

workshops or how their labor was organized, the unique characteristics of individual industries such as recruiting, or labor processes or workplace culture that might have shaped their subjectivities in different ways. However, even for those more interested in labor in detail, this book is a useful and interesting analysis that glimpses the history of labor beyond the period of rapid industrialization and reminds us of the importance of class and gender as key organizing principles in labor and nation-building processes in colonial and postcolonial Korea. These factors have been frequently overlooked in the literature about the rapid industrialization and economic growth of the country.

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Embodied Engineering: Gendered Labor, Food Security, and Taste in Twentieth-Century Mali

By Laura Ann Twagira. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2021. Pp. 344.



In her introduction to this journal's April 2020 special issue on "Africanizing the History of Technology," Laura Ann Twagira identified key themes emerging from scholarship centering African experiences of technology, including technology in action, the remaking of infrastructure, scarcity, and creativity. Twagira's new book, *Embodied Engineering*, takes up these themes via a history of African women's food production, enriching the literature on both the history of technology in Africa and studies of gender and technology.

Embodied Engineering redefines food security as encompassing the quality, not just quantity, of food: its taste, color, texture; its familiarity and capacity to evoke memory and satiety; its place at the center of household relationships and Malian norms of hospitality; its nutritiousness; and the laboriousness or ease of its production. Malian women were responsible for producing this fulfilling food—labor that included not only cooking but also collecting firewood and wild plants, growing garden produce, pounding grains, producing shea-nut cooking oil, and other work. Centering the historical importance of everyday or "modest technologies" like the hoe, metal pot, and wrap skirt, Twagira reveals how Malian women's skill, knowledge, and innovative use of these technologies allowed them to make the landscape a food resource (p. 3).

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In chapter 1, focused on the early twentieth century, Twagira masterfully uses folktales to show how Malian women produced satisfying meals from both cultivated and wild lands. Chapters 2–4 trace life in the Office du Niger, a 100,000-hectare agricultural scheme in central Mali, initially created in the 1930s by colonial officials and maintained after Mali's independence from France in 1960. Because of the deep association of the Office du Niger with mechanized, industrialized, and export-oriented agriculture, Twagira's choice to explore women's food production in this context produces intriguing juxtapositions that allow her to renarrate the history of technological change in West Africa.

Chapter 2 identifies the interrelationship of food production and social relationships. Colonial officials imagined the Office du Niger to be a model site of "modern" agriculture. But for Malians, it was a space of violence, including forced resettlement, isolation, and food shortages. This was epitomized by the lack of women residents and their difficulty in producing food, as the Office du Niger reordered the landscape into a matrix of roads, canals, fields, and protected forests, limiting women's access to food sources like gardens and wild trees. Chapter 3 examines how women ultimately adapted the Office du Niger's infrastructure into a useful foodscape, for example by building rock staircases to more easily draw water from irrigation canals. In chapter 4, Twagira pairs changes in agricultural technology, like the introduction of mechanized threshers, with a parallel "modest technological revolution," epitomized by the replacement of clay cooking pots with metal ones (*negeda*) after World War II. Young women, specifically brides, were the technological innovators, as they introduced metal pots via their dowry of household goods. Metal pots altered the dynamics of labor time by cooking food faster and requiring less wood, saving women time that they reallocated to other tasks. This chapter also offers an excellent example of Twagira's attention to the sensory and embodied experiences of food production, engaging Marcel Mauss's concept of the "body as a natural tool" (pp. 149–50)—metal pots required new physical movements when stirring the thick staple porridge *toh* and produced new sounds as the stirring spoon hit the pot's walls. The final chapter presents a visceral exploration of food insecurity during the 1969–73 Sahelian drought and famine. While the Office du Niger was comparatively better off than other areas of Mali, the postcolonial regime sought to monopolize the region's rice production via coercive measures. As in earlier eras, it was Malian women who were responsible for food security, whether by making food aid palatable or hiding bundles of rice from anti-smuggling police by disguising it as a pregnancy.

To evoke these details of rural Malian life, Twagira draws on a rich corpus of archival documents, but it is her impressive use of folktales, oral histories, and conversations with Office du Niger residents that allows her to challenge the highly idealized narratives of the project presented in the colonial and postcolonial bureaucratic documents. This source base also allows Twagira

to follow the historical changes that mattered most to rural Malians. Political events are peripheral (most evident in the book's final chapter, which covers two postcolonial governments). Instead, Twagira centers people's memories of the taste of specific grains and the feeling of drawing water from an irrigation canal, and through this method she spotlights the historical impact of "ordinary yet essential technologies" (p. 12).

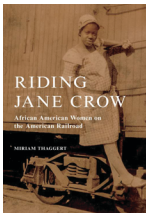
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Riding Jane Crow: African American Women on the American Railroad

By Miriam Thaggert. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2022. Pp. 208.



Since historian of technology Bruce Sinclair's pronouncement that "the history of race in America has been written as if technologies scarcely existed, and the history of technology as if it were utterly innocent of racial significance" (*Technology and the African-American Experience*, 2004), scholarship on the relations between race and technology has proliferated, driven by a desire to flesh out the ways in which African Americans played hugely significant roles in the history of American technology, from the nineteenth century to the present, breaking ground as scientists and mathematicians, astronauts and aviators, and inventors and investors, among work in countless other fields. In short, the last two decades have seen accounts of Black contributions to American science and technology, finally, break wide open.

But such work has also given way to scholarship in the history of technology that refuses to treat the categories of race and technology as fundamentally separate, instead pushing to trace the imbrications of technology and race in fruitful ways. W. H. K. Chun, for instance, considers race *as* technology, tracing how historically race has been used to marshal logics of comparison and sorting. This shift from what Chun calls the *what* to the *how* of race also motivates Robert J. Topinka's *Racing the Street* (2020), in which he interrogates the ways "race as a technology gathers, sorts, and assembles particularities into manageable networks." In rhetorical terms, Topinka explains, "race responds to a crisis in metonymy; as the relationship between the part and whole breaks down, race supplies resources for the