

In light of the student-led call for the epistemological reappropriation of Berkeley's legacy within College, I am making this submission in order to offer evidentiary justification for the denaming of the Berkeley Library.

I make this submission in my role as Assistant Professor of Black Studies, Trinity College Dublin. I am a Co-Chair of College's Race, Ethnicity, Equality Working Group. I am a Black graduate, gaining BA, M.Phil, and PhD degrees in Trinity College Dublin, in English and Philosophy, Women's Studies, and Sociology respectively. My Nigerian father, Akinwale Olufemi Williams, came to study Medicine in 1955, and joined the teaching staff in College in 1964. He was, in his own words a lifelong 'sound Trinity man.' One of my children recently gained her BA in European Studies (First and Gold Medal), and my other child is currently studying in College. Thus, three generations of my family are embedded in the College.

Furthermore, I make this submission in the full knowledge that Trinity College Dublin in 2023 is a different institution than its 1978 incarnation that named the library. It possesses different institutional values and strategic goals, a more diverse staff and student composition, and access to a wider and more informed knowledge base. What links Trinity College Dublin in 2023 to its 1978 incarnation is that we remain a community of knowledge seekers. This imposes upon us the requirement that, while knowledge must be balanced with human sentiment, we must seek out knowledge. We must not rely on nostalgia, deference or allegiance. We are bound to ensure that the reputation of College is not attrited by the defence of hagiography posing as historiography, or by some perceived performative contrition. Knowledge is what binds us together in this process and knowledge is what must guide us through this process. Or as Berkeley would put it, '...we ought to think with the learned'¹.

Finally, I make this submission in full appreciation that there is precedent for this denaming process within College, and that this process is not alien to College as evidenced by the recent denaming of the Schrödinger Lecture Theatre, in early 2022. The process of denaming the Schrödinger Lecture Theatre has led to neither Schrödinger's erasure from history or a diminution of our appreciation of his intellectual stature and contributions, though we do question the character of the man himself. Equally, I note – though like Schrödinger's feline I am hesitant to verify my observation – that the process of denaming the Schrödinger Lecture Theatre has not led to any calls for Trinity College Dublin to be renamed or 'cancelled'². I also note that the process of successfully denaming the Schrödinger Lecture Theatre has not stopped contemporary³ violence of a sexual nature towards young women and children, though I hazard that the denaming process did not have this as its purpose.

¹ George Berkeley. *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1734), at LI.

² Tweet from user @fmcomment to author:

'Historically trite. What dissent existed in Berkeley's time was peripheral. Died century before abolition. Why not cancel TCD itself? Created as a discriminatory bastion of ascendancy and grew rich and influential on back of slavery and empire? Nonsense presentism.' <https://twitter.com/fmcomment/status/1618641329759883271>

³ Tweet from user @drsjcostello:

'The height of militant wokeism, the perfidious cult of perfectionism, ahistorical revisionism, and cancel culture: Trinity College consider erasing philosopher George Berkeley's name

While the above is written in a discernibly flippant manner in response to such tweets, I hope to impress upon the Working Group that much that passes for debate about Berkeley's legacy is not really a debate about history, being more about deference than the dialectical. It tends towards complacency about the lives of Black people masquerading as history, a history in which the Black voice is largely trivial and mainly irrelevant to any consideration of said legacy.

This submission will take the form of sections 1-3 presenting the case against Berkeley. Using a Black Studies framework, it will consider the significance of laying the charge against Berkeley in relation to his involvement in the enslavement of others and his ideological support for the system of enslaving others.

Sections 4-6 will address the three common defences that are advanced to immunise Berkeley from his actions, namely that he was a man of his times, that his endorsement of slavery arose from Christian belief and is therefore a manifestation of excusable missionary zeal (this is a modified version of the man of his times argument), and lastly that the attempt to dename the library risks the devaluation/diminution/erasure of Berkeley's intellectual contributions, stature and brand.

I will conclude my submission by framing my thoughts in relation to the following hypothetical: would the naming committee in 1978 have considered Berkeley as a suitable candidate had the significance of his involvement in the enslavement of others and his ideological support for the system of enslaving others been adequately understood?

1) Berkeley's enslavement of others

As part of the debate about denaming the library, the knowledge of Berkeley's involvement in the enslavement of others and his ideological support for the slave system is well established.⁴ I would like to acknowledge the informed expertise and analysis of the Trinity Colonial Legacies Project and the commitment shown by Drs. Ciaran O'Neill, Patrick Walsh and Mobeen Hussain to historical accuracy in their work on Berkeley. I am also grateful to a large body of scholarship of Black Atlantic

from library due to his slave-owning. This will do nothing to stop contemporary racial prejudice.' <https://twitter.com/drsjcostello/status/1616865164157935616>

⁴ Though my submission will focus on the plight of Black bodies, the Trinity Colonial Legacies Project has drawn College's attention to his plan to Christianise indigenous Americans at his proposed college in Bermuda which would have required kidnap:

'The young Americans necessary for this Purpose, may in the Beginning be procured, either by peaceable Methods from those savage Nations, which border on our Colonies, and are in Friendship with us, or by taking captive the Children of our Enemies.' George Berkeley, *A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in Our Foreign Plantations, and for Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity* (London: H. Woodfall, 1724), 8-9.

Also see A.A. Luce, 'Berkeley's Bermuda Project and His Benefactions to American Universities, with Unpublished Letters and Extracts from the Egmont Papers.' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, vol. 42, 1934, 97-120; A.A. Luce, *The Life of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1949); and Costica Bradatan, *The Other Bishop Berkeley: An Exercise in Reenchantment* (NY: Fordham University Press, 2007), 146-172; and Travis Glasson, 'Baptism doth not bestow freedom: missionary Anglicanism, slavery and the Yorke-Talbot opinion, 1701-30', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 67(2), 2010, 279-318, 295.

Studies, and in particular to African American Slavery Studies, which detail the experiences of the enslaved.⁵

The knowledge of Berkeley being a slave-owner is a matter of long-standing record.

‘On the parish records of Trinity Church of June 11, 1731, may be found the names of Philip Berkeley, Anthony Berkeley, and Agnes Berkeley his own Negroes received into the church. Still later he procured from his Majesty’s attorney and solicitor-general an opinion in favor of the reception of Negroes in the church and had it distributed throughout the plantations.’⁶

‘On 4 October 1730, Berkeley paid £80 to one Simon Pease in order to purchase a Negro named Philip, aged about fourteen, and three days later he paid William Coddington £86 for Edward, also known as Anthony, a Negro of about twenty years of age. Around this same time he apparently also bought a female slave called Agnes, although the exact details of this transaction have been lost.’⁷

Such knowledge amply predates the naming of the library in College. Alexander Campbell Fraser’s 1871 *Life and Letters of George Berkeley*⁸ references it and observes that ‘slavery produced festivity’ for Berkeley and his fellow slave-owners.⁹ Hone and Rossi’s 1931 *Bishop Berkeley: His Life, Writings, and Philosophy*¹⁰ references it.

John Wild’s 1936 study, *George Berkeley: A Study of His Life and Philosophy*,¹¹ observes that:

‘Berkeley was very careful to have his own slaves baptized. See Annals of Trinity Church, p. 51. ‘On the eleventh of June of this year, Dean Berkeley baptized three of his negroes, Philip, Anthony, and Agnes Berkeley.’¹²

In *The Journal of Negro History*, Wylie Sypher pointed out that Berkeley ‘own[ed] slaves on his Rhode Island estate.’¹³

Within Trinity College Dublin, the renowned Berkeleian scholar, Arthur Aston Luce, extolled Berkeley. I note that in a review of Tom Jones’ 2021 *George Berkeley: A Philosophical Life*,¹⁴ ‘the most substantial book-length treatment of the philosopher’s

⁵ See **Appendix 1**.

⁶ Benjamin Rand, *Berkeley’s American Sojourn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 28.

⁷ Carole Fabricant. George Berkeley the Islander: Some Reflections on Utopia, Race, and Tar-Water. In *The Global Eighteenth Century*, (ed. Felicity Nussbaum), (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 263-278, 269.

⁸ Alexander Campbell Fraser, *Life and Letters of George Berkeley* (in 4 volumes) (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1871).

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol 1, 158.

¹⁰ J. M. Hone and M. M. Rossi, *Bishop Berkeley: His Life, Writings, and Philosophy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1931).

¹¹ John Wild, *George Berkeley: A Study of His Life and Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936).

¹² *Ibid.*, 323.

¹³ Wylie Sypher, ‘Hutcheson and the ‘Classical’ Theory of Slavery.’ *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1939, 263–80, 280.

¹⁴ Tom Jones, *George Berkeley: A Philosophical Life* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2021).

life and thought since the publication of AA Luce's *The Life of George Berkeley* in 1949,¹⁵ the reviewer notes that

‘Luce, [was] probably the most prolific and influential Berkeley scholar of the twentieth century, was more concerned in this work with the events of Berkeley’s life than with the intricacies of his thought.’¹⁶

And yet, Luce limited his examination of the fact of enslaving Black bodies to a mere footnote in his otherwise detailed account of Berkeley’s life,

‘Berkeley’s own slaves, whose indentures are among the Berkeley Papers in the British Museum, were baptized by him.’¹⁷

2) Epistemological ignorance and the enslavement of human beings

Before examining Berkeley’s central role in helping to establish the particularly virulent form of slavery that came to characterise the institution in the US (large-scale, hereditary, and race-restricted), I should like to unpack the epistemological ignorance that is evident in the scanty acknowledge of Berkeley’s enslavement of human beings outlined above as it speaks to the matters of power and privilege.

The quotation below, taken from a 2020 study of Berkeley by Margaret Atherton, in the Blackwell Great Minds series (edited by Steven Nadler), also deals with the issue of Berkeley as a slave-owner in a similarly superficial manner (a mere footnote) and introduces the most common justification for Berkeley’s slave-ownership, namely he was simply a man of his times (which I will address in section 4 below):

‘fn 8. It is undeniable that Berkeley’s attitudes towards those of other races than his own was that of a man of his times. Thus we find that Berkeley, described by Alexander Pope as having ‘every virtue under heaven,’ owned three African slaves while in Newport, and was much praised for insisting that these slaves be baptized.’¹⁸

Leaving aside the possibility that Berkeley may have bought or owned more than three enslaved people,¹⁹ and may have returned enslaved people to Ireland,²⁰ this is a level of epistemological ignorance that borders on disregard and obfuscation when it comes to considering the true import of the enslavement of African bodies as part of any consideration of Berkeley the man.

By the application of a Black Studies framework, an intellectually detailed examination of this aspect of Berkeley’s life in Rhode Island would highlight that as a slave-owner, Berkeley was by definition one who profited directly, and not at a remove, from the practice of enslaving Black bodies.

¹⁵ <https://drb.ie/articles/against-the-tide-2/>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Luce, 1949, 155.

¹⁸ Margaret Atherton, *Berkeley* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), 22.

¹⁹ <http://www.yaleslavery.org/Endowments/e2schol.html>.

²⁰ Patrick Kelly, ‘Berkeley’s Servants’, *Berkeley Newsletter*, 14 (1995–1996), 13–14.

There is ample literature on what being an enslaved Black body working on a plantation such as Berkeley's Whitehall entailed, and while space permits no more than a brief overview, it is worth examining some of this experience as it gets little or no mention in much of this debate.

From the ample literature on the slave experience²¹ the deportation, through kidnapping, from their home in Africa to the plantations in the US, called the Middle Passage, was one of abominable horror. For the captive Africans aboard a slave ship, the voyage to the New World was a passage of nearly unimaginable horror. For most captives, the separation from their villages and families was still fresh, and now they were thrust into a hostile and alien world, at the mercy of people who were like none they had ever seen before. Upon boarding, they were stripped of their belongings, branded, chained, and sent below decks, where they would be forced to remain for most of the months-long journey.

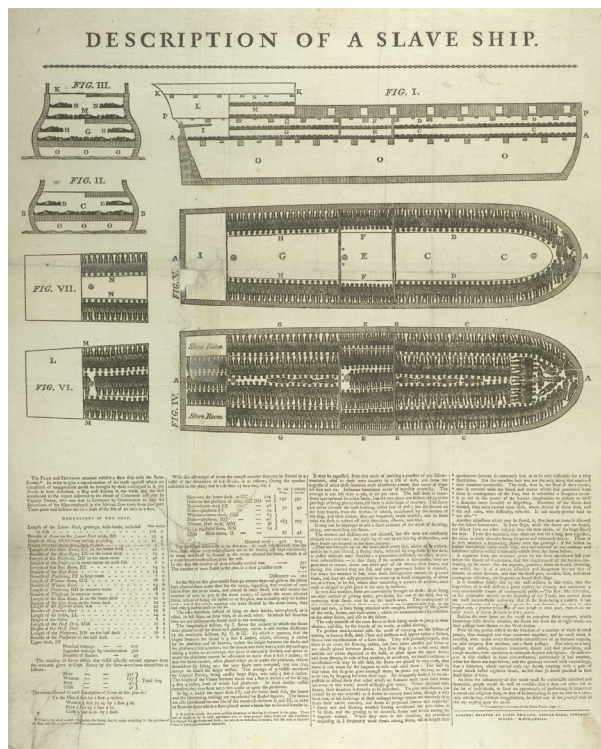


Diagram of the 'Brookes' slave ship c.1801

To the slave traders, these human beings were cargo, and slave ships were especially designed to transport as many captives as possible, with little regard for either their health or their humanity. Deaths from suffocation, malnutrition, and disease were routine, as were arbitrary torture, sexual assault and murder by the crew. The closeness, the filth, and the fear delivered many into madness, and suicide attempts were common. Other ships could smell slavers from far away, Portuguese sailors called them *tumbeiros* (or floating tombs), and it has been claimed that Atlantic Sharks changed their migratory patterns due to the number of corpses being thrown

²¹ See Appendix 1.

overboard.²² Those who were not killed by conditions on board were often permanently disabled by beatings or disease. Many slave captains threw sick or injured Africans overboard so that their losses would be covered by insurance.²³

Olaudah Equiano described his journey in this manner:

‘The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us... This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.’²⁴

Though they were shackled, sickened, and outnumbered, captive Africans frequently fought back against their tormentors. On more than 300 voyages, the captives on the slave deck attempted to overthrow the crew, and in several cases they triumphed. In 1839, the victorious Africans on the slave ship *La Amistad* even succeeded in sailing the ship into port and, eventually returned home in freedom.²⁵

Colonists believed that the enslaved Africans needed to be ‘seasoned,’ sometimes over a number of years, to habituate them to the new disease environment and to plantation labour.

‘[the Africans are] of so savage a disposition’ that they ‘scarcely differ from the wild beasts of the wood.’ ‘Such men must be managed at first as if they were beasts; they must be tamed, before they can be treated like men.’²⁶

Once seasoned in special camps,²⁷ the enslaved were placed on the auction block.²⁸

The threat of suicide by enslaved people was particularly acute during the initial years of enslavement, as they were discharged from ships, dispersed to plantations and cities, and confronted new world labour regimes. Once on American ground, routine features of slavery - labour regimes, anomic isolation, the renewal of separation from

²² Marcus Rediker, ‘History from below the water line: Sharks and the Atlantic slave trade,’ *Atlantic Studies*, 2008, 5:2, 285-297.

²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/jan/19/the-story-of-the-zong-slave-ship-a-mass-masquerading-as-an-insurance-claim>. see also James Walvin, *The Zong A Massacre, the Law and the End of Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); and Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999).

²⁴ <https://www.brycchancarey.com/equiano/extract3.htm>.

²⁵ Marcus Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*. (New York: Viking, 2012).

²⁶ Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of that Island: with Reflections on its Situation, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), Vol II, 461.

²⁷ Nicholas Radburn. ‘[M]anaged at First as if They Were Beasts’: The Seasoning of Enslaved Africans in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica. *Journal of Global Slavery*. (2021), 6. 11-30.

²⁸ Jerome S. Handler, ‘Survivors of the Middle Passage: Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in British America,’ *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 1 (2002): 25-56.

shipmates, multiple sales, sexual coercion, corporal punishment, and even the English criminal justice system - also shaped enslaved peoples' deaths by suicide.²⁹

Once bought by people like Berkeley the enslaved person was forced to perform gruelling labour, subjected to mental and physical degradation, and denied their most basic rights. Enslaved men and women could be beaten mercilessly (as is documented in the diary of Berkeley's friend and neighbour, Rev. James MacSparran, another Irish clergyman who served as rector of the Narragansett parish, who details how he cruelly tortured one of his enslaved people),³⁰ separated from loved ones arbitrarily, and, regardless of gender, treated as property in the eyes of the law.

On small plantations with few slaves, women were more likely to perform the same labour as men and rather than contributing to the nourishment of their families were forced to contribute to the commercial production of their masters. In Africa, woman's primary social role was that of mother. In slavery, this aspect of African womanhood was debased. Whereas childbirth in Africa was a rite of passage for women that earned them increased respect, within the American plantation system that developed by the eighteenth century, it was an economic advantage for the master, who multiplied his labour force through slave pregnancy. The average enslaved woman at this time gave birth to her first child at nineteen years old, and thereafter, bore one child every two and a half years.

²⁹ Terri L. Snyder, 'Suicide and Seasoning in British American Plantations.' In *The Power to Die: Slavery and Suicide in British North America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 46-63.

³⁰ James MacSparran, *A Letter Book and Abstract of Out Services Written During the Years 1743-1751*, edited by Daniel Goodwin (Boston: D. B. Updike, Merrymount Press, 1899), 52.

'got up this morning early, and finding Hannibal had been out [...] I stript and gave him a few Lashes till he begged. As Harry was untying him, my poor passionate dear, saying I had not given him eno', gave him a lash or two, upon wch he ran, and Harry after him as far as William Brown's. As ey were returning he slipt from Harry naked as he was above ye waist. Peter and Harry found [him] toward night at Block Island Henry Gardiner's, bro't him Home, and then carried him to Duglasse's where he had wt is called Pothooks put about his Neck.'

3) Berkeley's ideological support for the slave system

The involvement of the 'Good Bishop' in the practice of enslaving other people of his time was more pernicious than simply owning and profiting from the enslaved Black body. Berkeley played a significant role in soliciting and publicising the 1729 Yorke-Talbot Opinion that came to operate as a bulwark for slavery around the British Empire³². Yorke-Talbot was the most significant development in the legal history of slavery since the first slave code of Barbados in 1661.³³

The opinion was simply a response to a petition by private merchants, with Yorke and Talbot scribbling their response in Lincoln's Inn Hall over supper, not an official decision by a court of record. At its core, it was an opinion by self-interested slave-owners that slavery could exist throughout the British Empire, including in England – something that had been outlawed by a national synod at Westminster in 1102 and in the judgments of Sir John Holt several decades earlier. It decoupled Christianity and freedom by ruling that baptism would not 'make any alteration in [a slave's] temporal condition' in Great Britain.³⁴

The Opinion protected slavery within English law in an unprecedented way, and at a time when plantation economies were growing throughout the empire.³⁵

³² Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 15.

³³ Nicholas G. Leah, *Confronting the Yorke-Talbot Slavery Opinion and its legacy within English law*, Gatehouse Chambers, 1 Lady Hale Gate, Gray's Inn, London, 2021.

³⁴ Travis Glasson, 'Baptism doth not bestow freedom: missionary Anglicanism, slavery and the Yorke-Talbot opinion, 1701-30', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 67(2), 2010, 279-318.

³⁵ John N. Blanton, *This Species of Property: Slavery and the Properties of Subjecthood in Anglo-American Law and Politics, 1619-1783*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, The City University of New York, 2016, 389:

'...[Yorke-Talbot] established slave property as an extraterritorial right. Unlike earlier decisions, the Yorke-Talbot opinion implied that, once established, property claims to slaves would adhere throughout the empire and would not be 'determined or varied' by passage through local jurisdictions. Furthermore, since it was irrelevant whether the slave entered England 'with or without his master,' and since masters could 'legally compel [slaves] to return to the plantations,' the Yorke-Talbot opinion essentially created an imperial fugitive slave law. Defined only as rightless articles of property, and protected as such throughout the empire, slaves could no longer hope to gain their freedom in English courts as some had done a generation earlier. The potential for emancipation through Christianization was closely linked to this question of the extraterritorial reach of slave property, and the Yorke-Talbot opinion sought to close off any possibility of emancipation through baptism. Though already closed in the plantation colonies, this window had been left open a crack by the King's Bench decision in *Butts v. Penny* and opened more fully by the Holt court.'

4). Defences raised #1: The man of his times argument

Berkeley's role in profiting from the enslavement of others and his ideological support for the system of enslaving others (ss.(1) and (3) above) are acknowledged even by those who support the retention of his name on the library.

Yet, in the same breath that acknowledges this to be wrong, many who defend Berkeley argue that because he was a man of his times, he should not be blamed. He simply could not have known better given the moral standards of his day. His views, considered abhorrent today, were not unusual at the time. A man considered to be exceptional amongst his peers for his intellect is somehow also to be considered to be no more than one of the masses. Berkeley is simultaneously exceptional yet wholly mundane, and little better than the masses that made up early 18th society.

In imposing a temporal argument, rather than a moral one, it seeks to mitigate culpability rather than erase it.

However, the man of his times argument is demonstrably ahistorical. And profoundly in error.

There are usually three components to the man of his times argument, which we can summarise as follows:

- a) **Commonality of belief:** everyone thought like him.
- b) **No true intellectual or written dissent:** racial power and privilege play a significant part in defending Berkeley as the Black voice is dismissed.
- c) **No comparable intellectual dissent:** dissent having been shown to exist is rejected as it does not stem from a comparable intellect.

a) Commonality of belief

We are all of our time, and hold certain views and world beliefs while simultaneously being aware of opposing views. I am aware that submissions will be received which will disagree with what I write here.

Similarly, many people of Berkeley's time held different views. There were many people who believed that enslavement was wrong.

It seems incredible to have to state it, but enslaved people believed it was wrong. They revealed their moral dissent through constant rebellion and flight. As Henry Louis Gates has argued, 'The slave, by definition, possessed at most a liminal status within the human community. To read and write was to transgress this nebulous realm of liminality'³⁶. Consequently, their voices and intellects were manifested through action.

The historian Herbert Aptheker defines in his 1943 *American Negro Slave Revolts*, a slave revolt is an action involving ten or more slaves, with 'freedom as the apparent aim [and] contemporary references labelling the event as an uprising, plot, insurrection, or the equivalent of these.'³⁷ In all, Aptheker says, he 'found records of

³⁶ Gates, 1988, 128.

³⁷ Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (NY: Columbia University Press. 1943), 113.

approximately two hundred and fifty revolts and conspiracies in the history of American Negro slavery.³⁸ More recent historians have identified 313.³⁹

While space does not permit us to address the many rebellions that occurred before Berkeley set foot in Rhode Island (for example the New York Slave Revolt of 1712⁴⁰), it is germane to consider the ferocity of an action such as the 1739 Stono Rebellion, which was the largest slave revolt ever staged in the 13 colonies, as it is stark testimony to the hatred of slavery and the desire for freedom on the part of those enslaved. Many members of the group who rebelled were seasoned soldiers, either veterans of the Yamasee War (1715-17) or from their tribal experiences in Angola, where they were captured and sold, and had been trained in the use of weapons. Their intention was to march through the colony toward St. Augustine, Florida., where under Spanish law, they would be free. However, their hatred for their enslavement side-tracked them and they began to kill their English slave-owners. The insurrectionists soon numbered about 100. They paraded down King's Highway, according to sources, carrying banners and shouting, 'Lukango' in their native Kikongo, a word that would have expressed the English ideals embodied in liberty and, perhaps, salvation. The enslaved fought off the English for more than a week before the colonists rallied and killed them.

In June 1730, at the very time Berkeley was writing from Newport to various correspondents, reaffirming his opinion that Bermuda was indeed 'the proper place' to establish his utopia,⁴¹ an enslaved woman on that island was being burned at the stake for allegedly plotting to poison the members of the affluent white family for whom she worked. The notorious Sarah Bassett trial and execution—with its threat of black resistance to white oppression—gave immediate rise to legislation directed at tightening control over 'Negroes, Indians, Mulattoes, and other Slaves,' and ensuring that Bermudan slave-owners would be protected from punishment for killing an enslaved person, who was described as 'no otherwise valued or esteemed amongst us than as our Goods and Chattels or other personal Estates.'⁴²

Large-scale (ten or more slaves) slave revolts such as this were replicated on a smaller scale throughout the colonies, evidenced in the frequent records of murdered slave-owners by both male and female enslaved persons.⁴³ Men and women resisted the injustice of their enslavement by refusing to have children, or by aborting fetuses or murdering new born infants.⁴⁴

It is important to note that even before travelling to Rhode Island, Berkeley would have been exposed to written evidence of this desire on the part of the enslaved Black

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ <http://slaverebellion.org/>

⁴⁰ See Ferenc M. Szasz, 'The New York Slave Revolt of 1741: A ReExamination, *New York History*, 1967, XLVIII, 215-230; and Joel G. Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Louisiana* (Louisiana Historical Association, 1963).

⁴¹ George Berkeley, *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, 9 vols. (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948-57), vol. 8, 210.

⁴² Fabricant, 2003, 270.

⁴³ A.C. Myers, "'Sisters in Arms': Slave Women's Resistance to Slavery in the United States', *Past Imperfect*, Vol. 5 (1996), 141-174.

⁴⁴ L.M. Perrin, 'Resisting Reproduction: Reconsidering Slave Reproduction in the Old South', *Journal of American Studies*, 35:2 (2001), 255-274.

body to escape their white enslavers. William Hart, in his 'Africans in Eighteenth-Century Ireland'⁴⁵ details the frequent appearance of notices in the most popular press discussing the flight of Black enslaved people, and concludes that from the newspaper record: 'There is no disguising the existence of slavery in Ireland.'⁴⁶

The desire to flee such enslavement was so prevalent amongst Black bodies throughout the entire span of slavery as an institution, that in May, 1851, Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright, a Louisiana physician, published a paper entitled, 'Report On The Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro race.' The paper appeared in *The New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal*, a reputable scholarly publication of the time. Cartwright claimed to have discovered two new diseases peculiar to Blacks that he believed justified enslavement as a therapeutic necessity for the enslaved and as a medical and moral responsibility for their white masters. He claimed that Blacks who fled slavery suffered from *drapetomania*. In his words:

'A runaway slave is mania mad or crazy. It is unknown to our medical authorities, although its diagnostic symptoms be absconding from service, is well known to our planters and overseers. In noticing a disease that, therefore, is hitherto classed among the long list of maladies that man is subject to, it was necessary to have a new term to express it. The cause in most cases that induces the Negro to run away from service is as much a disease of the mind as any other species of mental alienation, and much more curable as a general rule. With the advantages of proper medical advice strictly followed, this troublesome practice that **many Negroes** [*emphasis mine*] have of running away can be almost entirely prevented, although the slaves are located on the borders of a free state within a stone's throw of abolitionists.'⁴⁷

Cartwright went on to argue that *drapetomania* could be prevented by 'beating the devil out of them.'⁴⁸ Amputation of the toes was also suggested.

Cartwright also described another mental disorder, *Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*, to explain the apparent lack of work ethic exhibited by many enslaved. The diagnosable symptoms included disobedience, insolence, and refusing to work. Cartwright suggested as remedy 'Put the patient to some hard kind of work in the open air and sunshine,' under the watchful eye of a white man.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ W.A. Hart, 'Africans in Eighteenth-Century Ireland.' *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 33, no. 129, 2002, 19-32.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁷ Ferris State University Jim Crow Museum, <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/question/2005/november.htm>.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

b) No true intellectual or written dissent

In addition to this record of the enslaved's moral and physical dissent to the practice of slavery in the form of these historical artefacts, we can rely on the writings of freed Black people who wrote most eloquently on why they believed the practice of enslaving the Black body was morally wrong.⁵⁰ Some near contemporaries of Berkeley such as Nzima Antonius Wilhelm Amo (1703-59), Ignatius Sancho (1729–80), Olaudah Equiano (1745-97),⁵¹ Phillis Wheatley (1753–84),⁵² and Ottobah Cugoano (1757–91)⁵³ found a wide readership for their moral dissent in print.

For example, the African philosopher Amo's intelligence was such that even as an enslaved child he was recognised as exceptional. He was gifted to and then raised by the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. He became the first black African to successfully publicly defend a doctorate in philosophy and letters from a German university (University of Wittenberg), *On the Impassivity of the Human Mind [De Humanae Mentis Apatheia]* in 1734, and taught in the Universities of Wittenburg, Halle (where a statue of him stands), and Jena. Reportedly a master of six languages, he published in 1738, in Latin, his *Treatise on the Art of Philosophizing Soberly and Accurately [Tractatus de Arte Sobrie et Accurate Philosophandi]*, and also wrote the first document on the rights of Black people in Europe.⁵⁴

Racial power and privilege within the academy may dismiss these historical records and not accord the Black written voice the same weight as that of the 'Good Bishop.' But the historical record is replete with the writings and recorded actions of many white religious contemporaries⁵⁵ of Berkeley who believed it to be wrong, such as

⁵⁰ Narration of lives in bondage, write Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates Jr. of the early narratives, 'arose response to and refutation of claims that blacks could not write.' US slave narrative, they argue, 'represents the attempts of blacks to write themselves into being.' Narratives were carefully crafted, Gates notes, because 'each author knew that all black slaves would be judged on this published evidence provided by one of their number.' Narration of experience was a mutual project, 'a communal utterance, a collective tale,' and lay at the origin of the US African American literary tradition. Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates, eds., *The Slave's Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), xi-xxxii.

There exists a significant body of writing which captures the voice of the enslaved during the long 18th century (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_eighteenth_century). See **Appendix 1** for a non-exhaustive listing of works which remove the liminality of the voice of the enslaved Black body from before, during and post Berkeley's sojourn in Rhode Island, and convey in their words, the knowledge that slavery was morally reprehensible.

⁵¹ Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*, ed. Vincent Carretta (New York: Penguin, 1995). See also Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self made Man* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005).

⁵² William H. Robinson, *Phillis Wheatley: A Bio-Bibliography* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1981), 143-152 (for the years 1766-9). For the poem 'On Being Brought from Africa to America', see Julian D. Mason (ed.), *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 7.

⁵³ Especially, Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Commerce of the Human Species, Humbly Submitted by Ottobah Cugoano, a Native of Africa* (London, 1787).

⁵⁴ Interestingly enough, his intellect did not seem to protect him from racial discrimination and he returned to Africa in 1746 and lived the remainder of his life in the Dutch coastal fortress of Chama, see Jacob Emmanuel Mabe *Anton Wilhelm Amo: the intercultural background of his philosophy*, Nordhausen, 2007.

⁵⁵ And even earlier. Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484-1566), for example, was a Spanish missionary and historian who became the first European intellectual to oppose the enslavement of indigenous inhabitants in the New World. He argued that they were rational beings, not lacking in sufficient reason to govern themselves.

Bartolome de Albornoz (1519-73), Samuel Gorton (1593–1677), Roger Williams (1603-83), Francis Pastorius (1651-1720) Samuel Sewall (1652–1730), Benjamin Lay (1682–1759), and Anthony Benezet (1713–1784).

The comparison between Berkeley and a contemporary from the above list, Benjamin Lay is stark and deserving of comparison as Lay, too, was a man of the same times as Berkeley.

An Anglo-American Quaker humanitarian and abolitionist, he is best known for his early and strident anti-slavery activities which would culminate in dramatic protests. He was also an author, farmer, vegetarian, and was distinguished by his early concern for the ethical treatment of animals. He published several pamphlets on social causes during his lifetime, and one book—*All Slave-Keepers That Keep the Innocent in Bondage, Apostates*—one of the earliest North American works against slavery.

Lay started connecting and sharing ideas with other local anti-slavery Quaker advocates like Ralph Sandiford. Sandiford owned a shop above the 4th and Chestnut slave market and would consistently hear the cries of Black families being torn apart. Sandiford's 1729 book, *A Brief Examination of the Practice of the Times*, provides a religiously-based refutation of slavery in all its forms.

Lay was best known for staging bizarre pieces of antislavery theatre. For one stunt, he stood outside with one bare foot in the snow to show the suffering of slaves 'who go all winter half-clad'; for another, he briefly kidnapped a slaveholding Quaker's child to illustrate the injustice of separating Africans from their families. In 1738, Lay took the floor at an annual Quaker meeting, drew a sword and stabbed a hollowed-out Bible filled with red-coloured juice, spraying some of it on the crowd. 'Thus shall God shed the blood of those who have enslaved their fellow creatures,' he proclaimed.

According to Berkeley's biographers, he was a man of the world, familiar with the ideas, debates, and notable figures of his day⁵⁶. Fraser observes that Berkeley's white acquaintances and fellow white Rhode Islanders 'were of many religious sects — Quakers, Moravians, Jews, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, sixth principle and seventh principle Baptists'⁵⁷ and more, and that 'Quakers and Baptists alike came to hear him. All sects were present in his congregation'⁵⁸.

It is not speculative, then, to suggest that Berkeley would have been exposed to some form of the anti-slavery flavoured Christianity being espoused by several of the above groupings. Whatever the exposure, it is apparent that he was unmoved by the arguments by these other men of his time.

⁵⁶ Luce, 1949, iii-xi.

⁵⁷ Fraser, 1871, vol 1, 157.

⁵⁸ Benjamin Rand, *Berkeley's American Sojourn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 28.

c) No comparable intellectual dissent: dissent having been shown to exist is rejected as it does not stem from a comparable intellect.

To continue to justify Berkeley's endorsement of slavery and the exploitation and dehumanisation of people on the grounds that he was simply 'a man of his time,' and could not have known any better ultimately fails as his views can be contrasted with the opposing views on the liberty of all men – which were known to Berkeley since he critiques them in *Alciphron*⁵⁹ - of an Irish contemporary of his and the eminence of Scottish philosophy and father of Utilitarianism, Francis Hutcheson.

Hutcheson held that natural rights belong equally to all, thus leading him to reject any form of slavery. Son of a Presbyterian minister, Hutcheson was not a Trinity man, pursuing his studies at the University of Glasgow. In fact, he risked prosecution by the Presbytery at Glasgow for teaching the 'false and dangerous doctrine that the standard of moral goodness is the promotion of the happiness of others'.⁶⁰

He qualified as a Presbyterian minister before becoming a teacher at a dissenting academy in Dublin in 1719. In 1730 he moved back to Glasgow to take up the chair in moral philosophy. He died in 1746, during a visit with friends in Dublin.

On the enslavement of others, he wrote

'Strange, that in any nation where a sense of liberty prevails, where the Christian religion is professed, custom and high prospects of gain can so stupefy the consciences of men, and all sense of natural justice, that they can hear such computations made about the value of their fellow-men, and their liberty, without abhorrence and indignation!'.⁶¹

A strong case can be made that Hutcheson is demonstrably of comparable intellect to Berkeley. He was a major theoretical influence on the American Revolution, and U.S. education and philosophy, and a favourite author of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and John Witherspoon, principal of the College of New Jersey (now known as Princeton University). The entry of 16 January 1756 in the diary of John Adams of Massachusetts, the second president of the United States reads: 'A fine morning. A large white frost upon the ground. Reading Hutcheson's Introduction to Moral Philosophy.' It has also been argued that Thomas Jefferson, the third president, was influenced by Hutcheson, specifically in his justification for the Revolution of 1776.⁶²

His writings on the topic of liberty were widely diffused and read by the Quaker, Anthony Benezet, and influenced the abolitionist movement throughout the British and French empires (Condorcet, for example, was heavily influenced by Hutcheson's writings on natural rights and they influenced his approach to natural rights under the First French republic).⁶³

⁵⁹ Or *The Minute Philosopher*, a work against free-thinkers that Berkeley wrote while in America. See Samuel C. Rickless, 'Berkeley's Criticisms of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.' *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements*, 88, 2020, 97-119.

⁶⁰ Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 230.

⁶¹ Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy in Three Books* (Glasgow, 1755), book 2, 85.

⁶² Francis Hutcheson, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. R. S. Downie (London: Everyman, 1994).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

The man of his times argument goes beyond the mere injunction against imposing our moral standards on those who lived and died before us. This defence seeks to redirect blame and accuse those who critique the man of his times for lacking critical historical judgement. Few slopes are as slippery as this. The reality is that it is the examination of the historical record that tends to undermine the man of his times defence.

The persistent clinging to the claim that he was a man of his times does not address the ahistoricity of such a claim. History is not absolute in the way that supporters of Berkeley advance when they argue that Berkeley is immunised from any involvement in slavery since everyone thought this way. 'Everyone' is such a charged word and is reliant on literary presence, rather than being convincingly reflective of the history period under consideration when the man of his times argument is made.

It is not convincing to attribute expiation to Berkeley on such ahistorical terms as the man of his times argument. Even those reduced to a liminal historical presence, the enslaved, manifest their voices and moral dissent through their physical reaction to slavery. Berkeley is best understood as a man of his times who chose to engage in and profit from the pernicious institution of slavery when other articulate moral avenues were available to him. Whatever justifications as propitiation Berkeley may present in his work must be refracted through the lens that these do not amount to expiation.

The man of his times argument then becomes less about knowing or not knowing, but rather about belief and choice, of self-interest and concomitant disinterest in the plight of others. There were lots of people contemporaneous to Berkeley who believed that enslavement was wrong. Enslaved people believed it was wrong. Free black people believed it was wrong. Many, many white co-religious of Berkeley – from Quakers to fellow Anglicans - believed it was wrong. People in all of those groups allowed their beliefs to guide the choices they made, including small and large public and private resistance, sometimes at great risk to their lives.

As such, the Working Group reading this submission are correct in examining Berkeley's record as a man of his times since such an approach will examine the totality of the historical evidence and tend to highlight his individual complicity as a slave-owner and as a profiteer from the enslavement of Black bodies.

Another characteristic of the 'man of his times' defence I have encountered is where an attempt is made to advance and determine some calculus of villainy. This argument being that perhaps, maybe, if the individual in question is a real tyrant some change may need to be enacted but otherwise, we can explain it away as a historical consequence – or inconsequence. For example, it may well have been proper to dename the Schrödinger Lecture Theatre given the proximity or nature of the charges presented. On the other hand, Berkeley's case is neither proximate in time nor as serious (the man of his times argument). This is unsound as an approach and does not satisfy historical analysis.

5). Defences raised #2: The religious argument

Closely linked to the man of his times approach, the argument is frequently advanced to excuse Berkeley's enslavement of the Black body⁶⁴ on the grounds that his motivation stemmed from the missionary aspect of his Anglicanism and, consequently is not evidence of racism or economic rapaciousness.

This is best exemplified by the following extract:

'Berkeley was motivated by missionary zeal, and, [...] is clearly guilty of ethnocentrism—presupposing the superiority of his own culture and religion. However, Berkeley is not guilty of racism, because he did not believe in the inherent or irremediable inferiority of non-Europeans. Another reason that Berkeley had no quarrel with slavery is his rather conservative political views. He embraced the doctrine of passive obedience, which supports submission to existing authority and institutions. In the end it is not racism but Berkeley's religious and political views that explain Berkeley's approval of slavery.'⁶⁵

Scholars⁶⁶ in the field of Black Atlantic Studies, and in particular, African American Slavery Studies, reject this religious justification for slavery. Enslavement of the Black body was profitable (as evidenced from the fact that a substantial part of the donation Berkeley endowed to Yale to fund the first scholarships there came from profits generated from their work on his Whitehall plantation) but the avenue to purchasing enslaved people was only available to a certain monetary class who could afford the initial investment. Underlying any discussion of slavery are the twin factors of racism (the raced Black body) and economics⁶⁷. These factors may co-exist with religious impulses but have been identified as being more significant than such impulses.

For example, the work of Travis Glasson is particularly enlightening with respect to Berkeley's Anglican circle in this regard.⁶⁸ The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) was the largest and most influential missionary organisation in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic world. It sent hundreds of Anglican clergymen to widely dispersed posts, circulated large amounts of religious literature, lobbied politicians and the public, and helped found many churches and schools. Its work among European settlers helped transplant the Church of England to

⁶⁴ And his proposed enslavement of the white Irish and Native American bodies.

⁶⁵ Andrew Valls (referring to William Uzgalis' 'Berkeley and the westward course of empire: On racism and ethnocentrism'), *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 10-11.

⁶⁶ E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York, 2014); R. Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York, 1989); R. Fogel and S. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (London, 1974); E.D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1972); S.R. Nelson, 'Who Put Their Capitalism in My Slavery?', *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2015), 289-310; and U.B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labour as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York, 1928). A useful starting point is Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*. (University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

⁶⁷ <https://uncpress.org/book/9781469663685/capitalism-and-slavery-third-edition/>.

⁶⁸ Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Britain's far-flung empire and laid the foundation for American Episcopalianism. Glasson makes the strong case that missionary Anglicanism in the mid-eighteenth century in the form of the SPG held that 'slavery, if properly managed, could help the Society's religious aims'⁶⁹. However, the practical application of the enslavement of the Black body in the US, in Barbados, and in Africa itself, show that when the SPG had to choose, 'the religious program ... was repeatedly undermined by efforts to maximize ... profitability'⁷⁰.

6). Defences raised #3: The risk of erasure and the possibility of retain and explain argument

Another argument commonly proffered is that the removal of the public commemoration of a public figure will produce a public erasure of the importance and name recognition of the individual in question.

Common sense and academic research demonstrates that this is not the case. For example, Queen Victoria and Lord Nelson are no longer commemorated publicly in the streets of Dublin, but I am historically aware of their place within and contribution to the store of public knowledge. I possess this awareness not through daily commemoration but by means of curriculum. In other words, I was taught about them, warts and all! My College formation then allowed me to examine, query and assimilate this knowledge.

However, this assertion (risk of erasure) may be tested in a crude manner by examining cases of removal of public commemoration for problematised historical figures in other jurisdictions (though I will restrict this for current purposes to English-speaking). Using the Google search operators 'before:YYYY-MM-DD' and 'after:YYYY-MM-DD',⁷¹ it can be determined if public erasure issues from the removal of the public commemoration, in the form of Google results, which may be framed as a significant body of enquiring knowledge.

For example, in New Zealand's fourth-largest city, Hamilton, a bronze statue of the British naval officer Capt. John Hamilton, the city's namesake, was removed in June 2020. A Maori tribe asked for the statue be taken down as Hamilton was accused of killing indigenous Maori people in the 1860s.⁷²

A Google search 'John Fane Charles Hamilton'⁷³ using the operators and using comparable time periods,⁷⁴ results in 'About 59 results' for the period 01 January 2018-30 June 2020, and 'About 57 results' for the period 01 July 2020-31 January 2023. This is hardly an erasure since the knowledge base represented by new post-01 July 2020 searches of the name 'John Fane Charles Hamilton' may also be added to the existing knowledge base represented by all searches prior to 01 July 2020.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁷¹ <https://searchengineland.com/search-google-by-date-with-new-before-and-after-search-commands-315184>.

⁷² <https://apnews.com/article/race-and-ethnicity-new-zealand-international-news-asia-pacific-death-of-george-floyd-dc79b51c4e17317c174fc4863072686f>.

⁷³ Using Hamilton's full name as provided by his Wikipedia entry.

⁷⁴ To ensure equivalence with the time which has elapsed since the removal of the statue to current date.

In fact, this crude⁷⁵ test suggests that rather than erasure, the debate and subsequent (re)action in relation to Hamilton has increased the public's knowledge of the man, his public contributions, and the actions which have rendered him suspect for such public commemoration.

Similar results support a similar argument being made using the data returned by searches for other statues of public figures which were removed in the period 2020-21: the 17th-century Bristolian slave trader, Edward Colston; Confederate President Jefferson Davis in Richmond, Virginia, the former capital of the Confederacy; Edward Ward Carmack⁷⁶ stood at the State Capitol in Nashville; Theodore Roosevelt, Museum of Natural History NY;⁷⁷ the Boston statue of Columbus; Queen Victoria, Winnipeg, MB, Canada; and James Cook, Victoria, BC, Canada.

What this extremely crude test confirms is our awareness that in reality removal from public commemoration does not reduce the collective store of knowledge of the historical figure.

Knowledge can be erased with the passage of time. Few of us now know, that is unless we are taught this fact, that College Green, named in the 1600s, was originally known as Hoggen Green (which comes from the Scandinavian word for mound), or that it was near the Thingmote, which was the Viking assembly place in Dublin.⁷⁸ I did not know this until I looked it up. However, thanks to my exposure to a curriculum in Philosophy, I 'know' about Thales from two millennia before the renaming of College Green.

It seems odd to entertain the idea that a figure such as Berkeley, and to whom Profs. Vasilis Politis, Peter Simons, David Berman, Jim Levine, and John Dillon referred as a 'top-ten' philosopher⁷⁹ would vanish from the philosophical record if the library was denamed. Because of my curriculum, and not because of his commemoration within College, I came to know of and 'know' Berkeley as an undergraduate. The denaming of the library will have no impact on this process of learning about Berkeley, and it is this which will ensure that he is not erased from the collective store of knowledge.

What any denaming of the library entails is simply the application of the standard of *his* times, the belief amongst all but those who profited from the cruel practice, that the enslavement of human beings was wrong.

⁷⁵ And contestable test given how the Google Algorithm actually works.

⁷⁶ Carmack was a lawmaker and newspaper editor in Nashville and Memphis in the early 1900s. He endorsed the lynching of three black men who were trying to open a grocery store, and incited a mob to attack the newspaper editor, journalist and activist Ida B. Wells. Carmack was shot dead in 1908 by the son of a political rival. His statue was erected in 1927.

⁷⁷ The objection was not to Roosevelt himself — whose family helped found the museum — but to the symbolism of the Native American man and the African man who stand beside him.

⁷⁸ <https://www.archiseek.com/2007/dublin-street-names/>.

⁷⁹ Vasilis Politis, Peter Simons, David Berman, Jim Levine, and John Dillon. *Concept Paper. The Philosopher George Berkeley and Trinity College Dublin. The Next hundred years?* August 2014, 1. Available at https://www.tcd.ie/Philosophy/assets/pdfs/TCD_Berkeley_Concept_Paper.pdf.

Two final accompanying matters arise in relation to the above point of erasure.

What has become known as the **retain and explain** approach, is whereby, as a sop to the opponents of the problematised public figure, those who are not seeking to disturb the status quo may suggest some explanation of the reprehensible deeds be placed on the library. This subtle recognition of the charge is normally voiced as an explanatory plaque and is usually presented as serving an educational purpose.

The counterargument is that the charges are usually of such a significance for those who oppose the retention of the problematised public figure that subtlety is not what is justified in this instance and that the explanatory element should outweigh the impact of that being commemorated. In the case of the Berkeley Library, and in light of the impressive lettering that constitutes the name on the outside wall, such an argument would necessitate large scale mural depictions of chattel slavery such as practised by Berkeley, much in the vein of similar murals in the style of Diego Rivera and his contemporaries.

Such a suggestion is, perhaps, as preposterous as the suggestion that Berkeley's name should be retained given the historical evidence.

The second point is the argument that is usually presented as to why should Trinity College Dublin dename a mere library, when Berkeley's name graces a city and the celebrated university in California? The question is always posed as one of scale, namely to rename our small library is presented as an over-reaction.

Proponents of this argument are correct in recognising that it involves scale but they are incorrect in representing their scaling objects. The Californian Berkeley is a result of a mere poetic quirk⁸⁰.

In stark contrast, Berkeley was a Trinity man with an deeply embedded and commemorated history within our institution. Trinity College Dublin is the number one university in Ireland and must strive towards leadership in all social justice matters. This process does not need to be divisive but can herald in new College governance on the naming of buildings and institute a consensus driven naming of buildings in the future.⁸¹

⁸⁰ <https://berkeleyplaques.org/plaque/how-berkeley-got-its-name/>.

⁸¹ For example, The University of Richmond, a small private university in Virginia, introduced policies that 'no building, program, professorship, or other entity at the University should be named for a person who directly engaged in the trafficking and/or enslavement of others or openly advocated for the enslavement of people,' a clause that led to the immediate removal of several building names the same day the policy was established. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/11/18/new-policies-guide-removal-controversial-building-names>.

Final thoughts (or would the naming committee in 1978 have considered Berkeley as a suitable candidate had the significance of his involvement in the enslavement of others and his ideological support for the system of enslaving others been adequately understood?)

Trinity is familiar with and responsive to staff and student demands for the de/renaming of problematised spaces within College. The Schrödinger Lecture Theatre, which was originally named the Physics Lecture Theatre, but was renamed in the 1990s to celebrate Schrödinger and his contributions to quantum theory, is a case in point. Following revelations, much of it from Schrödinger's own diaries, of the quantum physicist's grooming of young girls, the process was publicly uncontested within College and the entire process only took a few months as the article which brought Schrödinger's abuse to light appeared in December 2021, and the change was enacted in April 2022.

In light of the speed of the above process, it is germane to note that Schrödinger and Berkeley are both historical figures, with comparable significance in their respective fields, and who existed in their particular periods of time where their actions and self-justifications for said actions would have found both defenders and reproachful antagonists.

Furthermore, what Schrödinger and Berkeley share in common is that they challenge the College community to think harder about what we commemorate in a public sphere rather than what we should promote for its intellectual value.

The name on the front of such a fine library is inescapably a statement which is suggestive of an historical interpretation of the historical record as well as a rejection of the voices of those enslaved and those contemporaries of Berkeley who knew that his actions were morally reprehensible. To fail to consider the full implications of retaining Berkeley's name on the library given what we know about him and about slavery, is to fall back on a hagiography bordering on sanctimony that should have no place in an intellectual and institutional debate.

Trinity College Dublin is forming the leaders, not only of society, but also of our College in the future and we have this opportunity to display the proper application of history. A practical consideration is that in the long history of College, the library is not so firmly embedded that its de/renaming will be convulsive. Future generations of staff and students will embrace the change and recognise that College has done a good and proper thing.

While Trinity maintains close links to its traditions and history, it is salient to recognise that it is not the same university that it was when the library was, let us not forget *renamed* in 1978, just as it will not be the same institution in another 50 years.

And as College seeks to define itself through its internationalisation of learning, promoting itself as providing a world class education in a world class institution, we are now increasingly a globalised College community. The inclusivity for which we strive among the global student and staff body behoves us to take into consideration the level of discomfort, personal and epistemic, for Black and African staff and

students who are confronted by the public celebration of Berkeley's legacy, and for all those who understand the full implication of Berkeley's actions.

At this remove, it is difficult to answer the posed hypothetical in relation to the actions of the (renaming) committee in 1978. However, given the totality of the evidence in favour of denaming the library in 2023, such difficulties should not present.

Thank you

Dr. Phil Mullen (TCD)

Appendix 1: An non-exhaustive list of literature conveying the voice of the enslaved Black body

For overviews of the literature of the late eighteenth-century Black Atlantic, see Vincent Carretta, ed., *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington, KY, 1996); and Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould, eds., *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic* (Lexington, KY, 2001). For examples incorporating such works into wider histories, see Daniel Littlefield, ‘‘Almost an Englishman’’: Eighteenth Century Anglo-African Identities,’ in *Cultures and Identities in Colonial British America*, ed. Robert Olwell and Alan Tully (Baltimore, 2006), 70-94; Roxanne Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia, 2000), 243-87; and Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2003), 43-48.

There exists a significant body of writing which captures the voice of the enslaved during the long 18th century including Marion Wilson Starling, *The Slave Narrative: Its Place in American History* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982), p. 311; Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates, eds., *The Slave’s Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. xi-xxxii; and Henry Louis Gates, ed., *The Classic Slave Narratives* (New York: Penguin, 1987), pp. ix- xviii.

Other texts which incorporate the voice of the enslaved during the long 18th century include Benjamin F. Prentiss, *The Blind African Slave, or, Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch, Nicknamed Jeffrey Brace* (St. Albans, Vt.: Printed by Harry Whitney, 1810); Philip D. Curtin, ed., *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967); Edward A. Alpers, ‘The Story of Swema: Female Vulnerability in Nineteenth-Century East Africa,’ in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, ed. Claire Robertson and Martin A. Klein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), pp. 185-219; Mareia Wright, *Women in Peril: Life Stories of Four Captives* (Lusaka: NECZAM, 1984); Mareia Wright, *Strategies of Slaves & Women: Life-Stories from East I Central Africa* (New York: Lilian Barber Press, 1993); E. Ann McDougall, ‘A Sense of Self: The Life of Fatma Barka,’ *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 32, no. 2 (1998): 285-3 15; Robin Law and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage from Slavery to Freedom in Africa and America* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener, 2001); John Hunwick and Eve Troutt Powell, eds., *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener, 2002); Randy J. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); and Anne C. Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).

Other texts include Venture Smith, *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa, but Resident above Sixty Years in the United States of America, Related by Himself* (New-London, Conn.: Printed by C. Holt at the Bee-Office, 1798); Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle, ‘A Biographical Sketch of Ali Eisami Gazir,’ in *African Native Literature, or Proverbs, Tales, Fables, & Historic Fragments in the Kanuri or Bornu Language, to which Are Added a Translation of the Above and a Kanwi-English Vocabulary*, ed. Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle (London: Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, 1854), pp. 248-256; William B. Hodgson, *Notes on Northern Africa, the Sahara, and Sudan* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), pp. 68-74; Jonn Warner Barber, *A History of the Amistad Captives: Being a Circumstantial Account of the Capture of the Spanish Schooner Amistad, by the Africans on Board; Their Voyage, and Capture near Long Island, New York; With Biographical Sketches of Each of the Surviving Africans; an Account of the Trials had on Their Case, Before the District and Circuit Courts of the United States, for the District of Connecticut* (New Haven, Conn.: E. L. & J. W. Barber, 1840), p. 15; Petro Kilekwa, *Slave Boy to Priest: The Autobiography of Padre Petro Kilekwa* (London: Universities’ Mission to Central Africa, 1937); ‘A Native of Borneo,’ *Atlantic Monthly* (October 1867): 485-495; Nicholas Said, *The Autobiography of Nicholas Said, A Native of Borneo, Eastern Sudan, Central Africa* (Memphis, Tenn.: Shotwell and Co., 1873); Maria Luisa Dagnino, *Bakhita Tells Her Story*, 3rd ed. (Rome: Casa Generalizia, Canossiane Figlie delia Carita, 1993), pp. 37-68; and Allan Austin, ‘Mohammed AH Ben Said: Travels on Five Continents,’ *Contributions in Black Studies* 12 (1994): 129-158. Sparks, *Two Princes of Calabar*; Thomas Bluett, *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job, the Son of Solomon, the High Priest of Boonda in Africa* (London: Richard Ford, 1 734); Frances Moore, *Travels into the Profound Parts of Africa, with a Particular Account of Job Ben Solomon, Who Was in England in the Year 1733 , and Known by the Name of the African* (London: E. Cave, 1 738); *The Royal African, or, Memoirs of the Young Prince of Annamaboe Comprehending a Distinct Account of His Country and Family, His Condition while a Slave in Barbadoes, His Voyage from Thence, and Reception here in England* (London: Printed for W. Reeve,

G. Woodfall & J. Barnes, 1749); and Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves: The True Story of an African Prince Sold into Slavery in the American South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). Moving past this period, for interviews with ex-slaves, see George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972); George P. Rawick, Jan Hillegas, and Ken Lawrence, eds., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography. Supplement, Series 1*, 12 vols. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1977); and George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography. Supplement, Series 2*, 10 vols. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979). Ira Berlin and his co-authors discuss the history of slave narratives as memory and the politics and historical criticism surrounding them in Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller, 'Introduction: Slavery as Memory and History,' in *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk about Their Personal Experiences of Slavery*, ed. Ira Berlin et al. (New York: New Press, 1998), pp. xiii-xx. See also John W. Blassingame, 'Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves Approaches and Problems,' *Journal of Southern History* 41 (1975): 473-492; Norman Yetman, 'Ex-Slave Interviews and the Historiography of Slavery,' *American Quarterly* no. 2 (1984): 181- 210; C. Van Woodward, 'History from Slave Sources: A Review American Historical Review 79 (1985): 470-481; and Donna]. Spindel, 'Assessing Twentieth-Century Slave Narratives Reconsidered,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* no. 2 (1996): 247-261. Such foundational works on slave life as those of John Blassingame and Eugene Genovese drew heavily on slave narratives. See John W. Blassingame, *The Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University 1972); and Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (Pantheon Books, 1974). The best recent examples of this tradition are Ira Berlin's interpretations of North American slavery: Ira Berlin, *Marry Thousands Gone: The Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard City Press, 1998); Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller, eds., *Remembering African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation* (New York: New Press, 2000); and Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African Slaves* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University).

I would be happy to provide more references to the voice of the enslaved at the Working Group's request.