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One sometimes feels that old interpretations never die and that we historians endlessly rehash the same arguments. It is therefore gratifying to see that the debate regarding Lincoln's attitudes toward slavery, race, emancipation, and civil rights has narrowed considerably since Lerone Bennett published his challenge as a book *Forced into Glory: Lincoln's White Dream* in 2000 and Richard Striner replied with *Father Abraham: Lincoln's Relentless Struggle to End Slavery* in 2006. The responsible poles in the debate seem now to be represented by Eric Foner, on the left and relatively critical of Lincoln, and Allen Guelzo on the right, relatively celebratory. But while Guelzo gives us a very positive presentation of Lincoln, he fully acknowledges Lincoln's personal and legal entanglements with slavery, arguing that Lincoln's measured political moves and sometimes even pandering rhetoric represented an Enlightenment style politics of "prudence." Indeed for Guelzo, Lincoln's disciplined prudence was precisely what was required, and thus what some perceive to have been blemishes in his record, in fact only make him the greater statesman in the end. Frederick Douglass himself would eventually land on this conclusion. For his part, Eric Foner finds an early Lincoln in need of moral "growth." Lincoln needed abolitionists and radicals to show him the way. Nevertheless, Foner's Lincoln *did* grow. More importantly, at certain points along the way, Foner's Lincoln did show unmistakable political courage in opposing slavery. And Foner acknowledges that Frederick Douglass himself flirted briefly with colonization just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. In a sense then, what we have may be the narcissism of small differences. Neither side claims Lincoln looks perfect from a 21st century point of view, yet neither side paints him as an unreconstructed racist either. Both, in fact, give us a morally courageous Lincoln.

On the surface this might not appear to be the case. Reviewing for the *Wall Street Journal*, Allen Guelzo has written scathingly of Eric Foner's recent effort, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*. In his review, Guelzo mounts a substantive challenge to Foner's contention that the way to reconcile Lincoln's more racist seeming language or actions with his anti-slavery idealism, the Emancipation Proclamation, the use of Black troops and the steps toward Black civil rights was that Lincoln "grew." On this particular point I must confess I find Guelzo convincing.

"Lincoln also never abandoned his view that gradual emancipation rather than outright abolition was the best means 'by which the two races could gradually live themselves out of their old relation to each other, and both come out better prepared for the new.' . . . Mr. Foner's notion that, as president, Lincoln was nudged toward championing emancipation by "the pressure of abolitionists and Radicals" and "the actions of slaves" themselves simply passes understanding. The ranks of the abolitionists, even during the Civil War, were vanishingly small, and we have never had a reliable tabulation of the number of runaway slaves—who, in any case, had no political leverage to exert on the president. If the end of slavery were to come, it would have to come from Lincoln's own long-held convictions and political sagacity." (Unquote)

Guelzo's view here is confirmed by military historian Mark Grimsley who finds no pressure from his generals on Lincoln to make use of Black troops. As for the abolitionist power to shape public opinion through moral suasion, in their despair of ever having sufficient effect, by 1859 many previously pacifist abolitionists had abandoned hope and begun to flirt with more violent alternatives, including support for John Brown. I fully sympathize with Foner's desire to rescue the abolitionists from what amounts to lingering neo-confederate and revisionist calumny. They were courageous, they were principled, and on the merits, they were generally right. And they do not deserve to be dismissed. In radical reconstruction they exerted direct influence. It has been and remains a catastrophe that their vision was not sustained. Guelzo's dismissal of them is reckless and says more about the 1960's and the rise of neo-conservatism than it does about abolitionists, who for one thing, tended toward the Enlightenment philosophy of common sense,

rather than to romanticism. But prior to the war, the abolitionist's chief effect, it is generally held, was to stir up the South especially on the numerically irrelevant fugitive slave question which in turn stirred Northern fears of slave power domination and of the nationalization of slavery. Guelzo is right about the practical effects of their activism on Lincoln, especially prior to the Emancipation Proclamation. More often, they found themselves forced to accept Lincoln's views than the other way around. (Here I am thinking of Owen Lovejoy and Garrison himself, but also of Frederick Douglass.)

Also problematic for Foner, it now seems Lincoln continued to tinker with the possibility of colonization. I have not heard Foner's response to these developments, but I presume this returns him and others like Manish Sinha, back to the position that Lincoln remained a racist. In any case, the thesis that Lincoln "*grew*" based on the idea that he later discontinued his interest in colonization may have suffered a mortal blow. Foner might argue that Lincoln's advocacy of Black voting rights in his last speech, and his entertainment of Frederick Douglass as an equal could still be used to contend that the formerly racist Lincoln had grown, in spite of his continued dalliance with colonization, but since colonization for Foner was exhibit A in why we should prefer the abolitionists, that seems unlikely.

Still on the facts and in the details, Guelzo and Foner are simply not that far apart. It is rather in the framing of the narrative that they differ. Guelzo argues that gradual, compensated emancipation may indeed have been the better option as a practical economic matter, while Foner argues that colonization indicated an inability to envision a biracial society and thus a lingering racism on Lincoln's part.

If this is correct; if the narratives are in fact so close; why does the framing of those narratives remain so different in tone? There is more than one way to answer this question. In some ways it comes down to a battle between baby boomers over whom we should celebrate and to a question of political science. Foner believes the abolitionists and activists ought to be celebrated more than they have been, and he therefore takes his narrative in that direction. “Too often,” writes Foner, “Lincoln is presented as a singular model of prudence and pragmatism while other critics of slavery are relegated to the fringe, caricatured as self-righteous fanatics with no sense of practical politics. I believe that this displays a misunderstanding of how politics operates in a democratic society.” For Foner, political radicalism is necessary to the political process. Radicals shape public opinion, and thus eventually move the political center. Precisely as Foner alleges, Guelzo openly dismisses this kind of activism as misguided romanticism profoundly at odds with the Enlightenment meaning of America, which for Guelzo centers on a conceptually enriched doctrine of “prudence.” Guelzo celebrates Lincoln not as a radical, but as an establishment player, exhibit A in why old Thoreau-loving romantic hippies like Foner were wrong back in the day.

Where Foner contends, essentially, that Lincoln followed the abolitionists and radicals rather than led, and where Guelzo contends that Lincoln prudentially mastered the forces of politics and history to guide the nation to a glorious fulfillment, I would like to suggest that each of our baby boomer siblings in his own way is too optimistic about America, and too optimistic about politics. While Foner views the period through the lens of a triumphant Civil Rights movement, Guelzo views it through the stereo lenses of WWII and Vietnam.

For myself, born at the end of the baby boom, I hold no great hope that my older siblings will ever stop creating new quibbles around which to refight the 1960's. I suppose I could always

choose Thanksgiving with the in-laws, but since I have never been able to resist the narcissism of small differences myself, I would like to offer yet another way of looking at the problem, one that emerges from careful attention to Lincoln's own self descriptions, descriptions which in peculiar, idiosyncratic ways resorted to the language of theology. Lest one think I have given us a Lincoln too good to be true. I will suggest we see Lincoln's racial views as about the best we could hope for from a Victorian, but nevertheless as entirely Victorian in cast.

Guelzo sees Lincoln's leadership as "prudential." Let me start by saying that there is a great deal of truth in this claim. Lincoln was perfectly capable of disguising his intentions in order to improve his chances of success. And I accept the arguments of Guelzo and others that he did so for principled reasons. After all, no politician or lawyer can survive without mastering the art of literary indirection, to put it politely, and these were the two professions at which Lincoln excelled. To take one example, between 1858 and 1860 Lincoln and nearly the entire Republican Party backtracked on the implication that Blacks could be national citizens. After his nomination as a Senate candidate, Lincoln moved to solidify his Republican base, as we now say, with the radical seeming House Divided Speech. Not unsurprisingly to anyone familiar with politics in a two party system, Lincoln was subsequently forced to "move to the center," as we now delicately put it. And some of Lincoln's most racist seeming language came in the context of the ensuing debates, in particular the one at Charleston Illinois.

Yet as James Oakes has shown, immediately upon his election, Lincoln used his Inaugural Address to reaffirm Black national citizenship, the very position he had spent the last two years denying. Oakes notes that this had to gall the two men seated behind Lincoln, Stephen Douglas and Roger B. Taney. Douglas had spent two years accusing Lincoln of just this deception, only

to watch him slip out of his carefully laid rhetorical traps. And for his part, Taney had ruled from the high bench that Blacks were not entitled to any rights whatsoever, let alone the privileges and immunities of citizens when faced with extradition under the Fugitive Slave Act. Examples of such prudential hedging are abundant in Lincoln's political and legal life. If this was "prudence" which in some ways it was, Lincoln was a master of the art.

But admirable as Lincoln was as a politician, and strong therefore as Guelzo presentation is as a book, there are fatal problems with using prudence more globally as an apology for Lincoln's words and actions. The prudential explanation implies that Lincoln knew more than he could possibly have known about the direction of history. For instance, Guelzo somewhat inconsistently apologizes for Lincoln's participation as legal counsel for Robert Matson in an action for the recovery of the slave Jane Bryant and her family by saying that at the time, Lincoln assumed that slavery as an institution was dying. (Of course had Lincoln won the case, this would have been slim consolation to Jane and her family, for whom slavery and Illinois race law could not change soon enough, a battle which Lincoln never chose to fight.) More to the point, "prudence" only really works if you guess right about the future, and in this case Lincoln was incorrect. Slavery was not dying.

Perhaps sensing this problem, Guelzo writes, "Rather than needing to develop *progress*, I believe that Abraham Lincoln understood from the first that his administration was the beginning of the end of slavery and that he would not leave office without some form of legislative emancipation policy in place." (E.P.5) This is correct if by it Guelzo means Lincoln thought that he would not leave office without a plan of voluntary, compensated, gradual emancipation over a period

perhaps as long as 100 years, accompanied by a voluntary and subsidized program of colonization. But of course none of this came to pass. To his great sorrow, Lincoln came to learn he had grossly overestimated antislavery and union sentiment in the South, even with the sweetener of colonization. It is hard to argue that Lincoln was prudent when he was so entirely wrong about what the near future held. He did not know there would be a war, and when it came, he did not know it would result in emancipation. (He said as much in the Second Inaugural.). Had northern troops not arrived in time to defend Washington we would hardly celebrate Lincoln today. And had the war not resulted in Emancipation, we would hardly find his stewardship of the slavery issue “prudent.” He did not know that he would be re-elected or that the war would be won. And he feared, but could not have known, that the confederates would win the peace after his death. He died just as that battle was beginning.

Thus pandering away black civil rights in order to get elected on an anti-slavery platform, while very calculated and very understandable given Douglas's unapologetic race-baiting, and while stunningly successful in the near term, was also very risky. In the end it would prove to be a tragic political move in the classic sense, one that made it nearly impossible for Republicans to sustain Black civil rights later on. There was never a majority sentiment in the North in favor of Black equality in part because Lincoln and his party never ran on it. Thus rather than "prudentially" guiding the nation to the glorious fulfillment of emancipation and victory, Lincoln's party under Grant would be forced to let the terrorists win. And so, contrary to the nationalist narratives of Ken Burns, James McPherson, Allen Guelzo and others, the Civil War emerges, not as a triumph of national purpose, but as dark tragedy. (Not, by the way, the old tragedy of a noble South doomed to defeat, but rather the tragedy of a still heavily racist North

achieving a morally compromised victory over a pretty detestable white South, smarting from its defeat and thus all the less willing to stem its lust for racial domination: economic, sexual, and sadistic.

On the other hand, scholars more critical of Lincoln like Eric Foner argue that Lincoln grew because, he had in fact been racist in the late 1850's, but that he abandoned colonization only after January 1, 1863 -- or so they until recently contended. I have to confess this interpretation never made much sense to me in this form. Lincoln's racist seeming language at Charleston, to take the most notorious example, came so clearly in the political situation already described -- in fact in a political squeeze affecting the entire Republican effort nationally -- that to see in them expressions of Lincoln's personal views requires an almost deliberate disregard for context. One might more easily draw the opposite conclusion from Lincoln's addressing the issue of race only reluctantly and under siege in this way. If this situation tells us anything about Lincoln's personal views at all, it seems to show a Lincoln loath to descend to Douglas's level, hedging as much as possible to avoid endorsing his racism, but in the end willing to pander to that racism if that was what it took to maintain a still delicate Republican coalition and get elected on an antislavery platform.

Let me interject here a point of personal confession. It is this willingness to accept irony, paradox, and moral compromise, and yet to remain as true as humanly possible that I find most admirable in Lincoln's leadership.

Foner supposes abolitionists had a great effect on Northern public opinion regarding slavery and race. This inadvertently fails to take due cognizance of the breadth and depth of racism in Lincoln's America, North as well as South. Lincoln knew better, though we have to add that even Lincoln misjudged his morally tortured political landscape when not even Delaware would accept his plan for voluntary, compensated, gradual abolition with the possibility of colonization. Lincoln was well aware that 70% of Illinois voters chose to exclude new Black settlement in Illinois in 1848 a poll which was repeated in 1862. In the face of these numbers, it is hard to argue the abolitionists had any more effect on public opinion than they did no Lincoln. This is close to polling data that the 19th century ever got, and David Davis and the Blairs would not let Lincoln miss the point if he wanted to. Unless that changed, colonization seemed to Lincoln the only possibility. "What then?" asked Lincoln, "Free them all, and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition?" (Speech at Peoria, Illinois October 16, 1854 Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln. Volume 2, p. 255-6.) In grappling with the realities of a 70% racist society (and that's in the North), Lincoln unknowingly contemplated something very much like the eventual post-reconstruction settlement, only to reject it as immoral and unfair . . . to Blacks.

In fact depending on how one reads Lincoln's speech at Peoria in 1854, Lincoln may have been a closet racial egalitarian all along.

"What next? Free them, and make them politically and socially, our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of white people will not. Whether this feeling accords with justice and sound judgment, is not the sole question, if indeed, it is any part of it. A universal feeling, whether well or ill-founded, can not be safely disregarded. We can not, then, make them equals."

This now notorious passage is susceptible of a number of readings. Foner suggests we take Lincoln at his word. This was Lincoln's personal view. Foner then argues that under the influence of abolitionists and radicals he subsequently "grew." This may be correct. This might be one of those rare moments when Lincoln revealed himself. But if we take this to have been personal revelation rather than political speech, we would have to say that as of 1854 Lincoln was a racist, but that he more than suspected his own racism was both unjust and poor judgment. This does not leave much room for abolitionists to school him in his growth. I think the more sensible read of this deliberately tortured passage from one of Lincoln's most carefully written speeches that Lincoln pandered to racism. Unless the situation changed drastically, which it showed no signs of doing, no politician could openly espouse racial equality. That was life in 19th Century America.¹ In pretty clear terms Lincoln tells us he felt compelled to pander.

In fact at key points, Foner takes Lincoln's words as expressions of his personal views rather than as political expressions. This, it seems to me, is to misunderstand politics in a democracy. It ignores what we have always known about Lincoln, which is that he was a very "shut mouthed man." And it ignores what we have more recently learned, which is that he was an exceptionally able attorney, able to represent clients in every available artful way. Lincoln's salient trait, it would seem, was his ability to keep counsel. He was also capable of playing a very long game.

¹ Why then the nod in the direction of personal confession? Why did Lincoln bring his "own feelings" into it? I think the next passage makes it clear why. (quote) "It does seem to me that systems of gradual emancipation might be adopted; but for their tardiness in this, I will not undertake to judge our brethren of the south." This, I submit, is vintage Lincoln. By adding himself to the list of racists in spite of the obvious contradiction, Lincoln toned down what otherwise would be a self-righteous passage likely to repel precisely the voters he sought to woo. This may be over reading, but I'm not sure any other reading makes sense of the passage.

This is some of what Allen Guelzo admires as “prudence” in Lincoln. If we assume that the 30% of the electorate which voted to allow Black settlement also voted Republican, which seems fair enough, this represented Lincoln’s base and 3/5ths of the overall vote necessary to win. But in a two party system it takes at least 50.1 % to win a state. Lincoln still needed to convert or coopt 20.1% of the electorate that was racist. To a great extent, democratic leaders are prisoners of polling data. Except in certain important and very special circumstances, losing elections does not advance a cause. There are times to show courage, and on important occasions including both of his presidential bids, Lincoln did so. But political capital, as we call it, must be invested wisely. No politician or lawyer can afford to stand up for all that she knows or believes, all of the time. Heck, no adult can. That’s just life.

Right now in America, we like to blame our politicians for our political troubles. The Tea Party and the libertarians say politicians should listen to the people. But of course so does the Occupy Wall Street crowd. Politician and Washington have been made into dirty words. But on this analysis the fault is as often with ourselves as it is with our political stars. We get the leaders we elect, after all. Clearly a democratically elected politician in a republican form of government can never ignore strongly held public opinion. If one does not understand this, one does not understand anything about politics in a democracy.

Of course Foner does understand this, but oddly, he credits abolitionists and radicals with seeking to change public opinion, while downplaying or missing altogether Lincoln’s moves in precisely that same direction. (FT 90) I often tell my students that to defend Lincoln is to defend politics. Lincoln did not rest with accepting public opinion as a static given. If Lincoln had

stopped there, his politics would merely be about pandering. But what often gets lost, including in Foner's account, is Lincoln's emphasis on SHAPING public opinion, which Lincoln explicitly stated was what he was up to! It may sound elitist . . . because it is. A classic Victorian paternalist, Lincoln believed in educating the public. In his Dred Scott Speech he went so far as to say that public opinion ultimately determined the meaning of the constitution. Ultimately, even the Supreme Court was a creature of public opinion. In defending himself against Douglass's charge that Lincoln was "slow to provide protection for black soldiers and prisoners; Lincoln responded that the country needed talking up to that point."² Lincoln's whole political analysis of Douglas (Stephen) rested on the notion that public opinion could change, and was in fact changing . . . for the worse! Lincoln was forced to the conclusion that public opinion must be shaped for the better, otherwise the democratic experiment was a failure. The other half of the "House Divided" position was that the antislavery forces had to win the battle for hearts and minds. But prior to military emancipation, a possibility which by the way, only existed once the Union Army had grown sufficiently to enforce it, Lincoln seems to have assumed that a battle against racism would be a bridge to far.

Quixotic or not, the Emancipation Proclamation made a battle against racism unavoidable. After Emancipation, Lincoln began using the bully pulpit, in a calculated way, to make a space for the politics of racial equality. In fact, using Blacks as soldiers was a hammer in this political game before it was a hammer on the battlefield. Let me say that again. Initially Lincoln was not under pressure from his generals to use Black troops, quite the contrary. Again, this underestimates the depth and breadth of racism in 19th century America. Lincoln's generals tended to think that

² Frederick Douglass, "Emancipation, racism, and the work before us: P an address delivered in Philadelphia, PA, Dec. 4, 1863. (As described by Thomas C. Mackey.)

Blacks were too degraded and unmanly to fight. Rather Lincoln took this step of using Black troops largely on his own and though they would prove militarily decisive in 1864, Lincoln could not have known that. Rather Lincoln made full use of Black troops in the Conkling letter to goad copperheads into fighting, challenging their manhood with the image of brave black soldiers fighting when cowardly copperheads would not. In addition to mustering public opinion for his antislavery moves, which as Guelzo and others have shown, began early in Lincoln's administration, Lincoln did his best, not only in the Conkling letter, but in the Gettysburg Address to push for Black equality.

With this conception of Lincoln's political leadership, the Gettysburg Address emerges, not merely as sentimentally moving elegy, but as a vicious piece of political combat. Lincoln was saying that if copperheads discontinued fighting a war for the equality of ALL men, -- including, it went without saying at this point, Black men -- then they would have betrayed the dead. All of us love to wax sentimental about one of the most artful expressions of American purpose ever crafted. Often missed, it was a stab in the back to the emerging copperhead movement and was taken as such. In his book Foner misses this point. This was an important move to shape public opinion on the issue of race, one that Lincoln would continue in almost precisely the same terms with the Conkling letter. Perhaps an analogy to the more recent past will make this clearer. George W. Bush made a similarly vicious rhetorical move in support of the surge in Iraq by arguing that those who opposed the surge would be insuring that the fallen had died in vain. Obviously we need not assume that both causes were equally noble. But anyone tempted to start a war with the thought of controlling the outcome should take note of merciless logic. Even with a volunteer force, all societies but especially democracies quickly reach and pass a proverbial

Rubicon where only moral or physical exhaustion allows them to sue for terms. This after all is the logic behind having the French Foreign Legion: legionnaires are politically expendable. Neoconservatives drew the conclusion from Vietnam that Americans and democracies generally are casualty and war averse. The opposite would appear to be the case here and Ms. Rice might well consider rereading her Thucydides. More often the logic of death and loss simply feeds upon itself. There is a grim lesson here for both the left and the right.

Having rescued from maudlin sentimentality the politically vicious Lincoln and with that, the Gettysburg Address no less, what can we conclude about Lincoln's leadership and about leadership in a democracy?

As the title indicates, I think Lincoln's leadership can be thought of in terms of *kenosis* or self-emptying. Doris Kearns Goodwin captured Lincoln's leadership as well as anyone. Rather than "team of rivals," I think that was her theme, whether she knew it or not. You can take the girl out of Catholic school, but you can't take the Catholic school out of the girl. Her Lincoln was almost never "ego involved" as we might say. Rather he willingly accepted humiliation, for instance, when he felt compelled to rehire McClellan, a man who had betrayed both him and the Union cause. One sees him emptying himself and waiting for hours, while McClellan, triumphing over him, made his commander-in-chief wait. Or in accepting the intrigues of Seward and especially Chase and then appointing him Chief Justice. Or even in looking past the petty slights inflicted him by Stanton. Lincoln was somehow able to keep his own ego out of the way. Because he did not fall in love with his own solutions to problems, he remained open to the perspectives of others, even those he opposed. Guelzo would have us believe Lincoln hated the

abolitionists. (EP 26) This may be Guelzo's weakest point. In fact as Foner and others show, he worked with them when he could. Sometimes he moved them around like pieces on a chessboard, but he was not hostile to them and in fact shared their ends. Ironically, he offered men like Salmon Chase a more truly Christian style of leadership. He was able not to get ahead of himself, and not to overextend or overestimate his mandate of power. The moral? Humility is the ironic prerequisite for wielding effective power. To gain one's life, one has to lose it.

More and more we have become accustomed to thinking of leadership in Ayn Randian terms. Leaders are supposed to be the ultimate egoists, people who clearly and creatively see what needs to be done, and who, heedless of naysayers, press on, ultimately to vindicated as greater, wiser, and more visionary than the rest of us. This was the model of heroic leadership of Jeffrey Skilling at Enron. And I think that much of the self-help movement and even what now passes for Christianity in America has imbibed a good bit of this. Guelzo does not take us explicitly in this direction, but I think the interpretation of Lincoln as "prudential" takes us in this direction. Lincoln could certainly be prudent. He could even be a master wire-puller. But we miss something important if we assume, contrary to his own statements, that he was in charge of events rather than the other way around.

This may seem like an odd way to talk about Abraham Lincoln, and I am not arguing that in any sense he was an evangelical Christian of his day, he was not. But consider the following passage from a private letter to Joshua Speed in 1855:

It is hardly fair for you to assume, that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings, in order to maintain their loyalty to the constitution and the Union.

Lincoln emerges as an especially attractive tragic figure because he was able to table his own feelings and make the calculated political moves that would lead a viciously racist electorate to elect an antislavery President. Notice the word “lead” in that sentence. We do not know what would have happened had he lived, but as it was, he was too clever by half. In the absence of a mandate for racial equality on the one hand, or a mandate from Blacks for voluntary colonization, both of which Lincoln was actively working toward when he died, Black Americans were plunged into a century of rule by terror.

Lincoln kept counsel. His political positions were the positions of a lawyer for his cause. They were only sometimes the personal positions of the man. People think they want their politicians to mean what they say and say what they mean. They should reconsider. Political morality is not that simple. Lincoln concluded that public opinion must be shaped and led. I confess that I am elitist enough to say that I think Lincoln was right about this. Perhaps it’s the professor in me. But to use a contemporary example, I think it is fair to say that an electorate that wants government services but not the taxes to pay for them stands in need of correction. And like many others, I fault our current President for not shaping opinion more actively on this point.

Lincoln played a long game. Here the verdict is not so clear. How far should a politician go in “adjusting priorities” as it is delicately called? Here political leadership appears more of an art than a science. Lincoln said once that slavery might have to continue another 100 years before it could peacefully die out. If you were faced with the sale of your daughters into the sex traffic and your sons to lives of hard labor, that would be quite a priority adjustment. I have argued that in my view Lincoln was probably always a closet racial egalitarian. While Lincoln’s more

unambiguous admirers might contend that his “prudential” strategy succeeded, we should note that if it succeeded it did so only in an unanticipated way when an unexpected war led to an unexpected immediate emancipation. And Lincoln’s detractors would be right to point out that the racial pandering that had made emancipation possible did nothing to secure Republicans a mandate to address Black Civil Rights. Lincoln’s leadership thus leaves us with tragic ambiguity. This is the tragic cost of leadership.