and Topolska argue that advancing technology means that “visuality shapes […] our relationship with the past even more comprehensively than ever before”, something which seems to be being increasingly recognised within the textbook genre (2023:1). For example, in the context of the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people, the visual representation of key historical figures shapes students’ understanding of and engagement with the topic. All three pre-2020 textbooks, as well as *Early Elizabethan England* (Hodder, 2022) include portraits of figures such as John Cabot, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh (**Appendix D**). These images are used decoratively, often within ‘profiles’, rather than being framed as historical sources for critical engagement. Francis Drake, for example, was an active trader of enslaved people, yet his portrait is used in a neutral or even reverent style, given the celebratory nature of portraiture.[[1]](#footnote-2) In contrast, *Early Elizabethan England* (OUP, 2022) omits portraiture altogether, instead utilising images of statues or commemorative plaques – objects which have themselves become objects of controversy through their involvement in watershed moments in the Black Lives Matter movement (see for example Quinn, 2020; Atuire, 2022; Davies, 2024). This reflects a more reflexive and decolonial visual strategy that encourages students to critically assess not just what or who is remembered, but *how*.

This strategy is not only limited to representations of historical figures. For example, *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023) deals with the challenge of a lack of African portraiture by including illustrations, which offer a form of representation which counteracts the overwhelming visual whiteness of earlier textbooks in the sample. Additionally, both post-2020 OUP textbooks frequently include photographs of artefacts, such as brass sculptures from the Kingdom of Benin or the seal of a trading company. These artefacts are more than just decorative; they provide active prompts for enquiry, allowing students to critically consider the material culture of the past. While these choices are still curated, there is an underlying pedagogical value in encouraging critical engagement with how the past is visualised. The earlier publications often present images without captions or context – which limits their educational value. In contrast, the multimodal construction of the later OUP textbooks represents a shift in the history textbook genre where the use of images to aid interpretation, critique, and awareness of the construction of historical narratives is prioritised.

*4.6 – Silences and the Question of Inclusion*

Eurocentric narratives in English history textbooks are reinforced by selective ‘silences’, an idea put forward and developed by Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2015). The historical ‘silences’ within the sample, which serve to preserve colonial legacies by reducing historical nuances for pedagogical convenience, are not accidental but rather actively shaped by editorial policies, considerations of the market, and ideological influences that prioritise certain historical perspectives over others. In the sample, one of the most glaring and troubling absences is any critical discussion of the relationship between racism and the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people. Despite the nature of racism and slavery as being mutually reinforcing, only *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023) discusses how racism influenced and *was influenced* by the ‘slave trade’. Other textbooks erase the racial dimension to slavery entirely. Perhaps, more than a silence, this represents a *distortion* of history, and the lack of critical engagement with how the ‘slave trade’ informed racism limits students’ understanding of the origins of both the trade and modern racial inequality, impeding efforts to teach a critical account of empire and colonialism.

A further significant silence is the absence of depictions of African agency. As discussed in the section on agency and transitivity, while *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023) and *Renaissance, Revolution, and Reformation* (OUP, 2014) acknowledge the role of West African leaders in the trade, and *Early Elizabethan England* (OUP, 2022) discusses African resistance, the other textbooks present binary portrayals of Europeans as perpetrators and Africans as victims. In this section, the particular concern is the absence of individual names and stories of African historical actors, particularly those who resisted enslavement. While European actors such as John Hawkins and Francis Drake have profiles dedicated to them, named African actors largely remain invisible. This imbalance fails to show how history was not merely something which happened *to* African people; they shaped it, through resistance, collaboration and survival.

*4.7 – Interdiscursivity and (the Absence of) Competing Narratives*

Fairclough defines interdiscursivity as “relations between discursive formations or more loosely between different types of discourse” (1993:47). In the context of history textbooks, this refers to how they might draw upon historical, political and educational discourses to construct their narratives. In theory, interdiscursivity should facilitate critical engagement with a range of historical perspectives, since competing narratives are a fundamental aspect of the study of history. However, in practice, most of the textbooks in this sample present unified narratives rather than engaging with truly contrasting viewpoints. Although terminology and framing varies somewhat, these differences seem to be a result of balancing different perspectives within a dominant Eurocentric framework rather than a meaningful engagement with multiple perspectives. One example of interdiscursivity within the sample is the inclusion of historical sources, which could challenge dominant narratives. However, the selection, presentation and contextualisation of these sources often ensures they align with the textbook’s overarching depiction of historical narratives, limiting their potential.

Nevertheless, some of the textbooks demonstrate a more interdiscursive approach. For example, *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023) includes a textbox explaining that “Having analysed the primary evidence, historians construct their interpretations: their accounts of the past. This is a very personal process and historians’ interpretations are, at times, different as a result” (p.11). This allows students to recognise that historical narratives are constructed rather than fixed. This is furthered by the inclusion of photographs of the historians alongside their quotations. Despite being a simple design feature, this visual element humanises the concept of a ‘historical interpretation’ and counters their typical presentation as being written from a place of detached objectivity.

Evidence of competing narratives also appears within *Early Elizabethan England* (OUP, 2022) through its treatment of the contested legacy of Francis Drake. The book dedicates a double-page spread to the debate regarding how he should be remembered, with subheadings “On the one hand: Drake the pirate and trader in enslaved Africans” and “On the other hand: Drake the naval hero” (pp.82-83). Whilst the former is given more visual and textual space, the framing of this debate highlights the competing historiographical perspectives. Both of these textbooks also include textboxes titled ‘Earlier on…’ and ‘Meanwhile…’ and ‘Later on…’ (**Appendix E**). These introduce knowledge peripheral to the main focus of the page, such as acknowledging how, prior to European arrival, there were several wealthy and powerful African kingdoms (p.78). These textboxes offer a subtler form of interdiscursivity that fits within curricular constraints.

*4.8 – Textbook Production and Ideological Influences*

Textbook production is shaped by a web of interdependent factors, including the national curriculum, exam board specifications, publisher priorities, and market demand. Since 2014, the English context has been strongly influenced by curriculum reform and the political push for a ‘renaissance in the use of textbooks’, endorsed by Nick Gibb as Education minister (Oates et al., 2021:36; Richardson, 2014). In this context, textbooks are restricted, as in order to be competitive, their content must directly correspond to specifications created by exam boards such as AQA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC Eduqas. Importantly, UK textbooks are produced within a market economy rather than being state-commissioned, as they are in countries such as China, where textbook production is highly centralised (Jackson & Du, 2022:195). This means that they *do* respond to demand, and thus where teachers and schools express growing demand for inclusive and decolonial resources, publishers respond accordingly not solely from a pedagogically grounded reasoning but also in order to remain competitive within the market.

While textbook production is rarely the work of a single author, this does not negate the role of ideological influence. Indeed, editorial policy, house style, and assumptions about what teachers and schools want shape textbook production. As Oates notes, “textbooks authors are not passive agents in the textbook production process”; rather, they navigate these market influences as active participants (2021:47). As demonstrated by the sample of this dissertation, OUP and Hodder seemingly adopt different ideological stances in how they present content on similar or identical topics. For example, OUP textbooks tend to incorporate a more reflexive approach, allowing students to critically consider historical events and figures. Contrastingly, Hodder textbooks seem to maintain greater continuity in their depiction of key historical figures and narratives, generally portraying them with less critique or explicit contextualisation. This leads to a more authoritative portrayal, depicting figures as actors within a single uncontested narrative. These differences suggest that whilst OUP increasingly acknowledges shifts in historiography, Hodder more closely aligns with traditional historical narratives which depict a more Eurocentric account of the past.

*4.9 – Genre Shift and Sociocultural Change*

The genre of history textbooks has evolved significantly over the past few decades, in response to pedagogical developments and the ‘new history’ movement. This movement challenged the perception of history as a ‘received subject’ and advocated for a more dynamic and critical approach to teaching and learning (McDermid & Foster, 2024:6).More recently, the genre is continuing to evolve in response to sociocultural developments; namely, calls for decolonisation and the influence of the widespread Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, amongst other initiatives such as ‘Why is my curriculum White?’ and ‘The Black Curriculum’ (see Peters, 2015; The Black Curriculum, n.d.). Fairclough defines genre as encompassing “not only a particular text type, but also particular processes of producing, distributing and consuming texts” (1993:126). This understanding illustrates how the changing role of textbooks in the classroom forms part of a broader genre shift. The most reflexive and decolonial textbooks of the sample (the later OUP publications) go beyond including more diverse and inclusive content; they emphasise subjectivity, explain terminology, avoid heroic depictions, and emphasise multiplicity through devices such as their ‘Earlier on…’ and ‘Meanwhile…’ textboxes. This helps teachers and students grasp the contested and constructed nature of history.

The changing pedagogical function of textbooks represents a further aspect of this genre shift. As topics available to teach increasingly foreground previously marginalised histories, teachers are being required more frequently to teach unfamiliar material outside of their prior subject expertise. The role of textbooks thus becomes less a classroom tool for student engagement, and more pedagogical scaffolding for teachers unfamiliar with a certain topic. The more reflexive OUP textbooks demonstrate this shift in their explicit dealing with historical interpretations and historiographical nuance, allowing teachers to navigate these complex topics and draw on this in their lesson creation. The genre shift brought about by calls for decolonisation is therefore not only about the content of the textbooks but about how they are used in and outside of the classroom.

Importantly, these developments alone are not enough to constitute a transformation across the sector; Hodder publications continue some concerning Eurocentric narrative depictions. However, the emergence of more reflexive and decolonial textbooks from such a dominant publisher as OUP suggests a genre shift is indeed underway, although it is far from fully realised. OUP’s role in this shift can perhaps be attributed to its institutional standing. It is well positioned, as a department of the University of Oxford and one of the largest and most reputable academic publishers in the world, to be at the forefront of pedagogical innovation. Whereas competitors such as Hodder are more explicitly commercial, OUP’s non-profit status could allow for increased editorial independence and engagement with academic debates around race, power, and coloniality. The fact that OUP was demonstrating some reflexive tendencies in their earlier publication in the sample, before decolonisation’s mainstreaming in 2020, suggests a willingness to challenge dominant Eurocentric narratives at an institutional level. However, continued adherence to the constraining curriculum demonstrates the complex position all textbooks occupy: they are both *agents* and *products* of sociocultural change.

*4.10 – Conclusion*

Chapter 4 has demonstrated how history textbooks construct, reinforce, and occasionally challenge dominant Eurocentric narratives surrounding the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people. Regarding the linguistic and visual features of the sample, most of the textbooks revealed persistent Eurocentrism through their lexical choices, omission of African agency, and their ‘silences’ on the racialised foundations of the trade. However, a genre shift seems to be underway, most clearly demonstrated by the later OUP publications which include increased reflexivity, critical use of multimodal elements, and attention to historiographical debate. This shift is not only found in the content of textbooks but also in their pedagogical function, as they become aids for teachers who are increasingly delivering lessons on inclusive topics which may be unfamiliar to them. Nevertheless, the adoption of these strategies is inconsistent across publishers, demonstrating constraints of curriculum and market demands. The analysis highlights that although textbooks are beginning to respond to calls for decolonisation, their transformation is partial and influenced by institutional and sociocultural contexts. These findings raise important questions about the possibilities and constraints of textbook reform, as well as how textbooks mediate students’ encounters with the concepts of race, power, and coloniality – questions which will be explored further in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This Chapter provides an interpretation of Chapter 4 in the context of wider academic literature on history education, decolonisation, and textbook production. It synthesises the core themes of Eurocentrism, authorial voice, representation and institutional influence to assess how history textbooks construct and depict knowledge. The discussion is organised thematically to align with the research questions, first analysing persistent trends and emerging shifts in both textbook design and function, before assessing the extent to which shifts demonstrated by the sample reflect a broader genre shift of history textbooks. Across these sections, the chapter argues that although progress is uneven, the later OUP publications offer a model of good practice. Their reflexive strategies enable a more decolonial depiction of the Transatlantic trade and provide an adaptable framework for textbook design across a range of topics.

*5.1 – Persisting Eurocentrism and Emerging Shifts*

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, Eurocentrism remains a dominant narrative framework in many of the textbooks in the sample. All three pre-2020 textbooks, as well as the more recent *Early Elizabethan England* (Hodder, 2022) reinforce this narrative through their lexical framing and selective ‘silences’. They present European colonial expansion as neutral through the use of unquestioned terminology related to ‘discovery’. Trouillot asserts that historical narratives are shaped equally by what is *omitted* as by what is included, and this is evidenced within the sample (2015). Across the texts, there is a notable silence surrounding both African agency and any discussion of the relationship between the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people and racism – or indeed ‘race’ at all. Whilst half of the sample was published around a decade ago, the fact that in most schools resources are replaced only when curricular updates necessitates it, means that their impact remains ongoing. The persistent Eurocentrism within these textbooks, then, continues to shape students’ encounters with and understanding of the past and the subject of history itself.

The sample also demonstrates an emerging shift in lexical framing, for example through the use of ‘enslaved’ in place of ‘slave’ and problematising ‘exploration’ through the use of quotation marks, encouraging students to critically engage with the past. These shifts are not only linguistic; for example, *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023) visibilises historians’ interpretations through visual strategies, and the use of ‘Earlier on…’ and ‘Meanwhile…’ textboxes in this publication and *Early Elizabethan England* (OUP, 2022) effectively integrates alternate narratives that serve to redress typically marginalised histories. These later OUP publications also highlight the historical contributions of non-European societies, challenging the dominant narrative of European innovation. This is particularly significant given the prominence of the “our island story” narrative in the national curriculum, which these textbooks begin to nuance through their acknowledgment of global interconnectedness (Department for Education, 2014).

This emerging shift is not uniformly distributed across the sample – nor, by extension, across the current offering of English history textbooks. While the later OUP publications demonstrate a more reflexive approach, Hodder’s *Early Elizabethan England* (2022) continues to reflect the Eurocentric framing present within the earlier textbooks. Given the scope of the sample, it is unclear whether this persistence is connected to the fact that this textbook is foundation-tier, or whether it demonstrates a divergence in the ideological positioning of each publisher. More broadly, this variation reflects the limits of these emerging shifts: the presence of decolonial strategies in some textbooks cannot guarantee their use in classrooms, particularly given their perceived link to didactic instruction which is currently not in favour in contemporary pedagogy (Oates, 2021:60-68). There is a risk, therefore, that even if this genre shift continues to develop, its impact could remain limited unless it is matched with wider developments in classroom practice and teacher training. These limitations will be explored further in a later section.

*5.2 – From Neutrality to Reflexivity: Authorial Voice and the Politics of Knowledge*

In the 20th century, history textbooks were often presented as vessels of objective truth, particularly regarding Britain’s imperial past. They often presented history as a linear, factual narrative and student engagement in the form of activities was limited (McDermid & Foster, 2024:5-6). It is increasingly recognised, however, that textbooks are not in fact neutral presentations of information. Rather, they are products of social, political, and pedagogical influence. The findings of this dissertation demonstrate that choices regarding terminology, transitivity, visual elements, and of course what *is* or is *not* included in the textbook, actively shape students’ understanding of the past. These choices reflect the ideological positioning of the authors and publishers involved in textbook production. The increased acknowledgement of historiography, interpretations, and authorial reflexivity in some of the later textbooks demonstrates a shift towards the recognition that textbooks are subjective and contested tools which legitimise and frame some knowledge above alternatives.

This is particularly visible in the framing of authorial voice within the textbooks. While most textbooks in the sample adopt an impersonal tone, the later OUP publications visibilise their authorial voice through direct language, such as the use of “we” and explicit acknowledgement of their terminological choices. In contrast, the other textbooks maintain an authoritative tone with no recognition of the subjective nature of textbook authorship. The perception of textbooks as neutral tools reinforces the broader belief that the education system itself is apolitical. Therefore, those interested in maintaining the status quo, where Eurocentricity remains the norm, stand to benefit from the continued presentation of textbooks as objective. In failing to acknowledge partiality, many textbooks across all school subjects obscure the political nature of knowledge itself. This recognition is therefore a crucial step in decolonising not just history but education as a whole.

Reflexivity also influences the perceived authority of textbooks. When publications such as *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023) ‘pull back the curtain’ on how historical narratives are constructed, they challenge the notion that history is a linear, uncontested group of facts. Although this could undermine the authority of textbooks if they are to be seen only as vessels of uncontested knowledge, in fact, reflexivity *strengthens* their pedagogical value. They guide students through the process of historical enquiry, providing interpretations and modelling how they might be interpreted and debated. Rather than diminish their status as trusted educational tools, the source of their authority merely shifts to the way they support students in critical engagement and evidence-based interpretation. This increased reflexivity does not necessarily confuse students, especially when explained sufficiently by the classroom teacher. In fact, presenting history as a discipline that is rooted in critical engagement and interpretations can deepen student engagement and encourage them to see the past not as a set of facts to learn by rote but as something to analyse, question and make meaning from. Reflexivity, therefore, enhances rather than threatens the authority of textbooks and, by extension, the perceived value of history as a subject.

*5.3 – Who is Represented and Remembered? Visuality, Voice, and Historical Agency*

Analysis in Chapter 4 demonstrated that visual elements in textbooks are not neutral. Due to their ideological weight, they thus warrant equal critical attention as textual choices. Whilst Fairclough’s framework centres on language, this research adopted a multimodal approach in order to highlight how visual representations also shape historical understanding. In the pre-2020 textbooks, the use of portraiture and illustrative images is often uncritical and decorative, as they are sometimes presented without captions, contextualisation or prompts for student engagement. In addition to the persisting Eurocentricity of these choices, it also misses key opportunities for students to reflect on power, memory, memorialisation, and representation. The later OUP publications, on the other hand, omit portraiture and instead include images of statues and commemorative plaques – objects which carry discursive weight, particularly since the 2020 BLM protests. This aligns with a more decolonial visual strategy.

However, the omission of portraiture is not the only decolonial strategy available. The use of portraits to provide students with visual reference points for historical actors can still serve a pedagogical purpose, provided these images are framed critically, with appropriate contextualisation such as the date of production and name of artist, and they are used to prompt historical enquiry. The analysis of sources is of course not an unfamiliar concept in the subject of history, however ensuring that every source is approached critically is evidently yet to be achieved. Ultimately, those involved with textbook design must recognise that visual elements are not merely supplementary but are in fact central to how historical narratives are constructed and contested.

*5.4 – Constraints and Possibilities of Textbook Production in a Marketised System*

Textbooks are shaped not only by the curriculum but also by the structural constraints of marketised education. In order to remain competitive, publishers ensure their textbooks align with exam board specifications and curricular requirements, leaving limited room for innovative or decolonial approaches. Since all textbooks begin from the same curriculum, differentiation depends on tone, emphasis, and design, rather than any true reimagining or reinterpretation. Alternative models do exist; for example, *Bristol and Transatlantic Slavery: Origins, Impact, and Legacy*, is a textbook which was created collaboratively by local historians and sold via Bristol Museums (Kennet et al*.*, 2023). Produced outside the remit of the commercial market, this publication embodies the possibilities of public-facing historical education. However, its use in schools is limited and it was developed on a non-profit basis, highlighting the challenges involved in producing non-commercial projects. By contrast, commercial textbooks prioritise engagement with exam board specifications over decolonial ambitions, not because they are mutually exclusive, but because meeting specifications is the minimum requirement for classroom use. However, these constraints are not absolute; the question is not *whether* decolonial education can exist alongside qualifications-driven structures, but rather *how* textbooks can fulfil this requirement whilst also providing a decolonised portrayal of history.

The production of textbooks is not only influenced by structural constraints, but also by the ideological and academic values shown through editorial policy and institutional ethos. Even when textbooks are marketed as neutral, they reflect ideological assumptions about which histories matter and how they should be told. This serves to explain the differences observed in this research between the Hodder publications and those published by Oxford University Press. Despite having the same curricular basis, their publications differ in tone, reflexivity, and, to a lesser extent, content. This suggests that in addition to structural constraints, publishers’ values and perceptions of market demand shape how history is presented. The examples of the later OUP textbooks demonstrates how, despite the constraints of the market and the curriculum, it is possible to push boundaries and implement decolonial strategies by focusing on critical engagement with histories and visibilising alternative narratives.

*5.5 – Is a Genre Shift Really Underway?*

As demonstrated by analysis in Chapter 4, the history textbook genre is experiencing a gradual shift in response to broader societal changes, namely the increased calls for decolonising education following the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. There is evidence from OUP of integration of critical perspectives, and a break from the solely Eurocentric narratives of their previous publications. However, textbook production is still limited by structural constraints, and textbooks are designed to align with exam specifications and the curriculum. The genre shift is therefore still emerging, and is not felt uniformly. Nevertheless, given OUP’s influence in the UK publishing sector, it is likely that smaller publishers such as Hodder will be influenced by their example, meaning that there is real potential for the decolonial strategies of OUP to become more widespread in coming years.

While textbooks play an essential role in shaping historical understanding, teachers remain the crucial player in translating these materials into decolonised learning experiences. The emerging genre shift, though important and necessary, can only fulfil its potential positive impact in combination with the agency of teachers in the classroom. Indeed, when textbooks used in a lesson lack decolonial strategies and present a persistent Eurocentric view, teachers are crucial in mitigating the negative impacts. This highlights the utility of the other aspect of the emerging genre shift, which is their function as pedagogical scaffolds for teachers, allowing them to explore inclusive approaches to history. The role of textbooks, then, must be seen as complementary to the vital work of teachers, who are responsible for ensuring that decolonisation in the classroom goes beyond the written page. Ultimately, the full impact of a genre shift will only be felt if teachers have access to and engage with textbooks which are decolonial, critical, and reflexive.

*5.6 – Summary and Forward Look*

This dissertation has investigated the representations of the beginnings of the Transatlantic trade in enslaved people in English secondary school history textbooks, through the lens of decolonisation. It has utilised a Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the persistence of Eurocentric narratives and an emerging shift towards the inclusion of decolonial strategies, particularly in recent OUP publications. The findings demonstrate the ongoing barriers to adopting reflexive, inclusive practices in textbooks, due to the national curriculum and market constraints. The research has also explored the multifaceted role of textbooks as both pedagogical tools and perpetuations of ideological positions. In future, further research through a decolonial lens could explore the practical use of, and critical engagement with, textbooks by teachers, especially where the textbooks in question remain largely Eurocentric.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This dissertation set out to address two research questions: (1) *How are Eurocentric narratives of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery represented in English secondary school history textbooks?* and (2) *How has the process of decolonisation influenced the representation of the beginnings of Transatlantic slavery in English secondary school history textbooks?.* Through a CDA of a sample of history textbooks, this research has shown that although many textbooks still in use today perpetuate Eurocentric narratives, significant progress has been made, particularly in the more recent publications from Oxford University Press. These textbooks demonstrate the possibility of an effective implementation of decolonial strategies even within the constraints of a Eurocentric curriculum, through a considered selection of language, the inclusion of typically marginalised narratives, and a more critical approach to historical figures and events.

The findings contribute to the wider conversation on decolonisation in history education through its demonstration that textbooks can be both pedagogically effective and decolonial. In the UK context, there has perhaps been an overcorrection to the previous reliance on didactic materials – what Oates describes as an “anti-textbook ethos” – which has led to an underappreciation of the potential of textbooks to encourage critical thinking and introduce students to historiographical debates (2021:60-68). This research highlights that when designed with reflexivity and critical engagement in mind, textbooks can serve as valuable tools in bridging the gap identified by Mansfield between secondary school and university-level history education (2019:47).

While the sample was necessarily limited by its size and focus on the beginnings of the ‘slave trade’, it provides a representative account of how issues of coloniality are presented in English textbooks. The analysis and subsequent discussion demonstrate that, even when concerned with inherently ‘colonial’ history, it is possible for textbooks to integrate decolonial strategies. This is particularly significant when considering the constraints of the current curriculum and its continued prioritisation of Euro- and Anglo- centrism. The emerging genre shift enacted by OUP represents a promising development, and has the potential to – if adopted more evenly across the sector – transform how history is taught in England.

In light of this research, future studies should centre the role of teachers in decolonising history education. Teachers are crucial in ensuring that any decolonial strategies within textbooks translate into meaningful classroom engagement, meaning that their use of textbooks are vital in allowing its emerging genre shift to realise its full potential. Thus, research into how textbooks are practically used in classrooms will allow judgements of the true impact of the emerging genre shift. Additionally, further research should also continue to consider how curriculum changes, exam specifications, and pedagogical practices all interact to shape history education in the UK. By focusing on the entire educational ecosystem, from top-down government policy to daily classroom practices, future studies will be able to offer a more comprehensive assessment of the barriers and possibilities for a truly decolonial history teaching.

**Bibliography**

Primary sources:

Amery, K. and Gogo, T. (2023) *KS3 History Depth Study: African Kingdoms: West Africa Student Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Armstrong, B. (2022) *Hodder GCSE (9-1) History for Pearson Edexcel Foundation Edition: Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88: Boost eBook*. [digital version]. London: Hodder Education.

Podesta, E. (2016) *AQA GCSE History: Restoration England, 1660-1685*. London: Hodder Education.

Royle, W. (2016) *AQA GCSE History: Elizabethan England, c1568-1603.* London: Hodder Education.

Wilkes, A. (2014) *Key Stage 3 History by Aaron Wilkes: Renaissance, Revolution and Reformation: Britain 1509-1745 Student Book*. 3rd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilkes, A. (2022) *Edexcel GCSE History (9-1): Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88 Student Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Secondary sources:

Alexander, C. and Weekes-Bernard, D. (2017) ‘History lessons: inequality, diversity and the national curriculum’, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 478–494. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1294571>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Andreoli, M. et al. (2024) ‘Achieving teacher agency for inclusive education: an exploration of general education teachers’ perspective’, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, pp. 1–18. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2024.2397458>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Atuire, C. A. (2022) ‘Black Lives Matter and the removal of racist statues’, *Inquiries into Art, History, and the Visual – Beiträge Zur Kunstgeschichte Und Visuellen Kultur*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 449–467. Available at: <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:32d0d19e-cd2b-4ae4-8ee2-8af0c3b0d029/files/sd504rm39b>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Bhambra, G. K., Gebrial, D., & Nişancıoğlu, K. (Eds.). (2018) *Decolonising the University* (1st ed.). Pluto Press.

Bock, A. (2018) ‘Theories and methods of textbook studies’, *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*. Fuchs, E., Bock, A. (eds.), London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 57–70.

Burns, J. R. (2023) ‘‘Slaves’ and ‘Slave Owners’ or ‘Enslaved People’ and ‘Enslavers’?’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* Vol. 2, pp. 371-388. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0080440123000282>, accessed 22nd April 2025.

Chantiluke, R., Kwoba, B., & Nkopo, A. (Eds.) (2018) *Rhodes Must Fall: The Struggle to Decolonise the Racist Heart of Empire*. Zed Books

Chigudu, S. (2020) ‘Rhodes Must Fall in Oxford: a critical testimony’, *Critical African Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 302–312. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2020.1788401>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Connell, R. (2022) *The Good University: What universities actually do and why it’s time for radical change*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Davies, E. J. (2024) ‘The uses and reuses of monuments in the Black Lives Matter era’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, pp. 1–25. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2356872>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Department for Education (2014) *National curriculum in England: history programmes of study.* Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-history-programmes-of-study>, accessed 18th January 2025.

Doharty, N. (2018) ‘‘I FELT DEAD’: applying a racial microaggressions framework to Black students’ experiences of Black History Month and Black History’, *Race Ethnicity and Education,* Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 110–129. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1417253>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Fairclough, N., 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman.

Foucault, M., 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Pantheon Books.

Gabowitsch, M., and Topolska, A. (2023) ‘Visual Literacy in History Education: Textbooks and Beyond’, *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* Vol.15, No.1, pp.1-19. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3167/jemms.2023.150101>, accessed 21st March 2025.

Graham, P. (2018) ‘Ethics in critical discourse analysis’, *Critical Discourse Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 186–203. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2017.1421243>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Hart, C. (2014) *Discourse, Grammar and Ideology: Functional and Cognitive Perspectives*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London.

IbisWorld. (2024) ‘Book Publishing in the UK – Market Research Report (2014-2029)’, *IbisWorld.* Available at: <https://www.ibisworld.com/united-kingdom/industry/book-publishing/3460/>, accessed 20th April 2025.

Jackson, I., & Du, S. (2022) ‘The Impact of History Textbooks on Young Chinese People’s Understanding of the Past: A Social Media Analysis’, *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs,* Vol. 51, No. 2, pp.194-218. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681026221105525>, accessed 9th April 2025.

Jordanova, L. (2022) ‘Portraiture, Biography and Public Histories’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 32, pp. 159–175. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S008044012200007X>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Kennet, R., et al. (eds.) (2023) *Bristol and Transatlantic Slavery: Origins, Impact and Legacy*. Bristol: Bristol Books.

Klerides, E. (2010) ‘Imagining the textbook: Textbooks as discourse and genre’, *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society,* Vol*.* 2, No.1, pp. 31–54, Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3167/jemms.2010.020103>, accessed 24th January 2025.

Lidher, S., Bibi, R. and Alexander, C. (2023) ‘Reframing British history: teacher education after Black Lives Matter’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 10, pp. 2196–2218. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2023.2271067>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Lobo, J. (2021) ‘The Exclamation Mark! A Brief History!’, *BookRiot*. Available at: <https://bookriot.com/history-of-the-exclamation-mark/>, accessed 6th April 2025.

Mansfield, A. (2019) ‘Confusion, contradiction and exclusion: the promotion of British values in the teaching of history in schools’, *The Curriculum Journal*, Vol. 30, pp. 40-50. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2018.1533483>, accessed 25th January 2025.

Mansfield, A. (2022) ‘Increasing inclusion for ethnic minority students by teaching the British Empire and global history in the English history curriculum’, *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 360–375. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2022.2087618>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Mbembe, J. A. (2016) ‘Decolonizing the university: New directions’, *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education,* Vol. 15, No.1, pp.29-45. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022215618513>, accessed 18th January 2025.

McDermid, C. and Foster, S. (2024) ‘Comparative portrayals of the British Empire in history textbooks, 1920s–2020s: influences, paradigms and historical frameworks’, *History Education Research Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 14. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.14324/HERJ.21.1.14>, accessed 25th January 2025.

Moncrieffe, M. L. (2020) *Decolonising the History Curriculum: Euro-centrism and Primary Schooling*, Palgrave Macmillan: Switzerland.

Næsguthe, R. E. (2024) *Framing the Past: Analyzing Representations of the British Empire in Key Stage 3 History Textbooks, 2020-2022*. Master’s Thesis. Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). Available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/11250/3172340>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Nagre, K. (2023) ‘(Mis)educating England: Eurocentric narratives in secondary school history textbooks’, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, Vol. 28, No. 1 pp. 1–20. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2023.2192945>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2018). *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Nezhad, M. P. and Stolz, S. A. (2024) ‘Unveiling teachers’ professional agency and decision-making in professional learning: the illusion of choice’, *Professional Development in Education*, pp. 1–21. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2024.2349058>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Oates, T. et al. (2021) *Changing texts – an international review of research on textbooks and related materials.* Cambridge University Press & Assessment Research Report. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

Oxford University Press. (2025) ‘Publisher Description’, *JSTOR*. Available at: [OUP-Publisher-Description, JSTOR](https://www.jstor.org/publisher/oup#:~:text=Publisher%20Description&text=OUP%20is%20the%20world's%20largest,more%20than%205%2C500%20people%20worldwide)., accessed 20th April 2025.

Pantić, N., et al. (2022) ‘Making sense of teacher agency for change with social and epistemic network analysis’, *Journal of Educational Change*, Vol. 23, pp. 145–177. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-021-09413-7>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Peters, M. A. (2015) ‘Why is My Curriculum White?’, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, Vol. 47, No. 7, pp. 641–646. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2015.1037227>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Quinn, M. (2020) ‘Toppled Monuments and Black Lives Matter: Race, Gender, and Memory’, *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 45–62. Available at: <https://atlantisjournal.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/5552>, accessed 20th April 2025.

Ribeiro, G. L. (2023) ‘From decolonizing knowledge to postimperialism’, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 50, No.1, pp.9–22. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.13186>, accessed 26th April 2025.

Richardson, H. (2014) ‘Schools need textbooks not worksheets, says minister’, *BBC News*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-30129639>, accessed 29th March 2025.

Royal Historical Society. (2024) ‘Student numbers for History A-Levels, GCSEs, and Scottish Advanced Higher, Higher and National 5 Exams, 2024’, *Historical Transactions: Royal Historical Society Blog and Online Resources.* Available at: <https://blog.royalhistsoc.org/2024/08/28/student-numbers-for-history-a-levels-gcses-and-scottish-highers-2024/>, accessed 24th January 2025.

Santos, B. de S. (2014) *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide. Boulder*, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Szabó-Zsoldos, G. (2023) ‘Decolonising history teaching in the United Kingdom: Movements, methods, and curricula’, *Hungarian Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 515-530. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1556/063.2023.00139>, accessed 25th January 2025.

The Black Curriculum (n.d.) *The Black Curriculum*. Available at: <https://theblackcurriculum.com/>, accessed 22nd April 2025.

Trouillot, M. R. (2015) *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press. Available at: <https://research-ebsco-com.bris.idm.oclc.org/linkprocessor/plink?id=a2b71cec-1bbf-3730-85b0-d2058a771610>, accessed 31st March 2025.

YouGov. (2014) ‘The British Empire is “something to be proud of”’, *YouGov*. Available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2014/07/26/britain-proud-its-empire>, accessed 25th January 2025.

Appendix

**Appendix A:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Textbook** | **Terminology used regarding the ‘New World’ and themes of ‘exploration’ and ‘discovery’** |
| Renaissance, Revolution and Reformation (Hodder, 2014) | Subheading: “’Age of discovery’” (p.65)  “Amerigo Vespucci, who sailed to this ‘new world’ several times.” (p.66)  “John Cabot […] didn’t stay long in the ‘new found land’ of North America.” (p.66)  “a group of settlers did manage to survive out in the New World and start new lives.” (p.66) |
| Elizabethan England (Hodder, 2016) | Heading: “Elizabethan exploration” (p53)  “[…] maps were made of newly discovered lands […]” (p.53)  Subheading: “European explorers and the New World” (p.54)  “[…] Christopher Columbus inadvertently discovered what was called the NEW WORLD.” (p.54) [glossary term]  Subheading: “Trade with the New World” (p.56) |
| Restoration England (Hodder, 2016) | “[…] other European powers who had their own claims on this new world.” (p.55)  “This chapter examines the importance of England’s overseas possessions […].” (p.55)  Task for students: “Which of England’s overseas possessions was the most important?” (p.58) |
| Early Elizabethan England (Hodder, 2022) | “John Hawkins made two voyages to sell slaves in the New World.” (p.63)  Chapter title: “Exploration, voyages of discovery, Raleigh and Virginia” (p.93)  “Elizabethan explorers wanted to discover what lay beyond the parts of the world that they already knew.” (p.95)  “Voyages to other countries, such as the New World, increased people’s knowledge of the world.” (p.106) |
| Early Elizabethan England (OUP, 2022) | Chapter title: “Exploration and voyages of ‘discovery’” (p.3)  Heading: “What caused the ‘age of exploration’?” (p.76)  “Drake aimed to: […] find new lands to claim for Elizabeth and England” (p.80) |
| African Kingdoms (OUP, 2023) | “The Spanish and Portuguese led this ‘age of exploration’, exploring the seas and oceans […]” (p.40) |

**Appendix B:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Textbook** | **Terminology regarding local populations of the ‘New World’ and Africa, and slavery** |
| Renaissance, Revolution and Reformation (OUP, 2014) | “So where did slaves come from? Why were they needed?” (p.68)  “On one Caribbean island, there were around two million native people when the Spanish took over in 1492. Sixty years later, there were none left!” (p.68)  “Before reading any further, think about the word ‘slave’. Who or what was a slave? What does the word mean?” (p.68)  Subheading: “Using slaves” (p.68)  “To begin with they might capture people from local tribes to use as slaves on the farms. But the supply of local tribes didn’t last long. […] So when the settlers ran out of local people to use as slaves, they decided to go somewhere else to find new ones – Africa!” (p.68) |
| Elizabethan England (Hodder, 2016) | “The Spanish had rapidly defeated local peoples in Central and South America […]” (p.54)  “[…] John Hawkins made three voyages to the Caribbean, trading slaves he had captured […].” (p.56) |
| Restoration England (Hodder, 2016) | “trading in coffee, tobacco, furs, diamonds, silks, sugar and even people.” (p.55)  “Slave plantations in the Caribbean” (p.63)  “at the end of the period [….], Jamaica needed to import 10,000 slaves a year to maintain the sugar industry.” (p.63)  “plantation owners started to import huge numbers of slaves” (p.63) |
| Early Elizabethan England (Hodder, 2022) | “[…] John Hawkins was attacked […] while taking slaves to trade in the New World.” (p.63)  “Sailors […] had […] conquered lands and peoples, especially in Central and South America.” (p.93)  “The easiest way to make money was illegally selling goods to the Spanish colonies in the New World. A common item to sell was slaves from Africa.” (p.94)  Title of a textbox (each textbox on page presenting reasons for “Why was there so much overseas exploration during Elizabeth’s reign?”): “England had a ‘duty’ to civilise other cultures”. Within the textbox: “Elizabethan explorers believed that the Native Americans would benefit from being taught English culture, or being ‘civilised’.” (p.95)  “The native peoples of California thought that Drake was a god and gave him gifts of feathers and tobacco.” (p.101) |
| Early Elizabethan England (OUP, 2022) | “why did explorers like John Hawkins participate in the trade in enslaved Africans?” (p.78)  “Hawkins […] seized the enslaved African men and women on board.” (p.78)  “Hawkins made voyages to the west coast of Africa where he kidnapped hundreds of African men and women and transported them across the Atlantic, selling them as slaves.” (p.82) |
| African Kingdoms (OUP, 2023) | “[…] establishing forts on the coasts of Africa and South America so they could trade with local people.” (p.40)  “The Akan communities the Portuguese encountered […]” (p.77)  “[…] the Portuguese began to enslave Africans […]” (p.41)  “Some enslaved people were sold in Europe […]” (p.41)  Subheading: “The transatlantic trade in enslaved people” (p.57) |

**Appendix C:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Textbook** | **Direct explanation or acknowledgement of terminology use** |
| Renaissance, Revolution and Reformation (OUP, 2014) |  |
| Elizabethan England (Hodder, 2016) |  |
| Restoration England (Hodder, 2016) |  |
| Early Elizabethan England (Hodder, 2022) |  |
| Early Elizabethan England (OUP, 2022) | “At the time, the term ‘negro’ was used to describe Black people, but it is now considered out of date and offensive in many countries.” (p79) |
| African Kingdoms (OUP, 2023) | “You’ll notice that ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ are in quotation marks. For many years (and sometimes still today), European people referred to things that were familiar to them as developed or better, and things they knew little about as undeveloped or worse. We use the quotation marks to show that these ideas are incorrect.” (p.10)  “You’ll notice that ‘uncivilised’ is in quotation marks. […]” [repeats previous explanation] (p.40) |

**Appendix D:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Textbook** | **Portraits** |
| Renaissance, Revolution and Reformation (OUP, 2014) | John Cabot (p.65)  Sir Humphrey Gilbert (p.66) |
| Elizabethan England (Hodder, 2016) | Sir Francis Drake (p.57)  Sir Walter Raleigh (p.59) |
| Restoration England (Hodder, 2016) | Henry Morgan (p.62) |
| Early Elizabethan England (Hodder, 2022) | Francis Drake (p.101)  Sir Walter Raleigh (p.102) |
| Early Elizabethan England (OUP, 2022) | Archie Williams (p.82) |
| African Kingdoms (OUP, 2023) | Leo Africanus (p.40) |

**Appendix E:**

Examples of an ‘Earlier on…’ and ‘Meanwhile…’ textbox from *Early Elizabethan England* (OUP, 2022):

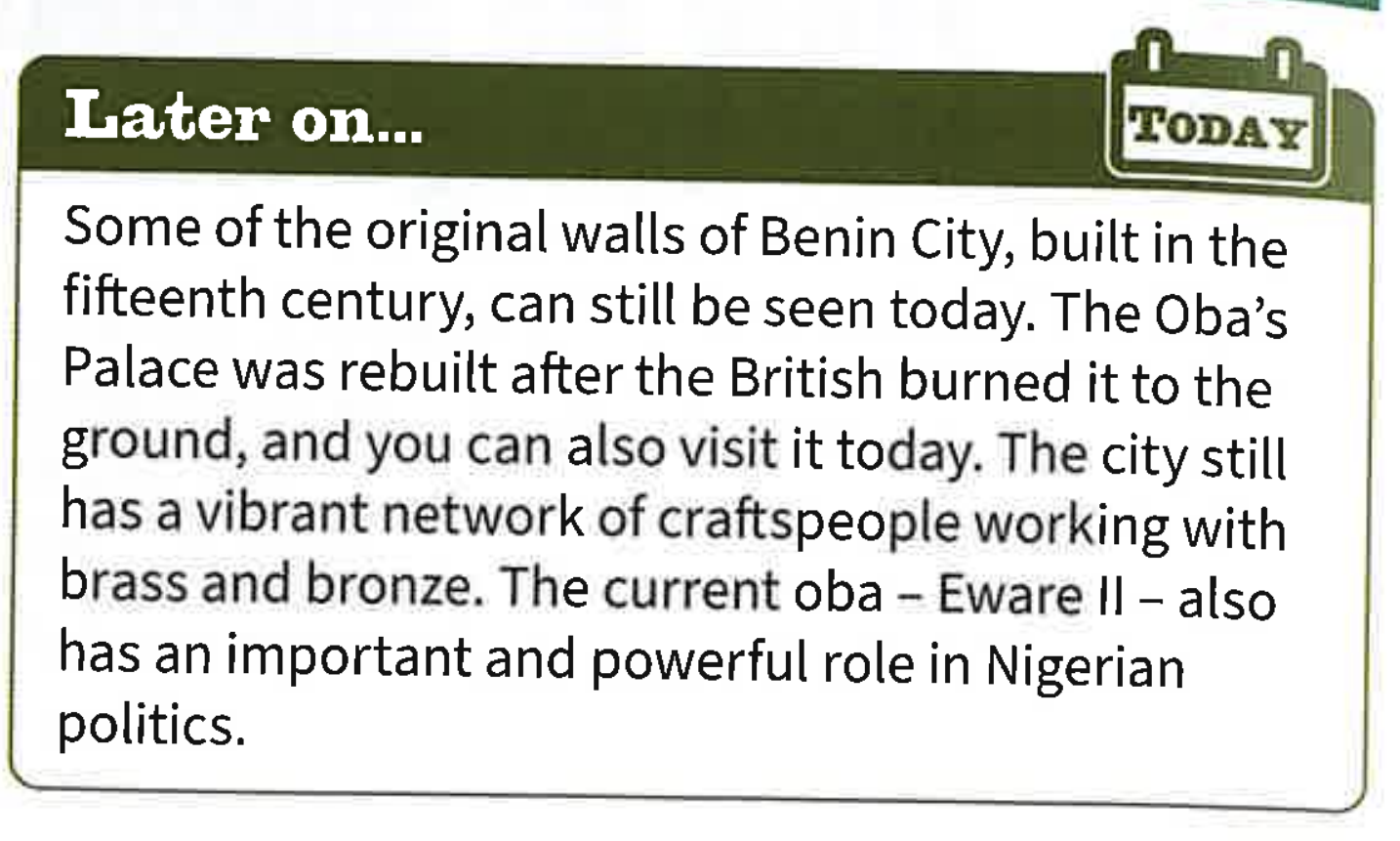
**A blue and white rectangular box with black text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**(p.78)

A close-up of a green and white sign

AI-generated content may be incorrect.(p.79)

Examples of ‘Later on…’ textboxes from *African Kingdoms* (OUP, 2023):

(p.59)

A close-up of a text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.(p.76)

1. Portrature is often inherently celebratory in nature, particularly when presented without critique or contextualisation. As Jordanava notes, portraits are “artefacts through which the present is recorded, celebrated, represented and disseminated” (2022:163). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)