

is an important study which illuminates the inner dynamics of nineteenth-century reform and documents the neurotic impulses, both destructive and benevolent, which gave Henry Clarke Wright's life its aggressive power.

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The Public and the Private Lincoln: Contemporary Perspectives.

Edited by Cullom Davis, Charles B. Strozier, Rebecca Monroe Veach, and Geoffrey C. Ward. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979. Pp. x, 182. Notes, index. \$18.95.)

This book consists of nine articles on Lincoln written by both young scholars and scholars of established reputation.

Charles B. Strozier's "The Search for Identity and Love in Young Lincoln" is a conservative psychobiographical approach to Lincoln's romantic years. He argues convincingly that internal confusion and fears of sexual encounter rather than hostility from the Todd family temporarily blocked Lincoln's union with Mary Todd, just as they had blocked the progress of his courtship of Mary Owens. Lincoln worked out his difficulties vicariously by closely monitoring Joshua Speed's courtship and marriage. Kathryn Kish Sklar's "Victorian Women and Domestic Life: Mary Todd Lincoln, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Harriet Beecher Stowe" explores the strategies Victorian women used to control their domestic lives. Mrs. Lincoln, she argues, controlled hers, probably with her husband's cooperation, by having children at greater intervals and by ceasing to have them earlier in life than most of her peers. Her complete commitment to her husband and family was a way of justifying a marriage unpopular with her relatives. Abraham Lincoln's success, to which Mary Lincoln sacrificed all, proved her relatives wrong. The third essay on the private side of Lincoln's life, "Lincoln, Blacks, and Women," by Roy P. Basler, focuses on Lincoln's personal encounters with individual women and blacks but is too discursive to make points as important as those in the first two essays.

G. S. Boritt's "The Right to Rise" is a succinct summary of the major points of his book, *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream*. He argues that Whig-Republican economics more than Jeffersonian political theory defined Lincoln's vision. The importance of the idea justifies its repetition, but the essay would have had more impact had it been published soon after it

was written rather than after the appearance of Boritt's book. Norman Graebner's "The Apostle of Progress," which traces Lincoln's consistent devotion to improving transportation, shows a less profound grasp of the central idea in Boritt's work. It is, however, proof that the view that Lincoln was concerned primarily with economic questions before 1854 is an idea whose time has come.

George Fredrickson's "The Search for Order and Community," if less successful than Boritt's and Graebner's essays, does suggest an important question: what effect did Lincoln's profession have on his "intellectual style"? Fredrickson opts for a sane reading of the Lyceum Address as a conservative document typical of lawyers, and he is skeptical of the popular psychological interpretations first spawned by Edmund Wilson. Christopher N. Breiseth's "Lincoln, Douglas, and Springfield in the 1858 Campaign" sets its sights lower than any other essay in the book, but it also explores an important question: what was the *effect* of the Lincoln-Douglas campaign on the local voters? He examines only press opinion, but he does show the Springfield Republican paper to have been surprisingly discomfited by Lincoln's more advanced doctrines. Don E. Fehrenbacher, ever able, assesses the big subject of "Lincoln and the Constitution" by saying that both North and South fought for conservative goals. Lincoln's thought went little further than the idea of restoring the same old republic without slavery. Richard N. Current's "Lincoln, the Civil War, and the American Mission" states briefly, but correctly, Lincoln's reason for opposing secession and spurning compromise: secession threatened the moral example of the American republican experiment.

The essays grew out of a conference called "Lincoln's Thought and the Present." Fortunately, the editors chose another title for this book. Only two authors address the theme suggested by the conference's title. Both of them, Graebner and Fehrenbacher, hint at the irrelevance of Lincoln's thought to the present. His economic ideas were premised on the assumption of abundance. His political ideas put more faith in majority will than modern society, with its proliferating protections of proliferating minorities, seems willing to tolerate. The editors wisely let the scholars explore history for its own sake with the result that the book serves history well.

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