

refurbished May Seven cadre school in Hubei, or the Red Guard graveyard in Chongqing, and to a lesser degree the lone Cultural Revolution Museum in Shantou, remain largely inaccessible – on several levels – to the public.

Li Jie's study provides a rich and thought-provoking account of the cultural texts she has chosen to focus on and highlights the many-layered ambiguities inherent in today's remembrances of the Mao era. Some of these ambiguities perhaps deserve to be teased out more fully. This reviewer remains somewhat doubtful about both the object "utopian ruins" and the chosen form of a "curated exhibit." Certainly, Maoist ideology can be described as informed by certain utopian philosophies (although these might be spelled out more precisely). However, the systematic attempt to strike a balance between utopian idealism and violent or destructive outcomes often seems contrived. Do we really need to connect literary inquisitions with a "utopian quest to purify the ranks of 'the People'" (p. 69), or can we recognise that there are sincerely held but destructive and anti-humanistic views at the foundation of the Maoist project and socialism more generally? The word "dystopian," incidentally, only appears once or twice in the book, and always to characterise a "reality" that is contrasted with a "utopian vision" (p. 63). Portraying socialism as mainly a ruined ideal seems at best an oversimplification.

Similar questions are raised by the method of selective "curating." Although it is true that historical "objects" can be studied together with their "re-mediation" as memory in the present, the objects themselves are not quite the same in different parts of the book. The literary and visual texts produced during the Mao era and discussed in the first two parts are studied in their original contexts before they are "re-mediated"; by contrast, the factories and prison camps are studied only through their re-mediation and lack original context.

Finally, while the study mobilises an army of references from literary and cultural studies, cameo appearances by Agamben, Badiou, Barthes, Derrida, Žižek, and others add little substance, producing a scattered effect and deterring from the main argument rather than reinforcing it. By contrast, it is regrettable that the study does not engage more systematically with the renewed historical production on the Mao era that has appeared over the last decades, both in China and abroad. For example, Gao Hua's study *How the Red Sun Rose* (2019) is conspicuously absent from the discussion on ideology, and although Li's book aims to investigate "subaltern" memories, it is largely based on the productions of intellectuals or other elites, while studies of grassroots groups like Yang Kuisong's *Eight Outcasts: Social and Political Marginalization under Mao* (2019) or Guo Yuhua's 郭于華 *Shoukuren de jiangshu* (受苦人的講述, The Narrative of the Sufferers, 2013) are not mentioned. As a result, *Utopian Ruins* sometimes lacks historical depth. Without further discussion, the post-Mao era is termed "post-socialist" despite the ubiquity of references to socialism in today's media discourse. The larger arc of connections between the Republican, Mao, and post-Mao eras is also oversimplified when the book calls to reinvent the "public cultural practices" of the Mao era (p. 275), ignoring that these practices were themselves often violent and destructive deformations of civic practices that existed earlier in China's modern history. While curation and history remain legitimately distinct projects, more engagement with historians might bring additional clarity to the book's object and method.

■ Sebastian Veg is a professor of intellectual history of modern and contemporary China at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. Centre de recherches historiques, EHESS, 54 boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris, France (veg@ehess.fr).

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BRUCKERMANN, Charlotte. 2019. *Claiming Homes: Confronting Domicide in Rural China*. New York: Berghahn Books.

ANNE-CHRISTINE TRÉMON

Charlotte Bruckermann's book is set in Sweeping Cliff, a village that has been developed into a tourist site in the mountainous Shanxi countryside. As the village and its old courtyard houses are being economically revalued as a resource for development, the local population, although benefitting from increased income and employment opportunities, experiences dispossession and dislocation – and as such is threatened by "domicide," the destruction of home. Bruckermann builds on a wide-ranging literature, combining Marxist, feminist, and ritual studies, to interpret the ethnographic material she collected by living in Sweeping Cliff and sharing the villagers' daily activities for a year. She shows that most families manage to confront and thwart domicile. The home is simultaneously the house, the household, and the place where one lives, which is in all these dimensions constantly made by labour. She conceptualises the labour of homemaking as a relational mechanism for claims-making.

Part One, "History, Politics, Place," explores the villagers' claims to the home in the context of touristification and in an uneasy relationship with the past. Chapter One traces the architectural legacy of the village and Shanxi's merchant past and entrepreneurial tradition, currently being hailed by local governments and media in the context of a new capitalist accumulation. The village committee's leadership has surrendered to the tourism development company, which has taken over many former collective resources and buildings. Domestic dwellings started being targeted by the late 2000s, undermining villagers' claims for residence. Cautioning that the experiences

of Sweeping Cliff villagers cannot be reduced to the totalising domicile experienced elsewhere in China, Bruckermann offers a compelling account of how they face contradictory injunctions. Chapter Two addresses the rarely studied issue of housing redistribution in rural villages. Secret narratives of family histories and photomontages of family and socialist celebrations reveal the clash of ideological commitments to the family and the nation, and to inherited and acquired status of people and their belongings. On the spirit altar at the centre of the house, the God of Wealth has replaced Chairman Mao. Bruckermann eschews an interpretation in terms of a return to past traditionalism by stressing the similarities between both figures, which are seen by residents as sources of wealth and redistribution.

Part Two, "Gender, Generation, Kinship," explores the reproduction of homes through claims staked on kin. Chapters Three and Four offer careful descriptions and analyses of children's birthdays and bridal farewells, whose surface tensions between ancient and modern ritual components reveal deeper social dramas. Bruckermann's ethnographic analysis makes a significant contribution to anthropological discussions of kinship and feminist theories by pointing out the extent to which the devaluation of labour and personhood is gendered *and* generational. The devaluation of (past) agricultural work and the limitation of grandparents' influence by market reforms and birth control policies is contested by women who encourage the birth of offspring from their children and negotiate keeping grandchildren close to home. Their practices offer a continuum with state policies of population control that have increased the importance of uterine kinship, and with mobility restrictions that encourage migrant workers to leave their children with grandparents. However, Bruckermann daringly suggests, these women's requests for offspring, and for keeping them under their care, make up for reproductive and care losses in the past, rather than constituting a gift that might be reciprocated in the future. Chapter Four further discusses value claims staked in marriage negotiations, of which the house is a centrepiece. It shows how both young men and women, in the context of increased labour migration to the cities, struggle to safeguard their futures.

Part Three, "Labor, Location, Precarity," focuses on how people locate themselves within dispossession. Chapter Five examines the shifting role of agriculture in rural life. While under Mao women's work in the fields and food allocation had become public, the market reforms increasingly tend to include unremunerated agricultural work and the allocation of food in the domain of the "inside," domestic sphere. Describing the labour of harvesting millet and its transformation into food, Bruckermann shows how belonging to the rural village is shaped through the connection between land, labour, and bodies. By extolling the virtues of hard physical labour and a frugal diet, participation in mutual aid and care work, and the growing of domestic crops without pesticide, villagers create a division between their inside non-commodified sociality and the outside realm of the market. A new generational inversion is taking place, now that young people originating from the village who find employment as tour guides and network marketers romanticised and commodified their ruralness. Chapter Six widens the lens to the rural citizens increasingly dispersed across the urbanising valley. One event, the earthquake scare that spread one night across the region, and the way people took refuge in rural villages, revealed the suspicion toward the city and distrust of the state. Bruckermann's shrewd contrastive analysis of their moral economy of person-to-person action (*minjian* 民間) with Thompson's moral economy of the English crowd (1971) offers an understanding of Shanxi's rural households' anxieties and possibilities for counteraction. As further stated in the book's postscript, Sweeping Cliff villagers have retained a strong sense of being countryside people, and they

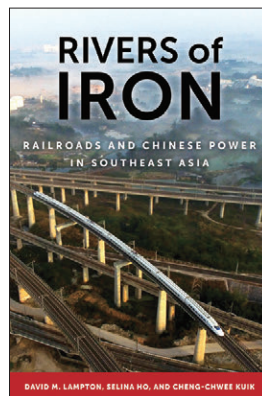
subvert the devaluations of peasant status that come along with rural-urban inequalities and exclusions.

In the conclusion, Bruckermann discusses the contradictions of Chinese red capitalism, and argues for a relational approach to class and location. Her book's convincing contention is that the residents of Sweeping Cliff have managed to "domesticate" capitalism, that is, neutralising some of its destructive effects while also actively participating in its development. They have done this by striking compromises between generations on the basis of their "homegrown labour theory of value," which is suffused with Marxist logic and kinship ethics. In this case, and probably in many others, making claims to the home is not so much a matter of individual property rights as it is a matter of rights to the product of one's labour. Contradictions between the forces of the capitalist market and socialist redistribution play out in struggles over value, the value of past and present labour, and of productive and reproductive labour, which are collapsed. This book offers a rare outlook on the home as a workplace, and a place created by work. I recommend it to all those interested in China's transformations and in theories of social reproduction.

■ Anne-Christine Trémon is Associate Professor and Director of the Laboratory of Cultural and Social Anthropology, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lausanne. Quartier UNIL-Mouline, Geopolis 5331, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland (anne-christine.tremon@unil.ch).

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DRAGAN PAVLIĆEVIĆ

Rivers of Iron examines China's role in the development of railroad connectivity between China and Southeast Asia (SEA) via the Pan-Asia Railway Network (PARN). The authors investigate the ideational and policy sources of regional interconnectivity in both China and SEA, China's political economy that drove it into taking a leading