



9

Developing a Reframed Curriculum for the UK: Who Were the Ancient Britons?

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Introduction

Minute by minute, hour by hour, when you lose your history you lose your power, so sharpen your eyes and tune your ear so you'll know what you see and understand what you hear.

This prophetic verse is taken from a poem by Listervelt Middleton titled *The Origin of Things* (2003). Take a walk around any gallery or museum today in Britain and you will find almost exclusively inaccurate images of Britain's nobility. Similarly, if you open-up any school textbook about history, the dominant images of Melanated Global Majority people throughout time are depictions of slaves, servants, or runaways.

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The primary conceptual and theoretical framework for this chapter is Afrocentricity (Asante, 2003; King & Swartz, 2018; Mazama, 2003), and Africana phenomenology (Fanon, 1967; Gordon, 2006; Henry, 2006), situated within a critical pedagogical lens. These integrated and interwoven lenses facilitate an understanding of how a change in social and learning behaviour can occur because of an increased understanding of learners' affective, conative, and cognitive domains (Boyle & Charles, 2014). Framed within a pathway to praxis, my reconceptualised teaching programme of *Reframed Units of Change* (Charles, 2019), addresses the issue of decolonising the curriculum for both learner and teacher to access and engage. This evidenced gateway to Black identity is rooted in cultural and historical achievements. The word 'black' is erroneously viewed within a paradigm of connotative linguistics that positions oneself outside of the human family (El Adwo, 2014; Tariq Bey, 2015). The Kemites (Egyptians) had only one term to designate themselves: KMT = Black. This is the strongest term existing in the Nesut Biti/Pharonic tongue to indicate Blackness. This word is the etymological origin of the well-known root Kemit (Obadele Kambon, 2019). Additionally, the term Black here, is used throughout denotatively as a scientific term as proposed by Moore (2002):

That the physiological origin of blackness or pigmentation is a result of melanocyte functioning. Since melanin is associated with the distribution of numerous types of cells to other destination sites in the body, it is apparent that there is a critical role for the *darkness* provided by melanin (pp. 23–24)

Barr et al. (1983) in their 139-page medical hypothesis paper entitled: *Melanin: The Organizing Molecule*, confirm: 'It (blackness) functions as the major organising molecule in living systems' (p. 1). In support to this, King (1993, online) provides a useful analogy:

If you can understand plant photosynthesis then you can understand human photosynthesis because chlorophyll is to the plant, as melanin is to the human- chloroplast cell is to the plant as melanocyte is to the human.

Therefore, throughout this discussion, the words Black, Melanated, and Melanated Global Majority within this paradigm will be used interchangeably. Thank you to Professor Gus John for his appellation Global Majority (John, 2006) to describe the majoritising status rather than the erroneous label of ‘minority’.

The goal of the research which is presented in this chapter, through intent and content (Nobles, 2010) is to alter the diminution of Black learner voice and learner behaviours; to raise their status as subjects with agency and power. ‘Genesis of Geometry’ was the specific unit of study from the *Reframed Units of Change* (Charles, 2019) that I taught to reinforce Black identity. Through extracts from a case study with children aged 7 and 8 years, I will argue in this chapter that the ‘Genesis of Geometry’ culture enables the reader/student to understand/innerstand and overstand that the original Britons were Black people (Al-Amin, 2014; Ali & Ali, 1992; MacRitchie, 1884a, 1884b; Martin, 1695; Massey, 1881; Thurnam, 1865; Von Fleischer, 2010). For example, the Silures of South Wales, the Picts of ancient Scotland, and the Tuatha de Danann throughout ancient Briton were all Black people (Rogers, 1952, 1980).

Notable Black writers, such as Ignatius Sancho (1729–1780) and Olaudah Equiano (1745–1797), are treated as isolated ‘exceptions’ but are nevertheless consistently framed within a slave narrative as formerly subjugated beings. This dominant narrative has created (and continues to create) in the minds of teachers, a narrative which they then pass onto their students (Charles, 2019, 2020). How accurate are these narratives? This ‘Single Story’ paradigm (see Kamfon, 2019) has raised concern about how conversations for learning about Black history are being framed in the national curriculum, media, and public spaces (Moncrieffe, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021; Olusoga, 2016).

Because of this context, children in the current schooling system are being taught within a culture of historical untruths. The multi-disciplinary scholar, historian, anthropologist, and physicist, Cheikh Anta Diop (1974, p. xiv) stated: ‘Our investigations have convinced us that the West has not been calm enough and objective enough to teach us our history correctly, without crude falsifications’. This claim was supported in speech given by John Henrik Clarke (Lecture, 1991) where he said:

If you expect the present-day school system to give history to you, you are dreaming. This, we must do ourselves. The Chinese didn't go out in the world and beg people to teach Chinese studies or let them teach Chinese studies. The Japanese didn't do that either. *People don't beg other people to restore their history: they do it themselves.*

This version of history that Dr Clarke raises is a system that operates within a *media res* framework, one which begins 'in the middle of things' such as slavery and ends with the Civil Rights Movement. Nowhere in the (UK or international) current national curriculum programmes are there any references to 'the Black migrations that settled the world...the Black people who founded the first cultures and civilisations of Africa, Europe, Australia, the Pacific Islands, and North and South America' (Dass, 2013a, pp. 12–13). Where in mainstream education are these Black foundational origins of culture, invention and discovery being taught based on enquiry, depth, and integrity? Therefore, to honour a Diopian legacy, which is 'to see the formation of bold research workers, allergic to complacency, [and] busy exploring ideas expressed in our work' (Diop, 1974, p. xiv), this chapter has been written to rescue, restore and reclaim Black history as indigenous settlers of the British Isles.

Historical Context: Where Did the First Human Beings Emerge?

We know that the first inhabitants of Britain and especially those of the northern parts were craniologically of a type approaching to the Negro or to the Australian race. (MacRitchie, 1884b, pp. 7–8)

The current schooling system teaches young children a dislocated, disconnected, and premature sense of chronology and geography. (Moncrieffe, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). For example, for both primary and secondary age students, the earliest starting point in their history subject syllabus is a timeline starting from the 'Stone Age to the Bronze Age' (DfE, 2013, p. 4). This arbitrary limitation forces several questions:

For example, whose Stone Age does this refer to? The inference being that there was only *one* Stone Age, and that its inception was static in one locale. Secondly, the UK history curriculum effectively disorients students and teachers by not grounding their spatial concepts in the region where the first human beings emerged on the planet. This disorientating premise creates not only a series of false conceptual baselines, but an inaccurate understanding of historical and geographical human migrations. Nowhere in the current UK curriculum content and planning does it state that human beings originated from Africa (Asante, 1999; Barashango, 1991; Bernal, 1987; Dass, 2013a, 2013b; Diop, 1974, 1991; Oppenheimer, 2004; Poe, 1997). Jackson (1994, p. 7) argues:

The distortions must be admitted. The hard fact is that most of what we call world history is only the history of the first and second rise of Europe. The Europeans are not yet willing to acknowledge that the world did not wait in darkness for them to bring the light.

The History of Africa Was Already Old When Europe Was Born

Indeed, Runnymede (see Alexander et al., 2015), the United Kingdom's leading 'think-tank' on 'race' has critiqued the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) in this regard:

Scope - that it artificially imposed barriers between 'British' and 'world' history and considered *the former in isolation from the latter*.

Content - that it flattened historical content and sacrificed depth to 'facts and dates' disengaged from critique and the recognition of multiple and contested histories, sources and chronologies. (Runnymede, 2015, p. 4)

Findings a report produced by the Royal Historical Society (2018, p. 7) state: 'The taught curriculum for secondary school pupils and

university undergraduate and postgraduate students fails to fully incorporate the *new, diverse histories* produced by UK and international researchers’.

The Department for Education (DfE, 2013, p. 1) asserts in its guidance that the purpose and study of history: ‘will help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain’s past and that of the wider world’. It should inspire pupils’ curiosity to know more about the past’. Surely, then, from that Department’s own statement of ‘high quality’ content there should be the connect to ‘a coherent knowledge of Britain and the wider world’? DfE (2013) in its guidance for teaching and learning omits any reference to the knowing that ‘Africans are the oldest group on the planet-meaning that the human species had originated there’ (Wells, 2002, p. 30).

In 1987, Rebecca Cann produced a ground-breaking study in which as part of her PhD work, she persuaded 147 pregnant women to donate their babies’ placentae to science. Cann, who trained in molecular biology, collected samples of human placentae (abundant source of mtDNA)¹ from different populations from Europe, New Guinea, Australia, and Asia. In her report Cann et al. (1987, p. 31) stated:

Mitochondrial DNAs from 147 people, drawn from five geographic locations have been analysed by restriction mapping. All these mitochondrial DNAs stem from one woman who is postulated to have lived about 200,000 years ago, probably in Africa.

Where in the teaching of formal curriculum history is the importance of ‘the journey we have taken as a species from our birthplace in Africa to the far corners of the world?’ (Wells, 2002, p. xiii). Why, is this content not being explicitly taught in schools, when genetics and the study of DNA prove an African genesis of humanity? The DfE (2013) statements for teaching successfully the subject of History include: ‘a

¹ ‘DNA is the code initials for deoxyribonucleic acid, the chemical of which genes are composed. Genes being the basic units of inheritance-which determines what a being will be. DNA is the hereditary material of living cells. Mitochondrial DNA is inherited only from the mother, and it functions as a cell’s powerhouse converting the chemical energy from food into a form which the cell can use’ (Barashango, 1998, p. 40).

quality content’ of history to ‘help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain’s past and that of the *wider world*?’ (p. 1, emphasis added). However, the aims and contents given by the document are framed by white British default position starting points only (see Moncrieffe, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021) Whiteness as a narcissistic positioning for knowing the past (Huidor & Cooper, 2010; Moncrieffe, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021) sees itself only as the entitled occupant of the intellectual space—the curriculum. Saha (2018, p. 7) recognises that ‘whiteness impairs the faculties...it is a set of structures so familiar they [the structures] are often not apparent to those who benefit from them’. This has been termed as ‘*The painful demise of Eurocentrism*’ and is the title of Asante’s (1999) book. In this, Asante argues: ‘Europe is no longer the definitional universal and the idea of race, first articulated by Europe, has come to be baggage that must be discarded’ (Asante, 1999, p. viii). Asante’s (1999) argument would expose DfE (2013) as presenting its history curriculum as ‘definitionally universal’. The language of DfE (2013) gives sanction to the false premise that Britain’s ‘white’ inhabitants have always been there as the first ancient civilisation.

A New Historiography of Experience: Afrocentricity and Africana Phenomenology

Wright and Counsell (2018) call for a ‘new scholarship that moves away from stereotypical problem-based themes and towards broader conceptions and considerations of black children’ (p. ix) (Asante, 1991; Henry, 2006). Wright and Counsell’s (2018) argument is necessarily framed within Asante’s (2009) new historiography of experience. In the pursuit of hidden histories that go beyond the starting point of black identity as slavery, this study is influenced by the work of Sullivan and Tuana’s (2007) ‘unknowledge(s)’ and the phenomena of concealed information. Sullivan and Tuana (2007) suggest ‘at times this takes the form of those at the centre refusing the marginalized to know’ (p. 1). Therefore, the concealed and hidden history of this nation (UK) requires a paradigm shift in seeing and knowing; a change in worldview (Kuhn, 2012). Afrocentricity is the paradigmatic shift required for seeing and knowing the

past and the origins of people of the British Isles within this. However, DfE (2013) curriculum directives and guidance ignore the locating this history (Figs. 9.1, 9.2).

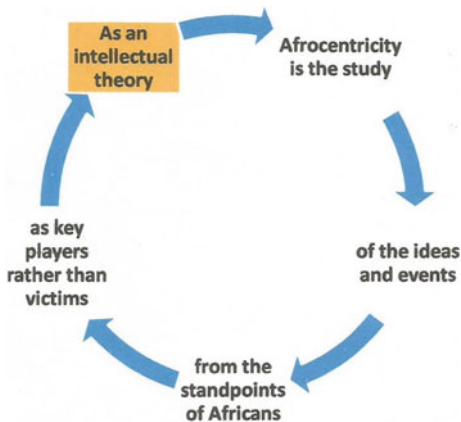


Fig. 9.1 Asante (1991, p. 172)

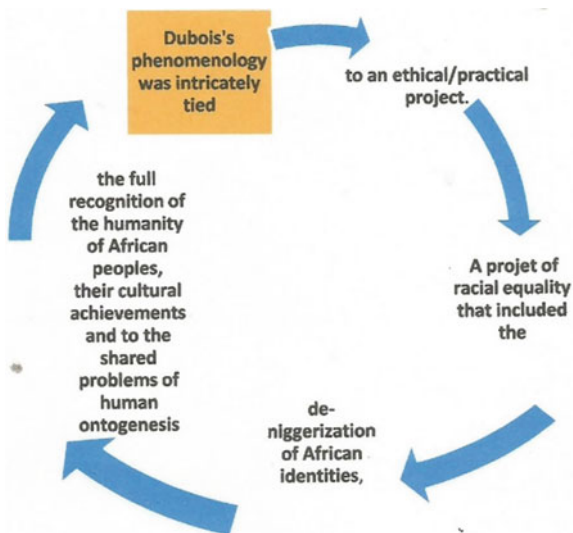


Fig. 9.2 Asante (1991, p. 172)

Consequently, children are not taught that the origins of writing began in Africa, and not Europe (Obenga, 2004). Similarly, the Phoenicians (Canaanites from Canan-Kin'anu), originally named Britain as: *Ba ra tanac* (Lemon, 1783) over three thousand years ago. Indeed, Roman author, Avienus writing in the fourth century AD describes the Phoenicians living in Britain and Ireland (Ali & Ali, 1992). The current UK school curriculum does not teach that the ancient geometric stone carvings found all over Britain, Scotland and Ireland have their etymon in Africa. For Masterman (1970, p.59) 'Paradigms are a puzzle-solving device...paradigm is a way of seeing'.

For more than 200 years, the anthropologists, archaeologists and historians have recorded in their works that the first people to inhabit the world were Black people: known as the Anu/Twa, the Khoi, the Diminutive Black People (DBP), and the seed people (Churchward, 1913; Dass, 2013a, 2013b).

Robert Munro was a Scottish physician and lecturer in anthropology and archaeology. In his work entitled: *Prehistoric Scotland and its place in European Civilization* he wrote:

The results of my first investigations into the physical characteristics of the earliest races of North Britain appeared to me sufficient to establish the fact that the Aryan nations *on their arrival, found the country in occupation of*² *allophylian races.* (Munro, 1899, p. 445)

Added to this, he stated:

With regard to the early ethnology of Western Europe, I have attempted to establish the truth of the two following propositions: (1) that during the Quaternary period [divided into two epochs: Pleistocene-2.588 million years ago to 11.7 thousand years ago] only dolichocephalic crania

² From the Greek *Allos* which means 'different' cognate with Latin *alius* = 'other.' *Phylon* is from the Greek which means 'tribe,' 'race'- a direct line of descent within a group; a group that constitutes or has the unity of a phylum (Merriam-Webster (nd) <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/phylum>) 'Allobroges- a people of S.E Gaul- a Celtic tribe occupying what is now Dauphine & Savoy' (O'Neil, 1913, p. 52). See *Moorish Britain* on the original inhabitants of Gaul- France, Belgium & Luxembourg in Charles & Boyle (2021, issue #2, MFIT Magazine, January).

have been met with and (2) that the first appearance of a brachycephalic people on the scene was contemporary with the rudimentary development of the Neolithic civilization in Europe. Of these the dolichocephalic were the oldest... (Munro, 1899, p. 444)

It is noteworthy, how the UK history school curriculum for Key Stages 1 & 2 (DfE, 2013) gives no attention to the original cultural groups or parent civilisation of people on the British Isles as described by Munro (1899). Instead, (DfE, 2013, p. 3) states that pupils should be taught about 'late Neolithic hunter-gathers and early farmers, example Skara Brae. Bronze Age religion technology and travel, for example Stonehenge'. The evidence of Melanated people in Skara Brae and of their construction of Stonehenge is conspicuously absent and placed within a premature timeline (Imhotep, 2021; MacRitchie, 1884a, 1884b). 'Stonehenge: Geological feature indicates the site was constructed at the end of the last Ice Age, 14,000 years ago' (Imhotep, 2021, p. 228). Evidence of Melanated people as the original people of the British Isles comes from Higgins (1836) in his two-volume treatise: *Anacalypsis: An attempt to draw aside the veil of the Saitic Isis or an inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions*. In this (Vol. 1, p. 286) he wrote:

We have found the black complexion or something relating to it whenever we have approached to the *origin of nations*. The Alma Mater, the Goddess Multimammia, the founders of the oracles, the Memnons or first idols were always black. Venus, Juno, Jupiter, Apollo, Bacchus, Hercules, Asteroth, Adonis, Horus, Apis, Osiris, Ammon, - in short, all the wood and stone Deities were black.

In addition to this, he adds:

I shall in the course of this work, produce a number of extraordinary facts, which will be quite sufficient to prove that a black race, in very early times, had more influence over the world than has been lately suspected. (Higgins, 1836, p. 51)

Massey (1881) produced his two-volume work: *A Book of the Beginnings. Egyptian Origines in the British Isles*. He writes (Vol. 1, p. 218)

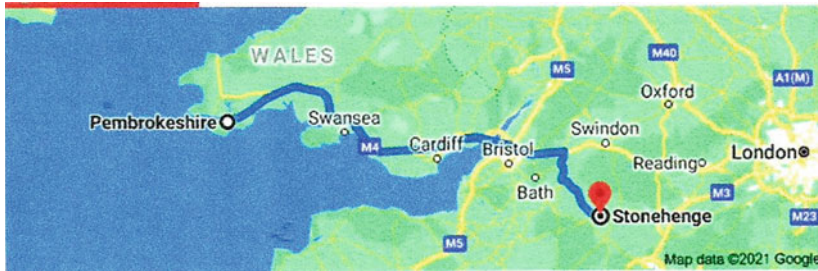


Fig. 9.3 Map shows the distance the ancient builders travelled in carrying the stones from Wales to Stonehenge

that Stonehenge was built by the Moors, namely Morien an Egyptian architect, or overseer through the root word MER (Fig. 9.3):

The MERE is the Mayor, and there is an English MER, a superintendent, prefect, overseer, or governor. An official called the MER governed the people of the quarries at Turuau, the mountain-quarry in Egypt. The MER was not only an overseer and superintendent, but an architect. The architects of the Egyptian Pharaohs, who were the royal sons and grandsons were called MER-KET. And we are told by the³Barddas Morion lifted the stone of the kettai. Morien is said to have been the architect of Stonehenge, Gwath Emrys, or the MUR Ior. MUR (e.g.) means the circle, as does the KETUI. KET (e.g.) denotes the builder, and the Kettai are the builders. MORIEN was the chief of the KETTAI. Now as a negro is still known as MORIEN in English, the language used appears to indicate that MORIEN belonged to the black race, the Kushite builders. (p. 218)

Massey describes the written evidence from a Welsh Manuscript (the land today known as Wales was occupied by Melanated Global Majority people over 33,000 years ago) and in 2019, geologists and archaeologists confirmed that ‘at least 42 of Stonehenge’s smaller stones, known

³ The Barddas of Iolo Morganwg is a collection of writings about ancient Welsh Bardic and Druidic beliefs. Although the author of this work is cited as J. Williams Ab Ithel, he was the editor, who pieced together from manuscripts written by Iolo Morganwg (1747–1826).

as ‘bluestones’ came from the Preseli hills in Pembrokeshire, West Wales’ (Andrei, 2019, p. 1).

The Reframed Units of Change Teaching Programme

The aim of this chapter is to understand the experience of a positivist, formative pedagogy using the *Reframed Units of Change* (Charles, 2019); and how this method can challenge the prevailing myth of Black Caribbean inferiority in learning and shape Black students’ perceptions of themselves as successful learners (Charles, 2019). Framing within a formative teaching and learning model provides the evidenced support necessary to ‘re-assemble a fractured self-consciousness within an educational setting that negates the affective, conative, and cognitive domains of Black learner identities’ (Charles, 2019, p. 732).

The *Reframed Units of Change* (Charles, 2019) has five units of study:

1. Genesis of Geometry.
2. People & Places.
3. Measurement: Order & Arrangement.
4. Artefacts as Evidence.
5. Language & Etymology of First World People.

In the case study presented below, in my role as Teacher/Researcher, I began laying the foundation of successful learning concepts with children through the ‘Genesis of Geometry’. The units of study comprise an integrated whole. However, I found that the dominant (White) culture of the school where the study took place became a barrier to commencing with a pure African episteme orientation. Below is a short extract taken from a lesson on Etymology shared as examples from a wider catalogue of lesson transcripts (Fig. 9.4).

Teacher/Researcher: Now, we have a lot to learn today and I’m going to introduce you to a new word, the Year 6 children had never heard of it before, and the word is called (begins to write it on the board) see if you can read it ‘Etymology’.

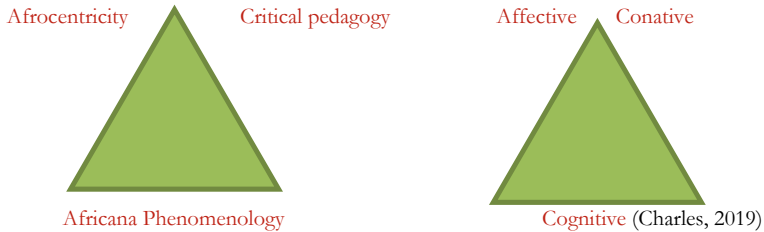


Fig. 9.4 Author's model demonstrates the importance of discursive spaces transforming into praxis. The learner is at the centre of planning, pedagogy, and correct historical content through Afrocentricity & phenomenology

Child 1: Etymology...but what about the question you asked us last week why would our ancestors do that? (Referring to the technology of creating microscopic carvings in ancient Kemet).

Teacher/Researcher: What a super memory you have, and we will come back to that later, thank you. Etymology, what does it mean?

Child 2: I 've heard of it, but I don't know what it means.

Child 1: Is it in the dictionary?

Researcher: Yes, it is...and it is the study and origin of words. So, when I say to you that the etymon of Egypt....

Child 1: So, it's the study of Egypt?

Teacher/Researcher: It is the study of the WORD Egypt.

Child 3: How the new name was created.

Teacher/Researcher: Excellent.

Child 4: Kemet.

Teacher/Researcher: Now before that, there was a place called Memphis or *Men-Nefer* which means 'built in perfection' and when the Greeks came into this land, they saw a beautiful temple called 'Hekuptah'

Child 1 and 2 (together): You mean it had three names?

Teacher/Researcher: So Hekuptah means 'spirit on the hill', and when the Greeks came upon this temple, they couldn't pronounce Hekuptah (researcher points to locations on Peter's Projection map) so they said (begins to write derivatives on board) '*Aegupotus*', then '*Aegopt* and finally *Egypt*.

Child 1: The took the 'g' and the 'p' but they didn't take the 'o' and the 'a'

Teacher/Researcher: Well spotted Menes!

Child 2: WOOOW!!

Teacher/Researcher: So, when we look at the etymon of word, the original names, this is very important because the original names will show you who the original people are.

Child 1: I get it now.

Teacher/Researcher: When we study etymology, we study the original word, and the etymon of Britain is *Baratanac*' (children echo the word). Thousands of years ago the Phoenicians named this land *Baratanac*. (Shows the group a picture of the Phoenicians and they all shout out lots of questions...the researcher writes *Phonics* and *Phoenicians* on the board) (Fig. 9.5).

The Phoenicians first named the British Isles as *Baratanac* (Lemon, 1783, p. 120). The name Phoenicians [descendants of the Canaanites] given to them by the 'Greeks, means dark-skinned' (De Beer, 1969, p. 21). *Ba* signifies the 'world-soul which exists within man and the universe' (Browder, 1992, p. 91). *Ra* is a Ntchr of light and victory of protection and of immeasurable power. He is the seen force of the universe manifested by the sun-the symbol used to describe energy. *Ra* is the energy that allows light to shine (Mfundishi, 2016, p. 129). *Anac* is of Hebrew derivation pronounced '*anas*' which means 'to insist-compel'



Fig. 9.5 Phoenician gilded bronze statuettes Source Photo credit: front cover *The Phoenicians* by Woolmer (2017) <https://www.gettyimages.com.au>

(Blue Letter Bible, n.d., p. 1). Additionally, *anac* contains the word *ana* a name like all other versions of the milk-giving mother she represented wealth or plenty and came to be synonymous with abundance (Walker, 1983, p. 122). The Tuatha de *Dananns* of ancient Ireland were black people and were also known as the tribes of *Ana*. The Irish scholar Marcus Keene (1867, p. 235) states: ‘The only historical references made to the colour of the Tuath-de-Danaans describe them as black.—‘The rusty large black youth’ Gobban Saer and his black race’ (p. 235). We also find in the Dogon language the word: *barankamaza* (Dorey, 2019, p. 4). Therefore, the ancient melanated cultures were tied etymologically to the origin and naming of Britain as *Ba ra tanac*.

Conclusion

Decolonising curriculum knowledge within a critical pedagogy facilitated the children’s understanding of language originates from an indigenous episteme. Extracts from my case study showing the introduction of etymology with its historical concepts of people, places and time to students aged 7 and 8 years old demonstrate not only their enthusiasm and attentiveness in the session, but equally the ability to comprehend and engage with complex concepts. Bey (2016) argues in his lecture presentation:

In the dictionaries they always refer to the Indo-European root when they look at the family tree of languages where are we in all of this?’ As mothers and fathers of the planet this sounds like linguistic apartheid to me. They separate us from the very language that we created.

In the transcript shared above, Child 1 articulated the observation of a sophisticated linguistic process called *umlaut*, a loss of vowels in words over time. The collective enthusiasm that the young children whom I worked with displayed when shown the original name *Baratanac* for Britain, and the image of the Phoenicians as the architects, and sound carriers of the alphabet shows pedagogy in decolonising curriculum knowledge. The Melanated faces of the Phoenicians not only decolonised

and reframed their phonics instruction but began the process of identifying and recognising root words e.g.⁴ *Phonetics—Phoenicians*. The transcribed extract above comes from a teaching and -learning session which generated a rich and in-depth longer narrative (see Charles, 2019; Charles & Boyle, 2020) which has been analysed and evaluated to provide direction to improved pathways for combining formative pedagogy with inclusive, affective domain-based teaching and learning to achieve the unapologetic education empowerment of Black children.

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⁴ The Sanskrit word 'bba'- to shine and 'bhas- to speak (Whitney, 1885, p. 110) show how the 'bh' phoneme was transliterated to the aspirated 'ph' Greek 'phono' sound and 'phone' voice. Notice how the modern idiom 'blah' 'blah' 'blah' has been transposed through epenthesis (addition of sounds) from its Sanskrita etymon (see *Language of the Gitanos*²Moorish Spain, Borrow, 1846), from the Sanskrit words *bhas* to speak and *bha* to shine.

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