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.

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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

variety of the love-and-theft paradigm. At the same time, he constantly reminds the reader that in the interwar period it was the white performers rather than their black colleagues who reaped the major publicity and main profits generated by art forms originating with African American cultural innovation.

Even a terse summary of Dinerstein's chapters will give a sense of the impressive scope of his interdisciplinary analysis – which, when taken as a whole, in various ways accentuates the national significance of African American cultural expression. Elaborating on the book's dual starting point, Chapter 1 not only examines the 1930s fear that American society was becoming overmechanized but also passionately portrays city dwellers' enjoyment in the rush of living. This chapter's industrial and urban soundscapes – the clanging of machinery, the metronomic beat of the clock that mentally punctuated the factory worker's day, and the rhythmic pulse of the subway – prepare the reader for the concept of an orchestra being a "factory of sound" (53, originally Stuart Chase's phrase) and for the idea that big-band swing embodied "the social tempo of the time" (62). Chapter 2 evokes the train as one of the era's "icon[s] of historical experience" (64) and then examines locomotive onomatopoeia in the blues and big-band swing. Chapter 3 continues to explore the symbiosis (and, at times, a more tension-ridden relationship) of machine aesthetics and individual artistic creativity in African American musical expression; Dinerstein's examples range from the folk ballad of John Henry to Duke Ellington. Chapter 4 studies streamliner trains and big bands, viewing these dynamic and energetic signs of the times as "two public symbols that manifested the human-machine interface and caught the industrial zeitgeist" (25).

Dinerstein's investigation, in Chapter 5, of such white phenomena as the Ziegfeld Follies and Busby Berkeley musicals (which have little to do with African American expressivity) serves as another investigation of the various expressions that the desire to master the machine and incorporate the "techno-dialogic" (126) into popular culture found in the interwar era. The Ziegfeld Follies and Berkeley's musicals looked at the relationship of machines and women through the lens of white male erotic fantasy, standardizing and objectifying the eroticized "ideal" woman. The "anonymous beautiful woman," notes Dinerstein, became an integral part of the "pleasure machine that produce[d] fables of abundance" (26). Chapter 6 examines black and white tap dance, Chapter 7 the lindy hop. Chapter 8 discusses the role that swing and these varieties of dance had at the New York World's Fair of 1939–40.

This ambitious study draws on a vast range of sources and synthesizes a great deal of scholarship on black aesthetic principles, popular culture, and technological progress. At the same time, it is a highly original contribution – celebratory in spirit, complex in argument, and abundant in example. Some readers, though, might wish to contest some aspects of the organization of the material. I had some such minor reservations, but I also recognize that the order of presentation cannot cater, in every detail, to all tastes in a stylistically pioneering study whose narrative flow bears close resemblance to that of jazz. In the final analysis, one of this book's chief virtues is precisely its

jazz-shaped energy and force, which delights in repetition with difference and in controlled improvisation. Even if some of Dinerstein's riffs may at times seem to risk losing themselves in digression, he ultimately always lets the main motif break through at strategic moments.

Swinging the Machine is of particular interest for those studying technology and culture, black music, interwar cultural expression, and the dialogue between modernity and popular modernism. In addition, many others working on interrelations of aesthetic forms and social change will benefit from this dynamic, insightful, and well-researched study. And, last but not least: written by a self-confessed "grooveologist" (xi), it is a book to enjoy.

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Per Winther, Jakob Lothe, and Hans H. Skei, eds., *The Art of Brevity: Excursions in Short Fiction Theory and Analysis*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2004. xx + 212 pages; ISBN 1-57003-557-1.

I spent part of last summer reading the collected shorts stories of Eyvind Johnson – a volume of 53 stories and 650 pages – an experience that highlighted the elusiveness of the short story genre's characteristics. I was again reminded of the variety of texts encompassed within the term short fiction, not only epic and lyrical, or syntagmatic and paradigmatic stories, but a whole spectrum of other texts such as fictionalized narratives bordering on the anecdote, the sketch, the reportage, the travelogue, and the fragment. Other issues were brought to mind: point of view (half of the stories were told by a first-person narrator); the resistance of the short story as the reader turns from one story to the next, causing the reader to slow down; the reader's lack of retention when one tries to take in a series of stories (which may explain why short story collections are so little read), and the structural variety in closure and openness, in the presence or absence of epiphanic moments, and in the linear vs. the spatial.

As I later turned to reading *The Art of Brevity: Excursions in Short Fiction Theory and Analysis*, edited by Per Winther, Jakob Lothe, and Hans H. Skei, it turned out that most of the above issues are addressed there in new and thought-provoking ways. After having read the introduction and the seventeen articles of this volume, I felt that I should go back to reread Johnson's fifty-three short stories, but then, unfortunately, my summer was over. But I will certainly carry the insights and new perspectives presented in the book with me for future short story reading.

Even though books on short story theory are infrequent, a few important works have appeared in the past. One may mention, for instance, Charles May, ed., *The New Short Story Theories* (1994), Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey, eds., *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads* (1989), Clare Hanson, ed., *Re-Reading the Short Story*