

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PAST: THE MERGING OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

This essay looks at the economic influences on the origins of the American Civil War. In order to go beyond purely econometric studies, an analysis of William Faulkner's novel *Absalom, Absalom!* is used to introduce and expand the discussion of how the economies of the North and South tie in with and influence the social structures of both sides. In the end, the essay reflects on the role that academic study itself plays in the shaping of history, calling into question the ability of ever getting the "real war" into the books.

Writing about the Civil War, Walt Whitman claimed that the "real war will never get into the books."¹ This is true, in part, simply because it is impossible to look at every aspect of the war in order to get a full picture of what occurred and why. But perhaps more of the truth made it into the books than Whitman ever thought possible. The difficulty in understanding the war lies in the separation and division between disciplines: what is studied by one group is practically ignored by another for having little or no value. When studying the past, scholars tend to focus on one or two aspects and ignore the way in which those aspects interacted with everything else. Economic historians focus on the elements of profits, market structures, and the effect of competition and trade. Historians generally look at the picture from either the side of the victor or the loser, while claiming impartiality. The ideology of the general public is normally shaped by the opinions of the surrounding society. And the fiction literature of the past is often overlooked as a viable way to understand events that occurred in the "real world." At the center of the conflict of the Civil War lie the identities of the cultures and the individuals—identities shaped by factors ranging from economics to psychology—that, perhaps, can best be understood through literature.

The Portrait in Literature

The works of William Faulkner arguably come closest to presenting an explanation for the war, if in fact an explanation does exist. Born and raised in Mississippi (1897-1962), Faulkner was immersed in a culture that would not and could not forget the war. Beyond embodying the nostalgia the South feels for the Civil War and the antebellum era, his works also present a vision of the interactions between the conflicting identities of the North and the South.

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In the novel *Absalom, Absalom!* Faulkner's characters lay out the story of Thomas Sutpen: a 19th Century rags-to-riches story that could be labeled by some as the quintessential "American Dream" story. Arriving in Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, in 1833, Sutpen emerges into the conscience of society from out of nowhere one Sunday morning. He proceeds to secure land and build a plantation from nothing, working side by side with the black slaves he brought with him. As the story of his childhood is revealed, Sutpen's character becomes even more the embodiment of Northern sentiment about the South. The reader learns that he came from the mountains in what would become West Virginia, "where he had never heard of, never imagined, a place, a land divided neatly up and actually owned by men who did nothing but ride over it on fine horses or sit in fine clothes on the galleries of the big houses while other people worked for them."² As he traveled out of the mountains and into the South, he began to discern, without realizing it, that

there was a difference between white men and white men not be measured by lifting anvils or gouging eyes or how much whiskey you could drink and then get up and walk out of the room. ...He still thought that that was just a matter of where you were spawned and how; lucky or not lucky; and that the lucky ones would be even slower and lother than the unlucky to take any advantage of it or credit for it, feel that it gave them anything more than luck.³

Eventually, Sutpen recognizes his 'innocence,' as Faulkner refers to it, and decides that he will have to create the advantages he was not born with.

In doing so, Sutpen's reaction was in line with the thought processes of the North. His rags-to-riches story seems to be the tale of the Northern ideal: build out of nothing what is desired. Ultimately, however, Sutpen ends up destroying not only himself and all that he built, but also the lives of numerous people who came in contact with him—even those who were born years after his death. The questions that remain are why this destruction occurred and why it was so complete. To understand the answer, one must look beyond the words of the novel into the influences of cultural identities—identities molded by economic systems—that shaped the characters in Faulkner's work.

The Economic Side

During the 19th Century the Northeast region of the United States acted in accordance with the economic models of an emerging capitalistic market-based economy. Manufacturing and industrial sectors grew at a dramatic rate: by the 1840s a strong domestic market had arisen in the US, and in 1843 the leading commercial periodical estimated American goods produced to equal \$1.5 billion—\$500 million consumed in production, \$100 million exported to foreign countries, and the remaining \$900 million exchanged within domestic markets.⁴ By the end of the antebellum era the US ranked second in the world in the value of manufactured goods.⁵ The North was following the

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trend of the world leaders in a shift away from subsistence agriculture to market economies where trade became dominant.⁶

The increased urbanization that occurred around the growing industries in the North led to a cyclical function of supply, demand, and trade with rural areas. As the industries grew, the labor force in and around the urban areas began to shift from agriculture to manufacturing and the demand for agricultural goods from rural areas increased. This increase in demand led to higher prices for agricultural products from rural areas, increasing individual incomes in that sector, and the higher prices led to an increase in supply of these products. In order to increase supplies, the agricultural sector had to focus more resources on farming and thus had to rely more on manufactured goods from urban areas to meet their needs—and with higher individual incomes the people could afford more goods from the urban areas.⁷ The increased demand for manufactured goods led to price increases, which thereby raised incomes in the urban areas giving individuals more disposable income to use for purchasing goods and services and in turn to increased production—completing the cycle and starting it in motion again. As Diane Lindstrom explained in *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1850* the American manufactures in the North had it both ways: “a rapidly rising urban market with more income per capita to spend, and an opportunity to penetrate the huge rural market.”⁸

The North focused on this new market opportunity. Transportation expansion revolved around the idea of opening the path of trade to the rural areas. In a competitive market, producers must focus on maximizing the profits through the use of the three factors of production: land, labor, and capital. Since the North could not profit from labor in the same manner as the South could through slavery, it focused its efforts on increasing the value derived from land through land clearing and improvements along with the promotion of canals and railroads to improve access to markets. Economic historian Gavin Wright explains that “in the North, the motives of property accumulation and property-value augmentation generated an ethos of expansion, promotion, land speculation, and labor recruitment.”⁹ The North began to look for ways to maximize profits using the factor of production that was most readily available—land.

As the North moved into industrialization and capital-intensive production, the South remained routed in a labor-centered form of production that did not easily allow for mechanization. According to economists of the 1960s, regional specialization of the antebellum era caused the trading within the country to act in accordance with the international trade theory of Heckscher-Ohlin. In 1966 the Callender-Schmidt-North thesis was published proposing that

the rise of internal commerce after 1815 made possible a territorial division of labor between the three sections of the Union—the West, the South, and the East. ...There was fostered a mutual economic dependence between sections... The South was thereby enabled to devote itself in particular to the production of a few plantation staples contributing a large and growing surplus for the foreign markets and depending on the East for the bulk of its

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manufactured goods... The East was devoted chiefly to manufacturing and commerce...while it became to an increasing extent dependent on the food and the fibers of [the South and the West]. The West became a surplus grain-and livestock-producing kingdom, supplying the growing deficits of the South and the East.¹⁰

The problem, however, is that this model of economic theory does not match what actually occurred during the years leading up to the Civil War as more current analyses by economic historians like Wright and Eugene Genovese have shown. The South did not hold up its end of the deal—the demand for Northern manufactured products and Western grains in the South was not large enough to meet the level of “mutual economic dependence” that the Callender-Schmidt-North theory calls for.¹¹

The structure of the South’s economy and development was not designed to support the dependence laid out in the above theory. Genovese credits the lack of demand to the underdeveloped market of the rural areas in the South. Unlike the North where transportation encouraged the spread of the market to less developed areas, the South fought against such urbanization: “the Southern transportation system tied the staple-producing areas to the ports and that was the best possible arrangement for the planters. The planters controlled the state legislatures in an era in which state participation was decisive in railroad construction and generally refused to assume the tax burden necessary to open the back country.”¹² The South depended on exporting the majority of its cotton crop (about 75% was shipped overseas in 1860¹³) hence transportation concerns focused on getting the product to port. Southern landowners needed to get their cotton to markets outside of the South and isolating the rural landscape only helped to solidify their position at the top of the social structure.

While the economy of the North centered around the expansion of industry, growth of markets, and innovation of product, the economy of South was rooted in agriculture, stability, and tradition. Economically speaking, the heart of the Southern market structure was slavery. In the North, labor resulted in profit when the marginal revenue product (the added product produced by the addition of one worker multiplied by the revenue gained from that additional product) is equal to the marginal cost of the worker (the added cost of hiring the one extra worker).¹⁴ The institution of slavery, however, causes the production factor of labor to act like capital. Generally capital is defined as “a durable good...that will accrue benefits to the owner in the future.”¹⁵ Slavery provided the slaveholder with a source of labor at a minimal cost (the cost of the food and shelter to keep the slave alive and healthy) along with providing a source of wealth like an investment in capital provides a firm. Wright argues that the price of slaves in the South was not dependent on the success of crops, but rather was a function of a fixed supply curve (due to the ban on the importation of slaves in 1790s) and the demand curve of a given year. The result, according to Wright, is that “virtually every slaveholder who was careful enough to keep his slaves alive made at least a normal profit during the 1850s from capital gains alone. ...Profitability was enjoyed by every slaveholder, large and small, in every part of the South.”¹⁶ While the North pushed forward to find ways to

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make land more profitable, increasing production with minimal increase in labor and expanding markets into rural areas, the South needed to maintain the structure of the plantation, founded on slavery, in order to secure the returns on the investments in slaves.

Beyond the Profits

Economic analysis, however, fails to take into account the larger picture. Through mathematical equations, economists rationalize why slavery existed in the South and why people would fight to protect it. Gerald Gunderson lays out a detailed econometric study of slavery in the South in "The Origin of the American Civil War." This type of analysis implies that plantation owners across the South were structuring involved mathematical formulas in order to determine "the percentage reduction in the average income of free citizens from noncompensated abolition of slavery."¹⁷ Following these computations, the cost of war would have to be compared to the other options. For example:

The first inequality (1) expresses the observed judgment of the eleven states of the Confederacy that the foreseen costs of the war are less than those of the compensated emancipation.

$$T > F * W_c + .23D \quad (1)$$

The right hand side of the inequality expresses the two expected costs of the war, military expenditures ($F * W_c$) and the possibility that the slaves would be freed by subjugation ($.23D$). The value of .23 is the average vested interest in slavery for the eleven states of the Confederacy.¹⁸

The probability of this type of econometric analysis going on in plantations across the South during the years leading up to the Civil War is most likely fairly low. While slaveholders almost certainly thought about their possible profit loss due to emancipation, the facts and figures derived from equations similar to Gunderson's seem unlikely to have the ability to stir the passions that ran through the war.

Along with being blamed as the South's motivation for going to war, monetary profits gained through slavery are also usually held as the main cause for the South's lack of economic growth. As Genovese points out, most discussions of economics and slavery rest "on the assumption that the master-slave relationship was purely economic and not essentially different from an employer-worker relationship." Yet it is the politics, ideology, and pattern of social behavior created and maintained through slavery that have the most "immense economic consequences."¹⁹ The system of slavery was connected to the aristocratic agrarian lifestyle of the South and *this* social structure is what hampered economic growth from occurring there as it did in the North.

The source of the social structure of the South is solidly tied to the romanticized distant past; in the words of one historian, the "poisoned remembrance of things past."²⁰ Mark Twain classified the problem of the South as stemming from, what he entitled, "The Sir Walter Scott Disease:"

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Then comes Sir Walter with his enchantments, and by his single might checks this wave of progress, and even turns it back; sets the world in love with dreams and phantoms; with decayed and degraded systems of government; with the silliness and emptiness, sham grandeurs, sham gauds, and sham chivalries of a brainless and worthless long-vanished society. He did measureless harm.²¹

Twain felt that the romantic tales of Scott were the inspiration of the code of the South—knights on horses gallantly protecting the virtuous fair maidens were remade into modern ideals. In the antebellum South these images were transformed into men on horseback overseeing plantations, worked by slaves who were the equivalent of serfs from the days of aristocratic Europe, protecting the quintessential Southern Belle. Historian Shelby Foote notes that even to this day, the Southern gentleman is supposed to live up to these ideals: “Growing up in Mississippi, [the Confederates] were the embodiment of gallantry and chivalry. You were expected to measure up to those standards, most of all with regard to physical and moral courage.”²² Yet the code of conduct all Southern gentlemen were, and are, supposed to follow was taken from the pages of novels describing a culture that never existed. Even Foote acknowledges the lack of basis for the code saying, “It’s a bunch of shit really. But all Southerners subscribe to this code to some degree, at least male Southerners of my generation.”²³

Underneath the code of chivalry and the way of life in the South lay slavery, and beyond the racial issues and even the economic rationales, slaves helped to create the class structure of an aristocracy. Slaves gave slaveholders a class to rule over and a sense of power beyond that given by money and profits—plantations could not exist in the same fashion without slaves, and without plantations the landowners had nothing.

Slaves, however, were not only, nor even necessarily the most important, element of Southern life (a factor often overlooked in economic analyses). What lay at the heart of the most plantation owners’ lives was a love and connection to the land itself. Tony Horwitz, in his book *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War*, found that even today people will claim the love of the land to be at the center of the cause of the Civil War. Jimmy Olgers, who, when he is not working in the local funeral parlor, runs the “general store museum” at Sutherland Station, Virginia, told Horwitz:

A Southerner—a true Southerner, of which there aren’t many left—is more related to the land, to the home place. Northerners just don’t have that attachment. Maybe that means they don’t have as much depth. I feel sorry for folks from the North, or anyone who hasn’t had that bond with the land.²⁴

Published over 60 years after the end of the Civil War, Margaret’s Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* encapsulates the same type of sentiment uttered by Olgers and paints the portrait of how important land was in the South. The main character of Scarlett O’Hara continually turns to the plantation *Tara* in her most desperate moments throughout the novel. At the very end, the land is all she has to comfort her when Rhett leaves for the

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final time: "She thought of *Tara* and it was as if a gentle cool hand were stealing over her heart. ...She felt vaguely comforted, strengthened by the picture, and some of her hurt and frantic regret was pushed from the top of her mind."²⁵ Land to the Southerner was a source of pride, comfort, and power; for the Northerner, it was a source to turn to in the quest for profits.

As Horwitz explains in his book, "North and South...represented two distinct and irreconcilable cultures, right down to their blood lines. White Southerners descended from freedom-loving Celts.... Northerners...came from mercantile and expansionist English stock."²⁶ The South viewed the North as cold-hearted, profit loving people.

This notion of Northerners, while being an extreme generalization, does have some basis of truth in fact. The capitalistic manufacturing and industry based Northern markets created a society that looked towards the future and profitable gains. The hope and ability to fulfill the "American Dream" of rising from poverty to build a fortune was born in the industrial revolution in the early 1800s. Increased personal incomes created opportunities for new businesses catering to luxury items; one primary example of such items being books. The innovations in the printing process during the 19th Century altered the publishing industry and generated the market of literature as entertainment. In 1820, \$2.5 million dollars of books were manufactured and sold in the US. By 1850 this total had multiplied almost six times (the greatest increase occurring between 1840 and 1850) to \$12.5 million dollars sold in 1850.²⁷ While these manufacturing changes gave authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman the opportunity to write works that are considered today great works of literature, the changes also produced a feeling of constraint caused by the pressure of the need to be successful and profitable. Melville felt this pressure most strongly and expressed it in his letters to Hawthorne:

Dollars damn me; and the malicious Devil is forever grinning in on me, —I shall at least be worn out and perish, like an old nutmeg-grater, grated to pieces by the constant attrition of the wood, that is, the nutmeg. What I feel most moved to write, that is banned,—it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the other way I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches.²⁸

While the general population may not have experienced the extent of strain felt by Melville, there was most definitely a consensus of the need to move forward towards profit gains.

The Southern lifestyle, however, as viewed by the North, was a hindrance to the continued expanded growth of capitalism. This viewpoint is supported, in part, by the history of other countries that have faced the issue of slavery and of a peasant class tied to the land. Genovese claims that

industrialization is unthinkable without an agrarian revolution which shatters the old regime of the countryside. While the peasantry is tied to the

land, burdened with debt, and limited to minimal purchasing power, the labor recruitment and market pre-conditions for extensive manufacturing are missing. "Land reform"—i.e. an agrarian revolution—is the essential first step in the creation of an urban working class, the reorganization of the agriculture to feed growing cities, and the development of a home market.²⁹

For the North to be able to expand markets into the South, it needed the Southern economic and cultural system to be adjusted to one more conducive to capitalism and competition; not only was the "peasantry" tied to the land, but so was the entire culture from the aristocratic landowners downward.

By this line of thought, the North may have fought for the abolition of slavery, not for reasons of morality, but because it lay at the heart of the Southern way of life. If the South could be defeated, and slavery removed, the aristocracy of the South would begin to fall apart, leaving the path open for Northern markets. In comparison to the Northern ideal of "progress," the South seemed stuck in an antiquated system that failed to make sense. By introducing the South to the "progress" of the industrial and manufacturing revolution the North was experiencing during the first half of 1800s, the "Sir Walter Scott Disease" could be treated. The South, however, was not a willing patient.

The economic systems of the North and South, and the cultural identities thereby influenced, could not exist simultaneously within the same country. The foundations of both systems were rooted in the concept that the opposite could not exist—a capitalist market cannot survive in an aristocracy, and a feudal system, like the South, cannot sustain itself with the pressures of competitive markets. History has shown that slavery falls under the demand of capitalism, but not without a fight. Genovese has found that, unlike what some economic theories would predict, there is no example of a gradual shift away from slavery to a capitalistic market based on industry; the changes tended to be drastic and destructive: "No slaveholding country or region crossed the threshold to industrialization. None adjusted to emancipation so as to launch a new cycle of growth that passed into structural development. All became marked by...a legacy of poverty, misery, and colonial dependency."³⁰ The South could not embrace the forward movement of the North, instead it looked towards the past with the desire to pass it on to the future.

The Realty and Relevance of Thomas Sutpen

The importance of the past and heredity in the South holds the key to understanding the destruction of Thomas Sutpen. He followed a course of action in line with the Northern ideals: from out of nothing he created what he lacked. The Southern culture and society, however, did not accept him. He fought for the South in the Civil War, but he was always without the past the South revered. As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that Sutpen was not interested in creating and owning a plantation to rule over—he created his fortune in order to pass the legacy on to his heirs. His unrelenting drive to see

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... [Sutpen] eventually proved to be not only his own downfall, but also the destruction of everything he built.

This series of events embodies the conflict presented by all the economic analyses of the Civil War—Sutpen attempted to follow the capitalistic methods of the North in order to invent the hereditary dynasty demanded by Southern culture. Destruction was the only possible outcome because the foundations of both systems are grounded in completely opposite ideologies. At the heart of the conflict of the Civil War lie the identities formed and created by the cultures and the individuals: a South struggling desperately to cling to a way of life against the ideals of progress embodied by the Northern way of life. The capitalistic viewpoint tends to be single minded in its pursuit of the end goal. Like economists (the quintessential persona of the extreme of the Northern ideal) who push to find the profit rationale to everything while ignoring other influences, Sutpen could not look beyond his end goal and the path he deemed necessary in order to succeed. The only Northern character in Faulkner's novel, a Canadian named Shreve, makes the connection between Sutpen's desire and the South's desire—while stressing the North's disbelief and disdain at Southern ideals: "So he [Sutpen] just wanted a grandson... That was all he was after. Jesus, the South is fine, isn't it. It's better than the theatre, isn't it."³¹ The only desire centers around the Sutpen bloodline continuing; for the bloodline of the code of the gentleman, the chivalrous South, to be maintained untainted by the contamination of Northern ideals. In the end, Sutpen achieved the "American Dream," so characteristic of the North, but destroyed it while trying to satisfy the demands of the South; just as, economically speaking, neither region could expand and experience profit growth without infringing on the territory of the other. The result of both history and the novel is a clash of ideals, lifestyles, and morals, ending in violence.

Ultimately, the differences remain irresolvable even by the early 20th Century characters and narrators of Faulkner's novel. The reason behind the irresolution lies not in the story of Sutpen itself, but rather in what is perhaps the most important correlation between Faulkner's novel and the economic and social analysis discussed here: the manner in which the story is told to the reader. The audience never directly learns the story of Sutpen chronologically from an omniscient narrator. Instead, Sutpen's tale is laid out mainly through the character of Quentin, a 20-year-old Harvard student in the "present day" of 1910. The tale of Sutpen's life is revealed in non-sequential segments as Quentin relates the various stories told to him by people who knew Sutpen and by people who heard stories passed down by people who knew Sutpen (although in Quentin's telling of these stories the narration takes on the persona of the source). As the source of narration shifts, so does the perspective and opinion of Sutpen. Throughout the novel, details of Sutpen's life are missing; details that were unknown even to those living at the same time as Sutpen. Eventually Quentin and Shreve wind up filling in these details. The relating of Sutpen's story ends with Shreve taking over the telling completely—the Northerner stepping in to fill in the gaps and to attempt to make sense of a story from a South he cannot fully understand (earlier in the novel Faulkner expresses how little Quentin's

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Cambridge schoolmates, including Shreve, understood the South: "Tell about the South. What's it like there. What do they do there. Why do they live there. Why do they live at all."³²

Up until the point in the text where Shreve takes over the telling each piece of the story has been presented as fact, without much use of conditional words or phrases, even though as the text moves along it becomes clear that much of what has been related has been a collection of individuals' assumptions and beliefs that fall slightly shy of what is finally presented as "truth." Once Shreve begins to tell the story, however, the tone shifts almost entirely into the realm of "maybe." In the first 10 pages after Shreve takes over, there are 25 uses of the word "maybe." In comparison, the previous 16 pages had a total of 3 uses of the word.³³ This shift creates doubt in the reader's mind as to the validity of the rest of the narrative; what previously in the novel had been related as "fact" has no more basis in hard evidence than the "maybe" creations of Quentin and Shreve. The reader is left to piece together his or her own perceptions of the stories and the overall purpose of the telling.

In the same way, people studying the Civil War must piece together their own picture from the sources available—sources shaded by preconceived notions, viewpoints, and emotions. So in a sense, Whitman was wrong about the real war getting into the books. The layers of the truth are there in fiction and in research, but it is the inability to see the entire picture without clouding it with judgments that stops the real war from emerging. In the end, there are more similarities between researchers of the Civil War and the character of Quentin than are first apparent or admitted. Quentin cannot acknowledge his own feelings about the South in the same way that economists, historians, and the general public fail to see preconceived notions coloring their perceptions. By trying to answer the question of why the war happened, many researchers have, perhaps unknowingly, placed themselves in the same situation Faulkner leaves Quentin in as Shreve poses his final question to him at novel's end:

"Now I want you to tell me just one thing more. Why do you hate the South?" "I dont [*sic*] hate it," Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; "I dont hate it," he said. *I dont hate it* he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark: *I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!*³⁴

Notes

1. Walt Whitman, "Specimen Days (1882-83)." "...the real war will never get in the books" *Selections from Writers During the Civil War*, ed. Louis P. Masur (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 281.
2. William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 179.
3. *Ibid.*, 183.
4. Diane Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 3.
5. *Ibid.*, 1.
6. Gavin Wright, "An Econometric Study of Cotton Production and Trade 1830-1860," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 53, no. 2 (May 1971): 119.

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7. As discussed by Eugene Genovese in "The Significance of the Slave Plantation for Southern Economic Development" the increased agricultural production led to the demand for innovations and increased production of goods and tools linked to farming (424). This shift in demand therefore led to yet another increase in production in the industrial sector magnifying the effects described above.
8. Lindstrom, *Economic Development*, 12.
9. Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 154.
10. Callender-Schmidt-North thesis quoted in Lindstrom, *Economic Development*, 5.
11. Lindstrom, *Economic Development*, 5.
12. Eugene D. Genovese, "The Significance of the Slave Plantation for Southern Economic Development," *The Journal of Southern History* 28, no. 4 (Nov. 1962): 429.
13. *Ibid.*, 424.
14. This profit equation is known as the *optimal quantity of labor rule*.
15. Andrew Schotter, *Microeconomics: A Modern Approach*, 2nd ed. (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1997), 631.
16. Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, 140-142.
17. Gerald Gunderson, "The Origin of the American Civil War," *Journal of Economic History* 34, no. 4 (Dec. 1974): 921.
18. *Ibid.*, 928-9.
19. Genovese, "The Significance of the Slave Plantation," 422.
20. Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 208.
21. Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 327.
22. Quoted in Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 149.
23. *Ibid.*, 150.
24. *Ibid.*, 261.
25. Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (New York: Warner Books, 1964), 1024.
26. Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 68.
27. John Trebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States: Volume I The Creation of an Industry 1630-1865* (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1972), 221.
28. Herman Melville, "Letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1 (?) June (?), 1851," *The Writings of Herman Melville The Northwestern Newberry Edition: Correspondence*, ed. Lynn Horth (Northwestern University Press & The Newberry Library, 1993), 128. Although the exact date and month of this letter is unknown, it was written in 1851, a year after the publication of *Moby Dick*. While it may appear to readers today that Melville's sentiment expressed here is the result of an author's exaggerated self-criticism, or that it was written in a sarcastic tone, publishing records from the time show that 1,500 copies of *Moby Dick* sold during the first month, 2,300 during the next year and a half, and only an additional 5,500 copies in the following half century. In total, Melville received only \$556.37 of the \$1,200 royalties earned in his lifetime on the book after repaying his publisher, Harper Brother's, for his back debts. He was forced to support himself and family through various other jobs because his writing of novels was not profitable. Publishing information from: Laurie Robertson-Lorrant, *Melville: A Biography* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 31.
29. Genovese, "The Significance of the Slave Plantation," 423.
30. Eugene D. Genovese, "The Slave Economies in Political Perspective," *The Journal of American History*, 66, no. 1 (Jun. 1970): 11.
31. Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*, 176.
32. *Ibid.*, 142.
33. All counting of the word "maybe" was done by myself from the 1990 Vintage Books edition of the novel.
34. Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*, 303.

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