

The War on Witchcraft: Andrew Dickson White, George Lincoln Burr, and the Origins of Witchcraft Historiography

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Abstract: Historians of the early modern witch-hunt often begin histories of their field with the realist theories propounded by Margaret Murray and Montague Summers in the 1920s. They overlook the lasting impact of nineteenth-century scholarship, in particular the contributions by two American historians, Andrew Dickson White (1832–1918) and George Lincoln Burr (1857–1938). Study of their work and scholarly personae contributes to our understanding of the deeply embedded popular understanding of the witch-hunt as representing an irrational past in opposition to an enlightened present. Yet the men’s relationship with each other, and with witchcraft sceptics – the heroes of their studies – also demonstrates how their writings were part of a larger war against ‘unreason’. This Element thus lays bare the ways scholarly masculinity helped shape witchcraft historiography, a field of study often seen as dominated by feminist scholarship. Such meditation on past practice may foster further reflection on contemporary models of history writing.

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Figure 1. Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki, ‘Christian Thomasius Helps an Elderly Witchcraft Suspect out of Her Prison Cell’ (1800). Image Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

1. ‘Ding! Dong! The Witch is Dead’

From the outset writing witchcraft history was about making witchcraft *history*. When scholars during the early eighteenth century began to reflect on the history of the European witch-hunt they did so with the explicit aim of banishing witchcraft to the past. The historicizing practices of these sceptics have generally been overlooked but they are the inevitable companion of the other, better-known strategy of presenting witchcraft beliefs solely as the preserve of the credulous multitude.¹ The two strategies come together in a work often regarded as the first history of the witch-hunt, at least for England: Francis Hutchinson’s 1718 *An Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft*.² The sceptical minister of Bury St Edmunds and ‘a Whig on his way up’ denounced ‘the credulous Multitude ... ever ... ready to try their Tricks and swim the old Women’, while also marking the time since England’s last witchcraft execution – ‘thirty five Years last past’ – and the nation’s reputation as ‘the first in

¹ On this ‘historicizing’ point see my review of Hunter, *The Decline of Magic*, and the author’s response: Machielsen, ‘Review of “The Decline of Magic”’.

² See e.g. Gaskill, ‘The Pursuit of Reality’, p. 1069. Gaskill presents Christian Thomasius’s 1701 *De crimine magiae* as the ‘first history of witchcraft’ but there is nothing overtly historical about that treatise. A 1712 law dissertation written by Thomasius and defended by one of his students does take a historical perspective: Thomasius, *Disputatio iuris canonici de origine ac progressu processus inquisitorii contra sagas*. Its aim was to prove that the demonic pact was not more than 600 years old. The claim overlooks the use of the past by authors defending the reality of witchcraft. Hutchinson was responding to Richard Boulton’s 1715 *A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft*. The question as to when Europeans began to see the past as a different country is a contentious one. For instance, Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, p. 4, dates this moment to ‘the late eighteenth century’, while Schiffman, *The Birth of the Past*, points to Renaissance humanism.

these latter Ages that clear'd it self of such Superstitions.'³ Two centuries later Hutchinson's victory appeared so decisive that Wallace Notestein felt comfortable ending his own 1911 study of witchcraft in England with the publication of this 'final and deadly blow at the dying superstition.'⁴ The end of witchcraft was history's triumph, or so it seemed.

This attitude has endured for a surprisingly long time. In his 1997 study, Ian Bostridge still considered Hutchinson's reply to be 'the last word in the witchcraft debate, a masterpiece of humane rationalism.'⁵ Yet Bostridge also recovers Hutchinson's anxieties about the timing of the work's publication and its possible reception, and he points out the artificiality of the main argument: the 1712 trial and conviction of Jane Wenham, which preoccupies a sizable part of the Whig's treatise, showed that the Witchcraft Act had by no means become a dead letter. (Wenham escaped the noose through a royal pardon.⁶) Both Bostridge and Hutchinson's subsequent biographer, Andrew Sneddon, note Hutchinson's redeployment of age-old sceptical arguments ('old wine ... in the new bottles of the "new science"').⁷ Strangely neither scholar has commented on the *Historical Essay*'s historical packaging, evident not only from the title but also from the extended 'Chronological Table' with which it more or less opens.⁸ Yet the historical approach aligned well with Hutchinson's moderation. The *Historical Essay* restricted itself to an examination of past cases of fraud, deception, and mental illness, avoiding the radical and complete rejections of the spirit world put forth by Thomas Hobbes, Balthasar Bekker, and Baruch Spinoza. In private, Hutchinson even offered to change his mind about witchcraft, 'if ever experience doth shew the contrary.'⁹ Upon closer examination then the historian comes across as timid, especially when compared to the universal certainties professed by the philosophers.

From these unheroic beginnings, historians have for generations worked hard to make witchcraft a thing of the past, even – or perhaps especially – when they knew that witchcraft beliefs (or other forms of apparent irrationality) still surrounded them. Parallels between witchcraft belief and fascism – 'another delusion, not so different in its effects or in its locale from the early witchcraft persecutions' – circulated widely during the Second World War and its aftermath.¹⁰ The influential works of Hugh Trevor Roper and Norman Cohn published during the 1960s and 1970s were still written in the shadow of a war in which both men served as British military officers.¹¹ For such authors, witchcraft was truly dead and buried – it had to be – but there was always the anxious possibility that it might return from the grave in another though related guise. Even today a prominent

³ Hutchinson, *An Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft*, pp. viii, 49, [xviii]. For this description of Hutchinson, see Bostridge, *Witchcraft and Its Transformations*, p. 144.

⁴ Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718*, p. vi.

⁵ Bostridge, *Witchcraft and Its Transformations*, p. 142. The claim that Hutchinson's book was 'in any serious sense' the last word is repeated on p. 153. For Sneddon's refutation of this claim, see Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Whigs*, pp. 123–25.

⁶ On the Wenham trial and its contemporary reception, see also Guskin, 'The Context of Witchcraft'.

⁷ Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Whigs*, p. 110.

⁸ The *Essay*'s second chapter is entitled 'Chronological Table of some Tryals and Executions of supposed Witches and Conjurers, and Imposters.' As Andrew Sneddon pointed out to me, Hutchinson engaged in a great number of historical projects throughout his life. As a young man, Hutchinson's 'historical studies' were directed by his maternal uncle, the ejected Puritan minister Francis Tallents: Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Whigs*, p. 19.

⁹ Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Whigs*, p. 122.

¹⁰ Guerlac, 'George Lincoln Burr', p. 152.

¹¹ Trevor-Roper, 'The European Witch-Craze'; Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*.

historical survey remains committed to ‘annihilat[ing]’ witchcraft belief, while the ‘decline of magic’ narrative is proving to be nearly as persistent as the beliefs whose death it purports to chart.¹²

All that said, the historicizing project has mostly been abandoned. At a time when modernity itself seems in peril, historians have come to reject larger, often sociological frameworks of modernization and disenchantment that underpin the very essence of the ‘early modern’.¹³ The past two decades have seen a venerable boom in studies of nineteenth and twentieth-century witchcraft beliefs, as well as studies of how modern Wiccans have constructed new histories of their own.¹⁴ Instead of the decline of magic, historians study its transformation in new guises and new contexts. Still, while academic history has moved on, this earlier campaign to make witchcraft a relic of the past has proved surprisingly successful. In our lecture theatres, seminar rooms, and Zoom classes we are reaping a past vision of history that our predecessors sowed. Students continue to arrive with views of witchcraft as inherently irrational, superstitious, false and therefore *obviously* past tense.

The problems with these popular attitudes are manifold. They drip with condescension and paternalism towards the past. They evince no understanding of or interest in the agency and beliefs of those involved in the witch-hunt (including the victims themselves), they simply prescribe better knowledge as a panacea.¹⁵ Ironically, these views unwittingly adhere to the same dichotomy between axiomatically true and false beliefs that structured the belief system they so ostentatiously scorn – dressed up in the same (originally religious) language of superstition that the demonologists once used themselves.¹⁶ The problem with the past was simply a lack of scientific rationalism. Refuting such facile assertions of reason or irrationality is not the principal focus of this study, however. They are simply a by-product of this Element’s central pre-occupation: the ways in which witchcraft beliefs have unthinkingly come to be seen as ‘past’, long before they actually were. (If, indeed, they are.) In 2006 the classicist Christopher Mackay chose as the motto for his new translation of the *Malleus maleficarum* the well-known line by L. P. Hartley that ‘the past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.’¹⁷ While also frankly uninspired, the choice further reveals how unreflectively *past* witchcraft has become. Metaphorical uses of witchcraft and witch-hunting are instructive. Labelling judicial investigations ‘the greatest witch hunt in American history’ not only lays claim to innocent victimhood, the grievance also seeks to discredit and delegitimize.¹⁸ Even politicians who blatantly contravene societal and political norms know that witch-hunting is fundamentally not us. It is what our ancestors did. Only the Middle Ages are used in a similar way. The news media abound in denunciations of terrorist atrocities and other horrors, even poor mobile phone reception, as

¹² For a study ‘designed’ to ‘annihilate’ fears of witches ‘by providing a better understanding of the roots of belief in such a figure and how they developed in a European context’, see Hutton, *The Witch*, p. 280. For the latest articulation of the decline of magic narrative see Hunter, *The Decline of Magic*. For the point about magic’s endurance, see William Pooley’s excellent review of the same volume: Pooley, ‘Review of “The Decline of Magic”’.

¹³ For modernization, see Walker, ‘Modernization’, esp. pp. 38–39. For a critique of the ‘disenchantment of the world’ theory, see Walsham, ‘The Reformation and “the Disenchantment of the World” Reassessed’.

¹⁴ See especially Waters, *Cursed Britain*, Pooley, ‘Magical Capital’, and the collection of essays included in Davies and De Blécourt (eds), *Witchcraft Continued*.

¹⁵ On the agency of victims of the witch-hunt, the starting points remain Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil* and Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*.

¹⁶ Clark, *Thinking with Demons*; Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*.

¹⁷ Institoris and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, ed. Christopher S. Mackay.

¹⁸ By one count President Trump tweeted the words ‘Witch Hunt’ more than 300 times: Almond, ‘You Think This Is a Witch Hunt, Mr President?’

‘medieval’. Both the time period and the witch persecutions are seen as the very essence of past ignorance that can be used to criticize aspects of the enlightened present. These metaphors create a bridge between the past and present that should not exist. It is no wonder that the witch-hunt is so often wrongly seen as a product of the ‘Dark Ages’, rather than the early modern period.¹⁹

Historians in recent years have shown renewed interest in ‘presentism’, the ways in which the present is anachronistically read into the past and the past is put to use in the present.²⁰ This study is interested in a form of presentism that at first sight might appear its antithesis: the past as a place of banishment, a Pandora’s box containing Europe’s inner demons, which should remain closed but always risks being opened. Far from its alter ego, this is presentism on steroids – it articulates a relation between past and present which emphasizes difference, distance, and thus moral superiority, though this is always imperilled and cannot be taken for granted. A comprehensive study of the origins of witchcraft’s past-ness would be a veritable whistle stop tour. Beyond the case study to which this Element is devoted, it would pay special attention to the 1691 Salem witch-hunt and examine how, almost from the outset, it got lodged in the American national subconscious.²¹ It would most certainly explore the long history of metaphorical witch-hunts and the ways these established a parallel between the past and present. World War Two, as already suggested, looms particularly large here, with Nazis in the role of witch-hunters. (In 1945, as part of the tercentenary commemorations of the East Anglia Witch-Hunt, *The Essex Newsmen* described Witchfinder General Matthew Hopkins as ‘the Himmler of his time.’²²) Especially important in this regard is Arthur Miller’s 1953 play *The Crucible*, and its attack on McCarthyism.²³ Its enduring influence can be measured by the fact that one recent scholar, in a botched attempt at reactionary revisionism, has called for historians to return to the *play*’s understanding of the Salem witch-hunt: ‘if ever there were an instance of “throwing the baby out with the bathwater”, the post-1960s historians of witchcraft have produced one.’²⁴

No study of popular culture could ever be a linear history, however, and a survey would also include those cross currents that agitate against the witch-hunt’s past-ness: for Wiccans and feminists the early modern witch-hunt has been a formative injury, as ‘the burning times’ or a ‘gynocide’, with consequences for the present and future.²⁵ Indirectly, however, these foundation myths may still contribute to the narrative that interests us here. By doubling down on the *craze* in ‘witch-craze’ and amplifying its scale to that of a genuine Holocaust, even these rival understandings of witchcraft history as not-past contribute to popular views of the witch-hunt as the very essence of the irrational past.²⁶

¹⁹ For the examples, and the parallel with witch-hunting, see Falk, *The Light Ages*, p. 5.

²⁰ See e.g. Welch, ‘Presentism and the Renaissance and Early Modern Historian’, which notes on p. 247 that for witchcraft historians ‘the past is not the beginning of today but often an unrecognizable alien environment, one where walking and talking with demons was the norm, not the exception.’ The classic, recently revised study of presentism is Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*.

²¹ Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*.

²² ‘The Witch Hunter’, *Essex Newsmen*, 27 February 1945. I owe this reference to my dissertation student, Robert Pearce.

²³ Miller’s own reflections on writing the play are a good starting point: Arthur Miller, ‘Why I Wrote “The Crucible”’.

²⁴ For this unusual use of Miller’s play, see Fels, *Switching Sides*, p. 127.

²⁵ For introductions to these alternative histories, see Shuck, ‘The Myth of the Burning Times’. For ‘gynocide’, see Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*, p. 198.

²⁶ On the eighteenth-century origins of the figure of nine million executions and its adoption by pagans, feminists, and even Nazis, see Behringer, ‘Neun Millionen Hexen’.

While others were certainly more important in disseminating and popularising witchcraft's past-ness, the two figures at the centre of this study – Andrew Dickson White (1832–1918) and his student George Lincoln Burr (1857–1938) – were instrumental in its formulation. Indeed, the importance of the two nineteenth-century American historians becomes clearer still if we approach our subject genealogically. Their works mark the first contributions to the history of witchcraft within English-speaking academia – White was the first President of the American Historical Association – and very possibly beyond it. The only work which the two men acknowledged as a precursor to their own, and which devoted a chapter on the witch-hunt, was the *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (1865) by the gentleman scholar William Lecky.²⁷ While witchcraft prosecutions had ended, White and Burr still grappled with the same problem that confronted Hutchinson a century earlier: what to do with a superstitious present that is not yet past? Their solution was to position witchcraft within a wider struggle between scientific investigation and religious dogma. This constitutes a – perhaps *the* – crucial link in the development of modern popular understandings of witchcraft. In this larger, indeed still on-going war between rationalism and superstition, the end of witchcraft prosecutions became a hallmark of the progress already made and proof of an enlightened present. White and Burr were warriors. Their histories cast witchcraft into the past as part of an ongoing war against present-day unreason, that war was by no means won but witchcraft's pastness demonstrated that with enough effort it inevitably would be.

These wider objectives indicate that White and Burr cannot be confined to the history of witchcraft. Indeed, placing White within the context of witchcraft historiography may come as a revelation to some, yet the case for doing so is compelling. Witchcraft books and manuscripts form a central part of the President White Library, many of them purchased by Burr on White's behalf in Europe. Cornell University Library to whom White bequeathed his books still possesses one of the world's largest collections of such texts.²⁸ Yet despite his evident interest in the subject, White himself is principally – perhaps solely – remembered for his contributions to the history of science. His two-volume *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (hereafter *Warfare of Science* or simply *Warfare*, 1896) has rarely, if ever, been out of print since its first publication. Unlike witchcraft historians, historians of science have long waged a campaign against *Warfare*. Considered to be the origin of many of the falsehoods surrounding the history of science,²⁹ the work 'is no longer regarded as even a reliable secondary source for historical study.'³⁰ As such, historians of science have devoted entire volumes to debunking myths propagated by this book.³¹ As this suggests, the

²⁷ In September 1907, when Henry Charles Lea announced to Burr his plan to resume work on his history of witchcraft, he could still claim that 'so far as I am aware, with the exception of Lecky's brief sketch, there is no work in our language on the subject which has any claim to consideration': Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, MS Coll. 111: Henry Charles Lea papers, Box 4, Folder 209. Cape May, NJ, 7 September 1907. Unlike White and Burr, however, Lecky never held an academic post. White's presidential address was published in its proceedings and its text can still be found on the AHA's website: White, 'On Studies in General History and the History of Civilization'. [https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/presidential-addresses/andrew-dickson-white-\(1884\)](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/presidential-addresses/andrew-dickson-white-(1884)).

²⁸ The Cornell University Witchcraft Collection contains over 3,000 titles, many of them digitized: 'The Cornell University Witchcraft Collection'.

²⁹ See e.g. the comments in Park, 'That the Medieval Church Prohibited Human Dissection', p. 43 and Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion*, p. 172.

³⁰ Russell, 'The Conflict of Science and Religion', p. 10.

³¹ See Numbers (ed.), *Galileo Goes to Jail*; Numbers and Kampourakis (eds), *Newton's Apple and Other Myths about Science*.

emphasis has been on refuting rather than understanding White. He acts principally as a straw figure representing the outmoded ‘conflict’ thesis which postulated mutual hostility between science and religion.³² For all its historiographical importance therefore the context in which this seminal work was written has been remarkably little studied, as we shall explore further in the next section. Burr’s role in the composition of *Warfare of Science* has gone almost entirely unnoticed.³³

While historians of science have at least taken cognizance of White, students of the early modern witch-hunt have ignored both men.³⁴ One reason for this lack of attention to the *longue durée* has been the existence of a truncated narrative that roots the origins of witchcraft historiography in the works published by Montague Summers and, especially, Margaret Murray during the 1920s. Although their interpretations could hardly have been more different, both scholars insisted that witchcraft had in some sense been *real*, in a way that White and Burr, as committed ‘rationalists’, had not.³⁵ Murray’s 1921 *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* argued that early modern Europe’s witches had been members of a secret pagan fertility cult. Summers, an ostentatious convert to Catholicism, argued that demon worship was real and continued in other (*e.g.* Communist) guises up to the present.³⁶ Burr, still alive to rebut these claims, insisted on witchcraft’s past-ness: ‘Mr Summers is still in the Middle Ages ... writing to bring back the days of the *Malleus Maleficarum*’³⁷ Murray was similarly charged with seeking to turn back time. It was three hundred years since Friedrich Spee’s *Cautio criminalis* ‘which did most to convince the world that these confessions ... were but fabrications wrung from them by torture. ... The rational eighteenth century invited yet more thoroughgoing revelations; and now for more than a hundred years Protestant scholars and Catholic, once rivals in credulity, have been disputing instead as to the credit for priority in unmasking the cruel delusion.’³⁸ Burr, in the 1920s, struggled to keep Pandora’s Box of the past closed.

When British historians returned to the subject of the early modern witch-hunt in the 1960s, they set their sights on Murray. (It seems that Summers, for all his learning and philological skill, could be ignored as a harmless eccentric.) When in 1967 Hugh Trevor-Roper published his essay on ‘the European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, he told his readers that ‘the fancies of the late Margaret Murray need not detain us. They were justly, if irritably, dismissed by a *real scholar* as “vapid balderdash”.’³⁹ Keith Thomas’s tone was more restrained in his 1971 *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, though he similarly dismissed Murray’s work as ‘much overrated’.⁴⁰

³² For criticism of the ‘conflict’ thesis, see esp. Brooke, *Science and Religion*, pp. 1–68.

³³ The existence of Glenn C. Altschuler’s excellent biography of White could have been a reason, but I have found it very little cited by historians of science. The only previous discussion of Burr’s role is Bainton, ‘His Life’, pp. 48–58.

³⁴ The best, though brief discussion of White’s and Burr’s role in witchcraft historiography remains Estes, ‘Incarnations of Evil’, pp. 136–38. Fudge, ‘Traditions and Trajectories’, p. 493, mentions Burr only in passing and gives the wrong years both for his birth and his death; Gaskill, ‘The Pursuit of Reality’, p. 1069, lists Burr only as ‘inspired’ by the Cologne archivist Joseph Hansen, although many of Burr’s publications predated Hansen’s famous 1900 work. Burr is entirely absent from the otherwise comprehensive survey by Christa Tuczay, ‘The Nineteenth Century’.

³⁵ On Murray and Summers, see esp. Wood, ‘The Reality of Witch Cults Reasserted’.

³⁶ See, in particular, Summers, *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology*.

³⁷ Burr, ‘A Group of Four Books on Witchcraft and Demonology’, p. 491. In his autobiography, Summers expressed delight that ‘the vulgarians snapped and snarled’: Summers, *The Galanty Show*, p. 157.

³⁸ Burr, ‘Review of *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*’, p. 780.

³⁹ Trevor-Roper, ‘The European Witch-Craze’, p. 107, n. 45. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 436, bibliographical note.

Murray's lasting influence (also on the modern Wicca movement), her tenacious defence of her own work (Thomas praised a contemporary for his 'dignified reply to her staggeringly ungenerous notices of his work'), and her longevity (she optimistically entitled her 1963 autobiography *My First Hundred Years*) help account for the sharpness of these attitudes.⁴¹ While no one has been able to salvage Murray's working methods, the gendered nature of these criticisms is hard to miss and has been called out.⁴² Both Murray and Summers were also easily represented as amateurs, the antithesis of serious historical scholarship.⁴³ Dichotomies such as these – objective versus subjective, professional versus amateur, masculine versus feminine – sustained this shortened historiographical narrative which represents the 1960s as the dawn of a new era which rescued the subject out of the damaging hands of the dilettantes.⁴⁴

The resulting omission of White and Burr is both unjust – Trevor-Roper's essay drew heavily on Burr's scholarship, as Thomas slyly noted – and a form of poetic justice.⁴⁵ Indeed, their elision from the historiographical narrative accidentally stemmed from the same gendered oppositions that we shall find embedded in their writings. These attitudes were part of the way the two men saw themselves as warriors committed to making witchcraft history. A study of White and Burr's scholarship therefore is also important for three historiographical reasons. First of all, it makes the perhaps mundane but hopefully valuable point that early witchcraft historiography was much more diverse than the focus on the 'eccentrics' allows. Secondly, and consequently, it reveals the extent to which witchcraft historiography, a field typically regarded as shaped more by feminist scholarship, has been forged by scholarly masculinity. As Trevor-Roper's comments about Murray show, White and Burr were not the last historians to fashion their identities out of their own opposition to (feminine) 'unreason'.⁴⁶ Finally, while White and particularly Burr's scholarship in their explicit rejection of the 'realism' of witchcraft may feel more 'modern' than Murray's or Summers's, their scholarly personae also produced real blind spots.⁴⁷ White and Burr produced an apocalyptic vision of

⁴¹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 516n; Murray, *My First Hundred Years*. On the reception of Murray's work, see also Simpson, 'Margaret Murray'. Norman Cohn held the recent 'extraordinary proliferation of "witches" covens"' against Murray: Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 108.

⁴² On Murray's working methods, see Oates, *A Coven of Scholars*. For a discussion of criticism of Murray, see Purkiss, *The Witch in History*, p. 63.

⁴³ Although employed by University College London, Murray was in fact based in the Egyptology department. Even in that career, she was largely an auto-didact (and proud of it): Murray, *My First Hundred Years*, pp. 93–96. In his refutation of Murray, Norman Cohen not only drew attention to her status as an amateur – she 'was not by profession a historian' – but also to her age – she 'was nearly sixty': Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, p. 109.

⁴⁴ See, for instance, Malcolm Gaskill's representation of Trevor-Roper's essay as 'a watershed in modern scholarship [which] banished the earlier twentieth-century idea that real witches had been targeted': Gaskill, 'The Pursuit of Reality', p. 33.

⁴⁵ Thomas notes that Trevor-Roper made 'spirited use' of material introduced and partly edited by Burr: Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 435, bibliographical note. Trevor-Roper's enmity towards Thomas was notorious. To a correspondent he admitted he was rash to tackle a topic as vast as the witch-hunt, 'but it will annoy Keith Thomas, which (I suppose) is something': Sisman, *Hugh Trevor-Roper*, p. 378. Trevor-Roper may also have prevented Thomas from succeeding him as Regius Professor of History at Oxford: *ibid.*, p. 452.

⁴⁶ See Purkiss, *The Witch in History*, chap. 3, and in particular, her especially insightful discussion of historians identifying with male sceptics, pp. 63–65. Trevor-Roper also published an essay on Erasmus and had a portrait of the humanist on his wall: Sisman, *Hugh Trevor-Roper*, pp. 261–62.

⁴⁷ For the concept of the 'scholarly persona', see Daston and Sibum, 'Introduction'; and as applied to the historian: Paul, 'What Is a Scholarly Persona?'

the witch-hunt, of good versus evil, in which the accused themselves – and by extension, women – barely featured. They banished witchcraft to the past as a way of legitimating their own battles of in the present.

In addition to their contribution to popular perceptions of witchcraft, then, White and Burr's work on the early modern witch-hunt has had long-lasting historiographical consequences that later generations have struggled to recognize and overcome. While all history may be contemporary history, the preoccupations and practices of past historians have ways of shaping the views of their successors in ways they do not recognize. The impact of White and Burr's scholarship was not predetermined nor did these effects play themselves out solely in gendered terms. For instance, the progress narratives also intersected with White and Burr's high regard for recently unified Germany and its modern research universities which ultimately casted a long shadow on later witchcraft historiography that they could not possibly have foreseen. This study will show that there is real value in taking stock and examining the longer history of our own field. Stripped off its narrative of steady progress, the study of *longue durée* witchcraft historiography can even inform current research questions.

Finally, there are more meditative reasons why a study of Andrew Dickson White and George Lincoln Burr and their engagement with witchcraft history may be of interest to historians – regardless of their time period, speciality, or general interest. Their striking use of the past as a place of banishment – a storeroom where those aspects of humanity of which they disapproved could gather dust – brings out the tensions between objectivity and subjectivity in historical writing, between the writing of history and the reasons for history writing. Where historiography often underscores how historians were products of their own time, what follows explores the deeply personal interactions out of which their research emerged. For this reason, we shall begin our case study *in media res*, at the point when our two historians encounter a new heroic witchcraft sceptic but start to have their doubts about the *bona fides* of another. These discoveries also begin to reshape the dynamic between White and Burr, ultimately leading the student to develop a different rationale for the war on witchcraft from his teacher.

From a distance of a century and a half, we can observe quite clearly how the two men's scholarship was constructed out of their relationships with each other, as teacher and student, and with their principal research subjects, the witchcraft sceptics. As we shall see, these relationships and attitudes were not static and they changed over time. Burr's view of human progress differed from White's in subtle yet important ways, and careful reading of their correspondence and his writings shows how the younger scholar struggled to emancipate himself from the person who – quite literally – had lifted him up from the back of the classroom.⁴⁸ These relational aspects of their scholarship may also foster introspection, at least they did for me. Writing this study raised a series of deeply personal questions: how have my teachers shaped my thinking and what debts do I owe them?⁴⁹ How do I relate to my subjects of study? How does my deployment of empathy inflect my scholarship? While there will be as many answers as there are readers to these questions, the case study that follows may also be a useful vehicle for such personal reflection.

⁴⁸ White, *Autobiography*, vol. I, pp. 382–83.

⁴⁹ I am writing this as a question asking historians about their 'intellectual grandparents' is doing the rounds again on Twitter.

2. Two Historians on a Double Date: White and Burr meet Flade and Loos

There is no better place to begin a study of Andrew Dickson White and George Lincoln Burr than with the letter which showed the first fractures in their relationship. On 10 September 1885, the 28-year old Burr wrote from Trier, Germany to White, his erstwhile teacher at Cornell University and its first president, with an unsettling revelation – the person he had been studying for his doctoral dissertation might not be deserving of his time.⁵⁰ The young American had been in Europe at White's expense for more than a year, studying at its universities and scouring its bookshops for early modern books and manuscripts, especially witchcraft ones.⁵¹ At the start of 1885, while studying at Leipzig, Burr had settled on a subject for his doctoral dissertation, an edition of a manuscript that was already in White's possession. 'What do you think', he asked White in January, 'of my editing the Flade MS – with perhaps a historical introduction on the growth of the witchcraft superstition [and] the struggle to eradicate it – as a thesis for my doctorate?'⁵² Dietrich Flade, a leading judge in Trier, one-time rector of its university and councillor to its Prince-Elector, had been executed for the crime of witchcraft on 18 September 1589. He was the early modern witch-hunt's 'most eminent victim in the land of its greatest thoroughness', Germany.⁵³ The judge was reputed to have been an opponent of the hunt. When the Jesuit demonologist Martin Delrio (1551–1608) argued that they 'who defend witches out of their own free will and attempt to lessen the enormity of their crime' should be suspected of witchcraft, he cited Flade as an example who 'was consumed by deadly fires'.⁵⁴

During the spring and summer of 1885 Burr continued to work on-and-off on his Flade project, after White arranged for the manuscript in his collection to be sent to him.⁵⁵ In July, Burr wrote that he had even found further evidence to sustain the judge's heroic reputation. Burr had unearthed an unspecified 'little matter regarding [Flade] which has escaped the notice of his biographers – and all to his credit. It will be a pleasure to show it to you.'⁵⁶ Yet by September 1885, the doubts as to Flade's heroism had evidently set in. To White, who was then presiding over the second meeting of the American Historical Association at Saratoga Springs, NY, Burr confessed his scepticism as to whether the judge really deserved his reputation as a martyr: 'I am much puzzled as to whether it is worth the while to give to the world what may only deprive the unfortunate man of the scanty recognition which he has thus far received.'⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Burr to White. Trier, 10 September 1885.

⁵¹ See Burr to White. 'Off Land's End', 19 July 1884, in which Burr announced his arrival in Plymouth the next day. Burr's time in Germany receives a passing mention in Werner, *The Transatlantic World of Higher Education*, esp. pp. 84, 184, 246.

⁵² Burr to White. Leipzig, 7 January 1885.

⁵³ Burr, 'The Fate of Dietrich Flade', p. 190. Voltmer, 'Witch-Finders, Witch-Hunters or Kings of the Sabbath?', pp. 82–83, has shown that Flade had, in fact, sentenced eight women to death for the crime of witchcraft.

⁵⁴ Delrio, *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex*, vol. III, 28: 'quis patrocinator sponte maleficis, et conatur criminis enormitatem elevare, et contendit, non esse credendum iis, quae de illis certo narrantur, et ea omnia vana esse et delira, aliaque huiusmodi ... flammis feralibus consumptus fuit.'

⁵⁵ White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 14 February 1885; Burr to White. Salzburg, 19 March 1885. Burr arranged a shipment of books for White but kept three as possibly of use 'in my work on the Flade matter'.

⁵⁶ Burr to White. Zurich, July 21, 1885.

⁵⁷ Burr to White. Trier, 10 September 1885.

Fortunately for Burr, the setback was only temporary. While Flade may not have been a true sceptic, he may still have fallen victim to a great Jesuit conspiracy. His discovery of their *litterae annuae* (the annual reports written by Jesuit colleges) led Burr to excitedly report on a secret Jesuit plot – ‘they stand virtually convicted out of their own mouths’ – to use a fourteen-year old boy from the countryside to incriminate Flade: ‘Of course, in the MSS fallen into my hands, the story of the boy is told, as if in good faith, but what was credible enough to deceive those for who the report was destined in that day, is quite too transparent in ours.’⁵⁸ Moreover, if Burr had been disappointed in Flade, he soon located in the Trier’s city library a manuscript belonging to another witchcraft sceptic more deserving of praise. On 10 June 1886, Burr sent White ‘a very crazy letter’ – the discovery of Cornelius Loos’s ‘long-lost manuscript (the book *De vera et falsa magia* which cost him humiliation, misery and death)’ even disturbed Burr’s ‘mental equilibrium’.⁵⁹ Where the Flade manuscript had been a disappointment, that of Loos was ‘the boldest thing ever written against the witchcraft horror, and the most eloquent except perhaps [Friedrich] Spee’s *Cautio [criminalis]*’.⁶⁰ Martin Delrio had excoriated Loos – ‘may God have mercy on his soul’ – on the same page of his demonology as he denounced Flade, and included the priest’s forced abjuration as an appendix to his witchcraft tome.⁶¹ In October 1886, a month after his return from Europe to Cornell University, Burr gave a lecture on Flade, who ‘had met his death’, and Loos, ‘one of [the world’s] bravest souls’, in which he speculated about the horrors used to force the latter’s recantation.⁶² Burr’s manuscript discovery was even announced to the American public by Charles Kendall Adams, White’s successor as University President, on 11 November 1886, in an article for *The Nation* newspaper entitled ‘A Manuscript and a Man’.⁶³

Burr’s work on the trial of Dr Flade and his discovery of the Loos manuscript, as part as his doctoral dissertation, mark the arrival of witchcraft history within the halls of academia which were beginning to welcome history as a discipline around this time.⁶⁴ While Burr’s contributions to this new field are scarcely remembered today for reasons already discussed, his interests were also not fully his own. Burr was, to a considerable degree, Andrew Dickson White’s creation. Burr’s work on the history of witchcraft was part of White’s much bigger project on the history of science, which, in turn, was also a project of moral and religious reform. Burr’s letter of 10 September 1885 casting doubt on Flade’s heroism marked the first sign of dissension within the ranks.

⁵⁸ Burr to White. Trier, April 18, 1886. Jesuit *litterae annuae* provide a rich source of information on the early modern witch-hunt, especially in Germany: Sobiech, *Jesuit Prison Ministry in the Witch Trials of the Holy Roman Empire*.

⁵⁹ Burr to White. Trier, 10 June 1886. The historiography on Loos has been dominated by amateur historians who praise him as ‘ein kritischer Geist’ and attack his opponents: P.C. Van der Eerden, ‘Der Teufelspakt bei Binsfeld und Loos’, p. 72, or they provide Loos with an epitaph: Othon Scholer, “O Kehrlicht des Aberglaubens”, p. 270.

⁶⁰ Burr to White, Trier, 14 June 1886.

⁶¹ Delrio, *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex*, vol. III, p. 28: ‘cuius animae Deus parcat’; *ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 117–19.

⁶² Burr, ‘On the Loos Manuscript’, pp. 151, 153.

⁶³ Adams, ‘A Manuscript and a Man’.

⁶⁴ On the professionalisation of history, see Lingelbach, ‘The Institutionalization and Professionalization of History’. I am separating the *historical* study of witchcraft from earlier discussions of witchcraft and its possible reality. The law and theology faculties of early modern universities were often consulted on witchcraft matters and aspects of demonology were the subject of early modern academic disputations, see e.g. Kauertz, *Wissenschaft und Hexenglaube*; Meyer, ‘Systematische Theologie, katechetische Strenge und pädagogisches Augenmaß’.

Burr first met Andrew Dickson White, Cornell University's co-founder, first president, and first professor of history, in the autumn of 1878, when as a mere sophomore he attended White's senior class on the historical development of criminal law, in which the witch-hunt played a major role.⁶⁵ In terms of social status, the two men could hardly have been more different. White, who was Burr's senior by 24 years, was the heir to a considerable fortune. Education and public service were for him a vocation and a duty, rather than a form of employment.⁶⁶ Burr, by contrast, had first worked as a schoolteacher and apprentice printer to save money for college.⁶⁷ Yet White's teaching left Burr enthralled. Fifty years later he still recalled White bringing his personal copy of the *Malleus maleficarum* to class, 'which he told us had caused more suffering than any other product of the human pen.'⁶⁸ Burr, at the same time, also made an impact on White who was so impressed by the quality of Burr's essays he asked the sophomore to mark the work of his classmates – in secret, 'for had the seniors known that I had intrusted their papers to the tender mercies of a sophomore, they would probably have mobbed me.'⁶⁹ After that first appointment as examiner, Burr would remain in the employment of White and, later, Cornell University until his retirement. During White's vacations and diplomatic assignments in Europe, Burr would even move into the White family home on campus.⁷⁰ In 1907, Burr, then aged 50, married a former student, but the marriage ended tragically with the death of both mother and infant in childbirth less than two years later.⁷¹ Burr, then, remained principally known as White's disciple. At his retirement in 1922, the local newspaper described him as 'for many years a member of [White's] household ... and now his literary executor, having remained his intimate friend until death.'⁷²

[insert Figure 2 here]

Figure 2. Andrew Dickson White (1885). Image courtesy of Cornell University Library.

This Element argues for the important role that relational identities and scholarly personae played (and doubtlessly still play) in the production of historical scholarship. While this is an aspect of historiography that is often overlooked, it has certainly not been the approach which historians of science have taken towards White (**Figure 2**). (Burr, as we already noted, has been almost entirely overlooked.) When they are not refuting him, historians of science have treated White simply as a man of his times, which of course he in many ways was. One admiring reviewer of Charles Darwin's 1859 *On the Origin of Species*, for instance, wrote that 'extinguished theologians lie about the cradle

⁶⁵ In his journal for Wednesday 8 November 1878, White noted that he was 'at work on final part of lecture on Demoniacal Powers which I delivered at noon': Ogden (ed.), *The Diaries of Andrew D. White*, p. 199. Giving his thoughts on publishing White's lectures, Burr discussed 'the lectures on witchcraft, demoniacal possession, and torture': Burr to White. Zurich, 7 July 1885.

⁶⁶ Horace White, a wealthy banker and railroad man, left his son a sizable fortune on his death in 1860: Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, pp. 22, 42.

⁶⁷ Bainton, 'His Life', pp. 11–14.

⁶⁸ Burr, 'A Witch-Hunter in the Book-Shops', p. 294. On Burr's first encounter with White and witchcraft, see also the footnote, written in April 1938, two months before Burr's death on 27 June: Burr, 'Introduction to Lea's Materials toward a History of Witchcraft', p. 455.

⁶⁹ White, *Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White*, vol. I, pp. 382–83.

⁷⁰ University of Pennsylvania, MS Coll. 111: Henry Charles Lea papers, Box 4, Folder 208. Ithaca, NY, 11 January 1895.

⁷¹ Bainton, 'His Life', pp. 96–107.

⁷² 'Retires in February: G. L. Burr'.

of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules' – language that could easily have been uttered by White.⁷³ Although the *Warfare of Science* was considered the more erudite and influential work, it was and is also commonly placed alongside John William Draper's *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1874).⁷⁴ (The supposed conflict between science and religion has also been called the Draper-White thesis.⁷⁵) Many of White's ideas were firmly rooted in late nineteenth-century America. His belief in progress was almost axiomatic – in his obituary of White, Burr would draw special attention to it – but it was also an important influence on his contemporaries.⁷⁶ White's promotion of evolutionary processes within human society (as opposed to revolutionary ones) reflected both the times in which he lived and his elite social standing.⁷⁷ His argument that Christianity effectively required another Reformation – as its full title made clear, *Warfare* was aimed at 'theology', *not* religion – was shared by many liberal Protestants, while others used his arguments to go further still.⁷⁸ His belief in the inhibitory role of religious dogma was similarly widespread, leading Peter Harrison to go so far as to conclude that 'all that remained [for White and for Draper] was to fill in the blanks.'⁷⁹ As a result, White's biography hardly features. At most, White is represented as defending the reputation of Cornell University, the institution he had helped to found as the country's first non-sectarian (and therefore in the eyes of its opponents, 'godless') university.⁸⁰

While these are extremely valuable insights, treating White solely as a product of his time elides a substantial part of the *Warfare of Science*'s origins and significance, the author's persona, and the wider project to which the book – like Burr's witchcraft writings – was meant to contribute. White and Burr found themselves outside the mainstream on several fronts, most notably within history as a newly emerging professional discipline. While *Warfare* was one of the earliest works of history of science, it was self-consciously not a work of *scientific* history. Although White was a cheerleader for all things German (its universities and historical research included),⁸¹ in practice, his mode of scholarship was aligned more with that of the early nineteenth-century 'gentleman amateur' and the traditional belief in *historia magistra vitae*, than with the new ideal of scientific objectivity.⁸² (Burr, as we shall see, would echo White's beliefs.) Similarly, White's religious vision of Christianity stripped off all dogma was genuinely esoteric – he himself struggled to define it – and moved well beyond liberal Protestantism. White's biographer Glenn C. Altschuler attributed his subject's

⁷³ Dixon, *Science and Religion*, p. 2.

⁷⁴ Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*. On the greater importance of *Warfare of Science*, see Lindberg and Numbers, 'Beyond War and Peace', p. 340.

⁷⁵ See e.g. the introduction to Ferngren, *Science and Religion*, p. ix.

⁷⁶ Burr, 'Andrew Dickson White', p. 416. See also Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, p. 16.

⁷⁷ Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought*.

⁷⁸ Ungureanu, 'Science and Religion in the Anglo-American Periodical Press'.

⁷⁹ Harrison, 'That Religion Has Typically Impeded the Progress of Science', p. 200.

⁸⁰ Numbers (ed.), introduction to *Galileo Goes to Jail*, pp. 2–3; Brooke, *Science and Religion*, pp. 46–47. For the label 'godless', see White, *Autobiography*, vol. I, p. 125.

⁸¹ White, 'On Studies in General History and the History of Civilization', pp. 69–70. See also White, 'The New Germany', p. 242.

⁸² Novick, *That Noble Dream*, esp. chap. 2; Iggers, 'The Intellectual Foundations of Nineteenth-Century "Scientific" History'. White, 'On Studies in General History', pp. 49, 53, 60, repeatedly praised such traditional 'gentleman amateurs' as John Lothrop Motley and William H. Prescott. In her short pamphlet on White's tenure at the University of Michigan, Ruth Bordin observed that White 'was soon supplanted by other young men' who 'developed a professionalization of the discipline with which White was only partly in sympathy': Bordin, *Andrew Dickson White*, p. 17.

‘vagueness’ about doctrine to ‘a product of confusion and, perhaps unconsciously, of a refusal to accept the unsettling implications of his own thought.’⁸³ A more plausible, if paradoxical reading is that faith for White was a genuinely mystical experience, beyond words or description. As this suggests, White saw and presented himself as a religious reformer, the latest in a long line of *devout* great men – both scientists and witchcraft sceptics – whose defender he was. White’s identity as a reformer sustained a project that extended beyond history, religion, or science. *Warfare* was part of a larger project of reforming both knowledge and mankind, which White not only committed to paper but also sought to put into practice at Cornell.⁸⁴ This project cannot be understood without analysis of White’s identity as a reformer and his relationship with Burr without whose assistance *Warfare* would never have appeared.

A close reading of White and Burr’s letters and publications, then, complicates many of the grand narratives that the main historiographical models have used as a shorthand for nineteenth-century scholarship: not only the ‘conflict’ thesis in history of science, but also the very similar ‘rationalist’ paradigm in witchcraft history, and lying beyond that, Rankean ‘realism’ – the nineteenth-century pursuit of writing history ‘objectively’ as it ‘actually’ was. They present a vital case study of the role of scholarly personae and relational identities in the production of historical knowledge. Their scholarship was in important ways a relational construct, shaped – even dictated – by the bond between White and Burr, and *with* their historical subjects, Cornelius Loos and Dietrich Flade foremost among them. These ties meant that, despite Burr’s doubts, Flade remained something of a martyr for him. Moreover, if these homosocial relationships, with the past and in the present, underpinned their scholarship, they were also the product of a particular vision of manhood. The early modern witch-hunt played a seminal role within this project, in part, because it transformed the struggle against ‘unreason’ into a rescue mission. The battle against the witchcraft ‘delusion’ offered an avenue for heroic *male* sceptics to rescue damsels in distress, with highly gendered wider implications for how they and other scientific apostles of progress were presented and understood. If the practices of nineteenth-century historical research were fundamentally gendered, as Joan W. Scott, Bonnie G. Smith, Angelika Epple, and others have taught us, this Element analyses these important homosocial relationships to show how gendered the fruits of such scholarship really were.⁸⁵ Before we can analyse these relationships further, however, the wider contours of White’s reform project and the role of history within it need to be sketched out further, both as the stage on which these scholarly personae and relationships were enacted and as the pursuit which legitimated everything else.

3. History and a Reformer’s Project of Reform

White was always explicit about the moral purpose which should underpin history writing. In his 1884 presidential address to the American Historical Association – the organization’s first – he stressed that the pursuit of morality was the only proper motive to write history: ‘The great, deep ground out of which large historical studies may grow is the ethical ground, – the simple ethical

⁸³ Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, p. 212.

⁸⁴ See, for instance, his comment that ‘training men to think, speak, and write on such subjects in the light of the best modern thought and experience [will bring] the results obtained by University research to bear upon the people at large’: White, *Evolution and Revolution*, p. 17. My choice here of ‘mankind’ over humanity or humankind is intentional and meant to reflect White’s gendered attitudes, not my own.

⁸⁵ Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*; Smith, ‘Gender and the Practices of Scientific History’; Smith, *The Gender of History*. See also Alberti, *Gender and the Historian*, pp. 1–20; Epple, ‘Historiographiegeschichte als Diskursanalyse und Analytik der Macht’; Schnicke, *Die männliche Disziplin*.

necessity for the perfecting, first, of man as man, and, secondly, of man as a member of society.’⁸⁶ Indeed, White had denounced knowledge for its own sake from his undergraduate days onwards. In his *Autobiography*, he dismissed the teaching he received at Yale College in the early 1850s as ‘gerund-grinding’.⁸⁷ In his first magazine article, he denounced ‘chronology-spinners and accent-markers’ and those who ‘counterfeit’ history: ‘sham historians – the real infidels of these times – men who see in this world’s great rich history, a mere game at cross-purposes, a careless whirl.’⁸⁸ In his undergraduate lecture series ‘on History’, first at the University of Michigan and later at Cornell, White included similar stark warnings about ‘the dealers in Sham History and their utterances’.⁸⁹ His youthful historical essays from the early 1860s already attempted to put into practice this deeply held belief that the past held in store moral lessons for the present. During the American Civil War his essays on Thomas Jefferson, on Cardinal Richelieu, and on the history of Russian serfdom repackaged history to advance the abolitionist cause.⁹⁰ The French statesman, a Unionist *avant la lettre*, was depicted as having ‘taught the true method ... of strangling that worst foe of liberty and order in every age, – a serf-owning aristocracy.’⁹¹

Historical scholarship for White not only served to legitimate future reform, however. It was also a product and a well-connected part of the overarching reform project. The *Warfare of Science*, for instance, was not only a polemical intervention in a public debate, it was also dedicated to the memory of Ezra Cornell and intended as a ‘tribute’ to the university he and White had co-founded.⁹² Perhaps as a result White’s historical scholarship shares essential features with the reforms he championed. First of all, White’s commitment to reform was less radical than he pretended, just as his flowing prose often concealed a more conservative stance – a factor complicating the interpretation of his writings.⁹³ White’s causes – the reform of Higher Education and the Civil Service, and even abolitionism – were safe for a man of independent means, because the son of a wealthy banker from Syracuse, NY simply took for granted that meritocracy would legitimate, rather than challenge, the position of white men of his social standing.⁹⁴ Secondly, the same causes (especially Higher Education reform) also implied a link between the perfecting of ‘man’ and society, and indirectly between the Great Man and his (general) cause, that permeated all of White’s historical writings. His understanding of both the past and the present, then, were sustained by the idea that society can be improved by the moral improvement of individuals.

⁸⁶ White, ‘On Studies in General History’, p. 51.

⁸⁷ White, ‘Glimpses of Universal History’, pp. 398–99. Although his biographer notes that ‘there is no evidence of dissatisfaction at the time’, the footnote below suggests that White’s criticism of knowledge for its own sake can be dated to an early time of his life: Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, p. 28.

⁸⁸ White, ‘Glimpses of Universal History’, pp. 398–99.

⁸⁹ White, *Outlines of a Course of Lectures on History* (1861), p. 4; White, *Outlines of a Course of Lectures on History* (1870), p. 8.

⁹⁰ White, ‘Jefferson and Slavery’; White, ‘The Statesmanship of Richelieu’; White, ‘The Development and Overthrow of the Russian Serf-System’.

⁹¹ White, ‘The Statesmanship of Richelieu’, p. 624.

⁹² White, *Warfare* (1896), vol. I, pp. iii, xi; White also donated the royalties to the President White Library at Cornell University: Bainton, ‘His Life’, p. 52.

⁹³ Here I am extending a central insight of Glen C. Altschuler’s biography (‘White liked to think of himself as a radical, but in reality his radicalism was severely limited. Most of his fire was rhetorical’) to White’s historical writings: Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, p. 19.

⁹⁴ E.g. on ‘White’s elitist assumptions about education’: Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, p. 37.

This preoccupation with general causes, evident for instance in White's 1884 presidential address to the AHA, has led both Georg G. Iggers and Dorothy Ross to observe that White understood Leopold von Ranke's idealistic philosophy of history better than most of his American contemporaries.⁹⁵ The supposed founder of modern history writing, who had described nations as 'spiritual substances . . . thoughts of God', was understood and valued in the United States almost exclusively as the objective empiricist who studied 'how things actually were'.⁹⁶ White once identified his central and frequently stated belief in 'the higher and better development of man . . . as a *man*' as German in origin, but this may have been more the result of White's Germanophilia (all good things came from Germany) than his reception of German scholarship.⁹⁷ Although the American Historical Association's first president appears to have been an outlier within a profession which increasingly valued 'scientific objectivity', his negative depiction of Ranke (discussed below) suggests that this was not because of a more perfect understanding of Rankean philosophy of history.⁹⁸ Germany, perceived as an idea and an ideal, seems to have been much more important to White than its historical methods.

In fact, Germany and its history illustrate White's historical interests perfectly. The German past and present contained both his two great historical interests – science and witchcraft – and revealed, at least to him, how general causes and great individuals intersected in history. In an 1882 public lecture, entitled 'The New Germany', White presented German unification in the same moral terms as the abolition of slavery, even going so far as to suggest that it was 'perhaps' more 'striking' as well.⁹⁹ He was awed by Germany's 'long-continued sacrifice, and work, and struggle . . . not merely by victory over other powers, but, far more, by victory over herself – over tendencies to sloth, anarchy, unreason.'¹⁰⁰ White placed the nadir of Germany's 'political' and 'intellectual' and 'moral development' in the seventeenth century. The 'golden age of witchcraft persecution' was, for White, 'the golden age of bigots and pedants.'¹⁰¹ Witchcraft illustrated an earlier, opposite state of affairs, while its past-ness emphasized how far Germany had come. The early modern period saw university 'instructors bec[o]me more and more stupid and the students more and more imbruted' – the contrast with the present, where German research universities provided a model for the world, could not be starker.¹⁰² The period of the Thirty Years War allowed White to show 'the evolution of a higher activity out of a lower by patient thought and earnest effort', and how generations of 'strong men' had 'persevered in this effort to evolve Cosmos out of Chaos.'¹⁰³ To some extent, these men fought to

⁹⁵ Iggers, 'The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought', esp. p. 19; Ross, 'On the Misunderstanding of Ranke', esp. p. 165.

⁹⁶ Novick, *That Noble Dream*, chap 1, esp. p. 27.

⁹⁷ White, *Some Practical Influences of German Thought*, p. 12. Italics in original.

⁹⁸ White's presidential address can best be read as an attempt to find a home for 'general' or 'philosophical' history (which offered practitioners 'a means for the greater enlightenment of their country and the better development of mankind') within an Association apparently devoted to 'special' history, examples of which are criticized for dealing merely with 'surface facts': White, 'On Studies in General History', pp. 72, 55.

⁹⁹ White, 'The New Germany', p. 205. According to his diary, White delivered this 'very well rec'd' lecture in New York on 20 December 1882: Ogden (ed.), *The Diaries of Andrew D. White*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁰ White, 'The New Germany', p. 206.

¹⁰¹ White, 'The New Germany', p. 214.

¹⁰² White, 'The New Germany', pp. 213–14. On the German origins of the modern research university, see Clark, *Academic Charisma*.

¹⁰³ White, 'The New Germany', p. 225. This attitude towards German progress constitutes a little noticed but important part of the *Warfare of Science* as well. See e.g. White's discussion of comets: White, *Warfare* (1896), vol. I, pp. 182, 201.

transcend general causes, notably Germany's geography, surrounded by hostile nations.¹⁰⁴ Yet they principally succeeded by aligning themselves *with* general causes and against those who resisted them, anticipating the recurring conflict between reactionaries and 'the thinking, open-minded, devoted men ... who are evidently thinking the future thought of the world' which sustained the *Warfare of Science*.¹⁰⁵ White, accordingly, ended his lecture with an extended tribute to the architect of German unification, Prince Otto von Bismarck, whom he had met as US minister to Germany.¹⁰⁶

Aligning great men and general causes – also construed as 'laws of development' and even as 'Providence' – made their success and thus progress inevitable.¹⁰⁷ This was to some extent a double-edged sword, however. If the general causes were forces for good (which they almost always were), then their inevitability possessed evident appeal. Yet the same inevitability could also undercut the practical call to action. Making men such as Bismarck into history's principal agents of change enabled White to infuse a measure of human agency into this inevitable march of progress. The role of the historian in retrospectively discerning general causes might defuse the tension between inevitability and agency even more. White's undergraduate lecture on Erasmus thus counselled that philosophical history which 'reverently' approached the 'secret hand of God' should be combined with biography, that is, 'the close study of the life [and] work of the great men who were the direct agents in the [historical] work.'¹⁰⁸

While discerning the hand of God might appear almost a mystical experience, in practice White's attention mostly centred on the agents supposedly doing His work. Most of his undergraduate lectures, as the first history of Cornell University noted, focussed on 'individual men as representative of movements', 'elaborate studies of the lives of great artists', 'the influence of the founders of the great religious orders' and 'studies in abnormal opinions' – that is, those scholastics who dared to oppose science.¹⁰⁹ The same pre-occupation with great men can be discerned from the title of White's second, lesser-known monograph: *Seven Great Statesmen in the Warfare of Humanity with Unreason* (1910), which – much like *Warfare of Science* – was based on his lectures and which was originally meant to chart the founding of modern Germany. ('The Builders of Modern Germany' was one possible title White had mentioned in discussions with Burr.¹¹⁰) Its portrayal of Hugo Grotius (whom White considered an honorary German) shows both the extent of White's hero worship and the religious language of his writings. Grotius was another Saviour, born for the 'redemption of civilization', who after his death, as 'a martyr to unreason', had 'risen from the dead, and live[s] evermore' [cf. Revelation 1:18] *within* a whole host of modern institutions and 'in the heart and mind

¹⁰⁴ White, 'The New Germany', p. 207.

¹⁰⁵ White, *Warfare* (1896), vol. I, p. 319.

¹⁰⁶ White had been US minister to Germany from 1879 to 1881 and would return as ambassador from 1897 to 1902: Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, pp. 119–131, 234–47. Bismarck's would be the last (and longest) of the seven portraits included in Andrew Dickson White, *Seven Great Statesmen*, pp. 391–535.

¹⁰⁷ For 'laws of development', see White, 'On Studies in General History', p. 51; for an example of 'Providence', see White, *Autobiography*, vol. I, p. 75.

¹⁰⁸ Andrew Dickson White, 'Erasmus', pp. 2–3 (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Rare and Manuscript Collections, Andrew Dickson White Microfilm Collection, reel 140, p. 144). Underlining in the original manuscript.

¹⁰⁹ Hewett, *Cornell University*, vol. I, pp. 181–82. Bordin similarly observed that at Michigan White's 'approach to the teaching of history was largely biographical': Bordin, *Andrew Dickson White*, p. 15.

¹¹⁰ White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 20 June 1896.

of every man who worthily undertakes to serve the nobler purposes of his country or the larger interests of his race'¹¹¹

The same principles – notably the role of individuals as agents of change – and religious language shaped White's famous lecture at Cooper Union in New York City on 17 December 1869, on 'the Battle-Fields of Science', the first public outing of what would become the *Warfare of Science*.¹¹² Study of this lecture allows us to flesh out further the strong religious impetus behind White's project, and how he conceived of his own role within it. Both factors were considerably stronger motives than White's commonly cited desire to defend Cornell University from sectarian attacks.¹¹³ In his lecture White maintained that 'all untrammelled scientific investigation ... has invariably resulted in the highest good of Religion and Science.'¹¹⁴ Christianity has 'given hope to the hopeless, comfort to the afflicted, light to the blind, bread to the starving, [and] life to the dying', only 'the idea that purely scientific investigation is unsafe' had sent it off kilter.¹¹⁵ From the outset, then, White's project was as much one of religious reform as a vindication of science, his strident tone notwithstanding. Unlike Draper, White believed the problem was with 'dogmatic theology', with 'the dead husks of sect and dogma', not with religion itself.¹¹⁶ Here too, God revealed the proper pursuit of science through history, rather than theology: 'The very finger of the Almighty has written on history that science must be studied by means proper to itself, and in no other way.' Inevitably, White substantiated these claims by populating the battle-fields with devout Christian scientists: Copernicus 'had lived a pious, Christian life', while Kepler 'speaks as one inspired'. Others were martyrs, whether proverbial or real: Galileo 'was subject certainly to indignity and imprisonment – possibly to physical torture', Vesalius died 'on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to atone for his sin [*i.e.* his anatomical discoveries] His poor blind foes destroyed one of *religion's* greatest apostles.'¹¹⁷

Witchcraft accusations were woven into the *Warfare of Science* project from the outset. Not only were supposed opponents of the witch-hunt such as Dietrich Flade burnt as witches, scientists were transformed into sorcerers as well. In his 1869 lecture White reported that the thirteenth-century physician Arnold de Villanova 'was charged with sorcery and dealings with the devil.'¹¹⁸ In his undergraduate lecture on the Age of Discovery, he declared that the compass was well-known among medieval mariners, 'yet to no small extent, dread of the charge of sorcery prevented its use.'¹¹⁹ Similarly the lecture on 'The Invention of Printing' asserted that England's first printer William Caxton 'did not escape the charge of sorcery.'¹²⁰ In 1876, when the *Warfare of Science* had grown from a published lecture to a small book, White claimed that 'mediaeval scientific battle-fields [were]

¹¹¹ White, *Seven Great Statesmen*, pp. 55, 101. As president of the American delegation to the 1899 Hague Peace Conference, White laid a wreath on Grotius's tomb and gave a speech wrapped in similar religious language: *Proceedings at the Laying of a Wreath*.

¹¹² White, 'The Battle-Fields of Science'.

¹¹³ Lindberg and Numbers, 'Beyond War and Peace', p. 338; Brooke, *Science and Religion*, 46–47.

¹¹⁴ White, 'The Battle-Fields of Science'.

¹¹⁵ White, 'The Battle-Fields of Science'. Note the imitation of the Beatitudes.

¹¹⁶ For White's thoughts on Draper's *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*: White, *Warfare* (1896), vol. I, p. ix. For White's comment about 'husks', see White, *Warfare* (1876), p. 151. I disagree, therefore, with claims that White narrowed his attack on religion only with time: Lindberg and Numbers, 'Beyond War and Peace', p. 339; Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth*, p. 42.

¹¹⁷ White, 'The Battle-Fields of Science'. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁸ White, 'The Battle-Fields of Science'.

¹¹⁹ 'The Age of Discovery', p. 8 (WMC, Reel 140, p. 13).

¹²⁰ 'The New Diffusion of Thought: B. The Invention of Printing', p. 15 (Reel 140, p. 15)

strewed with ... charge[s] of sorcery, of unlawful compact with the devil' and traced the use of 'these missiles' in almost all fields, and up to the eighteenth century.¹²¹ By 1896 lengthy discussions of witchcraft and demonic possession were inserted into a number of chapters, effectively making the war on witchcraft and the warfare of science extensions of each other.¹²² Like the *Warfare of Science* the witch-hunt demonstrated the consequences of dangerous theological and sectarian ideas, and it enhanced the humanitarian nature of the struggle against unreason in ways those battling purely on the frontlines of science never could: unlike scientists, witchcraft sceptics could be depicted as risking their lives to rescue others.

The 1869 lecture also shows how White joined the war himself. First of all, the historian entered the battlefield alongside the warriors: 'we will look well at the combatants – we will listen to the battle-cries, we will note the strategy of leaders, the cut and thrust of champions, the weight of missiles, the temper of weapons.'¹²³ Engaged on the same terrain, the historian was not at all different from the subjects he studied facing similar enemies in his own day. When the final two-volume iteration of *Warfare* appeared, Burr in a biographical sketch would depict White's religious-scientific mission as similar to those of his subjects: 'he seeks only to lift the timid faith which dares not trust the God of the universe to deal truly with the human mind he has made.'¹²⁴ Indeed, White was a combatant in his own right. While witchcraft might be past, the struggle for science was still on-going. 'In concluding' his 1869 lecture White referred to 'another battle-field in our own land and time': the attacks against Cornell University, 'against a body of Christian Trustees and Professors earnestly devoted to building up Christian civilization', and the institution's *other* founder, Ezra Cornell, 'whose life has been one of the purest and noblest on American records.' Both his self-evident role in Cornell's founding and his clarion call that 'the Warfare of Science ... be changed' to one where 'religion and science shall stand together as allies' allowed White to style himself as the latest (if not, last) in a long line of virtuous Christian men fighting for scientific *and* religious Truth. As such, White cast himself as the embodiment of the values and virtues that he himself had discerned in history in the first place. White's own perceived place in history, as the heir and successor of generations of other heroic men, profoundly shaped his writings and his actions.

If the importance White attached to his public persona as a reformer is evident from any reading of his works, it is brought into even starker relief by his evident failure to live up to those standards. A recurring problem during White's tenure at Cornell was the willingness of others to take White's rhetoric – for instance, about the University's non-denominational status and its admission policy – to its logical conclusion. White's dismissal of Cornell's first Jewish academic and his role in 'enclosing' its female undergraduates, discussed by White's biographer, offer perfect illustrations of the contrast between White's words and deeds.¹²⁵ Yet the possible admission of black students provides an even

¹²¹ White, *Warfare* (1876), pp. 65, 77, 102, 108. White had also uncovered the witchcraft accusations against Kepler's mother, on which see Rublack, *The Astronomer and the Witch*.

¹²² See especially the chapters entitled 'From "Signs and Wonders" to Law in the Heavens', 'From "The Prince of the Power of the Air" to Meteorology', 'From Magic to Chemistry and Physics', 'From Miracles to Medicine', 'From "Demonic Possession" to Insanity', and 'From Diabolism to Hysteria'. For charges against reputed 'sorcerers', see White, *Warfare* (1896), vol. I, pp. 107, 111, 319, 354, 377, 386, 390; vol. II, pp. 35, 37, 38.

¹²³ White, 'The Battle-Fields of Science'.

¹²⁴ Burr, 'Sketch of Andrew Dickson White', p. 556.

¹²⁵ Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, pp. 68, 97–99, 104–105. See also Altschuler's summary on p. 19: 'Most of [White's] fire was rhetorical. Beneath that rhetoric was the bedrock conservatism common to men of wealth.'

more instructive example. In a private letter, White declared that he would admit any suitable black candidate ‘even if all our five hundred white students were to ask for dismissal on that account’. None, however, were accepted during his twenty-year tenure and White made no discernible effort to advertise his views publicly. He did, however, preserve a copy of his claim for his personal records.¹²⁶ White’s rhetorical fireworks, then, suggest that his reputation as a radical reformer mattered rather more than the practical implementation of reform. That insight should also shape our interpretation of White’s historical writings as works more radical in appearance than in fact – and more committed to narrative than to facts.

4. The Reformer’s Apprentice

If the *Warfare of Science* was a project of religious reform – one that transformed early scientists into religious reformers (and suspected sorcerers) and replaced theology with history – then White would find in Burr a willing collaborator. Not only because ‘the *Warfare of Science* was a crusade, and Burr loved a crusade,’ as Roland Bainton, Burr’s friend and biographer, later put it, but because Burr was himself as deeply religious and as religiously heterodox as his patron.¹²⁷ Burr told White that ‘had my personal creed been more orthodox and had I been able to see in religion a panacea for all the ills of the earth’ he might have become a minister, but he chose to become a teacher of history instead.¹²⁸ In 1891 Burr preached before Cornell’s Christian Union on ‘the Living Gospel’, a text ‘written not on tables of stone or leaves of parchment, but on human lives.’¹²⁹ The gospels of the New Testament were ‘but the student-notes of [Christ’s] pupils: shall we measure his teaching by them?’¹³⁰ Instead Burr used his sermon to chart ‘a single paragraph from the genealogy of Christian charity.’¹³¹ White similarly had not confined his praise to scientists alone. Alongside them, he lined up a select group of good Christian figures, such as (rather implausibly) Carlo Borromeo and Vincent de Paul, ‘who have preached and practised the righteousness of the prophets, and the aspirations of the Psalmist, and the blessed Sermon on the Mount.’¹³² Both men thus focussed attention away from dogma and onto the (idealized, charitable) actions of great individuals, in effect, replacing theology with history. Burr’s conception of history was accordingly as transcendent as White’s – history was ‘not a stupid mechanical sequence, but a living principle, inspiring men’ – and just as ethically charged – ‘history is not a physical, but a moral science: ... not physiology, but ethics.’¹³³ Teacher and student had much ground in common, but as we shall see differences in outlook appeared as their relationship developed.

Burr was introduced to teacher’s projects soon after they met at the end of one of White’s classes in the autumn of 1878. The following summer, before the President departed for Europe, he recommended three books to Burr, two of which we have already encountered: Lecky’s *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism* and Draper’s *History of the Conflict between Religion*

¹²⁶ Andrew Dickson White to C.H. McCormick. Ithaca, NY, 5 September 1870. For further details, see: <https://diversity.cornell.edu/our-story/our-historic-commitment>.

¹²⁷ Bainton, ‘His Life’, p. 49.

¹²⁸ Burr to White. Zurich, 13 August 1885.

¹²⁹ Burr, ‘The Living Gospel’, p. 237.

¹³⁰ Burr, ‘The Living Gospel’, p. 241.

¹³¹ Burr, ‘The Living Gospel’, p. 239.

¹³² White, *Warfare* (1876), p. 150.

¹³³ Burr to White. Zurich, July 10, 1885. Earlier Burr had told White that no lecture series in Europe was better than White’s, given by ‘a man who has not only a brain, but a heart and a conscience’: Burr to White. Leipzig, 8 December 1884.

and Science.¹³⁴ Yet Burr's involvement in White's many writing projects seems to have begun in earnest only during his stay in Europe in the mid-1880s – as White's literary executor, it would continue until Burr's own death. Travelling through Europe on his teacher's expense as his 'witch-hunter in the book-shops', Burr was extremely conscious of the debts he owed his patron. The asymmetrical nature of their relationship, so unequal in age, wealth, and social status, is encapsulated in the appellations with which the two men opened their letters. While Burr in White's letters was sometimes a 'dear friend', and once even a 'busy B.', White for Burr would remain 'Mr President' long after he had resigned as president of Cornell University.¹³⁵

From the beginning of his European trip, Burr sought to impress White with both his work ethic and with his discoveries. He ostentatiously enjoyed early morning lectures – 'Some American students would be horrified to having a lecture at 7 but it is a feature I decidedly enjoy' – and he worked his way through 'a pile of MSS about six feet high.'¹³⁶ He also reported discovering a live book worm in Trier's copy of the *Malleus maleficarum* – 'horrible fodder, even for such a literary glutton.'¹³⁷ The efforts to impress (and perhaps entertain) his patron were part of an attempt to make White's project into a shared endeavour, while still acknowledging that White did not need him. In a letter written on 12 February 1885, Burr told White that he believed that 'I can serve the world best by serving you', at least until White was 'through' with him. Burr confessed that he was also 'by no means certain that I am so well fitted as another to aid you.' Yet he also worked to bridge the physical and emotional distance that separated them. Already on 24 November 1884, the 28-year old used White's poor health to issue a (non-)invitation to join him in Europe: 'if I dared, I would prescribe you a winter trip to Germany.'¹³⁸ In February he again urged White to lay down his duties and come to Europe that spring: 'we could at once set about getting ready for the printers some of your literary work?'¹³⁹ Burr made the case that White required a disciple in case the worst happened: 'should anything happen ... the work must, like every such labor of love depend upon the chances of other men's leisure.'¹⁴⁰

White ignored these invitations until early June, 1885, when he announced his planned resignation as President of Cornell and outlined plans to visit Europe and for his future publications, plans which would also involve Burr: 'Write me fully and carefully how all this strikes you, where in your judgement it would be well to begin, and where and in what field you would prefer to work with me. For I have always planned to make you my colleague in all this.'¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, when Burr embraced his role as 'colleague' too eagerly, giving White his – apparently too honest – opinion on the amount of work yet to be done, White replied that 'the whole matter had perhaps better await our meeting.'¹⁴² A lengthy letter in which Burr set out his views of history was more kindly received: 'I

¹³⁴ Burr to White. Syracuse, NY, 18 July 1879. Burr reported that he had already read Lecky twice. The third book was by Henry Thomas Buckle; presumably his *History of Civilization in England* (1857), which White praised in his presidential address: White, 'On Studies in General History', p. 50.

¹³⁵ White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 3 December 1884: 'My dear Busy B.'; White to Burr. Saratoga Springs, NY, 26 August 1885: 'My dear friend'; Burr, 'Andrew Dickson White', p. 415: 'Yet it is as "President White" that we shall remember him.'

¹³⁶ Burr to White. Zurich, 5 May 1886; Burr to White. Paris, 7 November 1885.

¹³⁷ Burr to White. Trier, 12 April 1886.

¹³⁸ Burr to White. Leipzig, 24 November 1884.

¹³⁹ Burr to White. Leipzig, 2 February 1885.

¹⁴⁰ White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 26 January 1885; Burr to White. Leipzig, 12 February 1885.

¹⁴¹ White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 11 June 1885; White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, June 24, 1885.

¹⁴² Burr to White. Zurich, 7 July 1885; White to Burr, Ithaca, NY, July 22, 1885.

do not think that two men could agree more fully than we do on the whole subject ... I hope that we may be of use to each other' – again, still something less than a full partnership.¹⁴³

As the two men felt their way to sharing White's project, they also needed to carve out something that belonged to Burr. The student's original ideas for his doctoral dissertation – his 'Arbeit' – would have elaborated on and sustained his patron's research interests.¹⁴⁴ Burr, at first, had suggested two vast topics, 'the relation of the Universities to freedom of thought' and 'the struggle for the abolition of censure in Europe' that fit seamlessly within White's larger project.¹⁴⁵ Yet while White thoroughly approved of them ('I hardly know which I like best'), the student had settled on editing the Flade manuscript, which had come into White's possession in 1883 after Burr had spotted it in a Berlin old-book catalogue.¹⁴⁶ White approval of Burr's new topic is telling: 'I do not see that your work need cross mine in any way. I have always intended to put that and other similar studies together in a book; but even in that case there would be no harm done to either of us.'¹⁴⁷ Burr was given access but the terrain was White's already and remained so.

As the prospect of closer proximity became more real it re-awakened in Burr fears about his dependency on his patron and how that might affect their relationship. He expressed 'a horror of becoming, or seeming to become, in any sense, a parasite upon you' and he repeated his comment that 'so soon as you are through with me, I am ready even impatient, to be set adrift.' He insisted that his motivations were entirely selfless: 'only the love I bear you and the gratitude I owe you, added to the sincere conviction that if I can indeed help you, I shall be serving the world better than would be possible in my own little sphere, has led me so persistently to speak of your work as ours.'¹⁴⁸ White soothed Burr's anxieties by affirming their (near) equal partnership: 'I propose something like a partnership – at least something leading to that very directly. Your word "parasite" I do not like – there is nothing in our actual or possible relations corresponding to it.'¹⁴⁹ For his part, Burr, ashamed of 'the doubts that came to me', implicitly rejected this offer of equality: 'loneliness begets strange fears and fancies ... I remain yours to command.'¹⁵⁰ The bundle of emotions on display in these letters is complex, and the men's inability to define their relationship is understandable: Burr's desire for White's proximity and his fear of rejection were clearly linked, but White's need to assert his higher status complicated a similar desire for closeness. When combined, these two sets of feelings generated a magnetic pulse that alternately attracted and repulsed.

White's arrival in Europe did not herald the dreamed-for partnership. Throughout White's tour of the continent, Burr variously acted as a baggage handler, as an apprentice and disciple, and as an amanuensis. Burr was entrusted with the care of the physical *Warfare of Science* manuscript along with the rest of White's trunks. In case anything would happen while White was taking in the sights

¹⁴³ Burr to White. Zurich, 10 July 1885; White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 27 July 1885.

¹⁴⁴ For the reference to 'the subject of my Arbeit', see Burr to White. Leipzig, 17 January 1885. White had similarly asked Burr about 'selecting your Fach or subject': White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 24 November 1884.

¹⁴⁵ Burr to White. Leipzig, 8 December 1884.

¹⁴⁶ White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 23 December 1884. For the history of the MS and White's acquisition of it, see the lengthy footnote in Burr, 'The Fate of Dietrich Flade', p. 191.

¹⁴⁷ White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 26 January 1885.

¹⁴⁸ Burr to White. Zurich, 13 August 1885.

¹⁴⁹ White to Burr. Saratoga Springs, NY, 26 August 1885.

¹⁵⁰ Burr to White. Trier, 10 September 1885.

of Capri and Campania, he expressed the hope ‘that if I do not complete them you will.’¹⁵¹ White encouraged Burr to refute an article on Galileo written ‘under Jesuit or at least priestly inspiration’ as ‘a good thing for the country and for yourself’, which would later become a draft chapter for the *Warfare of Science* manuscript.¹⁵² When Burr’s time in Europe came to an end in September 1886, he promised White (who was still overseas) that ‘what spare time I have shall be given to excerpting for the “Warfare of Science” such material as you have not already used.’¹⁵³

Inevitably, Burr’s witchcraft studies were also part of White’s project and similarly shaped by his relationship to his patron. The young American conceived of witchcraft in the same way his mentor conceived of all forms of false belief. Like other types of dogma, witchcraft belief existed only to be refuted as the absence or corruption of something good. While magic may be ‘actual and universal’, witchcraft was only ever ‘a shadow, a nightmare ... Less than five centuries saw its birth, its vigor, its decay.’¹⁵⁴ Burr’s rather repetitive metaphors tellingly cast witchcraft belief as pale perverse imitations easily defeated by the real thing. Witchcraft was a ‘nightmare of Christian thought’, ‘the nightmare of a religion, the shadow of a dogma’, and ‘the shadow on the dial whose recession marks the upward course of the sun of civilization’ – its decline marked progress.¹⁵⁵ These fundamentally Christian metaphors set up witchcraft’s inevitable defeat at the hands of those scholars who let ‘in the purer daylight.’¹⁵⁶ Although Burr was not alone in being primarily interested in opposition to the witch-hunt, both factors – witchcraft as the corruption of *something* else, to be refuted by *someone* else – helped locate witchcraft solidly within the larger *Warfare of Science* project, in which devout individuals fought monstrous perversions of dogmatic religion.¹⁵⁷ As we have already seen in Burr’s reviews of Murray and Summers, for the remainder of his life Burr held on to this view of witchcraft as a false perversion – a view which also helped to relegate these beliefs to the past. After all, we wake up from a nightmare.

While these intellectual foundations remained unchanged – indeed, they remained central to Burr’s understanding of his own role and duty as a historian – his witchcraft studies also provided an avenue for his emancipation from White. In his 1886 lecture on the Loos manuscript upon his return from Europe, Burr quelled his private doubts about Flade’s worthy martyrdom.¹⁵⁸ Five years later, his

¹⁵¹ White to Burr. Sorrento, 23 March 1886; Burr to White. Trier, 29 March 1886.

¹⁵² White to Burr. Cannes, 11 January 1886; White to Burr. Cannes, 15 January 1886; Burr to White. Zurich, March 26, 1887[=8]. The article that outraged the two men was Glover, ‘Rome and the Inquisitions’ Bainton reports that the Galileo chapter was intended for future editions of the *Warfare of Science* project: Bainton, ‘His Life’, p. 52.

¹⁵³ Burr to White. Ithaca, NY, 4 September 1886.

¹⁵⁴ George Lincoln Burr, ‘The Literature of Witchcraft’, p. 166.

¹⁵⁵ Burr, ‘A Witch-Hunter in the Book-Shops’, p. 294; Burr, ‘The Literature of Witchcraft’, p. 166; Robbins, *Witchcraft*, p. xiv.

¹⁵⁶ Burr, ‘The Literature of Witchcraft’, p. 187.

¹⁵⁷ In 1904, Burr wrote to Lea that ‘I still hope to have something to print in that field [witchcraft history]; but what most interests me in it is the work of the opponents of the persecution’: Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, MS Coll. 111: Henry Charles Lea papers, Box 4, Folder 209. Ithaca, NY, 26 February 1904. James Bryce (later Viscount Bryce, 1838–1922), then British ambassador to Washington, DC, heard Burr’s paper on ‘New England’s Place in the History of Witchcraft’ at the 1911 meeting of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA, and solicited a letter from Burr on ‘anybody who in the sixteenth or seventeenth century was wholly skeptical as to witchcraft and the superstitions akin to it’: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bryce USA 12, fols. 116r–117v, at 116r. Ithaca, NY, 3 October 1912.

¹⁵⁸ Burr, ‘On the Loos Manuscript’, pp. 149–50. Italics in the original.

attitude towards Flade had changed. In ‘The Fate of Dietrich Flade’ (1891), he still mustered Martin Delrio’s condemnation of Flade and evidence from silence as best he could. He suggested in passing that the ‘stout denials’ of one victim may have set Flade thinking, ‘though there is little in the record to suggest conscientious scruples on his part’.¹⁵⁹ A complaint by one of the witch-hunters about the sluggishness of a nearby court could only apply to Flade’s – ‘the only tribunal ... he could have reason to complain [about] was that of which Dietrich Flade was the head.’¹⁶⁰ Yet in the end the evidence for Flade’s heroic opposition to the witch-hunt no longer stacked up. Burr admitted that Flade ‘was not a martyr – scarcely even a hero.’¹⁶¹ Yet Burr could not give up on Flade, and indirectly on White, entirely. Adopting a lower standard of heroism, he still found valour in the every-day: ‘it is something to know that, even in that most drearily doctrinaire of ages, there lived plodding men of affairs, who, spite of dogma and of panic, clung to their common-sense and their humanity, and with such firmness as was in them breasted the fate that came.’¹⁶²

Upon reading Burr’s 1891 article, the historian Henry Charles Lea (1825–1909), an authority on the Spanish Inquisition but with an interest in witchcraft, wrote to Burr to praise his ‘exceeding thoroughness’ as ‘a matter of which not only you but all American students of history have reason to be praised.’¹⁶³ This compliment brings us to another difference between Burr and White. Burr’s commitment to factual accuracy, as Bainton noted long ago, contrasted with his patron’s ‘hasty procedures’ or rather – to put it more accurately – with the latter’s commitment to philosophical truth over ‘surface facts’, his concern with making ‘the fundamental facts shine through the surface annals.’¹⁶⁴ ‘The Fate of Dietrich Flade’ offers a glimpse of how Burr attempted to resolve the tension between these opposing forces – by emphasizing humanity rather than reason. Tellingly White continued to refer to Flade as a martyred opponent of the witch-hunt without Burr’s careful caveats.¹⁶⁵ The triumph of the truth of facts over the truth of narrative in Burr’s writings closely maps onto his gradually changing relationship with White. In the short term, Burr’s discovery of the Loos manuscript revealed an opponent of the witch-hunt whose *bona fides* could not be doubted.¹⁶⁶ Both White and Burr proved ready, as have more recent historians, to overlook Cornelius Loos’s deep hostility (to be expected, perhaps, from a Catholic exile) to Protestant heretics, whom he was more than happy to see burn.¹⁶⁷

Burr’s ambiguous attitude towards Flade reflects the fact that he could not escape White’s orbit. Throughout 1886 and 1887, he had been desperate to avoid making a second European trip for

¹⁵⁹ Burr, ‘The Fate of Dietrich Flade’, p. 199.

¹⁶⁰ Burr, ‘The Fate of Dietrich Flade’, p. 225.

¹⁶¹ Burr, ‘The Fate of Dietrich Flade’, p. 232.

¹⁶² Burr, ‘The Fate of Dietrich Flade’, p. 233.

¹⁶³ Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, MS Coll. 111: Henry Charles Lea papers, Box 4, Folder 207. Philadelphia, July 18, 1891.

¹⁶⁴ Bainton, ‘His Life’, p. 52; White, ‘On Studies in General History’, p. 55.

¹⁶⁵ White, *Warfare*, vol. I, pp. 356–57; White, *Seven Great Statesmen*, p. 141.

¹⁶⁶ Burr, ‘On the Loos Manuscript’, p. 153.

¹⁶⁷ White, *Warfare*, vol. I, p. 356: ‘He was a devoted churchman, and one of the most brilliant opponents of Protestantism, *but* he finally saw through the prevailing belief regarding occult powers, and in an evil hour for himself embodied his idea in a book entitled True and False Magic.’ (Emphasis added) Burr, of course, had been more suspect: Burr, ‘On the Loos Manuscript’, p. 151. For an introduction to Cornelius Loos and his attempts to publish his *De vera et falsa magia*, see Rita Voltmer, ‘Demonology and Anti-Demonology’. Efforts to publish the Loos manuscript have repeatedly failed. A German translation by the late Othon Scholer and revised by Luc Deitz is now finally forthcoming.

White.¹⁶⁸ He described his first 1884–1886 journey to Europe as his *Wanderjahre* – literally, wander-years but also a reference to the traditional German training of journeymen.¹⁶⁹ Having completed them, Burr sought to be a master in his own right. During his first stay he had kept up an exchange with a childhood sweetheart – known only from his diary as ‘P.’ – and was nearly engaged to her but his straightened financial circumstances and the need to support his family made that impossible.¹⁷⁰ He also discovered that time and continued involvement with the *Warfare* project rebalanced his relationship with White. During his second stay in Europe, in 1887–1888, Burr (supported by two assistants) worked extensively on such *Warfare of Science* chapters as education, evolution, the antiquity of man, and comparative philology.¹⁷¹ At that stage, with a post as history professor at Cornell in the offing, Burr became quite comfortable describing the project as belonging to them both. In January 1888, he was not only hard at work on White’s education chapter but also on his doctoral dissertation and the lectures he would give at Cornell in the autumn: ‘After all I feel more and more that, in the long run – as you have said yourself – our work is the same.’¹⁷² Although White had long stepped down from his roles at Cornell, in March Burr ‘looked forward with impatience to a good time coming when you and I can divide up the nineteen Christian centuries among us after our own fashion, leaving to President Adams the history of institutions and to Professor Tuttle that of diplomacy, in which they most delight.’¹⁷³ In May, he wrote to White that he understood their shared purpose: ‘Now that I have grown to know how largely our work is one, I am no longer afraid of you and do not fail to see that what is best for me physically is best for us both and for the work.’¹⁷⁴ He also felt emboldened to correct White, at least in private and after ‘long hesitation and painful struggle’. Even so, he told White, ‘the choice lay only between correcting you now and attacking you afterwards.’ (Burr’s assertiveness only went so far, however. His attempt at correction ended with a profession of obedience. White could cable the one word ‘Insert!’ and Burr would restore the original text.)¹⁷⁵

A more important divergence between the erstwhile teacher and student than Burr’s scruples about factual accuracy was the alternate, less fact-heavy theory of warfare that he put forward. In the same letter in which he corrected White’s chapter, he also pushed the idea of publishing a *Warfare of Humanity*: ‘I believe that Theology has too long been allowed to claim for itself a monopoly on the gentler impulses of human nature; and that, when the truth is known, the heart will be found to have had with theology as long and sharp a historic struggle for its rights as has the mind.’¹⁷⁶ In 1889, in a paper read at a meeting of the American Historical Association, Burr was more timid. He claimed that the ‘delusion ... faded before the advance of that more Christian spirit of mingled science and humanity which the world has too long stigmatized as rationalism.’¹⁷⁷ Yet over time humanity won out. In his 1891 sermon on ‘The Living Gospel’, mentioned above, Burr explicitly put his hope not in reason but in ‘Christian kindness’: ‘reason defended’ witchcraft persecutions and despotism out of

¹⁶⁸ Burr to White, Ithaca, NY, 1 August 1887: ‘Let us first make one more effort to find somebody who can help you as well as I.’

¹⁶⁹ Burr, ‘A Witch-Hunter in the Book-Shops’, p. 296. I am grateful to Alison Rowlands for this insight.

¹⁷⁰ Bainton, ‘His Life’, pp. 36–37.

¹⁷¹ See *e.g.* Burr to White. London, 22 January 1888; Burr to White. Zurich, 16 March 1888.

¹⁷² Burr to White. London, 22 January 1888.

¹⁷³ Burr to White. Zurich, 26 March 1888.

¹⁷⁴ Burr to White. Zurich, 5 May 1888.

¹⁷⁵ Burr to White. Ithaca, NY, 2 December 1888. Underlining in the original. The letter is partly excerpted in part in Bainton, ‘His Life’, 53–54.

¹⁷⁶ Burr to White. Ithaca, NY, 2 December 1888.

¹⁷⁷ Burr, ‘The Literature of Witchcraft’, p. 186.

Scripture.¹⁷⁸ In a sermon, first delivered in 1905, Burr was still more explicit: ‘Men sometimes tell us that what has brought us tolerance is only the growth of rationalism, the rise of the sciences.’ Here, the reference to White is unmistakable. By contrast, his own studies taught Burr that ‘the greatest scholars ... were often, as they are to-day, the most intolerant of men. It was the men of loving hearts and of broad acquaintance.’¹⁷⁹ Progress should be ascribed ‘less to any growth in knowledge than to that humanitarian trend, that new emphasis on conduct and on Christian kindness, which has confessedly so marked the religious temper of our time.’¹⁸⁰ (In 1931, when Burr’s students published a *festschrift* in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation from Cornell, they included chapters on Erasmus, Sebastian Castellio and other ‘humanitarians’. If White the Reformer resembled the scientists he triumphed, all these figures ended up rather resembling Burr.¹⁸¹)

Burr’s own war did not cause a break between the two men. In fact, White seems to have met Burr halfway, positioning his 1910 ‘Seven Great Statesmen’ within ‘the Warfare of *Humanity* with Unreason.’¹⁸² In his obituary of White, Burr called the work ‘a torso ... He had hoped to parallel his “Warfare of Science” with as full a study of the great steps in the conflict with inhumanity and prejudice.’¹⁸³ The latter assertion might just be Burr (**Figure 3**) posthumously claiming White for his own project. Yet it may also point to another reason for their continued collaboration. Perhaps Burr, with his repeated insistence on the ultimate triumph of the ‘kind of heart nurtured by the spirit of Christianity’, understood the ineffable religious mysticism at the heart of White’s project better than White himself ever did.¹⁸⁴

[insert Figure 3 here]

Figure 3. George Lincoln Burr (ca. 1900). Image courtesy of Cornell University Library.

Whatever Burr’s qualms, when the completed two-volume edition of *Warfare of Science* finally appeared in 1896, it was the product of two men and an unequal teacher-student relationship. The result was that Burr’s role in book’s production was elided but that he served a vital role as witness to White’s greatness. The publication of *Warfare* was accompanied by a biographical ‘Sketch’ by Burr

¹⁷⁸ Burr, ‘The Living Gospel’, p. 239.

¹⁷⁹ Burr, ‘Religious Progress’, p. 313. Burr delivered the same text again in 1925, taking his audience ‘back with me into the currents of that pre-war thinking’ after ‘a great war, with the conservative influence, the reactionary sequels, of all great wars, has thrown us back religiously whole decades’: *ibid.*, p. 309.

¹⁸⁰ Burr, ‘Religious Progress’, p. 314.

¹⁸¹ See *Persecution and Liberty* (no editor is listed). The full titles of some contributions are already instructive: Wallace K. Ferguson, ‘The Attitude of Erasmus toward Toleration’; Roland H. Bainton, ‘Sebastian Castellio and the Toleration Controversy of the Sixteenth Century’, Edward M. Hulme, ‘Lelio Sozzini’s Confession of Faith’, and Lois Oliphant Gibbons, ‘A Seventeenth Century Humanitarian: Hermann Löher’, in *Persecution and Liberty*. Hulme’s description of Sozzini (p. 211) can be easily applied to Burr: ‘The narrative of his life is the story of a man seeking truth, pressing onward, quietly with reserves and reticences, to a religion that should satisfy at once the mind and the heart.’ Bainton’s conclusion about Castellio (p. 205) could summarize Burr’s worldview: ‘That which hinders us from seeing the truth is self-love, hate, prejudice, blind love, the desire for victory, which is ambition. The way to truth is identical with the mystic way to God. It consists in the crucifixion of the self.’

¹⁸² Emphasis added. While ‘humanity’ replaces science, unreason remains. Burr was paid to correct the proofs of this work: Ogden (ed.), *The Diaries of Andrew D. White*, p. 426.

¹⁸³ Burr, ‘Andrew Dickson White’, p. 417.

¹⁸⁴ Burr to White. Ithaca, NY, 2 December 1888.

in *Popular Science Monthly*, the journal which had printed many of its chapters as instalments.¹⁸⁵ Predictably, Burr ended the portrait with a declaration of White's profound Christian faith: 'A man of profoundly religious nature, impatient of irreverence of any kind, and deeply attached to the Christian communion in which he was reared.'¹⁸⁶ The extent of Burr's contributions to the final text is impossible to determine but it was profound.¹⁸⁷ Burr modestly noted that White 'has known how to use the aid from time to time of sundry helpers' in the gathering of material but claimed 'that in the digestion and interpretation of his materials no other hand was ever given a part.'¹⁸⁸ Burr thus also effaced his own role, at least partly because he privately continued to push White towards the warfare of humanity instead. Although White in the preface of *Warfare of Science* thanked Burr 'first and above all' for his 'contributions, suggestions, criticisms, and cautions', with the exception of Bainton's 1943 short life of Burr – where few scholars of White would ever think to look –, his role in its composition has been completely forgotten.¹⁸⁹ Burr carried out his role as White's witness without fail until his death. As late as 1932, at a luncheon that honoured the centenary of White's birth, he gave a 'glowing tribute' to the sole 'builder' of Cornell University.¹⁹⁰

5. Meditations on Masculinity

So far, we have charted the bonds that tied Burr to White, but as already indicated, the connections that both men forged with past historical figures, especially Loos and Flade, were at least as important for their scholarship. When Burr first reached Trier, he found a room 'on the very street where Dr Flade used to live.' He also attempted a 'pilgrimage' to the grave of yet another Trier witchcraft sceptic, the Jesuit Friedrich Spee.¹⁹¹ (Burr would later describe him as a 'saint and martyr by a higher canonization than that of the Church.'¹⁹²) While working 'alone in the evening twilight' in Trier's former Jesuit library, he was conscious of being watched by the portrait of 'gentle Friedrich von Spee' (and by some less hospitable Electors): 'Friedrich v. Spee, indeed, sleeps scarce twenty yards away in the old crypt. I can almost fancy him shudder in his grave as I turn the leaves of these bloody old witchcraft records.'¹⁹³ Indeed, the parallels between White and Burr on the one hand, and Flade and Loos on the other were unmistakable. Flade had been the rector or 'University President' of the University of Trier, just as White had been at Cornell.¹⁹⁴ Loos was described as a 'young college professor', just when Burr took up his first instructorship at Cornell.¹⁹⁵ (In reality, Loos would have been in his late forties or early fifties when he composed the discovered witchcraft manuscript and he never seems to have had any academic employment.)

¹⁸⁵ For a sense of Burr's role in the revision of those articles, see Burr to White. Ithaca, NY, 16 December 1893; Burr to White. Ithaca, NY, 15 January 1894; and especially, Burr to White. Ithaca, NY, 26 February 1894, where Burr apologized for errors in the published text and promised 'to read with more care.'

¹⁸⁶ Burr, 'Sketch of Andrew Dickson White', p. 556.

¹⁸⁷ See also Bainton, 'His Life', p. 52. Burr's papers at Cornell contain more than two boxes of material related to the Warfare of Science project: Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Rare and Manuscript Collections, George Lincoln Burr Papers: Box 29 (folders 20 and 21 only), Box 30, and Box 31.

¹⁸⁸ Burr, 'Sketch of Andrew Dickson White', p. 556.

¹⁸⁹ White, *Warfare*, vol. I, p. x.

¹⁹⁰ 'Centenary of Birth of Dr. Andrew White Celebrated by Alumni'; 'Excerpt from Prof. Burr's Speech.'

¹⁹¹ Burr to White. Trier, 31 August 1885.

¹⁹² Burr, 'The Literature of Witchcraft', p. 186.

¹⁹³ Burr to White. Trier, 30 March 1886.

¹⁹⁴ Burr, 'On the Loos Manuscript', p. 149.

¹⁹⁵ Adams, 'A Manuscript and a Man'.

White's *Seven Great Statesmen* similarly shows that the author so identified with his subjects and so embodied the values he ascribed to them that he appeared to be their reincarnation.¹⁹⁶ Paolo Sarpi was neither Catholic nor Protestant, but Christian: 'a thoughtful, quiet scholar – large-minded and tolerant,' who 'must have' loathed, among others, the German Reformer Benedict Carpzov who 'had sent witches to the scaffold by the thousands.'¹⁹⁷ Hugo Grotius, like White, 'steered clear of the quicksands of useless scholarship, which had engulfed so many strong men of his time. The zeal of learned men in that period was largely given to knowing things not worth knowing, to discussing things not worth discussing, to proving things not worth proving.'¹⁹⁸ Yet of the seven figures, White probably identified most with Christian Thomasius, who had been one of the first rectors of the University of Halle (**Figure 1**). If Cornell had been a 'godless institution' in the eyes of its critics, then Halle had been a 'hellish' (*höllisches*) one.¹⁹⁹ White suggested that Thomasius, a late and (frankly) rather timid critic of the witch-hunt, might have been haunted by 'remembrances of the fate of many who had made a similar fight' – especially the fate of Flade, 'like him an eminent jurist and a university professor.'²⁰⁰

That White and Burr identified with their historical subjects, then, is readily apparent. Theirs was also firmly a history of Great Men, their admiration for some women (notably, 'Saint' Florence Nightingale) notwithstanding.²⁰¹ Yet the extent to which these factors – and their masculine identities – shaped their scholarship may be less obvious. At first glance the evidence for any misogynistic attitudes may seem less than clear-cut. White favoured the admission of women at Cornell University, but (as we shall see) for reasons that were less than egalitarian.²⁰² Unlike Burr, who remained steadfastly opposed to women's suffrage, White voted ('with many misgivings' he told his diary) in favour of the Nineteenth Amendment.²⁰³ Burr, who in his youth composed a satire entitled 'Our First Woman President', had warm relationships with female doctoral students – one of whom would edit a posthumous collection of his writings.²⁰⁴ None of them, however, ended up in academic employment, nor did Burr appear to expect them to.

If this does not seem overwhelmingly misogynistic then that is precisely what historians of scholarly masculinity have taught us to expect. The professionalization of historical research in the nineteenth century was a process of transforming the historian into a figure who was invisible and objective, yet also gendered male, *because* objectivity and professionalism were seen as masculine, defined against feminine 'amateurism'.²⁰⁵ Historical seminars and archives were male spaces, the new practices that

¹⁹⁶ I have taken the idea 'that virtues are the distinctive marks of scholarly personae' from Paul, 'What Is a Scholarly Persona?', esp. p. 350.

¹⁹⁷ White, *Seven Great Statesmen*, p. 48.

¹⁹⁸ White, *Seven Great Statesmen*, p. 58.

¹⁹⁹ White, *Seven Great Statesmen*, p. 133.

²⁰⁰ White, *Seven Great Statesmen*, p. 146. See also the reference to the 'ex-Rector of [Trier's] University' on p. 141.

²⁰¹ White, *Warfare* (1876), p. 150. White even commissioned a stained-glass window of Nightingale for Cornell's Sage Chapel from a London artist: Burr to White. London, 1 February 1888. Nightingale did not personify manly virtues. She was chosen because she was 'fitted to take a place among the sweet-souled, helpful-handed women of our own day whose memorials sanctify those walls': Burr, 'The Living Gospel', p. 239.

²⁰² Haines, 'For Honor and Alma Mater'.

²⁰³ Ogden (ed.), *The Diaries of Andrew D. White*, p. 466 (2 November 1915); Bainton, 'His Life', p. 127.

²⁰⁴ Bainton, 'His Life', pp. 9, 127.

²⁰⁵ See, in particular: Smith, *The Gender of History*.

accompanied them ‘proposed a masculine identity worthy of and equal to the arduous quest for objectivity.’²⁰⁶ Yet this rhetoric of universality did more than simply identify itself against femininity, it also subsumed the feminine as a lesser subcategory. As Joan Wallach Scott put it, ‘the feminine was but a particular instance; the masculine a universal signifier.’²⁰⁷ Cornell University’s early admission of women (especially early when compared to its more established Ivy League competitors) did not challenge the masculine universalist paradigm, the presence of women was meant to underwrite it, as we shall see.²⁰⁸

It will come as no surprise that White’s conception of history was thoroughly masculine from the outset. In his first magazine article he concluded that the ‘contemplation of the bearing of increased liberty on increased virtue, and of struggles of great good men with great bad men, strengthens a man’s heart. This is that higher discipline which gives mental discipline its worth; this repays all discouragement among old books – all buffeting among rugged men.’²⁰⁹ By contrast, students at America’s denominational colleges graduated with, at best, ‘clerically emasculated knowledge of the most careful modern thought.’²¹⁰ Small incidents characterize White’s and Burr’s ‘masculine’ attitudes just as much. At the 1885 AHA meeting, White encountered a ‘crankish’ female member but he ‘quickly got rid of her.’²¹¹ In a letter to White, Burr expressed his ‘amazement and indignation’ that ‘the important article’ on Galileo in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* ‘had been entrusted to a woman.’²¹² White admired Lecky’s historical scholarship because, he told Burr, ‘the reading of history of that sort makes not pedants but men.’²¹³ What the two scholars objected to was the limited agency given to the (male) sceptics in Lecky’s witchcraft chapter.²¹⁴

White and Burr may have felt a still greater need to assert the masculinity of their project because it strayed from ideals of historical objectivity espoused by their peers. White used decidedly gendered language to discredit the supposed prophet of scientific objectivity, Leopold von Ranke. In his *Autobiography*, White mocked Ranke, whose lectures he had attended in his youth, by feminizing him: ‘half a dozen students crowding around his desk, listening as priests might listen to the sibyl on her tripod.’²¹⁵ According to Burr, White considered ‘the trend of the German method toward minute research ... academic and devitalizing.’²¹⁶ But the ‘masculinity’ of White’s historical project finds its

²⁰⁶ Smith, *The Gender of History*, p. 105; see also Smith, ‘Gender and the Practices of Scientific History’.

²⁰⁷ Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 183.

²⁰⁸ For a study of the admission of women at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, see Malkiel, “*Keep the Damned Women Out*”.

²⁰⁹ White, ‘Glimpses of Universal History’, p. 427.

²¹⁰ White, *Warfare* (1876), p. 137.

²¹¹ Ogden (ed.), *The Diaries of Andrew D. White*, p. 247.

²¹² Burr to White. London, 18 February 1886.

²¹³ White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 13 August 1885. Underlining in the original manuscript.

²¹⁴ Burr, ‘The Literature of Witchcraft’, p. 181.

²¹⁵ White, *Autobiography*, vol. I, p. 139, which on to comment that Ranke ‘had a habit of becoming so absorbed in his subject, as to slide down in his chair, hold his finger up toward the ceiling, and then, with his eye fastened on the tip of it, to go mumbling through a kind of rhapsody.’ The somewhat less gendered parallel description in White’s diary (‘The great historian during most of his hour lay sprawled out in his chair looking upwards and talking to himself, now quickly, now slowly, now loud, now soft!’) is cited in Smith’s study: Ogden (ed.), *The Diaries of Andrew D. White*, p. 100 (October 30, 1855); Smith, *The Gender of History*, p. 106.

²¹⁶ Hewett, *Cornell University*, vol. II, p. 102. According to Bainton, ‘His Life’, p. 122, this section on the teaching of history was written by Burr ‘because of a wish to redress a slight to Andrew Dickson White in the first volume.’

greatest expression in the metaphor that was at its heart – and historians of science have, to my knowledge, strangely never commented on it. As Michael Kimmel has noted, ‘all wars ... are meditations on masculinity.’²¹⁷ For White, the war of the scientists far exceeded that of the soldiers. The warfare of science had seen ‘warriors’ engaged in ‘fiercer’ battles and ‘more persistent’ sieges than ‘the comparatively petty warfares of Alexander, or Caesar, or Napoleon.’²¹⁸

White’s pre-occupation with masculinity was also evident in the policies he pursued at Cornell. He was proud of the ‘strong men’ he had recruited to teach at Cornell – with Burr as the prime example within the history department – and rejected one job applicant because he was insufficiently manly, writing to his deputy that he preferred ‘thoroughbreds’ and wished to have ‘a Faculty as free as possible from the influence of half way men.’²¹⁹ While White’s intellectualized conception of masculinity – for very personal reasons – did not fully align with those of nineteenth-century America, he embraced the military drilling made compulsory for Cornell men by the Morrill Land Grant.²²⁰ He erected ‘one of the largest gymnasiums in the country’ for their use and hired an ‘experienced gymnast’ to train them.²²¹ The male students slept in dormitories and arose at 5AM in summer and 5:30AM in winter.²²² White was pleased when a group of Cornell students was victorious over Harvard and Yale during an 1875 boat race but especially delighted by the ‘manly qualities which they showed in the hour of triumph.’²²³ A young Burr fully understood what made Cornell different: where ‘other colleges strive to make boys pious’, he wrote in a student essay, ‘Cornell [strives] to make them manly.’²²⁴ Inevitably, manhood – and Burr’s need to assert it – also helps to account for Burr’s later and partial quest for independence.

Even Cornell’s admission of women had the manliness of the men foremost in mind. White claimed that their admission would make the men ‘more manly’ and the women ‘more womanly’ (as his mother had told him it would).²²⁵ In his report to the Trustees, White stressed that the admission of women would especially advantage men:

The greatest aid which could be rendered to smooth the way for any noble thinkers who are to march through the future, would be to increase the number of women who, by an education which has caught something from manly methods, are prevented from ... throwing themselves hysterically across their pathway.²²⁶

The passage, at once, highlights the masculinity of universal ideals and the dangers posed by women, while in effect also incorporating them in a subservient position – evidently they could never be

²¹⁷ Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, p. 72.

²¹⁸ See e.g. the description of Columbus as ‘the next warrior’: White, ‘The Battle-Fields of Science’. In his lecture on ‘The Age of Discovery’, p. 29 (Andrew Dickson White Papers, Reel 140, p. 24), White also emphasized how Columbus ‘developed his natural manliness and Godliness.’

²¹⁹ White, *Autobiography*, vol. I, p. 381; White to William Channing Russell. Long Branch, NJ, 18 August 1870.

²²⁰ Haines, ‘For Honor and Alma Mater’, 26.

²²¹ White (ed.), ‘*What Profession Shall I Choose and How Shall I Fit Myself or It?*’, p. 53. The women were provided with ‘a smaller but well-equipped gymnasium.’

²²² Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, pp. 78–79.

²²³ White, *Autobiography*, vol. I, p. 353.

²²⁴ Cited in Bainton, ‘His Life’, p. 16.

²²⁵ White, *Autobiography*, vol. I, pp. 397–98, 400.

²²⁶ White, *Report Submitted to the Trustees of Cornell University*, p. 36.

ranked among the ‘noble thinkers’. White further claimed that ‘the fetichisms and superstitions of the world are bolstered up mainly by women.’²²⁷ Needless to say, this belief in the superstitious nature of women also shaped White’s view of the past. The weapons used by the opponents of scientists – the epithets ‘Infidel’ and ‘Atheist’ – harmed men only indirectly through their families: ‘They go to the heart of loving women: they alienate dear children; they injure the man after life is ended, for they leave poisoned wounds in the hearts of those who loved him best—fears for his eternal happiness, dread of the Divine displeasure.’²²⁸ Fortunately, the weapons have since lost some of their edge: ‘though often effective in scaring women, [they] are somewhat blunted.’²²⁹

This central preoccupation with masculinity sustained White’s identity, his reforming project, and his scholarship. Unsurprisingly, then, in White’s view, women, including those accused of witchcraft, shared responsibility for the witch-hunt with the male scholastics and inquisitors who pursued them. White suggested that no other cause had so often given rise to witch-hunts ‘as the alleged bewitchment of some poor mad or foolish or hysterical creature. ... Well-authenticated, though rarer than is often believed, were the cases where crazed women voluntarily accused themselves of this impossible crime.’²³⁰ White cited a German psychiatrist who declared that their recorded conversations were ‘exactly like those familiar to him in our modern lunatic asylums.’²³¹ Convents, in particular, were ‘breeding-beds’ of the disease.²³² White concluded that ‘one evidence of Satanic intercourse with mankind especially, on which for many generations theologians had laid peculiar stress, and for which they had condemned scores of little girls and hundreds of old women to a most cruel death, was found to be nothing more than one of the many results of hysteria.’²³³ White thus outlined an unhealthy relationship between *seemingly* learned clerics and their enabling female victims, which was interrupted by heroic male opponents:

in the midst of demonstrations of demoniacal possession by the most eminent theologians and judges, who sat in their robes and *looked* wise, while women, shrieking, praying, and blaspheming, were put to the torture, a man arose who dared to protest effectively that some of the persons thus charged might be simply insane; and this man was [the witchcraft sceptic] John Wier [or Weyer], of Cleves.²³⁴

If nineteenth-century American men defined their masculinity primarily in relation to each other, then White’s representation of the conflict between theologians and sceptics reflects these attitudes.²³⁵

Burr took issue with White on the culpability of supposedly hysterical victims. The caveat ‘though rarer than is often believed’ may well be by his hand. (We know he inserted others.) Yet he only disagreed because the female victims were *superfluous*. In a letter to White, he explained that torture was ‘the sufficient explanation of the witch-confessions.’ In fact, the ‘very few’ cases of insanity had been used by modern theologians (that is, by White and Burr’s male opponents) ‘who would fain

²²⁷ White, ‘Proposal’, p. 36.

²²⁸ White, ‘The Battle-Fields of Science’.

²²⁹ White, ‘The Battle-Fields of Science’.

²³⁰ White, *Warfare*, vol. II, p. 118.

²³¹ White, *Warfare*, vol. II, p. 118.

²³² White, *Warfare*, vol. II, p. 121.

²³³ White, *Warfare*, vol. II, p. 125.

²³⁴ White, *Warfare*, vol. II, p. 122. Emphasis added.

²³⁵ Kimmel, *Manhood in America*.

exculpate religion by throwing the blame on the victims themselves.’ Like White, Burr saw the witch-hunt as a conflict between male elites: ‘Weyer [Wier] ... sought to save the witches by making them out demented. And the persecutors, who fought him tooth and nail on this point, saw that this was to undermine their whole position.’²³⁶

The witch-hunt, then, was a battle between rival masculinities. Burr took issue with Lecky’s assessment of the sceptics: ‘the opponents of the persecution seem to me neither so few nor so feeble as one might infer from the pages of Mr. Lecky.’²³⁷ In his first lecture on the Loos manuscript, he ranked the sceptics as ‘often the most learned and honored [men] of their respective communities’, although for the most part too frightened to speak up. Wier was ‘the first man who dare to raise his voice’, Loos was the ‘next man ... who dared to stand out boldly.’²³⁸ The victims of the witch-hunt received little attention. Burr asked his audience to imagine those imprisoned in a witch-tower. His description began with a ‘fair’ maiden – ‘her conscience black with tortured lies that blast her own fair name.’ But Burr quickly moved on to the male prisoners, an imprisoned village pastor, ‘touched by the sufferings of his people into questioning whether the Devil could really do all that was ascribed to him,’ before dwelling, as we already noted, on Flade himself: ‘a man of presence and dignity, whose chain of gold points to exalted rank ... who was brought into suspicion because as a judge he began to doubt whether *all* the witches were guilty of *all* the crimes laid to their charge.’²³⁹ For Burr, the female victims of the witch-hunt were innocent but scarcely ever worthy of attention, while male victims were their heroic defenders, falsely accused of witchcraft as a result.

Scholarly masculinity not only shaped how the two historians understood the witch-hunt, the entire *Warfare of Science* thesis was effectively a conflict between rival versions of manhood. White generally emphasized the laziness of mind and body of those who opposed his heroes who ‘patiently, fearlessly, and reverently devote themselves to the search for truth as truth.’²⁴⁰ These were ‘older theologians, who since their youth have learned nothing and forgotten nothing, sundry professors who do not wish to rewrite their lectures.’²⁴¹ They also took fright easily,²⁴² and engaged in ‘unmanly’ behaviour, such as attacking Galileo when he was prevented from responding.²⁴³ Ideas and expressions, too, were either manly or sterile and emasculating: ‘Which is the more likely to strengthen Christianity,’ White asked rhetorically, ‘a large, manly, honest, fearless utterance’ or ‘hair-splitting sophistries, bearing in their every line the germs of failure?’²⁴⁴ Even Germany could be represented in anthropomorphized form as ‘a strong, sound man building up his whole higher nature in struggling with obstacles and dangers.’²⁴⁵

If, as argued above, the *Warfare of Science* was impelled by White’s own identity as a reformer, then it was also in part the product of his own idiosyncratic conception of manhood. As a young professor

²³⁶ Burr to White. Ithaca, NY, 2 December 1888.

²³⁷ Burr, ‘The Literature of Witchcraft’, p. 181.

²³⁸ Burr, ‘On the Loos Manuscript’, p. 150.

²³⁹ Burr, ‘On the Loos Manuscript’, pp. 149–50. Italics in the original.

²⁴⁰ White, *Warfare of Science*, vol. I, p. 248.

²⁴¹ White, *Warfare of Science*, vol. I, pp. 318–19.

²⁴² White, *Warfare of Science*, vol. I, p. 91.

²⁴³ White, *Warfare of Science*, vol. I, p. 138. Note also the example Archbishop Archibald Tait, deemed too timid supporter of science: ‘manly as he was, he was somewhat more cautious in this matter than those who most revere his memory could now wish’: *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 356.

²⁴⁴ White, *Warfare of Science*, vol. I, p. 247.

²⁴⁵ White, ‘The New Germany’, p. 207.

at the University of Michigan, White had sent ‘to the field the young manhood of the North’, equipped with John Lothrop Motley’s three-volume *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (although, characteristically, he did his utmost to avoid military service himself).²⁴⁶ While White approved of physical exertion for others, the version of masculinity articulated in his writings stressed the superiority of the warfare of the mind, which he himself happened to embody. The very opposite of the then dominant ‘self-made man’, White was free from the necessity of hard work.²⁴⁷ Perhaps paradoxically, his weak physical condition established his efforts as strenuous and at the same time justified leisure – his many European vacations were legitimated by the need to recover his health. In his obituary of White, Burr claimed that although White had ‘never [been] in the most robust of health, a careful regimen made possible for him an amount of work that would have staggered many a stronger man.’²⁴⁸ The *Warfare of Science* accordingly was completed ‘under many difficulties’, which included not only many public duties but also the fact that White was ‘obliged from time to time to throw off by travel the effects of overwork.’²⁴⁹ White’s obsession with overexertion also enveloped Burr – the teacher was continuously anxious that his pupil was physically exhausting himself during his trips to Europe.²⁵⁰ White’s extensive overseas travels appear to indulge in the same form of escapism that dominated nineteenth-century American manhood. Yet where the typical American male escaped West when responsibilities grew too much, White, ‘breaking beneath his grief’ after the death of his first wife, went to Europe.²⁵¹ White’s health and status thus helped him embody the very conception of heroic intellectual manhood that he had idealized.

6. Reflections

This study has shown that there is room for, indeed a deep need for, a type of historiography that moves beyond seeing historians as products of their time. White and Burr’s letters and writings demonstrate the importance of paying close attention to the specific personal, individual circumstances in which historical scholarship is produced. Historians were humans too and their concerns did more than reflect the times in which they lived. The wars which White and Burr waged, whether for science or humanity, do not fit the large historiographical frameworks – the ‘conflict’ thesis in history of science, the ‘rationalist’ paradigm for witchcraft history, the American interpretation of Rankean ‘objectivity’ – which were supposed to contain them. White’s *Warfare of Science* was far from an anti-religious screed, but part of a project of religious reform with scientists in the role of religious reformers, who were accused of witchcraft (and much else) by their bigoted opponents. Burr’s witchcraft sceptics were motivated less by right reason and the mind, and more by

²⁴⁶ Burr, ‘Sketch of Andrew Dickson White’, p. 551; White, *Autobiography*, vol. I, p. 87; Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, p. 45.

²⁴⁷ As the *New York Times* would note in its obituary, White’s inheritance enabled him ‘to be free from financial cares all his life and made possible many of his services which would have been beyond the reach of a man who had to work for a living’” ‘Dr A.D. White dies’.

²⁴⁸ Burr, ‘Andrew Dickson White’, p. 418. I am grateful to Anthony Grafton for pointing this striking preoccupation with health and overwork out to me.

²⁴⁹ White, *Warfare*, vol. I, pp. ix–x.

²⁵⁰ See, for instance, White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 25 August 1884 (which expresses ‘some fears that you will overdo it at Göttingen’), and White to Burr. Cambridge, 25 November 1885 (‘I earnestly hope that your silence is not caused by illness; your statement regarding sleeplessness caused by work has made me rather nervous regarding you.’). Concerns by White for Burr overburdening himself continued to surface during later trips to Europe: White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 7 May 1888; White to Burr. Ithaca, NY, 25 June 1896.

²⁵¹ Burr, ‘Sketch of Andrew Dickson White’, p. 555. For the importance of escapism to nineteenth-century American manhood, see Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, chap. 2.

compassion and the heart. Neither was pursuing scientific objectivity, history for both was a moral science. The scholarship of both men, then, was the product of their identities. (Identity may be a more useful concept here than ‘scholarly persona’ not only because their identities – White the Reformer, Burr the Disciple and Humanitarian – were ultimately not about scholarship, and were more than mere personae.) White and Burr were defined, in part, by shared duties, debts, and obligations and their identities changed, along with their writings, as their relationship evolved from that of teacher and apprentice to something more equal. Their writings and relationship were also imbued with the need to define, protect, and assert their manhood.

This Element has never been intended as an exposé. It is neither a *j'accuse* or a *j'excuse*. It would be facile and wrong to conclude that White and Burr deserve our attention even less now that their ‘faults’ are laid bare. Indeed, the purpose has been the reverse. For starters, there remains much that is of value in Burr’s scholarship – it is based on an impressive amount of archival research and reading.²⁵² More importantly, like White and Burr, we are human too. The two authors may inspire ‘moral reflection’ on contemporary models of historical scholarship, especially at a time when historical writing, with the rise of public history and impact case studies, is again meant to have societal impact.²⁵³ Study of their project of activist history brings out some of the tensions within the project of history writing itself. The need to profess or appear to be objective often conflicts with our often very personal motivations for choosing our research topics, and with the morally charged mission to recover lost voices from the past – in short, with our humanity. Later generations of historians may see our debts, motivations, and blind spots more clearly than we do but we ourselves should also do our best acknowledge them. The study of our predecessors may help us identify them. If the present Element is any guide, it will show that historians cannot be reduced to products of their time and place, as historiography all too often does. Historians are also the product of relationships with others in the present and in the past. We should be conscious of what we owe others.

We should also not lose sight of the fact that history writing remains an incremental process. The unconscious assumptions and explicit aims of White and Burr’s scholarship have left their mark on the later historiography, whether we are aware of them or not. This impact is most easily identified in witchcraft historiography, perhaps because as a field of historical research, it has been relatively unreflective about its own past.²⁵⁴ Perhaps the greatest paradox of White and Burr’s scholarship is its impact on the study of male witches. Within their warfare framework, in which genders had clearly assigned roles, male witches were an anomaly that needed to be explained away. Perhaps the most important reason, then, why White and Burr continued to consider Flade a martyr, was that they could not conceive of an elite male, so much like themselves, to have been a *passive* victim. He had to have been an opponent of the hunt, he had to have had agency. When in 1897 Burr published a – still valuable – selection of sources on the witch-hunt these included fragments from the Flade and Loos manuscripts, but they also introduced a third elite male witch, the mayor of Bamberg, Johannes Junius.²⁵⁵ Thus explained away as sceptics and opponents, male witches did not receive scholarly

²⁵² Voltmer, “‘Germany’s First “Superhunt”?”, p. 229. Voltmer dedicated this chapter to Burr’s memory. See also Voltmer’s account of Burr’s stay in Trier, which includes useful information on Trier and the Stadtbibliothek where Burr discovered the manuscript: Voltmer, ‘Ein Amerikaner in Trier’.

²⁵³ For the importance of such ‘moral reflection’, see also Paul, ‘Sources of the Self’.

²⁵⁴ Fudge, ‘Traditions and Trajectories’, p. 488, opens with the advice to ignore everything written before the 1960s, commenting that ‘basic flaws in historical methodology crept into the early period of writing on the subject. Happily, these deficiencies were largely reversed from the 1970s.’

²⁵⁵ Burr (ed.), *The Witch-Persecutions*, pp. 13–18, 23–28.

attention until the early 2000s.²⁵⁶ Laura Apps and Andrew Gow, in their ground-breaking study of male witches, attribute the exclusion of male witches from the historiography to ‘active processes and assumptions’, including ‘a tacit agreement’ between feminist and ‘non-feminist’ historians that they are ‘neither as interesting nor as important as female witches and, furthermore, that they are not “proper” witches.’²⁵⁷ Scholarly masculinity helped to create this blind spot.

Other consequences of the warfare framework had, to some extent, become apparent in Burr’s own lifetime. In addition to taking on Murray and Summers across the pond, Burr also faced an opponent closer to home, in the form of the Harvard professor George Lyman Kittredge (1860–1941). Kittredge’s challenge showed just how much Burr identified himself – whether in defence of Science or Humanity – with the sceptics he studied and how much he had invested emotionally in their righteousness. Where Burr blamed scholastic theology and male elites for the witch-hunt, Kittredge – whose work would inspire Keith Thomas – placed responsibility ‘with the neighborhood or community’ and he provocatively discussed ‘the terrible prosecution in Trier toward the close of the sixteenth century’ as ‘a case in point.’²⁵⁸ The Harvard professor emphasized fears of *maleficium*, ‘the working of harm to the bodies and goods of one’s fellow-men’, as ‘the essential element in witchcraft’ and concluded that Burr had ‘over-emphasize[d] the learned or literary side of the question.’²⁵⁹ The normally mild-mannered Burr was still more upset by the claim that witchcraft belief was not only universal in the seventeenth century, ‘even among the elite’, but that it ‘was no more discreditable to a man’s head or heart than it was to believe in spontaneous generation or to be ignorant of the germ theory of disease.’²⁶⁰ Burr claimed that Kittredge’s conclusions were ‘contradictory of what my own lifelong study in this field has seemed to teach’ and ‘so much more generous to our ancestors than I can find it in my conscience to deem fair.’²⁶¹ Despite Kittredge’s intervention, or indeed later ones, historians have continued to identify with witchcraft sceptics. A German society still awards the Friedrich Spee prize for best work in witchcraft history, without recognition that Spee – like Loos before him – fought heresy as fervently as others fought witchcraft.²⁶² While historians of science have long exposed the at times esoteric thought that underpinned the work of early scientists, similar studies of witchcraft sceptics would again wait until the twenty-first century.²⁶³

²⁵⁶ Apps and Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe*; Schulte, *Man as Witch*; Rowlands (ed.), *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe*.

²⁵⁷ Apps and Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 26, 29.

²⁵⁸ Kittredge, *Notes on Witchcraft*, p. 46. See also thesis no. 9 (on p. 66): ‘The responsibility for any witch prosecution rests primarily on the community or neighborhood as a whole, not on the judge or the jury.’ Ronald Hutton is right to describe Kittredge as ‘unusual’ and place White and Kittredge on opposing sides of a spectrum of attitudes, but he still overstates the consensus between the Harvard and Cornell scholars: Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, pp. 133–34.

²⁵⁹ Kittredge, *Notes on Witchcraft*, p. 5.

²⁶⁰ Kittredge, *Notes on Witchcraft*, p. 66.

²⁶¹ Burr, ‘New England’s Place in the History of Witchcraft’, p. 353.

²⁶² Kemper, ‘Frank Sobiech Erhält den Preis des Paderborner Geschichtsvereins’.

²⁶³ For studies of witchcraft sceptics, see Valente, *Johann Wier* (a revised English translation is forthcoming); Almond, *England’s First Demonologist*; Hoorens, *Een ketterse arts voor de heksen*. Nevertheless, praise for witchcraft sceptics has by no means ceased. See, for instance, the attempt to style Spee as a ‘Kämpfer für die Menschenrechte’: Franz, ‘Antonius Hovaeus, Cornelius Loos und Friedrich Spee’, p. 132, and the examples under n. 59.

Military events proved an even greater shock, especially to White's warfare thesis, and demonstrated that progress was not, in the end, inevitable. Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium in 1914 destroyed its role as the Promised Land that had matched White's hopes for the future more than his own country. If facts had always been of secondary importance to White, German aggression simply could not be overlooked. In his diary, he wrote that 'violating neutrality of Belgium seems the unpardonable sin – and to these must be added dropping bombs into unfortified cities and killing women and children.'²⁶⁴ In his 1905 *Autobiography*, White had devoted an elegiac chapter on his personal reminiscences of Emperor William II, whom he had known as US ambassador, and he was now forced to eat his own words.²⁶⁵ The impact of White's positive view of Germany on witchcraft historiography was thus unintentional and profound. When White used Germany's role in the witch-hunt to illustrate the progress the country had made, he could not have foreseen that two World Wars would cause the same link to be used to illustrate the precise opposite – Germany as a home of irrational cruelty. British historians of the 1960s and 1970s, who had fought in World War II, would emphasize it.²⁶⁶ Refuting the connection and the implicit attack on Germany it entails seems, at times, to be the main aim of Germany's most prominent witchcraft historian.²⁶⁷

Study of past witchcraft historians, then, helps us explain why some aspects (male witches) have been overlooked, why others loom particularly large (Germany and its supposed lack of modernity), and still others really do appear to be evergreens, reflecting the deeply felt need for heroes in history. The popularity of the early modern witch-hunt as a subject of study and appropriation by the present forms part of this wider legacy as well, pointing to the continued need for witchcraft's past-ness and the need for that past to have meaning. Admiration of witchcraft sceptics may also help us to more easily perceive the appeal of the broader warfare thesis, because it stems from that same demand that history is not, to quote a young White, 'a mere game at cross-purposes, a careless whirl.' Of course, the past does not need to be a record of progress for it to have meaning. Yet progress seems what the present again demands. The positive reception by scientists and the greater public of a recent biography of Galileo, with the fitting title *Galileo and the Science Deniers*, suggests that progress narratives are undergoing an urgent revival. (As the cover of that book screams, '400 years later [Galileo's] message and mission are as important as ever.'²⁶⁸) The return of these narratives contain deeper truths about the present – they reveal how progress is seen as imperilled and in need of reinforcement, both real and rhetorical, and in need of warriors, old and new. The boundaries between the past and present remain blurred, despite our efforts to keep the past as past. More introspection may do us good. At the very least we should not forget that in their wars for progress White and Burr were roundly defeated. Whatever we do or do not do, we can be sure that future historians will have much to say about us.

²⁶⁴ Ogden (ed.), *The Diaries of Andrew D. White*, p. 458 (26 August 1914). See also the entry 4 April 1915 (p. 462): 'I can no longer sympathize with the Germans – strong as my leanings in that direction were. They seem determined to trample on all the best secured rights of nations.'

²⁶⁵ White, *Autobiography*, vol. II, chap. XLIV ('My Recollections of William II – 1879–1903'); Altschuler, *Andrew D. White*, pp. 281–85.

²⁶⁶ Trevor-Roper compared the witchcraft 'mythology' built up by inquisitors to 'the world-wide conspiracy of the Elders of Zion' created by anti-Semites: Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze*, pp. 92, 107; Cohn declared 'the great witch-hunt ... a supreme example of massive killing of innocent people by a bureaucracy ... Until our own century, the operation and consequences of demonization have never been more horrifyingly displayed': Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, p. 233.

²⁶⁷ e.g. 'Germanophobia does not make more sense than a stereotyping hatred of any other linguistic or ethnic group': Wolfgang Behringer, 'Germany', p. 417. See also Behringer, 'Witchcraft Studies in Austria, Germany and Switzerland', pp. 84–85.

²⁶⁸ Livio, *Galileo and the Science Deniers*.

7. Acknowledgements

This Element was a long time in the making and – perhaps inevitably, given its subject matter – its debts are so many they cannot and should not be contained in a footnote. Its origins go back to 2010 when, as a graduate student, I was the recipient of a scholarship to Cornell University from Abraham and Henrietta Brettschneider Oxford Exchange Fund, which provided me with an opportunity to study its large witchcraft collection. Sydney Van Morgan and Lianne O'Brien were excellent hosts at Cornell's Institute for European Studies, as was Duane Corpis at Cornell's History Department. It was an honour to be invited to present a seminar paper at Andrew Dickson White House, although I did not quite appreciate the significance of the place at the time. It was as a result of working on Cornell's many witchcraft holdings that I became interested in the collection's origins, and a grant from my then Oxford college, New College, enabled my return in 2014. I am grateful to Laurent Ferri for his hospitality during that visit, although I suspect our views of Burr, in particular, may differ.

A first version of this text began life as a long article in 2016. Its position at the intersection between a great many different fields of scholarship – so much so that it might resemble Swindon's Magic Roundabout – has also entailed many debts and I am grateful to the many experts – on history of witchcraft, science, scholarship, historiography, masculinity, and America – who cast their light on drafts of this text. In particular, I would like to thank David Doddington, Malcolm Gaskill, Anthony Grafton, Peter Harrison, Hannah Murphy, Johan Olsthoorn, Anthony Ossa-Richardson, Alison Rowlands, Lyndal Roper, and Rita Voltmer for their thoughts and comments. I wish I could be equally thankful to any of the three leading academic journals that each on average took a year to reject the original article version of this text, or to the reviewers who sought to damn it with faint praise ('it's true subject is ... the history of Cornell') or denounce it for 'playing to current fads in the academy'. I am therefore exceptionally grateful to Marion Gibson and to Alex Wright at Cambridge University Press for encouraging me to expand the argument into an Element and accepting it in the series. For once, Reviewer Two was also an absolute wonder of constructive and helpful feedback. White and Burr would, at different times in their lives, have been either delighted or horrified that this rewrite took place during a research stay in Germany funded by the Humboldt foundation. I would like to thank Gerd Schwerhoff for being an exceptional mentor and host at the TU Dresden during the challenging circumstances of a pandemic.

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NB Most of White's papers are available on-line in the form of digitized PDFs of 148 microfilms: <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/43964>. Unfortunately, these are organized differently from the physical originals and they also include items from other collections. In fact, the entirety of White's correspondence with Burr can be found amongst George Lincoln Burr's papers (on which see below). As I have consulted part of the letters in person and part digitally, I have decided to reference them solely by place and date but they can be retrieved using the link above and the following (digitized) inventory: Herb Finch, *Andrew Dickson White Papers at Cornell University, 1846–1919* (Ithaca, NY: Collection of Regional History and University Archives, 1970). <https://hdl.handle.net/1813/44116>.

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