

To whom it may concern,

I recently read both Nigel Biggar's piece in the Irish Times and Trinity News' coverage of David McConnell's submission regarding the renaming of the library. Frankly, I was incredibly insulted by the almost glib manner in which both claimed firstly that changing the library does not in itself solve the entirety of racism across the globe and thus is not worth doing, and secondly that since "everyone was doing it" at the time we cannot judge Berkeley by today's standards.

I simply wish to voice my firm opposition to both of these points and highlight that renaming the library will have a profoundly positive effect.

As a Trinity student of African descent, I am negatively impacted by having to study under the roof of a library named after an enslaver and a pro-slavery writer. The library, as it is currently named, is a clear reward to Berkeley and espouses the message that his enslavement of people is bad but only bad enough to be a mere footnote. Enslavement is more than a footnote in the story of Berkeley. It is more than just an extra detail for tour guides to tell. It is more than an additional plaque on the library. It is a continuous assault on me and people like me that promulgates the idea of Trinity preferring its colonial past to its more diverse present. This is all to say that of course the renaming of the library does not "solve" racism on a global level. But on a local and personal level, it is a necessary move towards decolonization and an inclusive campus as it is difficult for me to be a Trinity student when Trinity are actively rewarding those who espouse sentiments that are against me.

I would like to highlight this letter in the Irish Times in response to Mr Biggar's piece.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/2023/01/24/erasing-berkeleys-name-from-trinity/>

Regarding the point that slavery was common and we cannot judge Berkeley because he didn't know it was wrong. That's a common misconception. Of course some of his contemporaries knew slavery was wrong but furthermore his enslaved people knew it was wrong and the assertion that NO ONE knew it was wrong implies that the opinions of enslaved people does not matter. It is an inherently colonial belief. For a better explanation of this point, i would point you in the direction of Philomena Mullen's article on the 'man of his times' argument in the Irish Times.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2023/01/26/philomena-mullen-man-of-his-times-argument-does-not-get-berkeley-off-hook/>

Kind regards

Luther