

persuasive than it probably should be. During the very week that I write this review, Chinese demonstrators are shattering windows in Japanese-owned firms as the demonstrators protest Tokyo's refusal to acknowledge adequately its World War II crimes in China. But Barnett would likely respond that despite the demonstrations, there will be no hostilities. He would point to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's apology for those crimes as evidence that while political and cultural differences linger, both governments understand that the connections are more powerful than historical animosity. And, he would argue, if that is true in the Far East, it is equally true in Scandinavia and Central Europe and elsewhere.

But, like most of us, Barnett is selective. Missing in this otherwise brilliant book advocating connectedness is the unilateralism that has characterized the recent policy of Barnett's own government as expressed in the rejection of not just the Kyoto global warming treaty, but proposed international agreements regarding the International Criminal Court, landmines, children in war, nuclear testing, chemical and biological weapons, biodiversity, and much more. Missing, too, is the surge of American evangelical fervor that parallels the very fundamentalism that he believes helps to explain the disconnectedness in the Middle East. And missing is the real influence of the oil and other lobbyists that cynically undermine the idealism of writers like Barnett.

I just wished that I shared Barnett's optimism. He would probably dismiss my anxiety as that of a historian, like those admirals, who are blinded by history. I hope he, like my friend Larry Belle, is right.

Gary B. Ostrower Århus University (visiting lecturer)/Alfred University, NY

Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003. 374 pages; ISBN 0674010612 hardcover; \$29.95.

The historiography of American slavery has expanded dramatically in recent decades. While Ulrich Bonnell Phillips's *American Negro Slavery* (1918) almost single-handedly constituted the first phase of the field's modern development, and Kenneth M. Stampp's *The Peculiar Institution* (1956) and Stanley Elkins's *Slavery* (1958) epitomized the second stage, the third phase – which began in the 1970s with the works of John W. Blassingame, Eugene D. Genovese, Robert William Fogel, Stanley L. Engerman, and Herbert Gutman – rolled into the twenty-first century on an impressive growth curve. Contributing to this development, Ira Berlin's *Generations of Captivity* (2003) is an excellent up-to-date overview of the Peculiar Institution that both draws on and temporally expands the scope of his earlier prize-winning study *Many Thousands Gone* (1998).

Important as they were, the early works of the field's third phase – for example, Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1974), a massive compendium of the Southern way of

life as lived on slavery's terms – tended to suffer from a monolithic and time-frozen approach to slavery. Berlin's dynamic book serves as an important corrective to any static view of the institution. After introducing his readers to the protagonist of the epic drama that is about to unfold before their eyes ("The emphasis is on the slave," 4), Berlin then immediately articulates his other focus: "The emphasis is also on change" (4). He argues, and convincingly demonstrates, that black life on the North American mainland differed considerably across time and space during slavery.

Berlin combines a geographical approach with a chronological one. He divides the coastal colonies into four distinct regions – the North, the Chesapeake region, low-country South Carolina and Georgia, and the lower Mississippi Valley (Louisiana and West Florida). Temporally, Berlin breaks the slavery era into five parts, which he calls "generations." He then looks at the lives of the five generations in each of the four geographical areas, highlighting both differences and similarities in the evolution of slavery in each region. Although some may find the book's structure a little formulaic, its merits, in my opinion, far outweigh any possible disadvantages. The reader is rewarded with a carefully designed narrative that manages to survey the entire history of African American slaves in less than four hundred pages while being attentive to nuance and detail.

What Berlin calls the "Charter Generations" consisted of the "cosmopolitan men and women of African descent who arrived in mainland North America almost simultaneously with the first European adventurers" (6). Berlin, in other words, utilizes a Black Atlantic perspective as he discusses the early "Atlantic creoles" who had been exposed to cross-cultural contact in African and European ports (for example, Elmina and Lisbon) before being brought to America. He sees these early black arrivals as innovative survivors who did what they could to transform slavery into a negotiated relationship between slave and master. This effort of the Charter Generations was at its most successful in seventeenth-century Dutch New Netherland. Berlin sheds light on a dimension of the colony's life that early overviews of slavery hardly recognized: "By the middle of the seventeenth century, black people participated in almost every aspect of life in New Netherland. In addition to marrying and baptizing their children in the Dutch Reformed Church, they sued and were sued in Dutch courts and fought alongside Dutch militiamen against the colony's enemies. Black men and women – slave as well as free – traded independently and accumulated property. Black people also began to develop a variety of institutions that reflected their unique experience and served their special needs" (36).

The next wave of slaves – in Berlin's vocabulary, the "Plantation Generations" – were much worse off and had less room for negotiation with their masters. These were people from the African interior who were brought to America to work on plantations and to live in social environments that were "slave societies" (communities that depended economically on slavery) rather than "societies with slaves" (communities where the economy was not, to the same degree, built on slave labor). The Plantation Generations were forced, by their masters, to devote their lives to the cause of large-

scale staple production – tobacco in the Chesapeake and rice in lowcountry South Carolina and Georgia – with dismal consequences for their individual and communal existence.

Berlin's "Revolutionary Generations," in turn, were black people residing in North America during the era of the French, American, and Haitian revolutions. Although these generations mostly continued to live in captivity, Berlin incorporates into his discussion such vignettes of liberation as, for example, a glimpse into the (partly ambiguous) legal processes of emancipation in northern New England (102). He thereby celebrates the spirit of the revolutionary era and keeps the reader attuned to the need and desire for a fundamental political change.

However, before the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the Civil War initiated a political transformation, the slaves whom Berlin calls the "Migration Generations" were forced to undergo a "Second Middle Passage." The term refers to the large-scale domestic slave trade that began after the transatlantic trade was rendered illegal. This forced movement was prompted, in particular, by the cotton and sugar revolutions in the southern interior, which propelled masses of black people across "a wilderness that stretched from upland South Carolina to Texas" (161), tearing black families apart and causing unspeakable suffering. Again, Berlin's portrayal of how this involuntary migration disrupted the lives of those who were transported west to the southern interior as well as of those who were left behind in the old seaboard South perceptively draws on, illustrates, and adds to previous scholarship. Berlin's Epilogue, finally, portrays the "Freedom Generations," the African Americans who were contemporaries of the Emancipation Declaration and sought to establish new modes of black life after the Civil War.

Perhaps the most relevant critical question mark raised over Berlin's approach is the one that Nell Irvin Painter inserts into her otherwise warm and laudatory review of *Many Thousands Gone* in *African American Review* (34:3, 2000). In Painter's words, which apply to Berlin's 2003 book to the same extent that they pertain to his earlier study, Berlin "overstates the autonomy of the enslaved within a brutal institution." However, as Painter would agree, this tendency in Berlin (to the degree it exists at all) is not an attempt to belittle the institution's horrifyingly violent and unjust nature, but rather results from his effort to create a counternarrative to those approaches to slavery that may have underestimated the full extent, expression, and significance of black agency in the antebellum era. Berlin determinedly zooms in on slaves' initiative and skill at negotiating the terms of their daily lives, and examines the extent to which such negotiation was possible in each region and era. This focus on agency and negotiation constitutes the main continuum in Berlin's versatile story of the range of forms that black life took during slavery.

The praise won by *Many Thousands Gone* is equally apt when applied to *Generations of Captivity*; in addition, the latter book's temporal scope goes beyond the first two centuries of slavery that were the focus of the earlier study. In the pages of both

books, we see slaves toil and labor, as well as persistently and creatively develop their own cultural institutions as a means of individual and communal survival; Berlin *both* argues that any understanding of slaves' lives should begin with their work *and* gives culture a great deal of space in his analysis, rather than treating labor history and cultural history as binary opposites. In sum, Berlin's attention to change and complexity renders his scholarship sophisticated and mature. Lucidly written, *Generations of Captivity* is an excellent choice for undergraduate classrooms. Based on thorough and current research and a clearly articulated vision, it also generously rewards the more advanced reader.

Tuire Valkeakari

Yale University

Joel Dinerstein, *Swinging the Machine: Modernity, Technology, and African American Culture between the World Wars*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003. ISBN 1558493832; paperback; \$24.95.

Swinging the Machine is a lively and compelling study by a former rock critic and current academic, who works at the intersection of musical, literary, and vernacular traditions, as well as studying the history of American dance. Dinerstein examines the nexus of the Machine Age and the Swing Era, arguing that their temporal overlap was no coincidence. The Machine Age was marked, as Dinerstein observes, by an enthusiastic faith in the seemingly limitless potential of technological innovation and progress, on the one hand, and by the fear that Americans would find themselves enslaved to their machines, on the other. The outcome was the dual desire to master the machine and to integrate a machine aesthetics into cultural production. While creating artistic expression out of this desire, African American musicians and dancers, argues Dinerstein, humanized artists' and entertainers' dialogue with machines by adding to it a groovy touch that resonated with the pulse of urban environments. Dinerstein particularly focuses on big-band swing, the lindy hop, and tap dance. If early industrial researchers thought of the body as "the human motor" and physicians referred to it as the "human machine" (11), black performers taught Americans how to swing that machine, writes Dinerstein – that is, how to develop a new mode of dance and music that appropriated the tempo, rhythm, and drive of the industrial age and transformed it into fun, instead of allowing the assembly line's taxing demands on the human body and soul to become the sole epitome of the modern era.

Appropriation is, of course, a key issue in this book. Well versed in the racial power relations operative in the interwar era's cultural production, Dinerstein repeatedly addresses, for example, what he aptly calls "the corporate whitefacing of swing" (173). In his words, "[t]he music industry would never have supported an African American band as it did [Benny] Goodman's; a black band would not have been let in the front door of some of the nation's most prestigious venues" (173). Dinerstein, in any case, studies both white and black performers (dancers as well as musicians), celebrating the artistic strengths of them all and seeking to go beyond any simplistic