



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David

The Memorialisation of Edward Colston: How we 'Choose' to Remember

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

[Redacted]

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my dissertation supervisor [REDACTED] on the guidance given towards my dissertation. I would also like to [REDACTED] for their advice and encouragement on dealing with histories of a difficult heritage. I would like to express my gratitude to Nuala Davies for the continual support during my studies during a time that has been deeply challenging.

I would like to say a massive thank you to my [REDACTED] the patience, understanding and maturity you have shown when I have needed time and space to concentrate on my work. Finally, a special thank you to my partner Ami for your continual support and motivation. Your witty charm and loving nature have given me the inspiration and belief to make this dissertation a reality.

Abstract

During 2020 Britain faced a summer of protests following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis by a police officer. Protesters in Bristol pulled down the statue of citizen and philanthropist Edward Colston who made a significant portion of his wealth through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This research examines the complex web of connections across the Atlantic and the long shadows cast by the difficult heritage of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It investigates the processes of memorialisation amid competing narratives using Edward Colston as a case study. It examines the ways in which memorialisation is employed to control and manage a traumatic history. This study shows how ultimately, how narratives can be formed and gain dominance through memorialisation, eventually suppresses one narrative in favour for another. The legacy of slavery is acknowledged and confronted through the protests that occurred in Bristol and reverberated around the world in the wake of George Floyd's murder. This research provides the need to revisit past, present and future memorials in wake of BLM protests that saw statues toppled worldwide. The use of multidirectional memory theory, a comparative approach, is needed if individual memorialisation is to continue so that attempts can be made to honour all sides of a given history.

Contents

Contents

Introduction 1

Literature Review 3

Methodology 9

Chapter One: Establishing the Narrative 10

Chapter Two: Power and Process of Memorialisation 19

Conclusion 34

Bibliography 37

Introduction

With global movements during the summer of 2020, it has become apparent that dominant narratives of the past have neglected to include aspects of our heritage that are discomforting and difficult to discuss. Activist group Black Lives Matter (BLM) who advocate for the removal of white supremacy and oppose the systemic racism that has continually targeted black communities.¹ The focus is the statue of Edward Colston which was toppled by BLM protesters and rolled into the harbour in Bristol on 7 June 2020.² The attack on the statue came as a result of the growing BLM protest movement that was sparked by the murder of George Floyd, an African American, at the hands of Derek Chauvin, a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota 25 May 2020.³ The toppling of this individual statue paved a way for Britain's involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade back into the public's consciousness and a part of history that does not sit comfortably within the modern society of multicultural Britain we see today. The toppling of the Colston statue was just one statue from an extensive list of memorials from around the globe which were targeted and toppled by protesters around the world. Within the week following the toppling of the Colston statue, the Black Lives Matter activist group named over one hundred racist memorials within Britain, whilst the movement globally continued to target and vandalise monuments globally.⁴

This research focusses on the process and power of memorialisation and how selective narratives become dominant through the representation in memorials, using Edward Colston as a case study. Memorials decorated the streets and cities they reside in and whether consciously or not, have played a significant role in

¹ Patrisse Cullors, *Black Lives Matter - 2020 Impact Report* (Online, 2020), p. 42 (pp. 4–5) <<https://blacklivesmatter.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/blm-2020-impact-report.pdf>> [accessed 21 March 2021].

² Tom Wall, 'The Day Bristol Toppled Colston – and a Nation Began to Search Its Soul', *The Guardian* (Online, 14 June 2020), section UK news <<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/14/the-day-bristol-dumped-its-hated-slave-trader-in-the-docks-and-a-nation-began-to-search-its-soul>> [accessed 2 October 2020].

³ Evan Hill and others, 'How George Floyd Was Killed in Police Custody', *The New York Times* (Online, 31 May 2020), section U.S. <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html>> [accessed 2 October 2020].

⁴ Kaisha Langton, 'Black Lives Matter "racist" Statues MAPPED: Are Any of the 112 Statues near You?', *express.co.uk* (Online, 12 June 2020), section UK <<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1293928/Black-Lives-Matter-racist-statues-map-Robert-Milligan-Cecil-Rhodes>> [accessed 9 January 2021].

shaping the public's collective memory on a history connected to the memorial.⁵ Following the controversy of representation in memorials presented by the BLM movement, this research will investigate the context of Colston and his statue and how his memorialisation aided in the narrative that became fixed and dominant thus overshadowing alternative perspectives of his history.⁶

The memorialisation of an individual within a civic domain provides a means of collective remembrance that promotes the narrative that is represented through the memorial. This process is best identified as a progression that is rooted within the social and political perspective of the period that the memorial was established in. Through this progression the selected representation has promoted a particular narrative whilst simultaneously suppressing another.

My subject position is that I am a white male living in a sea-side town in rural west Wales for the last twenty-one years after moving from Bedfordshire with my parents when I was child. My life experiences with issues surrounding the difficult heritage of the trans-Atlantic slave trade are inadequate but through my research and development through my studies at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David it has provided me with the drive to challenge and research these areas of history which can be extremely discomforting to discuss due to their nature. My stance on the research topic is that I strongly believe past and present memorials needs to be re-examined and the process of memorialisation needs to be readdressed to be able to represent and reflect the multicultural society Britain is in today.

⁵ William Logan and Keir Reeves, *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage'* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 2-3.

⁶ Margaret Holloway, Miroslava Hukelova, Louis Bailey, and others, *Displaying Self: Memorialisation in Contemporary Society*, Remember Me (Online: University of Hull, 2019), p. 1-59 <<https://remembermeproject.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/remember-me-overarching-report-e-version-final.pdf>> [accessed 7 October 2020]; Laurence J. Gould, 'Collective Working Through: The Role and Function of Memorialisation', *Organisational and Social Dynamics; Bicester*, 11.1 (2011), 79–92.

Literature Review

A focus on narrativity within this research needs to be discussed and this research uses Hayden White (12 July 1928 - 5 March 2018) to interpret the processes of historical writings. White was an American Historian and theorist who had a 'seminal influence' on the rising popularity of cultural history studies.⁷ White's main focus is on narrativity and has continually explored the connection between written histories and artistic writing to show how dominant narratives occur in history.⁸ White's metahistory concept argues that historical writing is closer to art than it is to science, with an emphasis on the 'poetic nature' of historical accounts, which raises questions on the factual basis of histories.⁹ The focus of metahistory is based around classic nineteenth century written histories from philosophers and historians such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Hegel and Leopold von Ranke.¹⁰ White highlights personal biases of authors of written histories and their failure to acknowledge their position and agenda makes written accounts selective, as the author is 'choosing one perspective on history rather than another' which ultimately gives the written history a bias as it is being selective.¹¹ White's metahistory shows that written histories are more intertwined with artistic story-telling than empirical facts.¹² This implies that historical accounts may be more reflective than realistic and that a choice is made in 'contending interpretative strategies' which results in a selective perspective and this opens the door for selective narratives on a given history.¹³ Hayden White's metahistory concept combined with his other work, *The Content of the Form – Narrative discourse and Historical Representation*, show that moral views are embedded and disguised in 'factual' histories, but the selective perspective is giving an articulate view on a history.¹⁴ This is highly problematic as questions have to be raised of the given accounts legitimacy, as it has been selective in the

⁷ Scott Rappaport, 'Influential Historian Hayden White Dies at 89', *UC Santa Cruz News*, 2018 <<https://news.ucsc.edu/2018/03/hayden-white-news-obit.html>> [accessed 28 October 2020].

⁸ Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 7.1 (1980), 5–27 (pp. 5–9).

⁹ Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973) ix-xii.

¹⁰ White, *Metahistory*, x.

¹¹ White, *Metahistory*, xii, p. 91-92.

¹² White, *Metahistory*, x-ix.

¹³ White, *Metahistory*, xii.

¹⁴ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 10.

evidence it wishes to portray and disregard. Alun Munslow another scholar in the narrative field of historical research also considers how histories are selective. Munslow presents how narratives form discourses of an event portrayed, ultimately, Munslow reflects that it is down to the 'epistemological choices of the historian' on how selective narrative becomes apparent.¹⁵

Dominant narratives of the past become fixed, in part, through processes of memorialisation. A number of theorists have considered the part memorialisation plays in determining our understanding of our history and our relationship with the past. Michael Rothberg is an American Professor of English and comparative literature in holocaust studies with his field of expertise lying in memory, cultural, postcolonial and contemporary literature studies.¹⁶ Rothberg offers a unique approach to memory theory in his book *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*.¹⁷ Rothberg focusses on competitive, comparative, collective and screen memories.¹⁸ Rothberg highlights that screen memory can be seen as a 'remapping of memory', which becomes formed and reordered 'between the conscious and unconscious' and that produces motives, which cause tensions between memories and historical truths.¹⁹ Screen memories exchange distressing memories with more reassuring and uplifting ones, and by 'rearticulating memory' the outcome of a memory therefore is a perspective of the event which can be driven by personal motives.²⁰ While memories belong to an individual, it is when groups and societies come together who have witnessed or been part of an event that the complexity of collective memories becomes apparent; individual memories are shared collectively which in turn provides a collective memory of a given event.²¹

Rothberg acknowledges the selective nature of historical narratives in line with the concepts expressed in Hayden White's metahistory, in particular, the idea of a 'fragmentation of narration' is highlighted by Rothberg

¹⁵ Alun Munslow, *Narrative and History*, 2nd Edition (London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2018), p. 124.

¹⁶ Department of Comparative Literature, 'Michael Rothberg', *Comparative Literature - UCLA*, 2020 <<https://complit.ucla.edu/person/michael-rothberg/>> [accessed 27 October 2020].

¹⁷ Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford University Press, 2009).

¹⁸ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 1-16.

¹⁹ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 14.

²⁰ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 14.

²¹ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 14-15.

where he raises questions on the forms of narration and the impact they have on multicultural remembrance.²² Rothberg's multidirectional memory theory presents how screen memory forms a 'projection of memories' which acts as a 'barrier to remembrance', this protection barrier becomes apparent when conflicting narratives of history clash.²³ This is what happened in the events in Bristol 7 June 2020 when the statue of Edward Colston was toppled.²⁴ Multidirectional memory theory gives the opportunity to take a comparative approach to a history and makes it possible to remember all participants of a history, equally and collectively.²⁵ Multidirectional memory theory seeks a new way to remember histories collectively whereby it makes it possible to include separated and isolated histories together, which continually lie in the shadows of the competitive narratives of history. In Bristol, a screen memory was formed where Colston was remembered for his philanthropy but his links to the slave trade were ignored. Here competitive memory was able to win the narrative. If we take the BLM perspective, we can see the roles reversed. A new screen memory is promoted in the justification of the toppling to honour the slaves who have previously been disregarded. Colston's philanthropy becomes an awkward anomaly that is conveniently forgotten. Collectively Colston is now remembered by Bristolians as a slave trader. The competitive nature of these different aspects of memory is evident by the fact that the statue was toppled and has not been re-erected. The essence of multidirectional memory as advocated by Rothberg is that confictions in memory can be recognised and embraced to allow different narrative strands to be accepted simultaneously. The importance of Rothberg's multidirectional memory theory for future generations is in his comparative approach where all sides of a history are honoured and represented, and that competitive memories and dominant narratives no longer crowd out or reinterpret factual histories in bias of their own agendas.

Alan Rice presents a strategic form of counter memorialisation in what he characterises as 'guerrilla memorialisation' in his 2010 book *Creating Memorials, Building Identities - The Politics of Memory in the Black*

²² Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 137.

²³ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 16.

²⁴ Haroon Siddique and Clea Skopeliti, 'BLM Protesters Topple Statue of Bristol Slave Trader Edward Colston', *The Guardian*, 7 June 2020, section UK news <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/07/blm-protesters-topple-statue-of-bristol-slave-trader-edward-colston>> [accessed 30 September 2020].

²⁵ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 16.

Atlantic.²⁶ Rice uses guerrilla memorialisation to present how forms of counter monuments are produced to challenge established narratives that have drowned out competing narratives.²⁷ Rice focuses on local histories and portrays different forms of how guerrilla memorialisation can be presented. The works of slave artist Lubaina Himid and sculptor Kevin Dalton-Johnson are used by Rice to describe forms of guerrilla memorialisation through their artistic works.²⁸ This form of counter memorialisation varies in different contexts but the basis of it is that it promotes a narrative against the established one and is becoming increasingly popular and effective in combating the dominant narratives that have drowned out opposing perspectives on a shared history.²⁹ Guerrilla memorialisation ultimately pursues alternative ways for suppressed narratives to be heard.³⁰ Rice's depiction will demonstrate how Colston's links to the trans-Atlantic slave trade were kept alive by forms of guerrilla memorialisation.

Throughout Britain narratives and memorials control the way a given history is selectively remembered. Through the BLM movement it has become clear that memorials, not only in Britain, but worldwide have continually ignored a difficult past in which it has become easier to forget rather than accept. Professor Sally Morgan, a cultural historian and conceptual artist explains how memorialisation across Europe in the Victorian period frequently promoted 'civic authority' disguised in the monuments to 'great men.'³¹ Morgan uses Bristolians Edward Colston and John Cabot as case studies to explore how commemorative art has been used as a tool to create 'rhetorical narratives of power through selective interpretations of municipal memory'.³² This research relies on rigorous analysis of the now controversial memorials in Britain and how civic memory is shaped through the selective perspectives. Morgan and Rice shine light on how memorialisation in Britain is continually denying and lacking representation in a multicultural society and inspire challenging modes of remembrance.

²⁶ Alan Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic*, Illustrated edition (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010).

²⁷ Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities*, p. 15.

²⁸ Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities*, pp. 15, 50.

²⁹ Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities*, pp. 14-15 70-72.

³⁰ Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities*, pp. 14-15 70-72.

³¹ Sally Morgan, 'Memory and the Merchants: Commemoration and Civic Identity', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 4.2 (1998), 103-13 (p. 103) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13527259808722225>>.

³² Morgan, p. 103.

The overarching theory applied to this research is Professor Paul Gilroy's concept of the black Atlantic which originates from his work *The Black Atlantic - Modernity and Double Consciousness*.³³ Gilroy's black Atlantic concept is used to bring together histories from the transatlantic slave trade with a visual interpretation of a continuing web with intertwined experiences and events of the slave trade across the region. Being able to combine individual experiences to create a larger portrayal of events gives a deeper and richer understanding of the transatlantic slave trade. The network and historiography of the transatlantic slave trade is deeply immoral on a monumental scale, and it is where Gilroy's black Atlantic concept confronts the problem of nationalist models. These types of models can be seen in America and Britain today and show how overlapping histories continue to provide 'a means to reexamine the problems of national, location, identity and historical memory'.³⁴ Gilroy's black Atlantic was published in 1993 and with the events of BLM protests and the toppling of the Edward Colston statue occurring in 2020 it shows that re-examination of British heritage is required. What is important to note is that the concept of the black Atlantic is still viable today; the events of the George Floyd murder happened across the Atlantic from Britain but, the impact was felt on an international level which ignited the BLM movements around the globe. Gilroy is critical of the influence that 'black elite' professionals have on discussing African diaspora.³⁵ Gilroy is keen to point out that privileged black people of higher social class have 'fabricated a volkish outlook as an expression of their own contradictory position'.³⁶ These 'elites' according to Gilroy are out of touch with the poor black communities.³⁷ Gilroy draws attention to the 'mystification' which gets promoted through the 'neo-nationalism' from the 'black elites' and though the 'misplaced idea of national interest gets invoked as a means to silence dissent and censor political debate when the incoherences and inconsistencies of Africological discourse are put on display'.³⁸ These inconsistencies become evident in memorials around Britain such as the Edward Colston and Cecil Rhodes statues. The connective web of the black Atlantic concept continues to grow, and links to the concept can be seen globally. What is important to note here is that these events are linked, not just isolated events. These continual links can be seen in selective

³³ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic - Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 1st edition (London: Verso Books, 1993).

³⁴ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 16.

³⁵ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 33.

³⁶ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 33.

³⁷ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 33.

³⁸ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 33.

narratives on British histories of the transatlantic slave trade, and through national interest it has become easier to forget than discuss parts of our past that are difficult to come to terms with.

This research uses the black Atlantic as an overarching theoretical framework with the intention of being able to incorporate Gilroy's take on double consciousness, but, more importantly, to bring to light the lack of representation the slaves receive in the part they were forced to play in the transatlantic slave trade. The use of Gilroy's black Atlantic concept strongly supports the memory theory Rothberg presents; it is key to note that Rothberg found influence for his multidirectional memory theory through Gilroy's black Atlantic concept.³⁹ The contribution that this approach gives to this research is that it can make clear distinctions between the perspectives of the participants of the transatlantic slave trade.

³⁹ Christopher Levesque, Holocaust Memory and the Migrant "Double Bind" in Contemporary Germany: Interview with Michael Rothberg, 2018 <<https://thesocietypages.org/holocaust-genocide/michael-rothberg-on-holocaust-memory-and-the-migrant-double-bind-in-contemporary-germany/>> [accessed 10 November 2020].

Methodology

The methodology for the dissertation is to use Edward Colston and his memorialisation as the case study to examine how narratives become selective and the process that memorialisation has on affirming a part of a history whilst disregarding another. Paul Gilroy's concept of the black Atlantic acts as the overarching theoretical framework and provides the means in forming a connection between seemingly isolated events. The methodology applied to this research is from an historical memory theory approach and is used for the analysis in the processes of memorialisation. Two chapters will be presented in this research followed by a brief reflection and conclusion on the findings. Chapter one will focus on the biography of Colston and his representation in historical accounts. Section two will emphasise the power memorialisation has in cementing a narrative whilst conveniently turning a blind eye to another. The use of White's metahistory and Rothberg's multidirectional memory theory will be focused on portraying how selective narratives form collective memories that can be morphed and produce screen memories to block out parts of the past that are traumatising or uncomfortable to imagine and discuss. The discussion will follow chapter two, where questions will be raised in reflection to the evidence presented in this research for the reader to reflect on.

Chapter One: Establishing the Narrative

Edward Colston (1636 - 1721) was a British politician, merchant and philanthropist but most importantly to note, he was deeply involved in the transatlantic slave trade.⁴⁰ Colston became a member of the Royal African Company of England (RAC) on 26 March 1680 and maintained involvement for the following twelve years, in which he started as an investor and rose to deputy governor (1689-91).⁴¹ The RAC ran a legal trading company across the Atlantic from Africa to the West Indies with an estimated forty percent of trade involving slaves.⁴²

Colston was born in Bristol into an established wealthy merchant family with his father, William Colston, a senior member of the *Merchant Venturers Society* as well as holding the Sheriff of Bristol title in 1643.⁴³ Edward Colston was enrolled as an apprentice at the Mercers' Company, London in 1654.⁴⁴ The RAC is believed to be where Colston made the vast majority of his wealth from 1680 – 1692.⁴⁵ Edward Colston became famous and a local hero through his philanthropy where he funded and supported schools, hospitals, churches and shelters for the poor, mainly in and around the Bristol area during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.⁴⁶ As a result of Colston's charitable work, he has been widely celebrated throughout Bristol with extensive memorials honouring him such as public buildings, streets, events, societies and numerous art pieces.⁴⁷ Colston's charitable

⁴⁰ 'Edward Colston | British Museum' <<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG133284>> [accessed 13 November 2020].

⁴¹ Henry John Wilkins, *Edward Colston (1636-1721 A.D.), a Chronological Account of His Life and Work Together with an Account of the Colston Societies and Memorials in Bristol* (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1920), p. 20.

⁴² Ann M. Carlos and Jamie Brown Kruse, 'The Decline of the Royal African Company: Fringe Firms and the Role of the Charter', *The Economic History Review*, 49.2 (1996), 291–313 (pp. 291–92) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2597917>>.

⁴³ Andrew A Hanman and H. J. Wilkins, 'Colston, Edward II (1636-1721), of Mortlake, Surr.', *The History of Parliament - British Political, Social & Local History*, 2002 <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/member/colston-edward-ii-1636-1721#footnote2_00zaw48> [accessed 13 November 2020].

⁴⁴ Hanman and Wilkins, 2002.

⁴⁵ Hanman and Wilkins, 2002.

⁴⁶ 'Edward Colston | British Museum'.

⁴⁷ Morgan, pp. 105–6.

endeavours included, the founding of 'Colston's Almshouses' in 1691,⁴⁸ 'Colston's Hospital' founded in 1710,⁴⁹ and annual donations to the 'Temple School for Boys' to name just a few of an extensive list.⁵⁰ Through Colston's philanthropy, he was naturally a strong candidate for the conservative party in the 1710 election.⁵¹ According to *The Annals of Bristol in The Eighteenth Century* written by John Latimer in 1893, Colston wished to decline 'the honour' because of his age but was encouraged by the Conservative party due to the popularity he had gained through his philanthropy.⁵² Colston served three years as a Member of Parliament for Bristol (1710 - 1713).⁵³

Colston died aged 85 on 11 October 1721 at his home in Mortlake, London and was buried in Bristol's All Saints' Church.⁵⁴ The will of Edward Colston is held by the National Archives in Kew, Richmond, and it contains several large sums of money donated to charities, churches, alms houses and family members totalling £171,000, which according to the National Archives currency converter is worth an estimated 20 million pounds in 2017.⁵⁵ Edward Colston's life was intertwined with his deep religious beliefs, money making and philanthropy; upon visiting Bristol, the noticeable number of memorials honouring Colston is apparent. The means by which he acquired such wealth in order to be able to be a great philanthropist appears to have been overlooked. It has not been established in written record how much money Colston made or what, as an early biographer Thomas Garrard describes, 'the secret of his wealth' was.⁵⁶ Kenneth Morgan, historian and expert on Bristol's transatlantic trade during the eighteenth century, has investigated Colston's involvement.

⁴⁸ Historic England Communications Team, 'Colston's Almshouses', *Historic England*, 2020 <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1202546>> [accessed 16 November 2020].

⁴⁹ Kenneth Morgan, 'Edward Colston and Bristol', *Bristol Branch of the Historical Association The University, Bristol*, 96 (1999), 1–25 (p. 9).

⁵⁰ Kenneth Morgan, *Edward Colston and Bristol* p. 10.

⁵¹ Kenneth Morgan, *Edward Colston and Bristol* p. 12.

⁵² John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in The Eighteenth Century* (Bristol, 1893), p. 85 <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044012600573&view=1up&seq=95&q1=85>> [accessed 16 November 2020].

⁵³ Hanman and Wilkins, 2002.

⁵⁴ Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol*, p. 129.

⁵⁵ Edward Colston, 'Will of Edward Colston of Mortlake, Surrey' (The National Archives, Kew, 1721), The National Archives, Kew, PROB 11/582/499; The National Archives, 'The National Archives - Currency Converter: 1270–2017', *Currency Converter* (The National Archives, 2017) <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>> [accessed 16 November 2020]; Kenneth Morgan, p. 16.

⁵⁶ Thomas Garrard, *Edward Colston, The Philanthropist, His Life and Times; Including A Memoir of His Father; The Result of a Laborious Investigation into the Archives of the City*, ed. by Samuel. G. Tovey (Bristol: J. Chilcott, Clare Street, 1852), p. 319.

... the historical record of his activities does not allow us to pin down for certain the sources of his wealth, although his membership of the Royal African Company was indubitably one significant channel; nor do available records tell us much about the personality of this mysterious man.⁵⁷

Simply for his charitable work, early historians and biographers were quick to throw their arms out and embrace him. Clearly, he was a wealthy man both through his work and his family, and evidently, he was willing to share his fortune with his community.

Thomas Garrard wrote the first detailed biography of Colston entitled *Edward Colston The Philanthropist, His Life and Times; Including A Memoir of his Father; The Result of a Laborious Investigation into the Archives of the City* published in 1852. Garrard informs us that had it not been for his charitable endeavours that 'gladden the pages of our calendars' Colston's legacy would have been forgotten in history.⁵⁸ The civic memory of Colston was purely formed from his philanthropy among the general public in the 19th century. A revised second edition of Garrard's book was published in 1863 By Samuel. G. Tovey who gives credit to the extent of Garrard's research, but critically both editions fail to provide details showing that Colston actually profited from the trans-Atlantic slave trade.⁵⁹ The fact that Colston was widely commemorated and portrayed as 'one of the most virtuous and wise sons of their city' during the Victorian period seems, from contemporary sources of the era, as justified.⁶⁰ The significant absence of some of Colston's work appears to speak of a conscious choice to avoid the topic entirely, perhaps mindful of its unpalatable nature. This is an excellent example of the process by which narratives become selective through being subdued or privileged. These early incomplete biographies became the sources for later works on Colston and are a perfect example of the Hayden White metahistory concept, where White raises and describes authenticity issues in that the author is selective in their interpretation and what is presented and left out in a written account.⁶¹ The selectivity of Garrard and Tovey in their biographies portrays Colston as a moral and generous philanthropist. Through their selectivity,

⁵⁷ Kenneth Morgan, 'Edward Colston and Bristol', *Bristol Branch of the Historical Association the University, Bristol*, 96 (1999), 1–25.

⁵⁸ Thomas Garrard, *Edward Colston, The Philanthropist, His Life and Times; Including A Memoir of His Father; The Result of a Laborious Investigation into the Archives of the City*, ed. by Samuel. G. Tovey (Bristol: J. Chilcott, Clare Street, 1852), p. 15.

⁵⁹ Samuel. G. Tovey, *Colston, the Philanthropist; Memorials of His Life and Deeds*, 2d. ed. (Bristol: T. D. Taylor, 1863) <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112089334657>>.

⁶⁰ Historic England Communications Team, 'Statue of Edward Colston', *Historic England*, 2020 <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1202137>> [accessed 2 October 2020].

⁶¹ White, *Metahistory*, xii.

they have chosen to ignore the dark part of Colston's life and his links to the trans-Atlantic slave. This inclusion and exclusion ultimately gives a false representation, and the issue that White discusses is that historical accounts become closer to fiction than fact.⁶² Munslow reaffirms White's perception and states that the representation comes from the writer's choice of approach to the subject that ultimately produces the direction of selection within a narrative or written account.⁶³ However, whilst it is not untrue of Colston's famous philanthropy works, Garrard and Tovey's representation is dishonest. This ultimately leads to a fictional past as the authors have been selective in their inclusion which does not portray the complete picture of Colston's life.

Edward Colston's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade appears to have receded into the shadows of his biography and what he has been publicly remembered for is his philanthropy. The RAC had the terms of their charter granted by King Charles II in 1672.⁶⁴ The charter replaced the one granted in 1660 to the Company of Royal Adventurers after they surrendered their charter due to extensive debts.⁶⁵ Colston served on the 'Court of Assistances' of the RAC, which involved attending meetings of several committees in London.⁶⁶ These committees discussed many significant aspects within the RAC such as, commodities, slave trading, financial outgoings, marketing, logistics and quality control.⁶⁷ Historian Roger Ball describes Colston's rise in the RAC, 'With his fingers in almost all the pies of the management structure it was inevitable that in January 1689 he took the oath of Deputy Governor of the RAC with the remit to sit on all the committees of the company.'⁶⁸ This gave Colston a voice on a variety of matters within the RAC which shows how deeply embedded he was within the company that organised the purchasing and selling of enslaved people.

⁶² White, *Metahistory*, ix-xii, p. 91-92.

⁶³ Alun Munslow, *Narrative and History*, 2nd Edition (London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2018), p. 124.

⁶⁴ King Charles II, 'The King Grants the Right to Trade in Africa' (National Archives Online, 1672), National Archives, CO 268/1, ff. 8 10, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/africa_caribbean/docs/charter_royal_african.htm> [accessed 17 November 2020].

⁶⁵ Kenneth Gordon Davies, *The Royal African Company*, Reprint (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1999), p. 97.

⁶⁶ Kenneth Morgan, Edward Colston and Bristol p. 3.

⁶⁷ Kenneth Morgan, Edward Colston and Bristol p. 3.

⁶⁸ Roger Ball, 'The Royal African Company and Edward Colston (1680-92)', *Bristol Radical History Group*, 2 (2017) <<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/edward-colston-research-paper-2/>> [accessed 19 November 2020].

The RAC charter granted the company land and licence to trade between 'Beginning at ye Port of Seilley in South Barbary' encompassing onward to 'Cape De bona Esperanza inclusive, with all the Islands neer adjoining to those Coasts'.⁶⁹ The charter was to last one thousand years.⁷⁰ The documented trade rights for 'commodities' granted by King Charles II shows the RAC's deep involvement in the slave trade.⁷¹ The document clearly shows the RAC involvement with the slave trade as it states 'it's hoped quantities of Slaves may bee got' in Angola and 'a Supply of Servants, to all His Ma[jes]tie's American Plantations which cannot subsist without them'.⁷² Gilroy describes plantation slavery as 'capitalism with its clothes off' in his black Atlantic concept.⁷³ However, Gilroy does not detail his description but highlights that plantation slavery has been enforced into black historiography as a one-off phenomenon.⁷⁴ Gilroy is describing what plantation slavery was, making money off the back of enslaved Africans. The wording of the RAC's charter does not acknowledge the humanity of the slaves; they were dehumanised into making a profit. The charter implies that this was not an isolated event or venture to make a quick profit; this was straightforward capitalism through forced slave labour and describes Gilroy's concept of plantation slavery.⁷⁵ The charter identifies where many of the factories and forts were to be found on the West African coast; River Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Cess River, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Castel de Mina, Kingdom and city of Benin.⁷⁶ It identifies that these were locations used for trading in many different commodities, notably 'gold', 'elephants teeth', 'negros' and 'slaves'.⁷⁷ The fact the charter was assigned to the RAC for one thousand years shows that they intended to become an established and permanent company, not just to make a quick profit. It swiftly becomes evident that Gilroy's black Atlantic concept becomes much clearer when one can see the connections between the ports in Africa, RAC meetings, the King's American plantations, the RAC charter and the many men, women and children whose forced labour was at the centre of it all.

⁶⁹ King Charles II, 'Grants the Right to Trade'.

⁷⁰ King Charles II, 'Grants the Right to Trade'.

⁷¹ King Charles II, 'The Royal African Company Trades for Commodities Along the West African Coast' (The National Archives Website, 1672), The National Archives, Kew, CO 268/1, ff. 5-6
<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/africa_caribbean/transcripts/accts_rac.htm> [accessed 17 November 2020].

⁷² King Charles II, 'Trades for Commodities'.

⁷³ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 15.

⁷⁴ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 15.

⁷⁵ King Charles II, 'Grants the Right to Trade', King Charles II, 'Trades for Commodities'.

⁷⁶ King Charles II, 'Trades for Commodities'.

⁷⁷ King Charles II, 'Trades for Commodities'.

Colston's career is illustrative in understanding and the realisation of Britain's involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The number of slaves transported during the years Colston was active in the slave trade can be evaluated and considered. Roger Ball discusses the numbers of enslaved Africans the RAC transported during Colston's active years (1680-1692) in his 2017 article *The Royal African Company and Edward Colston (1680-92)*.⁷⁸ The data Ball presents was acquired from the *SlaveVoyages* online database, which is generally accepted as the most accurate source when discussing the numbers of enslaved people involved. Since Ball's article the database has been updated. A slightly more accurate calculation of the number of people involved can be seen in *Table 1* which gives updated figures from Ball's 2017 data showing minute changes in the numbers.

Royal African Company – Colston's Active Years			
Year	Embarked	Disembarked	Died on voyage
1680	7,009	5,523	1,486
1681	7,867	5,816	2,051
1682	7,831	6,059	1,772
1683	7,030	5,101	1,929
1684	7,997	6,187	1,810
1685	5,567	4,062	1,504
1686	10,840	7,949	2,891
1687	9,948	8,002	1,946
1688	5,885	4,803	1,082
1689	6,562	5,237	1,325
1690	2,458	1,917	541
1691	3,473	2,927	546
1692	2,073	1,795	278
Total	84,540	65,378	19,161

*Table 1: Data of Enslaved People Embarked and Disembarked through RAC Transatlantic Voyages between 1680-92.*⁷⁹

Eighty-four thousand five hundred and forty total individuals is difficult to comprehend, but importantly, these numbers were human lives. *Table 2* shows the breakdown of the total number of enslaved Africans trafficked by RAC in 10-year periods throughout the time the company was involved in the transatlantic slave trade.

⁷⁸ Roger Ball, 'The Royal African Company and Edward Colston (1680-92)', *Bristol Radical History Group*, 1 (2017) <<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/edward-colston-research-paper-2/>> [accessed 19 November 2020].

⁷⁹ 'Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade - Database', *SlaveVoyages*, 2021 <<https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>> [accessed 27 February 2021].

Colston's active period of involvement is highlighted in red; it becomes clear that there was a monumental difference in trading enslaved Africans when Colston was active within the RAC.

Royal African Company - 10-year Periods of Embarked Slaves			
Year Range	Spain / Uruguay	Great Britain	Totals
1661-1670	0	564	564
1671-1680	104	36,134	36,238
1681-1690	0	71,985	71,985
1691-1700	0	29,582	29,582
1701-1710	0	30,606	30,606
1711-1720	0	6,593	6,593
1721-1730	0	11,824	11,824
1731-1740	0	331	331

Table 2: Number of Slaves Embarked by the Royal African Company over 10-year Periods, Highlighting Colston's Most Active Decade.⁸⁰

The *SlaveVoyages* database shows us that Colston's time within the RAC coincides with the most active years in the trading of enslaved people for the company.⁸¹ However, *Table 3* shows that Colston's period of involvement was significant but by no means does it account for Britain's total involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. From the decade starting 1641 to the decade ending in 1810 it becomes clear that Britain was the most significant trader in human lives. While Colston is the case study investigated here, those numbers show that many other individuals and businesses in Britain were amassing wealth from slavery over a period of 170 years.

Examining the numbers from other nations involved in the transatlantic slave trade and comparing the numbers with *Table 2*, it immediately becomes evident that the RAC was the leading company in the transatlantic slave trade during Colston's time within the company.

⁸⁰ 'Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade - Database', *SlaveVoyages*, 2021
<<https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>> [accessed 27 February 2021].

⁸¹ 'Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade - Database'.

Transatlantic Slave Trade - Database 1611 - 1870									
Year Range	Spain / Uruguay	Portugal / Brazil	Great Britain	Netherlands	U.S.A.	France	Denmark / Baltic	Other	Totals
1611-1620	14,878	37,711	0	617	0	0	0	0	53,206
1621-1630	7,945	56,425	0	326	0	0	0	0	64,696
1631-1640	4,416	39,944	0	6,452	0	0	0	0	50,812
1641-1650	1,806	9,763	10,645	25,765	447	1,392	1,400	325	51,543
1651-1660	5,614	9,958	11,977	24,325	181	316	653	0	53,024
1661-1670	879	4,145	35,677	42,973	0	2,261	0	0	85,935
1671-1680	5,100	9,970	50,628	43,876	500	8,234	290	0	118,598
1681-1690	2,492	15,882	102,259	41,608	766	12,842	3,111	250	179,210
1691-1700	0	64,762	90,733	40,906	1,900	8,966	20,813	0	228,080
1701-1710	0	59,149	151,497	40,753	426	24,382	4,271	0	280,478
1711-1720	0	99,324	163,287	49,370	1,476	55,588	2,237	0	371,282
1721-1730	0	183,818	217,705	35,798	4,700	70,422	1,727	0	514,170
1731-1740	0	156,547	235,062	29,716	15,696	95,431	1,079	0	533,531
1741-1750	0	197,929	172,679	37,618	11,265	111,682	2,463	0	533,636
1751-1760	634	151,292	252,960	41,155	20,658	93,726	6,790	0	567,215
1761-1770	3,874	156,444	356,929	59,822	34,229	130,248	5,466	0	747,012
1771-1780	36	138,557	298,267	47,508	22,770	154,943	5,987	0	668,068
1781-1790	769	172,119	278,671	16,741	13,126	267,923	17,746	0	767,095
1791-1800	4,844	246,820	382,672	7,793	40,913	67,771	13,346	0	764,159
1801-1810	17,784	360,829	274,688	1,609	93,072	11,960	13,341	0	773,283
1811-1820	206,907	499,462	0	749	1,993	35,846	182	0	745,139
1821-1830	96,448	572,527	0	686	2,107	138,481	139	0	810,388
1831-1840	133,582	345,480	0	0	11,178	4,666	831	751	496,488
1841-1850	21,746	206,271	0	0	23,685	9,202	2,026	1,110	264,040
1851-1860	26,111	10,963	0	0	57,188	418	0	1,250	95,930
1861-1870	4,986	723	0	0	19,337	1,387	0	0	26,433

Table 3: Number of Slaves Embarked between 1611-1870 by Nations over 10-year Periods, Highlighting Colston's Most Active Decade.⁸²

Reflective of the data, Colston may well have been one of the most influential figures within the RAC and having a voice on many of the company's committees, it is hard to disregard the idea. The data provided shows that Colston may well have been a key officer in his own right within the company; this reflects the rise and fall in numbers of embarked slaves during and directly after his time with the RAC.

Edward Colston was just one of many businessmen who profited through the transatlantic slave trade. Links across Britain can be established with traces and connections to many other individuals, and it becomes difficult to find parts of Britain that do not have some form of connection. The University College London (UCL) website *Legacies of British Slave-ownership* (LBS) database and resource details connections between parts of Britain and the transatlantic slave trade.⁸³ The LBS database provides records of commercial, cultural, historical, imperial, physical and political legacies that connect individuals to slave ownership and, where possible further information regarding the activities and personal details of the slave owners.⁸⁴ LBS research database reveals the extent of British involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and the vast array of different ways in which

⁸² 'Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade - Database'.

⁸³ UCL Department of History, 'Legacies of British Slave-Ownership', *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership*, 2021 <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>> [accessed 5 March 2021].

⁸⁴ UCL Department of History, 'The Database | Legacies of British Slave-Ownership', *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership*, 2021 <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/details/>> [accessed 5 March 2021].

the slave trade reached across the nation.⁸⁵ As of 5 March 2021, there are ten thousand two hundred and nineteen individual 'inventories' listed on the LBS database, including over one thousand three hundred and four individuals and seven hundred and sixty-one firms grouped in 'commercial legacies'.⁸⁶ The LBS database shows that Colston was not a unique figure, and although not a complete project, the LBS database provides an in-depth reflection of how directly involved Britain had been.

The narrative and reputation of Edward Colston as the glorious philanthropist has been overshadowed by his affiliation with the transatlantic slave trade. The positions he held within the Royal African Company, combined with the data provided by *SlaveVoyages.org*, shows how deeply involved Colston was in trading enslaved Africans. Through early biographies, the narrative of Colston as a generous philanthropist was made possible by selectively distancing Colston from the transatlantic slave trade and putting an emphasis on his charitable endeavours. Hayden White's concept of metahistory explains how the writers of history play a part in shaping the narrative and, whether intentionally or not, the narratives that emerge do not always reflect a balanced view of the past or a true account of events. Gilroy's notion of the black Atlantic helps envisage the web of connections that exist between the capture and enslavement of Africans, the forced labour on the plantations, and the wealth generated in the streets, towns and cities of Britain. Through the means of selective and biased perspectives, Colston's links to the transatlantic slave trade faded into the shadows whilst emphasis was put on idolising Colston for his philanthropy work. Colston's life achievements were made possible through the profit made from his involvement within the transatlantic slave trade. Colston may not have been the definitive factor on the rise and early success of the Royal African Company but being on several committees within the company and holding a deputy governor position, it is a notion that cannot be discarded. Colston was just one of many businessmen who profited through the transatlantic slave trade.

⁸⁵ UCL Department of History, 'The Database | Legacies of British Slave-Ownership'.

⁸⁶ UCL Department of History, 'The Database | Legacies of British Slave-Ownership'.

Chapter Two: Power and Process of Memorialisation

This chapter will use Edward Colston as a case study to examine the processes of memorialisation and the impact it can have on controlling dominant narratives of history. Research into how the statue to commemorate Edward Colston became possible by connecting events during and after his lifetime. The concentration on using Colston as a case study is to illustrate through his memorials how narratives compete for dominance. The memory theory approach taken throughout this research aids in presenting how selective narratives become dominant through memorialisation which in turn, can result in a false representation. Through the use of Colston and the memorials in his honour, this chapter will illustrate how representation in memorials facilitates in promoting a selective narrative whilst disregarding and suppressing another.

The need to examine how selective narratives are formed and linked through the power and process of memorialisation is fundamental to giving an honest interpretation of a shared history. The presentation of a memorial depicts a selective story as much as it hides one through its production, whether intentional or not one perspective of history takes precedence over another. The establishment of a narrative is a process that happens over time. Rothberg argues in his multidirectional memory theory that a concentration on 'memory competition' works as a diversion from contemplating the connection of histories with the heritage and legacy of the monument.⁸⁷ An investigation into Edward Colston's memorialisation reveals the origins of how, in Colston's case, a particular narrative became established and dominant. Colston's extensive list of memorials and commemorations that vary from street names to town halls, build a public perception of Colston as a philanthropist and a moral citizen.⁸⁸ Rothberg argues that a common theme in collective memories of the past is the articulated representation in commemoration which provides indication of a 'struggle for recognition'.⁸⁹

The combination of memorials to Colston shaped and dictated the public's collective memory on how Colston was to be perceived. Rothberg's concept can be applied to Colston and the extensive pattern of memorialisation in his honour can be described as providing a projective screen memory to help shadow a

⁸⁷ Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 11.

⁸⁸ Countering Colston, 'Where Is Colston Celebrated?', *Countering Colston - Campaign to Decolonise Bristol*, 2020 <<https://counteringcolston.wordpress.com/who-celebrates-colston/>> [accessed 13 November 2020].

⁸⁹ Rothberg, p. 3.

distressing and repulsive memory for a more innocent and pleasing one.⁹⁰ The screen memories Rothberg discusses in his concept provides somewhat of a rationale in the representation of Colston in memorials and commemorations that honoured him.⁹¹

The particular historical context and timings of the memorialisation of Colston are relevant to how such screen memories develop to face the challenges of a difficult heritage and changing ideologies. This prompts further investigation into the emerging understanding that the practice of building individual memorials may have run its course. Such memorials may ultimately become a trend of the past perhaps giving way to new forms of commemoration that celebrate values and principals rather than individuals. This research chapter shows, through Colston, how memorialisation processes are linked to the broader context and wider ideological issues that have become more evident following the statue's toppling on 7 June 2020.⁹²

The memorialisation of Colston is best understood as a process over time embedded within the social and political context of the period that promoted and selected a particular narrative and at the same time suppressed another.

Analysis of the Edward Colston statue itself reveals much about the message that is trying to be conveyed. The Colston statue was erected on Colston Avenue in Bristol's city centre on 13 November 1895.⁹³ Important to note that the statue was erected one hundred and seventy-four years after Colston's death.⁹⁴ The sculptor of the Colston statue was Irish born John Cassidy (1860 - 1939).⁹⁵ Cassidy was a student at the Manchester School of Art from 1883 and set up his own workshop in the centre of Manchester in 1894.⁹⁶ The Colston Statue Committee appealed to the public in 1894 for designs for the Colston statue and the successful

⁹⁰ Rothberg, p. 16.

⁹¹ Rothberg, pp. 14–16.

⁹² Haroon Siddique and Clea Skopeliti, 'BLM Protesters Topple Statue of Bristol Slave Trader Edward Colston', *The Guardian* (Online, 7 June 2020), section UK news <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/07/blm-protesters-topple-statue-of-bristol-slave-trader-edward-colston>> [accessed 30 September 2020].

⁹³ 'Colston Anniversary', *Bristol Mercury* (Online, 14 November 1895), Image edition, section Advertisements & Notices, p. 5.

⁹⁴ Historic England Communications Team, 'Statue of Edward Colston', 2020.

⁹⁵ Charlie Hulme and Lis Nicolson, 'The Life of John Cassidy', *John Cassidy: Manchester Sculptor*, 2020 <<http://www.johncassidy.org.uk/life.html>> [accessed 30 March 2021].

⁹⁶ Hulme and Nicolson.

candidate whose design was picked ‘will be entrusted with the work, but no extra prize will be given’.⁹⁷ There were over twenty designs submitted and Cassidy’s model was selected by the committee.⁹⁸

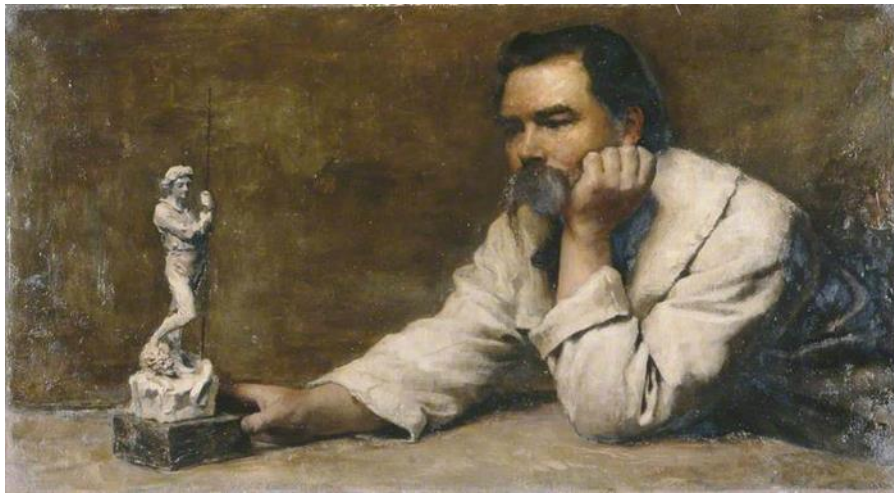


Figure 1: Painting of John Cassidy by Artist Reginald Barber, 1900, Image Credit: Manchester Art Gallery.⁹⁹

The Edward Colston statue (see figure 2) is cast in bronze and stood approximately eight feet and eight inches tall on top of a ten-foot-tall rectangular-shaped Portland stone plinth.¹⁰⁰ Cassidy presents Colston as a middle-aged man dressed in clothes very much from Colston’s lifetime, a long velvet coat accompanied by a wig and waistcoat, portraying Colston’s wealth and social class.¹⁰¹ The expression and body language of Colston (see

⁹⁷ ‘The Talk of Bristol’, *Bristol Mercury* (Online, 8 June 1894), Image edition, p. 8, The British Newspaper Archive.

⁹⁸ ‘The Talk of Bristol - Bristol Mercury, 1894’; Charlie Hulme, ‘Edward Colston Statue, Bristol (1895)’, *John Cassidy: Manchester Sculptor*, 2020 <<http://www.johncassidy.org.uk/cassidy2b.html>> [accessed 30 March 2021].

⁹⁹ Barber, Reginald, *John Cassidy (1860–1939)*, 1900, Oil on canvas, 58.6x107.3 cm, Manchester Art Gallery <<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/john-cassidy-18601939-rbs-204409>> [accessed 30 March 2021].

¹⁰⁰ Hulme, ‘Edward Colston Statue, Bristol (1895)’, 2020; Historic England Communications Team, ‘Statue of Edward Colston’, 2020.

¹⁰¹ Historic England Communications Team, ‘Statue of Edward Colston’; John Cassidy, *Statue of Edward Colston*, 1895, Heritage Category: Listed Building, 1202137 <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1202137>> [accessed 9 October 2020].

figure 3) on the statue is one of deep thought and reflection, and important to note, the statue faces south towards the harbour.¹⁰²

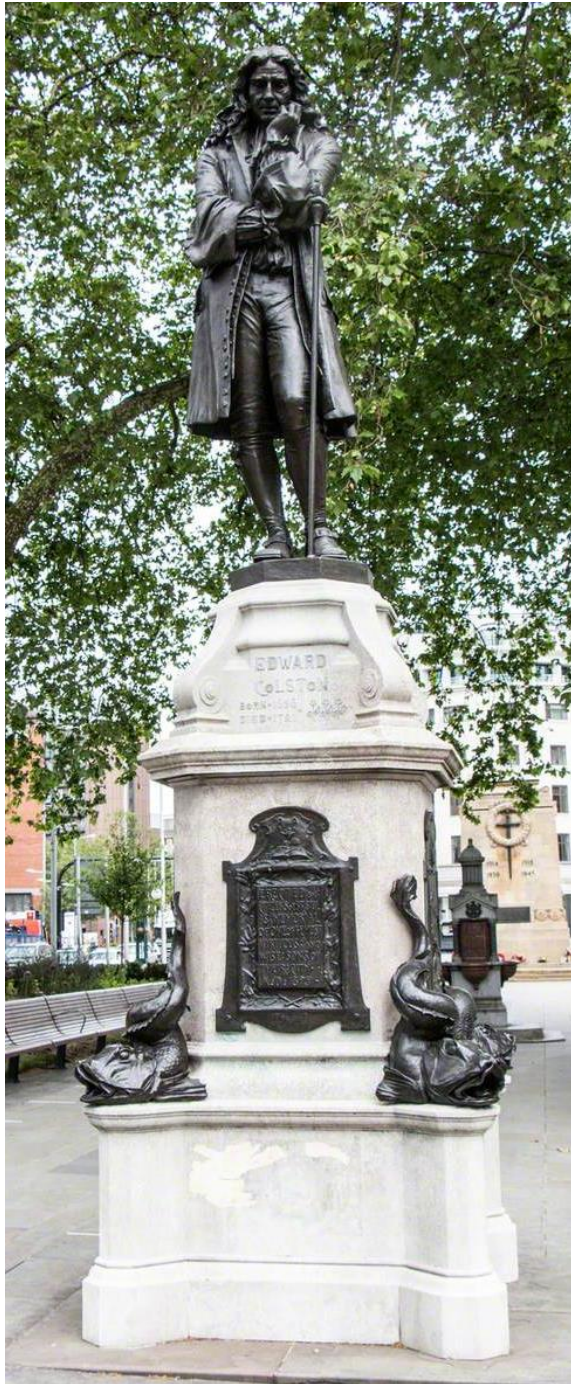


Figure 2: The Southside of the Edward Colston Statue, Image Credit: Paul Francis (Art UK).



Figure 3: Depiction of Colston's Attire and Physical Expression, Image Credit: Paul Francis (Art UK).

¹⁰² Historic England Communications Team, 'Statue of Edward Colston'; Paul Francis, *Edward Colston (1636–1721) Photo Album* | Art UK, 2020, figures 2 & 3, Art UK Online, BS1_PF_S021 <<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/edward-colston-16361721-276045>> [accessed 24 June 2021].

The inscription on the upper south face of the statue's plinth (see figure 4) displays Colston's name and life span and is accompanied by what is believed to be three bronze chrysanthemum buds.¹⁰³ Artist Carole Darke's publication in *Trophies of Empire* reveals that Colston's Girls' School held a Commemoration Day every year in honour of the school's benefactor, Edward Colston.¹⁰⁴ All attendees wore bronze chrysanthemums, Colston's supposedly favourite flower, at the service held at Bristol Cathedral, a tradition that lasted until 2017.¹⁰⁵

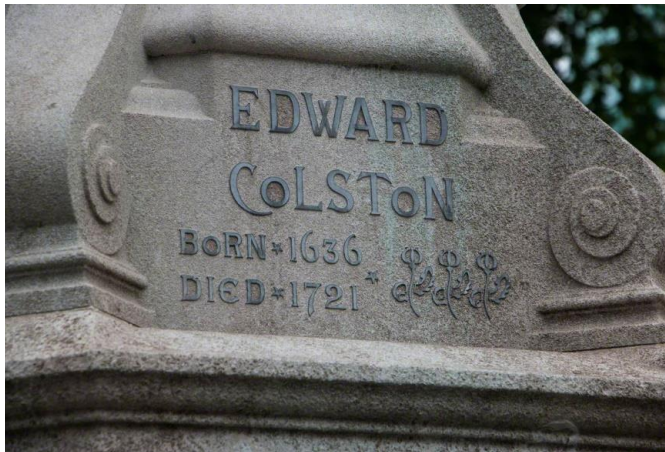


Figure 4: Colston's Name and dates Inscribed, Accompanied by three flowers, Image Credit: Paul Francis (Art UK)

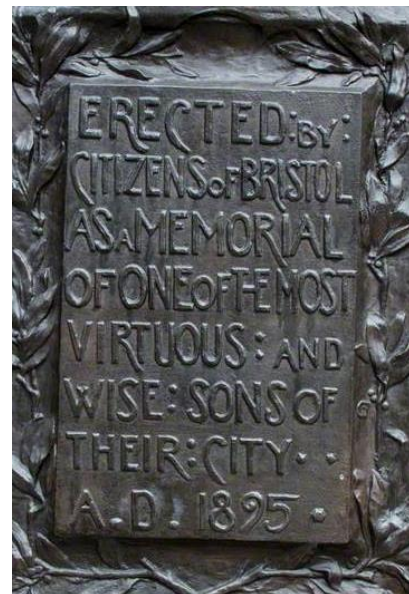


Figure 5: Bronze Inscription Southside of the Statue, Image Credit: Paul Francis (Art UK).

Underneath the name inscription is a large bronze plaque (see figure 5) that reads, 'erected by citizens of Bristol as a memorial of one of the most virtuous and wise sons of their city A.D 1895' accompanied by John Cassidy's name printed at the bottom of the plaque.¹⁰⁶ On each corner of the plinth are bronze casted dolphins that are

¹⁰³ Conor Gogarty, 'Stone from Edward Colston's Statue Plinth Disappears', *BristolLive* (Online, 9 June 2020), section Bristol News <<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/stone-edward-colstons-statue-plinth-4209135>> [accessed 1 April 2021]; Francis, fig. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Carole Drake, 'Commemoration Day', in *Trophies of Empire* (Liverpool: Bluecoat Gallery and Liverpool John Moores University School of Design & visual Arts, 1994), p. 42 <https://mybluecoat.org.uk/pdfs/viewer.html?file=/bluecoatimages/Bluecoat_School/Slavery/1994_Trophies_of_Empire_Publication.pdf> [accessed 1 April 2021].

¹⁰⁵ Drake, 1994, p. 42; Tristan Cork, 'Why School's Edward Colston Commemoration Day Won't Mention Him', *Bristol Live* (Online, 17 October 2017), section Bristol News <<http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/colstons-girls-school-commemoration-day-640090>> [accessed 1 April 2021].

¹⁰⁶ Historic England Communications Team, 'Statue of Edward Colston'; Francis, fig. 5.

featured on Colston's family cress (see figure 5&6).¹⁰⁷ According to legend there had been a miracle involving an uninsured ship owned by Colston returning home safely as a result of a dolphin plugging a large hole in the ship.¹⁰⁸



Figure 6: Bronze dolphins on each corner of the plinth (Dolphins are part of Colston's family crest), Image Credit: Paul Francis (Art UK).



Figure 7: Colston's family cress, 1722, Imaged Credit: The National Portrait Gallery.

The presentation of Colston in the statue clearly portrays a wealthy independent individual with undeniable links to the sea. The representation portrays that Colston's links to the trans-Atlantic slave trade were no secret. The inscription on the statue puts the figure of Colston in a heroic and moral context to its audience. The statue conveys the implication that Colston was a man worthy of miracles as if he were watched over by a divine power. The very nature and presentation of this memorial produced a collective memory for the people of Bristol and its visitors which formed the narrative of a city which celebrates charitable individuals focusing away from the uncomfortable reminders of the slave trade.

J. W Arrowsmith, president of the Anchor Society, called for the unification of separate Colston societies to support the notion of erecting a statue to commemorate Edward Colston and his philanthropy at the annual Fraternal Association dinner on 31 October 1893.¹⁰⁹ Important to note that according to contemporary

¹⁰⁷ Historic England Communications Team, 'Statue of Edward Colston'; Francis, fig. 6; George Verture, *Edward Colston, 1722*, National Portrait Gallery, NPG D34050

<<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw147982/Edward-Colston>> [accessed 7 July 2021].

¹⁰⁸ The Dolphin School, 'Background - The Dolphin School Bristol', *The Dolphin School*, 2021

<<https://www.dolphinschoolbristol.org/1489/background>> [accessed 7 July 2021]; Roger Ball, 'Myths within Myths... Edward Colston and That Statue', *Bristol Radical History Group*, 2017

<<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/myths-within-myths/>> [accessed 2 October 2020].

¹⁰⁹ Philip Kuhn, 'Who Owns Colston?', *Bristol Radical History Group*, Edward Colston, 2020

<<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/who-owns-colston/>> [accessed 5 July 2021].

newspapers of the period, Arrowsmith had great difficulty in raising the money to fund the statue that he proposed.¹¹⁰ An article in the *Bristol Mercury* newspaper published on 8 June 1894 claimed that the cost of the project was estimated around £1000.¹¹¹ The *Bristol Mercury* claimed over fifteen hundred members of four different Colston remembrance societies had been contacted for a donation to fund the statue which raised 'about £114 in addition to the £80 in hand'.¹¹² According to Philip Kuhn from the *Bristol Radical History Group*, many of the members of these Colston commemoration groups 'must be considered to have been amongst the wealthiest merchants and philanthropists in Bristol'.¹¹³ The *Bristol Mercury* expressed that the funds that had been raised to date was not very promising or reflective of Kuhn's notion that many of these members were particularly wealthy. It gives a greater understanding of how the lack of financial support from members was disappointing and how the statue was never really a popular project within the remembrance societies. Due to the necessary funding not being reached citizens were invited to subscribe to the fund.¹¹⁴ However, following the Colston statues unveiling, a publication from the *Western Daily Press* on 17 February 1896 states that a balance account of contributions and subscriptions in connection with the funding of the statue had been issued and that total donations totalled to '£675 13s 5d'.¹¹⁵ The article underlines that this total was made possible 'due mainly to the generosity of a gentleman who from the first has taken a leading part in the movement' who contributed roughly £117.¹¹⁶ The *Western Daily Press* states that the identity of the contributor is listed as 'a friend' and the article indicates that it will be 'without much difficulty' to work out the identity of this mystery 'friend'.¹¹⁷ It is widely accepted in scholarship that the secret identity of the contributor is in fact Arrowsmith, the initiator of the project to honour Colston with a statue.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰ 'The Talk of Bristol - Bristol Mercury, 1894', p. 8.

¹¹¹ 'The Talk of Bristol - Bristol Mercury, 1894', p. 8.

¹¹² 'The Talk of Bristol - Bristol Mercury, 1894', p. 8.

¹¹³ Kuhn; 'The Talk of Bristol - Bristol Mercury, 1894'.

¹¹⁴ 'The Talk of Bristol - Bristol Mercury, 1894', p. 8.

¹¹⁵ 'The Western Daily Press, Bristol, Monday, February 17 1896', *Western Daily Press* (Online, 17 February 1896), Image edition, p. 5, The British Newspaper Archive.

¹¹⁶ 'Western Daily Press - Bristol, 1896', p. 5.

¹¹⁷ 'Western Daily Press - Bristol, 1896', p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Eva Branscome, 'Colston's Travels, or Should We Talk About Statues?', *ARENA Journal of Architectural Research*, 6.1 (2021), 29 (p. 15) <<https://doi.org/10.5334/ajar.261>>; Kuhn, 2020.

The struggle to raise funds for the Colston statue suggests that the statue was forced upon Bristol's city centre by the interest of a few rather than it being desired by the people of Bristol. Architectural Historian Eva Branscome discusses that the little support from the citizens of Bristol in raising the funds for the statue ultimately led to a large single donation (assumed to be Arrowsmith) to cover the deficit.¹¹⁹ Branscome underlines the social unrest within Bristol during this time which may well have been a significant reason for the lack of support by the local populace.¹²⁰ However, despite the reasoning for the lack of support from the city's residents, the Colston statue was seemingly forced onto the people of Bristol and in light of this, the bronze inscription on the Colston statue that reads 'erected by citizens of Bristol' seems somewhat contradictory.¹²¹ The *London St James Gazette* published 14 November 1895 states that the Colston statue was 'provided by the subscriptions of members of the four Colston Benevolent Societies in Bristol' with no inclusion of the citizens of Bristol and their donations.¹²² The exclusion is slightly amusing because despite how small the support was from the locals it resembles the financial backing from the actual members of the Colston societies, who were thought to be among the wealthiest individuals within the city. This small exclusion presents the Colston commemorative societies as giving to the people. The inscription on the Colston statue portrays that the memorial was pursued and established by the city of Bristol collectively, when in reality it can be seen as mainly down to the project promoter Arrowsmith and his continual pleading for sponsorship.

The representation of Colston in the memorial is in many ways a manufactured image that incorporates both self-promotion by Colston and endorsement by the sponsors of the statue many years after his death. The erection of the statue nearly one hundred and seventy-five years after Colston's death is interesting and may well be related to raising the profile and image of the city of Bristol. The timing of the commissioning of the statue fits with a period during which Bristol was facing the challenges of poverty and unemployment.¹²³ The erection of a statue of a local philanthropist would encourage charitable giving and generate pride within the

¹¹⁹ Branscome, p. 15.

¹²⁰ Branscome, p. 15.

¹²¹ Branscome, p. 15; Historic England Communications Team, 'Statue of Edward Colston'.

¹²² 'A Statue to Edward Colston', *London St James Gazette* (London, 14 November 1895), Online Image edition, section Politics and Persons, p. 13, Newspaper Archive.

¹²³ University of Bristol, 'Edward Colston: How Brits Turned A Slave Trader Into a Hero', *Science Codex*, 2020 <<https://www.sciencecodex.com/edward-colston-how-brits-turned-slave-trader-hero-649047>> [accessed 24 June 2021].

city and a much-needed morale boost. Colston fit the bill as a well-known figure whose name already appeared on numerous local landmarks. At the time the statue was commissioned in 1895, slavery had been abolished for over sixty years as a result of the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act.¹²⁴ The difficult heritage of Bristol's involvement with the trans-Atlantic slave trade, still within living memory, was perhaps consciously pushed into the background with a focus on the positive aspects of its past. The manipulation of the figure of Colston was explored by Professor S. Jordan in 1999.¹²⁵ Jordan argues that the depiction of Colston was in line with a common theme of legitimisation in memorials in the Victorian period and that the Colston statue portrayed Colston as a 'merchant prince and moral saint'.¹²⁶ The statue of Colston represented and emulated the city's proud heritage, however, the 'moral saint' depiction aided the shadowing of an opposing narrative and memory that depicts a more sinister image of Colston, one of a slave trader rather than an honest saint. The numerous monuments associated to Colston through his activities during his lifetime combined with the controversial and selective historical accounts aided and manufactured an image that was intended to represent the city and its people. The choices for the memorial may all find their origins in the reasons why they wanted to present Colston in this way. Colston was reinvented as the figure of a successful, proud and benevolent city that had weathered the storms of a difficult past.

The ability for Colston's legacy to live on long after his death came partly from self-promotion through his philanthropy and business endeavours during his lifetime which resulted in various monuments and associations being named in his honour. The commendable legacy of Colston as a great philanthropist in Bristol was made possible through Colston's social and commercial activities that laid the foundations for his legacy to be built upon. Whether intentionally or not, Colston began the process of his legacy being honoured and memorialised with such enthusiasm by funding projects such as *Colston's Almshouses* which was built in 1691

¹²⁴ The British Parliament, *Slavery Abolition Act 1833*, 1833
<<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1833/act/73/enacted/en/print.html>> [accessed 2 October 2020].

¹²⁵ Spencer Jordan, 'The Development and Implementation of Authority in a Regional Capital : A Study of Bristol's Elites, 1835-1939.', 1999, p. 323
<<https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.311875>> [accessed 24 June 2021].

¹²⁶ Jordan, p. 323.

and being the founder of *Colston's School* (originally named *Colston's Hospital*) in 1710 which would have promoted his name.¹²⁷ Social Historian Martin Gorsky discusses how charitable endowments in Bristol operated,

To assure perpetuity the group of trustees had to be a permanent body, typically a parish vestry, the town corporation, a gild or dissenting chapel. Capital initially took the form of property which engendered rents and leasing fees, but with the rise of the securities market in the eighteenth century it became more common either to leave consols or a lump sum for the purchase of stock. Income was targeted at the alleviation of poverty and sickness through the provision of doles, orphan schools and almshouses, and also met broader social needs as education, civil works, business loans and apprenticeship fees.¹²⁸

Gorsky argues that establishments such as the ones Colston invested in was more to do with 'individual inclination than social need' and points out that had it not been for Colston's charitable gifts to his own school it would have failed to establish any income to support its upkeep.¹²⁹ Gorsky draws on the perception that Colston's philanthropy may have had an opposite agenda from the act of kindness that had been attributed to Colston and his legacy. The discussion Gorsky has on the process of endowments seems to have a more capital opportunist agenda rather than one of a moral philanthropist. This is apparent in Bristol Cathedral where a memorial celebrating the memory of Colston is on display on their largest window with an inscription 'dedicated to the glory of God and in memory of Edward Colston 1636-1721', which was a gift from the *Dolphin Society*, a society established to imitate Colston's charitable endeavours.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Historic England Communications Team, 'Colston's Almshouses', *Historic England*, 2020 <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1202546>> [accessed 16 November 2020]; Colston's School, 'History of Colston's School', *Colston's*, 2021 <<http://www.colstons.org/name-consultation/history-of-colstons-school>> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹²⁸ Martin Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 1999), p. 41.

¹²⁹ Gorsky, p. 47.

¹³⁰ Branscome, p. 11; The Dolphin Society, 'Edward Colston, the Dolphin Society and 270 Years of Letter-Writing...History / Background', *The Dolphin Society*, 2015 <<https://www.dolphin-society.org.uk/history>> [accessed 1 July 2021].

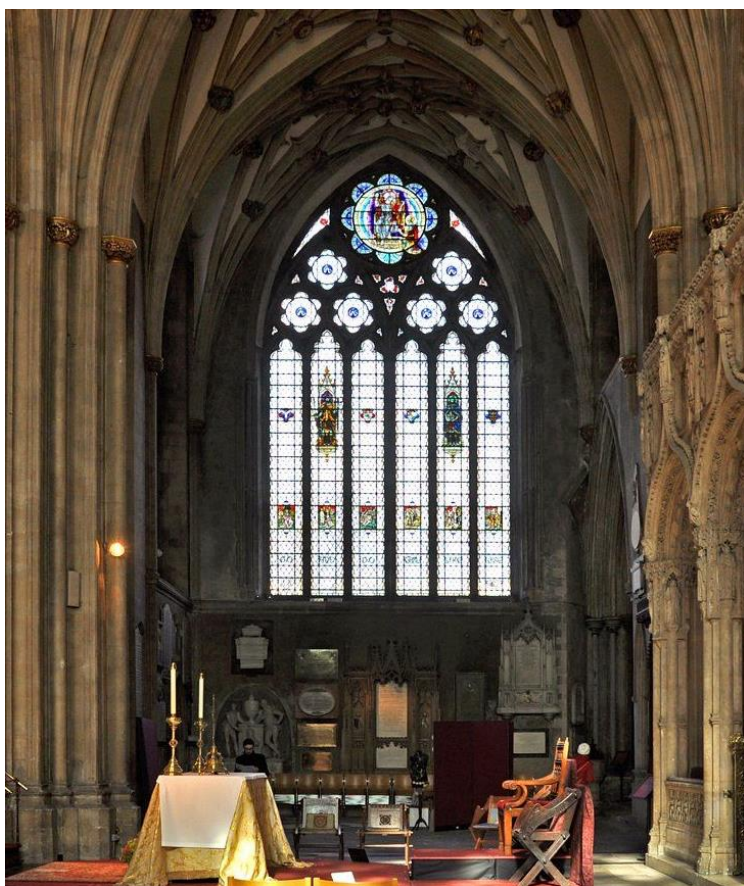


Figure 8: Stained glass window memorial honouring Edward Colston in Bristol Cathedral.¹³¹

Colston's image has been used to lead charitable societies such as the *Dolphin Society* and the intent in representation is clear with the noble saint legacy being portrayed through memorials such as the Colston Statue and the stained-glass windows on Bristol Cathedral. Professor Sally J Morgan highlights that Colston's reputation as a philanthropist is an unfair and deluded representation in modern principles.¹³² Morgan underlines that Colston's 'little kindnesses seem very little indeed' and combined with his connection to trading enslaved Africans his legacy, deeds and reputation is somewhat misinterpreted and misrepresented.¹³³ Morgan argues that Colston's philanthropy, especially the founding of his school and almshouse during his lifetime is more inclined with his own gain and agenda rather than the charitable act that is given face value.¹³⁴

In a period when it was notoriously hard to tempt men to work at sea, a time when potential sailors had to be press-ganged and were likely to jump ship at the first opportunity, the founding of these institutions might be seen less as an act of charity

¹³¹ BBC News Online, *The Window Is 'Dedicated to the Glory of God and in Memory of Edward Colston 1636-1721'*, 2017 <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-39063133>> [accessed 2 July 2021].

¹³² Morgan, pp.103–13.

¹³³ Morgan, pp. 105–6.

¹³⁴ Morgan, p. 106.

than as a pragmatic move to ensure a supply of trained labour from his school, and to encourage long service from his sailors through the promise of a place in his almshouse.¹³⁵

The objective of Colston's philanthropy appears multifaceted but what is clear is the acts during his lifetime were used by his supporters to present Colston as 'one of the most virtuous and wise sons of their city' as inscribed on the Colston statue.¹³⁶ Kenneth Morgan echoes Sally Morgan's depiction of Colston's questionable philanthropy and highlights the view point of the black community in Bristol in that Colston was 'someone who gained much of his fortune from the slave trade but singularly failed to do anything to aid the plight of black slaves'.¹³⁷ Through Colston's admirers and numerous societies in his honour it enabled the possibility for the narrative of his legacy to be shaped and moulded through their charitable acts and gifts in his name. The physical presence of Colston in Bristol through memorials aided his promoting and preserving his legacy.¹³⁸ The activist group, *Countering Colston* list over forty connections and commemorations within Bristol to Colston on their website.¹³⁹ This provides evidence not only on the magnitude of Colston's legacy but more importantly, the power that memorialisation can have on the public's collective memory. The selective concentration on promoting his philanthropy works and conveniently turning a blind eye to his commercial endeavours that created a collective memory of Colston's legacy as honest and honourable and a man worth celebrating. The collective memory of Colston formed a screen memory subtly distancing the city's links to the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The collective memory of Colston as a philanthropist was a popular narrative to present as it gave the city of Bristol an individual to celebrate and commemorate to promote the city; whether deliberately or not, it conveniently shadowed Colston and Bristol's deep-rooted connections to the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Alan Rice's depiction of the 'guerrilla memorialisation' concept portrays that activist groups fought against the given narrative with acts of vandalism such as graffitiing 'slave trader' on the Colston statue in 1999.¹⁴⁰ Rice emphasises the significant impact guerrilla memorialisation has in combating dominant narratives as it presents

¹³⁵ Morgan, p. 106.

¹³⁶ Cassidy; Historic England Communications Team, 'Statue of Edward Colston'.

¹³⁷ Kenneth Morgan, p. 18.

¹³⁸ Kenneth Morgan, p. 18.

¹³⁹ Countering Colston.

¹⁴⁰ Alan Rice, 'The History of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Heritage from Below in Action: Guerrilla Memorialisation in the Era of Bicentennial Commemoration', in *Heritage from Below*, ed. by Iain J. M. Robertson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 210.

a 'radical counterhistory' which is embedded within the local communities and is drowned out of the celebrated narratives.¹⁴¹ Further examples of guerrilla memorialisation in this context would be the actual toppling of the Colston statue in 2020 by the protesters and erecting a counter monument of BLM protester Jen Reid on Colston's plinth.¹⁴² This memorial of Jen Reid was taken down by Bristol town council within days of its secret unveiling, which has left the Colston plinth bare and empty, with just the memory of the day a slave trader disguised as a philanthropist was brought to justice for his crimes against humanity.



Figure 9: BLM protester Jen Reid standing in front of her statue on the plinth of Edward Colston, 2020, Image Credit: Graeme Robertson.¹⁴³

Cases of guerrilla memorialisation such as those stated surrounding Colston's statue from 1999 – 2020 gives evidence of the process of guerrilla memorialisation at work and highlights narratives of a shared history competing for dominance.¹⁴⁴ One of the significant impacts of guerrilla memorialisation is that it becomes a central talking point within the local community and due to the rise of social media, it has become possible to present suppressed narratives to the wider audience. This in turn makes it extremely difficult for an act to go unnoticed which ultimately brings narratives of a shared history in confrontation with each other. Regardless

¹⁴¹ Geoff Quilley, Fred D'Aguiar, and Hilda Kean, 'Roundtable: Alan Rice's "Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic"', ed. by Alan Rice, *Journal of American Studies*, 46.1 (2012), 219–35 (p. 220).

¹⁴² Archie Bland, 'Edward Colston Statue Replaced by Sculpture of Black Lives Matter Protester Jen Reid', *The Guardian* (Online, 15 July 2020), section World News <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/15/edward-colston-statue-replaced-by-sculpture-of-black-lives-matter-protester>> [accessed 21 September 2020].

¹⁴³ Graeme Robertson and The Guardian, *BLM Protester Jen Reid Stands in Front of a Statue of Her, Installed at the Site Previously Occupied by Slave Trader Edward Colston in Bristol*. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian, 2020 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/15/edward-colston-statue-replaced-by-sculpture-of-black-lives-matter-protester>>.

¹⁴⁴ Rice, 'The History of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Heritage from Below in Action: Guerrilla Memorialisation in the Era of Bicentennial Commemoration', pp. 210–11; Bland.

of how distasteful the events around a particular history are, the concept of guerrilla memorialisation has been proven as an effective way in countering the known narrative and making it possible for subdued narratives to rematerialize. The local memorialisation of Colston had produced a collective memory for the citizens of Bristol that had stretched into modern times. The impact of guerrilla memorialisation is evidential in fighting back against the given records of history and in the form of vandalism it becomes a hard one to promote. Had it not been for targeted vandalism and activist groups such as *Countering Colston*, the collective memory of Colston may have sustained the fixed narrative which was portrayed and accepted from the statue's establishment.

Rothberg's multidirectional memory theory provides an essential means of illustrating this confrontation of colliding histories. Rothberg argues that conflicts arise when the perspectives of collective memories become selective.¹⁴⁵ White's metahistory interweaves with Rothberg's theory in the view of historical narratives becoming selective. White states that written histories are selective, as the author is 'choosing one perspective on history rather than another' which ultimately gives the written history a bias perspective as it is being selective in its inclusion; however, what is excluded from the written history or given narrative very much tells a story and forms a narrative of its own.¹⁴⁶ Rothberg echoes this and states that when narratives become selective it ultimately chooses to ignore and deny important aspects of their history and heritage in favour to promote a particular view.¹⁴⁷ Rothberg puts an emphasis on accepting the 'inevitability of displacement and substitution in acts of remembrance' this requires us to recognise that a confliction of memories produces a 'rearticulation of historical relatedness beyond paradigms of uniqueness'.¹⁴⁸ This is apparent in relation to the memorialisation and narrative of Edward Colston. Arguably, guerrilla memorialisation played a crucial role in keeping Bristol's connections to the trans-Atlantic slave trade within the public's consciousness and cannot be overlooked in offering an alternative narrative to the one that was set in stone.

Examining how the narrative of Edward Colston was formed through his memorialisation sheds light on how selective narratives of histories can become established and dominant. The power memorialisation has in promoting a narrative is proven significant following the extensive memorialisation of Colston through the

¹⁴⁵ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 16.

¹⁴⁶ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987), preface xxi.

¹⁴⁷ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 16.

¹⁴⁸ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 14.

activist group Countering Colston. The physical representation of Colston in his statue depicts a moral, wealthy and virtuous individual with the body language of a man deep in contemplation abruptly gives the aura of a man held with great esteem connected to Bristol. However, what enabled Colston to be held in such high regard is down to his charitable activities. This has been brought into question though further investigation is needed on the actual extent of his philanthropy with critical analysis of ulterior motives to his charity acts. The struggle to raise the funds for the statue implies that Colston may not have been seen as a man worth honouring. Arrowsmith advocating for the statue and seemingly contributing a large sum of money to make ends meet, gives the impression that the statue had more to do with his personal agenda rather than the collective necessity of Bristol's population. Reflective in this context, the statue seems like an unwanted gift forced to be accepted rather than a desired one. Colston's name stamp on his charitable works during his lifetime aided the promotion of his legacy, where it has seen continuous commemorations in his name progressed through into modern times. The philanthropist representation of the Colston statue erected within living memory of the abolition of slavery provided a screen memory that promoted the good nature of Bristol and its locals and conveniently shied away from the disturbing events from the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The process of how these memories and narratives are formed and become established are examined by White's metahistory concept and Rothberg's multidirectional memory theory. In combining their adaptation in the context of Colston and his memorialisation it provides a rationale and understanding behind forms of guerrilla memorialisation. The use of Edward Colston as a case study provides sufficient evidence that not only memorials already established need readdressing but the process of memorialisation itself needs to be challenged.

Conclusion

Reflective on what has been discussed and presented in this research it has prompted several questions I wish the reader to contemplate. Should the idea and process of memorialisation to individuals become a trend of the past? Are individual memorials too controversial within multicultural societies? Should official accounts of histories be readdressed and reprocessed and in a comparative perspective?

Concluding on the evidence presented in this research it provides a realisation and understanding of how historical accounts can be constructed in favour of the writer's agenda more than the factual events of a history. The use of early biographies from Tovey and Garrard are evidential of the issues highlighted in White's metahistory. Gilroy's black Atlantic gives a means of how seemingly isolated events can be connected. The black Atlantic concept provides a possibility to connect the BLM movement with Edward Colston and his connection with the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The ability for Colston to even be considered as a philanthropist has had to come from the revenue he generated through his lifetime. Early biographies by Garrard and Tovey force fed the narrative of Colston as a philanthropist to the reader, forcing the assumption that Colston was nothing more than a magnificent philanthropist and astute businessman who shared his 'secret wealth' with the public and there were nothing more than goodhearted acts demonstrating his generous personality.¹⁴⁹ However, the failure to acknowledge Colston's involvement in the Royal African Company combined with his wealth being accumulated in secrecy seemed to be an open secret that has been adopted by numerous Colston societies. Through the memorialisation and charitable works in his name the open secret is portrayed as more of a myth than factual. Colston's deeds during his lifetime and the self-promotion that came as a result, combined with the initial biographies of Colston becomes straightforward to understand how Colston was held in such high regard. The folk in the road that authors of historical accounts ultimately arrive to is inclusion and exclusion which is a given understanding, but it is the emphasis of selectiveness that the writer decides on and how he wants his account to be perceived by the reader. Prior to the toppling of the Colston statue the dominant narrative could be dubbed as Colston the philanthropist, compared to Colston the slave trader since it was

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Garrard, *Edward Colston, The Philanthropist, His Life and Times; Including A Memoir of His Father; The Result of a Laborious Investigation into the Archives of the City*, ed. by Samuel. G. Tovey (Bristol: J. Chilcott, Clare Street, 1852), p. 319.

toppled. Rothberg's multidirectional memory provides an understanding of how memorials can help dictate the public's collective memory however, overtime moral principles and values change but the statues are predominantly set in stone. This produces the need to further examine the memorials that already decorate the streets and cities all over Britain so that honest representations where all sides of a shared history are honoured which Rothberg's describes as a comparative approach to memorialisation.¹⁵⁰

The acts of guerrilla memorialisation kept the narrative of Colston as a slave trader alive, but it was continually drowned out. Arguably because memorials to Colston were decorated all over the civic space in Bristol, or that it is just easier to disregard a part of history that makes for an uncomfortable conversation that people naturally distance themselves from. Had it not been for the events in America surrounding George Floyd's murder it is doubtful the statue would have been toppled, however this form of guerrilla memorialisation made it possible for the narrative of Colston as a slave trader to become established and acknowledged by the wider audience. It is acts such as these that offer a way to counter the known narrative and bring the controversies into the public sphere. The narrative that dominated for so long has much to do with the public's collective memory on how they wished to perceive the Colston statue. The evidence provided on the means of how the Colston statue was established and made possible has to send major alarm bells ringing as to what other memorials have been erected through biased accounts of history that have totally disregarded a heritage of another. The BLM protests have proven that many memorials around Britain have become outdated and no longer represent the Britain they were established in. The research into Edward Colston and the process of memorialisation has shown how narratives of the past can shape memorials that we look upon today and it is their reputation that manipulates the collective memory and, in the case of Colston can form screen memories that make it simply easier to forget than remember. Unfortunately for Colston, he may have been a great philanthropist, but as this research has shown that is questionable. Through changing ideologies his exposed history is one that does not sit well in a multicultural Britain. The empty plinth of Colston is symbolically a memorial with its constant reminder of what happens when parts of our history and heritage are disregarded. BLM protesters pushing the statue of slave trader Edward Colston into Bristol harbour was, to an outside

¹⁵⁰ Rothberg, p. 16.

observer, a somewhat poetic justice for a man who was involved in profiting from trafficking enslaved Africans across the Atlantic.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archives, The National, 'The National Archives - Currency Converter: 1270–2017', Currency Converter (The National Archives, 2017) <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>> [accessed 16 November 2020]

'A Statue to Edward Colston', *London St James Gazette* (London, 14 November 1895), Online Image edition, section Politics and Persons, Newspaper Archive

Barber, Reginald, *John Cassidy (1860–1939)*, 1900, Oil on canvas, 58.6x107.3 cm, Manchester Art Gallery <<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/john-cassidy-18601939-rbs-204409>> [accessed 30 March 2021]

BBC News Online, *The Window Is 'Dedicated to the Glory of God and in Memory of Edward Colston 1636-1721'*, 2017, Online Image <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-39063133>> [accessed 2 July 2021]

British Parliament, 'The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act 1807' (Britain, 1807) <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/slavery/pdf/abolition.pdf> [accessed 22 June 2020]

Cassidy, John, *Statue of Edward Colston*, 1895, Bronze statue with Portland stone pedestal, Heritage Category: Listed Building, 1202137 <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1202137>> [accessed 9 October 2020]

'Colston Anniversary', *Bristol Mercury* (Online, 14 November 1895), Image edition, section Advertisements & Notices

Colston, Edward, 'Will of Edward Colston of Mortlake, Surrey' (The National Archives, Kew, 1721), The National Archives, Kew, PROB 11/582/499

Francis, Paul, *Edward Colston (1636–1721) Photo Album | Art UK*, 2020, Online Image, Art UK Online, BS1_PF_S021 <<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/edward-colston-16361721-276045>> [accessed 24 June 2021]

Garrard, Thomas, *Edward Colston, The Philanthropist, His Life and Times; Including A Memoir of His Father; The Result of a Laborious Investigation into the Archives of the City*, ed. by Samuel. G. Tovey (Bristol: J. Chilcott, Clare Street, 1852)

Historic England Communications Team, 'Colston's Almshouses', *Historic England*, 2020 <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1202546>> [accessed 16 November 2020]

— — —, 'Statue of Edward Colston', *Historic England*, 2020 <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1202137>> [accessed 2 October 2020]

King Charles II, 'The King Grants the Right to Trade in Africa' (The National Archives Website, 1672), The National Archives, Kew, CO 268/1, ff. 8 10 <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/africa_caribbean/docs/charter_royal_african.htm> [accessed 17 November 2020]

- , 'The Royal African Company Trades for Commodities Along the West African Coast' (The National Archives Website, 1672), The National Archives, Kew, CO 268/1, ff. 5-6
<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/africa_caribbean/transcripts/accts_rac.htm> [accessed 17 November 2020]
- Latimer, John, *The Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* (Bristol, 1893)
<<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044012600573&view=1up&seq=95&q1=85>> [accessed 16 November 2020]
- 'The Talk of Bristol', *Bristol Mercury* (Online, 8 June 1894), Image edition, p. 8, The British Newspaper Archive
- 'The Western Daily Press, Bristol, Monday, February 17 1896', *Western Daily Press* (Online, 17 February 1896), Image edition, The British Newspaper Archive
- Tovey, Samuel. G., *Colston, the Philanthropist; Memorials of His Life and Deeds*, 2d. ed. (Bristol: T. D. Taylor, 1863) <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112089334657>>
- 'Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade - Database', *SlaveVoyages*, 2021
<<https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>> [accessed 27 February 2021]
- UCL Department of History, 'Legacies of British Slave-Ownership', *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership*, 2021
<<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>> [accessed 5 March 2021]
- , 'The Database | Legacies of British Slave-Ownership', *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership*, 2021
<<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/details/>> [accessed 5 March 2021]
- Verture, George, *Edward Colston, 1722*, line engraving, 391 mm x 289 mm, National Portrait Gallery, NPG D34050 <<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw147982/Edward-Colston>> [accessed 7 July 2021]
- Wilkins, Henry John, *Edward Colston (1636-1721 A.D.), a Chronological Account of His Life and Work Together with an Account of the Colston Societies and Memorials in Bristol* (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1920)

Secondary Sources

- Ball, Roger, 'Myths within Myths... Edward Colston and That Statue', *Bristol Radical History Group*, 2017
<<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/myths-within-myths/>> [accessed 2 October 2020]
- , Table 4: Numbers of Enslaved Africans Embarked and Disembarked on RAC Trans-Atlantic Voyages for the Period 1680-92., 2017, Online Image <<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/edward-colston-research-paper-1/#edward-colston-research-paper-1-n-12>> [accessed 24 February 2021]
- , 'The Royal African Company and Edward Colston (1680-92)', *Bristol Radical History Group*, 1 (2017)
<<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/edward-colston-research-paper-2/>> [accessed 19 November 2020]
- , 'The Royal African Company and Edward Colston (1680-92)', *Bristol Radical History Group*, 2 (2017)
<<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/edward-colston-research-paper-2/>> [accessed 19 November 2020]

- Bland, Archie, 'Edward Colston Statue Replaced by Sculpture of Black Lives Matter Protester Jen Reid', *The Guardian* (Online, 15 July 2020), section World News
<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/15/edward-colston-statue-replaced-by-sculpture-of-black-lives-matter-protester>> [accessed 21 September 2020]
- Branscome, Eva, 'Colston's Travels, or Should We Talk About Statues?', *ARENA Journal of Architectural Research*, 6.1 (2021), 29 <<https://doi.org/10.5334/ajar.261>>
- Carlos, Ann M., and Jamie Brown Kruse, 'The Decline of the Royal African Company: Fringe Firms and the Role of the Charter', *The Economic History Review*, 49.2 (1996), 291–313
<<https://doi.org/10.2307/2597917>>
- Colston's School, 'History of Colston's School', *Colston's*, 2021 <<http://www.colstons.org/name-consultation/history-of-colstons-school>> [accessed 1 July 2021]
- Cork, Tristan, 'Why School's Edward Colston Commemoration Day Won't Mention Him', *Bristol Live* (Online, 17 October 2017), section Bristol News <<http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/colstons-girls-school-commemoration-day-640090>> [accessed 1 April 2021]
- Countering Colston, 'Where Is Colston Celebrated?', *Countering Colston - Campaign to Decolonise Bristol*, 2020 <<https://counteringcolston.wordpress.com/who-celebrates-colston/>> [accessed 13 November 2020]
- Cullors, Patrisse, *Black Lives Matter - 2020 Impact Report* (Online, 2020), p. 42
<<https://blacklivesmatter.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/blm-2020-impact-report.pdf>> [accessed 21 March 2021]
- Davies, Kenneth Gordon, *The Royal African Company* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1999)
- Department of Comparative Literature, 'Michael Rothberg', *Comparative Literature - UCLA*, 2020
<<https://complit.ucla.edu/person/michael-rothberg/>> [accessed 27 October 2020]
- Drake, Carole, 'Commemoration Day', in *Trophies of Empire* (Liverpool: Bluecoat Gallery and Liverpool John Moores University School of Design & Visual Arts, 1994)
<https://mybluecoat.org.uk/pdfs/viewer.html?file=/bluecoatimages/Bluecoat_School/Slavery/1994_Trophies_of_Empire_Publication.pdf> [accessed 1 April 2021]
- Gilroy, Paul, *The Black Atlantic - Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 1st edition (London: Verso Books, 1993)
- Gogarty, Conor, 'Stone from Edward Colston's Statue Plinth Disappears', *BristolLive* (Online, 9 June 2020), section Bristol News <<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/stone-edward-colstons-statue-plinth-4209135>> [accessed 1 April 2021]
- Gorsky, Martin, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 1999)
- Gould, Laurence J., 'Collective Working Through: The Role and Function of Memorialisation', *Organisational and Social Dynamics; Bicester*, 11.1 (2011), 79–92
- Hanman, Andrew A, and H. J. Wilkins, 'Colston, Edward II (1636-1721), of Mortlake, Surr.', *The History of Parliament - British Political, Social & Local History*, 2002
<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/member/colston-edward-ii-1636-1721#footnote2_0ozaw48> [accessed 13 November 2020]
- Hill, Evan, Ainara Tiefertäler, Christiaan Triebert, Drew Jordan, Haley Willis, and Robin Stein, 'How George Floyd Was Killed in Police Custody', *The New York Times* (Online, 31 May 2020), section U.S.
<<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html>> [accessed 2 October 2020]

- Holloway, Margaret, Miroslava Hukelova, Louis Bailey, Lisa Dikomitis, Nicholas J Evans, Andrew Goodhead, and others, *Remember Me: The Changing Face of Memorialisation: Final Report*, Remember Me (Online: University of Hull, 2019), pp. 1–76
<<https://remembermeproject.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/remember-me-overarching-report-e-version-final.pdf>> [accessed 7 October 2020]
- Hulme, Charlie, 'Edward Colston Statue, Bristol (1895)', *John Cassidy: Manchester Sculptor*, 2020
<<http://www.johncassidy.org.uk/cassidy2b.html>> [accessed 30 March 2021]
- Hulme, Charlie, and Lis Nicolson, 'The Life of John Cassidy', *John Cassidy: Manchester Sculptor*, 2020
<<http://www.johncassidy.org.uk/life.html>> [accessed 30 March 2021]
- Jordan, Spencer, 'The Development and Implementation of Authority in a Regional Capital : A Study of Bristol's Elites, 1835-1939.', 1999 <<https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.311875>> [accessed 24 June 2021]
- Kuhn, Philip, 'Who Owns Colston?', *Bristol Radical History Group*, Edward Colston, 2020
<<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/articles/who-owns-colston/>> [accessed 5 July 2021]
- Langton, Kaisha, 'Black Lives Matter "racist" Statues MAPPED: Are Any of the 112 Statues near You?', *Express.Co.Uk* (Online, 12 June 2020), section UK
<<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1293928/Black-Lives-Matter-racist-statues-map-Robert-Milligan-Cecil-Rhodes>> [accessed 9 January 2021]
- Levesque, Christopher, *Holocaust Memory and the Migrant "Double Bind" in Contemporary Germany: Interview with Michael Rothberg*, 2018 <<https://thesocietypages.org/holocaust-genocide/michael-rothberg-on-holocaust-memory-and-the-migrant-double-bind-in-contemporary-germany/>> [accessed 10 November 2020]
- Logan, William, and Keir Reeves, *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage'* (Routledge, 2008)
- Morgan, Kenneth, 'Edward Colston and Bristol', Bristol Branch of the Historical Association The University, Bristol, 96 (1999), 1–25
- Morgan, Sally, 'Memory and the Merchants: Commemoration and Civic Identity', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 4.2 (1998), 103–13 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13527259808722225>>
- Munslow, Alun, *Narrative and History*, 2nd Edition (London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2018)
- Quilley, Geoff, Fred D'Aguiar, and Hilda Kean, 'Roundtable: Alan Rice's "Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic"', ed. by Alan Rice, *Journal of American Studies*, 46.1 (2012), 219–35
- Rappaport, Scott, 'Influential Historian Hayden White Dies at 89', *UC Santa Cruz News*, 2018
<<https://news.ucsc.edu/2018/03/hayden-white-news-obit.html>> [accessed 28 October 2020]
- Rice, Alan, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic*, Illustrated edition (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010)
- , 'The History of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Heritage from Below in Action: Guerrilla Memorialisation in the Era of Bicentennial Commemoration', in *Heritage from Below*, ed. by Iain J. M. Robertson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016)
- , 'Professor Alan Rice - Slavery, Racial Injustice and Guerilla Memorialisation in the Circum-Atlantic' (Edge Hill University Lectures & Events: Youtube, 2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_v7ZBg-DuM&t=1151s> [accessed 7 July 2021]

- Robertson, Graeme, and The Guardian, *BLM Protester Jen Reid Stands in Front of a Statue of Her, Installed at the Site Previously Occupied by Slave Trader Edward Colston in Bristol*. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian, 2020, Online Image
<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/15/edward-colston-statue-replaced-by-sculpture-of-black-lives-matter-protester>>
- Rothberg, Michael, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009)
- Siddique, Haroon, and Clea Skopeliti, 'BLM Protesters Topple Statue of Bristol Slave Trader Edward Colston', *The Guardian* (Online, 7 June 2020), section UK news <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/07/blm-protesters-topple-statue-of-bristol-slave-trader-edward-colston>> [accessed 30 September 2020]
- Spaulding, A. Timothy, *Re-Forming the Past: History, the Fantastic, and the Postmodern Slave Narrative* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2005)
- The British Museum, 'Edward Colston | British Museum', *The British Library*
<<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG133284>> [accessed 2 October 2020]
- The Dolphin School, 'Background - The Dolphin School Bristol', *The Dolphin School*, 2021
<<https://www.dolphinschoolbristol.org/1489/background>> [accessed 7 July 2021]
- The Dolphin Society, 'Edward Colston, the Dolphin Society and 270 Years of Letter-Writing...History / Background', *The Dolphin Society*, 2015 <<https://www.dolphin-society.org.uk/history>> [accessed 1 July 2021]
- University of Bristol, 'Edward Colston: How Brits Turned A Slave Trader Into a Hero', *Science Codex*, 2020
<<https://www.sciencecodex.com/edward-colston-how-brits-turned-slave-trader-hero-649047>> [accessed 24 June 2021]
- Wall, Tom, 'The Day Bristol Toppled Colston – and a Nation Began to Search Its Soul', *The Guardian* (Online, 14 June 2020), section UK news <<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/14/the-day-bristol-dumped-its-hated-slave-trader-in-the-docks-and-a-nation-began-to-search-its-soul>> [accessed 2 December 2020]
- White, Hayden, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987) Araujo, Ana Lucia, *Shadows of the Slave Past: Memory, Heritage, and Slavery* (Routledge, 2014)