

Another good example of how experience of a certain event or person can be existentially significant is provided by Sherman's later recollections of his meeting with Lincoln (and Grant) at City Point, 27-28 March 1865. I quote from Shelby Foote's account in *The Civil War: A Narrative*: 3. The passages Foote himself cites—other than obvious dialogue—are from Sherman.

"[A]t one point the President broke in to ask: 'Sherman, do you know why I took a shine to Grant and you?'

"I don't know, Mr. Lincoln,' he replied. 'You have been extremely kind to me, far more than my deserts.'

"Well, you never found fault with me,' Lincoln said.

"This was not true. Sherman had found a good deal of fault with the President over the past four years, beginning with the day he heard him say, almost blithely, 'Oh, well, I guess we'll manage to keep house.' But it was true from this day forward. For one thing, Lincoln had in fact managed to 'keep house,' though sometimes only by the hardest, and for another, now that Sherman knew him he admired him, perhaps beyond all the men he had ever known. Again at the wharf, he boarded the *Bat* and set out down the James. Afterwards, looking back, he said of Lincoln, who had walked him to the gangplank: 'I never saw him again. Of all the men I ever met, he seemed to possess more of the elements of greatness, combined with goodness, than any other'" (857).

"From what he had heard today [17 April 1865] in the roadside farmhouse Sherman believed there was little chance of that; Johnston, he knew, was eager to surrender, and he intended to give him every chance. He would do so in part because of his soldier's pride in being generous to a disadvantaged foe who asked for mercy. 'The South is broken and ruined and appeals to our pity,' he would tell Rawlins before the month was out. 'To ride the people down with persecutions and military exactions would be like slashing away at the crew of a sinking ship.' There was that, and there was also his reaction to the Good Friday assassination which was quite the opposite of the angered private's hope that Old Joe [Johnston] would not surrender. Lincoln's death brought Lincoln himself into sharper focus in Sherman's memory: particularly as he had come to know him at City Point, three weeks ago. Remembering his concern for avoiding 'this last bloody

battle,' his eagerness 'to get the men composing the Confederate armies back to their homes, at work on their farms and in their shops,' he was resolved, as he set out for the second meeting Tuesday morning [18 April], 'to manifest real respect for his memory by following after his death that policy which, if living, I felt certain he would have approved.' Grant had removed from the contest the most feared and admired of the rebel armies; now Sherman would remove all the rest by taking Johnston up on his soldier-to-soldier proposal that they 'make one job of it,' here and now in the Bennett farmhouse, and settle 'the fate of all armies to the Rio Grande'" (991 f.).

"[Johnston] got in touch with Sherman to arrange a third meeting and work out the details for surrender in accordance with the scaled-down terms. Two days later . . . they met again in the Bennett farmhouse and the matter was soon disposed of, including an issue of ten days rations for 25,000 paroled graybacks, offered by Sherman 'to facilitate what you and I and all good men desire, the return to their homes of the officers and men composing your army.' Johnston replied that 'the enlarged patriotism manifested in these papers reconciles me to what I previously regarded as the misfortune of my life—that of having had you to encounter in the field.' On this high note of mutual esteem they parted to meet no more, though Johnston would die some twenty-six years later from the effects of a severe cold he contracted in New York while standing bareheaded in raw February weather alongside the other pallbearers at Sherman's funeral. 'General, please put on your hat,' a friend urged the eighty-four-year-old Virginian; 'you might get sick.' Johnston refused. 'If I were in his place,' he said, 'and he were standing here in mine, he would not put on his hat'" (996).

13 April 2001 (Good Friday)