be a bit more than this volume could contain, as the author mainly focused on Massachusetts and the period between 1920 and 1960. The 1980s are only addressed in a few paragraphs, while the 1990s are completely absent. The analytical focus also breaks down somewhat in later decades, with a creeping substitution of secondary for primary sources and a shift toward summary of policies rather than analysis of outcomes. Nevertheless, this a fine book that offers pragmatic and nuanced conclusions about the possibilities and pitfalls inherent in crafting meaningful responses to industrial decline.

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doi:10.1017/eso.2017.8

Published online June 13, 2017

Barbara L. Solow. *The Economic Consequences of the Atlantic Slave Trade*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014. 140 pp. ISBN 978-0-7391-9246-7, $79.00 (cloth).

In his classic *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams portrayed slavery and the slave trade as the foundation of economic growth not only in the Americas but in Europe as well, having provided the impetus for the Industrial Revolution in Britain. The book was published in 1944, but the "Williams Thesis" remains a topic of intense debate. We are fortunate, therefore, that shortly before her death, Barbara Solow brought together her important contributions in this area of her work. The volume consists of five papers published in the 1980s and 1990s, and two recent unpublished essays. The themes that occupied Solow during the latter part of her career shine through in this unified, almost seamless, presentation of the transition to plantation slavery in the Americas, the centrality of the slave–sugar nexus to long-term growth in the colonies, the dependence of British North America on a trading system based on slavery, and the contribution of the slave trade to early industrialization. While addressing a broad range of issues, the book reveals Solow's iconic status as protagonist in the debate over the Williams Thesis.

In Chapter One, Solow sets the stage, tracing the origins of the European slave–sugar trade to the time of the Crusades, when the Italians established sugar plantations in the eastern Mediterranean, worked by slaves. The sugar trade gradually moved west, and by the end of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese island of Madeira was the world's largest producer. During the sixteenth century, Brazil replaced Madeira and, thereafter, the familiar Africa–America–Europe trade was dominant. As Solow points out, underpinning the shift in economic activity was the transport of captives from Africa. Nonslave regions produced little tradable surplus, and only the slave–sugar economies generated the investment needed for economic growth in the Americas.

Solow elaborates on these themes in "Slavery and Colonization." The staple theory assigns a key role to primary product exports in American development, but until the nineteenth century, high transport costs prevented trade in such low value-to-weight products as meat, grain, and timber, while the early staples, fish and furs, gave little impetus to settlement. The tradable agricultural goods: cotton, tobacco, coffee, and sugar, could in principle have been produced by Europeans, but because of the climate and nature of the work, the wages needed to attract European labor gave slavery a decided advantage. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, 75 percent of the exports from British America were produced by slaves. Indeed, up until that time, the strong trade connections and the great wealth that was accumulated in British America were almost all products of the slave system.

Previously unpublished, "Eric Williams and His Critics" synthesizes the reasoning and insights that make up the Williams Thesis, and presents a defense of its conclusions in light of Solow's earlier work and the recent literature. This powerful chapter confronts the key debates involving the contribution of the slave–sugar trade to industrializing Britain, the reasons Britain abolished the slave trade in 1807, and the connections between slavery and the slave trade to economic growth in Europe and the Americas. Solow argues for, among other factors, a coincidence in timing, the dependence of industrialization on trade and trade on slavery, economic events leading up to abolition, and, perhaps most important, the slave trade and slavery as promoters of investment and productivity change. The debate on the impact of the slave trade and slavery continues with recent scholarship pointing in both directions, and the discussion here by no means resolves the issues. Still, Solow offers as strong and succinct support for the Williams Thesis as exists in the literature.

"Why Columbus Failed: The New World Without Slavery" turns from the effect of slavery on Europe to its impact on the Americas, and although Solow's presentation is not explicitly counterfactual, the counterfactual inferences are clear. Her focus is on Spain. Gold and silver was the early basis of the Spanish trade, but the nature of the resources, given the technology of the time, assured that the trade would be temporary and unable to promote long-term settlement. Neither could the Spanish or other Europeans secure an Amerindian workforce through coercion. It is instructive that where Europeans and aboriginals cooperated, as in the fur trade of the northern part of North America, mutually beneficial long-term arrangements were established. Further south, such arrangements did not emerge. Planters were neither able to employ or enslave a significant native labor force, nor did European labor turn out to be a viable option. It was only after captives from Africa were brought to the region, ultimately in vast numbers, that the extraordinary wealth associated with the sugar colonies became possible.

The last chapter, "The Transition to Plantation Slavery: The Case of the British West Indies," presents in just twenty pages a remarkably wide-ranging account of the advance of slavery and the factors that promoted or inhibited that advance. Central were the type of crops that could be grown. There was little advantage to using slaves in mixed farming; and, until the nineteenth century, the gains were small in cotton and tobacco. It was only where production could take place on an "industrial" scale, as in sugar, that slaves provided the main, indeed, only labor force. Accordingly, the geographical distribution of the slave population shifted with the emergence of new sugar economies. The overall pattern was Madeira to Brazil to Barbados and, in the eighteenth century, to the Leeward Islands and Jamaica. Solow published this essay in 1985, at the time one of the few accounts based on quantitative evidence and economic reasoning. Partly inspired by her work, and with her support, David Eltis and a large team compiled and made accessible an extensive record of the slave trade (see *slavevoyages.org*). The extensive data sets have contributed to a substantial body of research that includes work confirming many of Solow's early insights.

This volume cements Barbara Solow's reputation as pioneer in addressing slavery and the slave trade in the context of the William Thesis. These lively, perceptive, and important essays, now available in one place, will continue to challenge and delight students and researchers.

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doi:10.1017/eso.2017.9

Published online June 9, 2017