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MARTHA HODES. *Mourning Lincoln.*

Martha Hodes. Mourning Lincoln. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015. Pp. 396. Cloth $30.00.

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Martha Hodes's book coincides not only with the sesquicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's assassination but also with the advent of serious challenges to the emancipationist perspective on the American Civil War. For emancipationists, Lincoln's primary goal and northern soldiers' driving passion was the destruction of slavery. Unionists, in contrast, believe Lincoln went to war to defeat secession. They conceive emancipation as an instrument in the struggle against the Confederacy, just as Lincoln himself conceived it. The Unionist perspective prevailed until the American civil rights movement, during and after which the emancipationist perspective became dominant. Mourning Lincoln speaks to this revision. Hodes, in fact, declares, "black experiences are central to the story I tell" (276). Whether they were central to most Americans' reaction to Lincoln's death is another matter.

The various reactions to Lincoln's death, as they appear in more than a thousand personal letters, diaries, and related sources, are the vehicles of Hodes's analysis. The frame of her analysis, however, is troublesome. She opens each chapter by personifying its ideological extremes. At one end are the experiences of abolitionists Albert and Sarah Browne of Salem, Massachusetts. They seek racial justice as they grieve the death of their daughter. At the other end is Rodney Dorman of Jacksonville, Florida, a passionate Confederate of mean and pitiless disposition, whose "venom knew no bounds" (212). Whatever Hodes's personal convictions, the pro-northern/anti-southern leaning of the Browne-Dorman dichotomy is patent.

Hodes's data raise the problem of representativeness. The president's murder precipitated shock, grief, and anger among Republican, pro-Lincoln northerners. But for the most radical Republicans, his death was a "godsend" (91), for it allowed them to initiate their program of vengeance and social revolution in the South. Democrats who supported the war but were indifferent to slavery and loyal pro-slavery Democrats also wrote letters and kept diaries, but the author says relatively little about them. Hodes seems to depend largely on loyal Republican testimony.

Southerners' letters, along with those of northern Copperheads who actively worked against the federal war effort, expressed pleasure at the death of the "tyrant" (71, 79). Three-quarters of southern families owned no slaves, but they hung crepe on their homes and businesses and attended public obsequies. Such displays, as Hodes demonstrates, were simply efforts to appease the Union military. How slaveholders' letters and diaries differed from theirs in unknown.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans in the North and South alike were indifferent to secession or unity, freedom or slavery. Readers will not find

their letters and diaries in Hodes's sample. However, the testimonies that Hodes selects, although partial, represent the viewpoints of a significant portion of the northern and southern population, which makes her book so useful. Quotations from this sample pepper the book, infusing it with richness and concreteness while laying bare the conflicting vocabularies of grief and joy.

The exhilaration felt by those attending General Robert E. Lee's April 10th surrender provides a frame of emotional reference affecting the way all Americans experienced Lincoln's death. News of it hit like lightning. But would the grief for Lincoln have been so great if he had died, as did Franklin Roosevelt, while the public's attention focused on a war still raging? Would Lincoln's two-week funeral have evoked as much emotion if he had died seventy days after being shot, as did James Garfield, or after eight days, as did William McKinley, or if he had died in office of a natural cause, like John Tyler, William Henry Harrison, or Warren G. Harding? Hodes says nothing about the conditions underlying the reaction to Lincoln's assassination.

The people's feelings, as Hodes observes, were expressed not only in letters and diaries but also structured within them. This part of her analysis is brilliant. She observes definitive markers—underlinings, shroudings, spaces, and announcements of a changed topic—to separate thoughts about the death of the president from household, business, and other routine affairs. Such practices effectively separated the realms of the extraordinary and the mundane.

Hodes's data limits her analysis of the duration of public woe and how it differed among northern and southern population subgroups. This is a pity given her inspiration to pursue Lincoln's death because of her vivid memories of John F. Kennedy's, not to mention Jacqueline Kennedy's use of the Lincoln funeral as a model for her husband's service. The type and range of emotions evoked by Kennedy's death differed from Lincoln's, but race and region shaped public reaction in both cases. Hodes could have consulted the National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) survey of the reactions to the Kennedy assassination since they are relevant to Lincoln's.

Two findings have special relevance. NORC's questionnaire included fifteen common symptoms of grief. Since African Americans considered Kennedy as a civil rights champion, they checked these symptoms far more often than did whites. Notable, too, is NORC's regional finding: southerners, including those who voted for Kennedy, grieved less than northerners. But when NORC replicated its survey two to five days after the funeral, the grief symptoms almost vanished! Only at a greatly attenuated level did racial and regional differences remain. That the public's grieving for Kennedy was so temporary reminds us, as Hodes does not, that the emotional effects of Lincoln's death and funeral were short-lived. His renown continued to be eclipsed by George Washington's through the last third of the nineteenth century.

Hodes's sensitivity to the subtleties of sadness expressed by her antislavery writers is more evident than in her reading of happy southerners. Although southern attitudes changed and southern peace movements multiplied during the last year of war, the reader finds no southerner admiring Lincoln and personally saddened by his murder. Only the prospect of a lenient reconstruction, according to Hodes, made southerners sorry to see him go. Also, Hodes appreciates northerners' private troubles mitigating their grieving for Lincoln but she finds something abnormal among southern planters grieving less over his death than their personal losses, which often included slaves but, in a society utterly devastated by war, could not have been confined to them. Hodes dwells more on the immorality of slavery than the concrete situation of the majority of southerners who owned no slaves yet wrote about the death of

the man who they thought caused their misery.

The emancipationist bent of Hodes's mind is visible in her decision to bypass southerners' complaints about measures that Lincoln carried out. He pursued the war harshly enough to cause the death of one military-aged male in four; refused prisoner exchange; and confiscated sea-borne clothing, food, medical supplies, and other necessary civilian goods from Europe. He allowed troops to burn Atlanta to the ground, leaving the vast majority of its population homeless. He failed to censure Sherman's army after it supplied itself entirely by confiscating civilian necessities as it moved virtually unopposed toward Savannah.

However imbalanced, Mourning Lincoln at least urges the reader to see the president's sudden death from the standpoint of opponents as well as supporters. Assassination evoked theodicy on both sides. Hodes's chapter on "God" shows northerners and southerners alike encountering the surprise of Lincoln's death by looking heavenward. Belief in divine intervention was deeply rooted in the culture of the late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth centuries, and its ruling premise was that God aligned worldly actions to His will. The president showed rebels too much leniency, thought Robert Browne. "Maybe that is why God had taken him away right after Union victory" (96). Such was "the view taken by almost every public speaker" throughout New England (106) and, according to eulogy collections, the rest of the North. Southerners, who purported to be more religious than their northern counterparts, thought they knew why Lincoln had died: God cut him down. This belief appears in their letters; but the author emphasizes more gloating and expressions of hate than divine intervention. That the "Imperial Ape" (78) had it coming to him, in Hodes's view, summarizes the meaning of his death throughout the South.

Hodes explains that a portion of the northern population attributed the assassination to slave-holders, the Confederate government, and/or Davis. Some blamed the anger of a single man, John Wilkes Booth. The agency ultimately responsible for Lincoln's assassination, however, was divine. Northern reasoning, much of it, was premised on Lincoln's Christ-like character. He was a mild and forgiving man eager to reunite the nation "with malice toward none and charity for all" (112 [Lincoln's second inaugural address]). Hodes notes this irony more than once: Lincoln's Christian willingness to forgive and forget was the very trait which caused God to replace him with a more punitive president. This Radical Republican God "allowed" Booth to murder Lincoln in order to prevent a lenient president from interfering with northerners' seeking their rightful revenge. Lincoln, as the Radicals believed, would have respected states' rights, including the southern "Black Laws," which would soon control and exploit the emancipated. He would have betrayed loyal northern fighters by treating their killers as friends. Lincoln's leniency, thus, explained his death.

The coincidences of this death were astonishing, and Hodes captures them all. Lee surrendered his army on Palm Sunday; Lincoln, murdered on Good Friday, was spiritually resurrected as religious leaders explained the meaning of his death on Easter Sunday. He drank of the cup God had given him. Days later, the president's funeral train added political lineament to the religious mood, bringing the majesty of the state to American cities and towns. Hodes handles this part of the story nicely. Her account differs from others, which generally adhere to chronology: viewings of Lincoln in Washington, the train cortege, removal of the body for viewing at successive state capitals and large cities, then entombment. Hodes uses a different lens. Funeral rites both induced and reflected sorrow and, through what social psychologists call a "conformity effect," made it seem widely shared. During the first days of mourning, Hodes notes, individuals saw their own grief in the words and faces of their

neighbors; later they found it in the remains of the president himself, encased in symbols that made visible the sanctity of the Union and the hundreds of thousands of lives spent to save it.

Hodes, thus, accomplishes her goal: to dissect the murder of a president from the standpoint of its observers. Their interaction, however, enlarges her phenomenological observations. Society's capacity to deify men, Emile Durkheim observed, is most evident during social upheavals, when information flow increases and communication (embodied here in letters and diaries) becomes more frequent and focuses sharply on a single object. A tide of individual sorrow carries the people to an extraordinary level of collective emotion. The result: a climate of grief which transcends, then intensifies, personal sentiments. This effect was more evident in the North, where citizens mourned together openly, than in the South, where public displays of joy were forbidden. From Hodes's account, one may infer that Lincoln's passing was mourned in the North more that it was rejoiced in the South.

Two further points may be added: before the advent of mass media, public drama constituted a major form of diversion, and when this diversion, this "effervescence" of concentration and emotional arousal, was over, participants dispersed, returned to their quotidian routine and, withal, their quotidian moods. But even as men and women necessarily devoted more time to their daily labors, Hodes reminds us that they continued to feel the currents of death. Soldiers still died from wounds and camp disease; family members and friends, from natural causes. However much the public drama of Lincoln's death numbed their private pain, the latter's relevance surpassed that of the former. Hodes puts matters in needed perspective. In their letters and private writing, individuals sought the meaning of personal loss more intensely and urgently than Lincoln's fate. In death as in life, the world of the family trumps the state. "[C]ataclysmic events" in Hodes's words, "never come to pass apart from daily life, but only in the midst of it" (171).

Overall, Hodes covers a wide range of material: the compassion of New England's Mr. and Mrs. Browne; the malevolence of southerner Dorman; the question of whether a defeated South should be treated mercifully or harshly; what a future without Lincoln would look like; and whether Lincoln's death, notwithstanding the ongoing ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, would lead to reenslavement. Given white southern resentment over emancipation, Frederick Douglass's fears were most realistic: as emancipated blacks were no longer chattel, southern property laws no longer protected them from unprovoked white violence. The result, Douglass predicted: "fiercer and intenser hate than ever before" (218).

Many observers in 1865 perceived Lincoln's grandiose funeral independently of the sorrow it embodied, manifesting the country's new majesty and power. Hodes's "Nation" chapter has little to say about this. She notes that "[p]rivate lives have all become interwoven with the life of the nation" (213) but says nothing about the new character of the nation itself. In contrast, the speeches of many ministers and public figures recognized that Lincoln's funeral marked a new national consciousness and esteem, one that had little to do with race or slavery. For eighty-five years, Americans revered and modeled their lives on the great heroes of the American Revolution. Now, a new war produced new heroes whose feats equaled their forefathers'. To preserve a nation, they now knew, required more effort than to create it.

Hodes's final chapter takes us to the aftermath of Union victory: the fate of the assassin and his conspirators, the passage of the equal protection and voting rights amendments. By 1870, however, northern whites, including the pious Browne family, lost interest in racial equality and voted

radicals out of office in favor of candidates who were preoccupied with the gathering sway of an industrial revolution. The 1876 compromise election of Rutherford B. Hayes ended Reconstruction, "redeemed" the South, and set the stage for the reestablishment of white supremacy (268, 270). Consequently, blacks found themselves abandoned before, not after, the late-nineteenth-century regional reconciliation. In the opinion of many emancipationist scholars, including David Blight (Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory [2001]), reconciliation downplayed slavery and involved northern acknowledgment of the South's racial worldview and Jim Crow social system.

One may now return to the fundamental question raised in the first page of this review: how did Lincoln's primary war goal and its political context affect the varied meanings of his death. Hodes may have made every effort to sample randomly among whites and blacks, northerners and southerners, but her sources led her to conclusions diametrically opposed to those of other historians, including Gary Gallagher. Gallagher is a useful foil to Hodes because her data and interpretation suggest emancipation to have been the key purpose and achievement of the war. In contrast, Gallagher's The Union War (2012) brings an equal, if not more massive, body of evidence pointing to secession as the war's immediate cause; reunification, its result. This review is not the place to compare Gallagher's and Hodes's work, but one must recognize the author's failure to acknowledge, let alone confront, results which challenge her and her many colleagues' understandings of Abraham Lincoln's death. As Hodes sees it, Lincoln's contemporaries mourned or reproved him more as a Great Emancipator than as a Savior of the Union.

On balance, however, no scholar can fail to profit from Hodes's prodigious research and her efforts to describe Lincoln's death from the viewpoint of ordinary men and women of his time. Moving back and forth between texts and contexts, as Robert Darnton observed, is the only way to make contact with alien mentalities. To dig for the multiple meanings of letters and diaries in a society which sees itself in the hands of God is to work in an alien world indeed. In this world, Hodes has roamed far and wide. She has worked uniquely from the bottom up. She has not traveled everywhere but far enough to deserve her colleagues' admiration and attention. Better **than anyone I know, Hodes had enriched our knowledge of the well-trod story of Abraham Lincoln's assassnation and mouring rites.**