Talpians are against the current reforms and believe that they were better off in the past. After Zhivkov stepped down in 1989, the dismantling of the communist system, decentralization, the development of market relations, and the privatization of property transformed rural society, and villages became increasingly marginalized. Kaneff argues that in these changed circumstances the past was no longer a useful tool in connecting the center and the periphery. Not surprisingly, history was rewritten by the reformers, who underscored tradition rather than history as it was defined under communism.

This book is of value for its description of the nature of Bulgarian communism in villages which were closely linked to the center of power. The case study of Talpia gives the reader important insights into everyday life in a Bulgarian village and into the way in which the past was used by the Zhivkov regime and its supporters.

A major weakness of this book is the low level of theorization. While the study focuses on the state and the construction of the past in state ideology, none of these concepts are adequately theorized. There is minimal reference to the large literature on memory and to the ways the past is constructed. Not placed within a comparative frame, the study remains an isolated case study. Another weakness is the amount of repetition in a book that is already somewhat short.

While an advantage in allowing the researcher to study village leaders, Kaneff's inability to get close to nonparty members in the village due to her personal/family network makes it difficult for her to analyze the degree of resistance to the state. Kaneff's suggestion that the present regime is unpopular in Talpa is convincing, given the village's powerful position in the past. However, reference to nonparty members who refuse to speak to the anthropologist and to the fact that the community is made up of families of mixed ethnic origin, makes the reader eager to know more. The author claims that decentralization has meant that it is no longer important to cultivate personal links with the center – what has this meant for constructions of the past? She notes that reformists now focus on tradition in rewriting history: what has this meant at the local level? It is at this juncture that the minority the anthropologist did not – or could not – study come into play: the noncommunists and the Talpians of various ethnic-religious origins who until recently had to suppress their identities.

Leyla Neyzi

Kistner, Ulrike: Commissioning and Contesting Post-Apartheid's Human Rights. HIV/AIDS – Racism – Truth and Reconciliation. Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003. 207 pp. ISBN 3-8258-6202-X. (African Connections in Post-Colonial Theory and Literatures, 2) Price: € 25,90

The essays in this volume are part of a debate on human rights in South Africa in terms of their political contestation. A central argument of Kistner is the diverging path of basic human rights and civil/political rights. She argues that unlike civil/political rights basic human rights do not amount to legally enforceable obligations. She maintains that the tendency to separate fundamental human rights – including the protection of life and the security of health and subsistence – from civil and political rights holds dangers for democratic citizenship. The essays discuss the relation of the two different sets of rights through perspectives from various academic disciplines and diverse theoretical stances. The use of diverse sources broadens the terrain and the terms of critical engagement with rights claims and struggles. The disadvantage of this approach is that the reader, unfamiliar with the wide scope of concepts and theories, has at times difficulties following the line of thought. Condensed explanations of historical developments and theoretical concepts within the essays help in this regard.

The first essay analyzes the issue of restorative justice at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that came to be linked to nation-building. Restorative justice favors reconciliation among former foes over punishment of perpetrators of crimes. It is, as Kistner posits, a justice that focuses on the future rather than on the past, on understanding and forgiveness rather than vengeance. She, however, points out that witnesses to the Commission found "justice" was traded for "truth" and "reconciliation." In their understanding truth was recovered at the cost of criminal liability of the perpetrators. Kistner posits that the uncoupling of truth from retributive justice and its re-inscription in reconciliation provides, what she calls, the founding myth of the new South Africa. The individual victim's attitude of forgiveness became directly linked to national reconciliation, without taking on the task of public retribution. She argues that in this process the dimension of retributive justice is lost and the whole restorative process is in peril. In her understanding retributive justice is fundamental to restorative justice guaranteeing human rights in South Africa.

The second essay in the publication looks at studies commissioned by the Human Rights Commission of South Africa in 1998 to investigate issues of racism in the media. She posits that the report's outcome is problematic due to methodological limitations. In her view analyzing racial utterances in terms of a discourse analysis utilizing formal semantics and assessing their truth values and truth claims is not reliable for reaching valid conclusions for human rights. She argues that speech-act-theory instead allows analyzing performative utterances in the context of the conditions looking also at communicative action-orientation. She also points out a gap in the report that seems to focus on white-on-black racism that it is to be dealt with by the constitution and the law. In contrast interethnic problematic stereotyping appears to be ignored and left to "anthropological explanation" and not be dealt with by the law. The author argues that this double standard is counterproductive to the development of a human rights culture.

The third essay critically examines the assumption of an unbroken lineage of white supremacy, linking racism and anti-Semitism. This view has a long history in South African political thought and activism. The author argues hat the comparison between fascism and

apartheid has been analytically unhelpful because it does not take into account the colonial origin of South African social structure and fails to examine the political terrain. According to her, the South African Human Rights Commission, however, has paid little attention to such distinctions and instead appears to support the modeling of apartheid racism on fascist anti-Semitism. A similar equation emerged with the notion of denial of racism and anti-Semitism. The Human Rights' Commission's Interim Report on the Inquiry into Racism in the Media makes Holocaust denial into a telltale sign of the denial of racism in South Africa. Kistner posits that as a result forms of colonial racism that have tied in with issues of race and class were bracketed out. The lineage of racism that has permitted capital accumulation in South African apartheid and post-apartheid was forgotten.

The fourth essay looks at the different kinds of causality in the etiology of HIV/AIDS. From 2000 onwards, public debates in South Africa have been dominated by the controversy around the causal link between HIV and AIDS epitomized by statements of the South African President Thabo Mbeki. Expressing an opinion for or against the causal link between HIV and AIDS has not only become a scientific but also a political credo. The author argues that the distinction between "necessary" and "sufficient" criteria for disease causation is crucial in understanding the debates on the etiology of HIV/AIDS. In the course of the history of medical diagnostics, the "sufficiency criterion" (meaning that with the organism present the disease must occur) has been considerably modified, while the "necessity criterion" (meaning that without the organism there is no disease) has been foregrounded. While mainstream medical science privileges the necessity criterion, the AIDS dissenters insist on strict sufficiency for conclusive proof of the causal link between HIV and AIDS. The latter subsequently argue that HIV is just a latent virus which becomes virulent through other factors, in the case of South Africa through malnutrition and related conditions. For them African AIDS is more a disease of poverty than anything else, what had some appeal for the South African government and their developmental agenda. However, also other factors, presented by Kistner in the subsequent essays, explain why South African politicians expressed at times controversial views about HIV/AIDS.

The fifth essay informs of a controversy in South Africa over who has the right to speak about AIDS, to decide on the response to AIDS, and even to define the problem itself. The South African President and others complained about the medicalization of AIDS arguing that etiology and treatment of AIDS are political questions to be addressed as part of the government's anti-racism thrust. Basic human rights are drawn back into the political realm. Kistner then maintains that responses to HIV/AIDS can be understood through the separation between human from civil/political rights. While the constitution serves as a reference point in matter of civil rights including racism, it has failed those who advocate human rights in its strict sense. Seeing a connection between HIV/AIDS and civil rights through identifying a link between the epidemic and racism, gives the government the right to speak out about the disease. However, this line of thought does not go so far to logically conclude that the state is obliged to provide for socioeconomic rights set out in the constitution, e. g., forcing the state to provide antiretroviral drugs. Kistner argues that this derives partly from a fear of the government that the necessary immense finances would threaten governance.

Another factor helpful to understand the politicalization of health in general and the treatment of HIV/AIDS is the issue of sovereignty discussed in the sixth essay. Kistner argues that the conflict between the sovereign power of the state and basic human rights takes shape within the context of state formation. Postcolonial states asserted national sovereignty which is further asserted threatened by increasing ties within the global economy. As nation-states are increasingly tied into the global economy, these emphasize sovereignty all the more. South Africa is in this regard no exception influencing also perceptions about and responses to human rights in general and to HIV/AIDS in particular. Kistner argues that this struggle between sovereignty and human rights need to be tackled by going beyond the nation-state, citizenship, and development. She posits that human rights are natural rights that entail immunities from sovereign governments and should be theoretically assertable against the decrees of sovereign governments. However, human rights attain positive value only within national legal statutes. Subsequently civil and political rights are given in South African rights discourse priority while human rights remain unspecified and unqualified and handed over to humanitarianism and its agents. However, this is also contested. An example is the President's stance on treatment of AIDS sufferers.

To sum up: the essays in this collection explore wider ramifications of human rights. A core argument throughout the publication is that basic human rights are not covered by civil and political rights in legally enforceable terms and are subsequently politically contested in the South African society. Examples are the provision of anti-retroviral drugs to AIDS sufferers as well as issues of retribution and inequality. Such basic human rights to life have moved to the center stage of political contestation.

The author carefully develops and prepares her arguments but at times stops to present these in detail. For instance, she introduces the concept of "class" into the discussion on racism, but does not explain in depth its relevance for the discussion. At times she even fails to explain concepts and views of cited authors at their first mentioning; for example Duesberg is mentioned in relation to the etiology of HIV/AIDS but his theory is only explained several pages later. By and large her arguments would have gained argumentative power through presenting ethnographic data from South Africa and elsewhere. For instance, she argues that the idea of retribution is common in many societies but hardly cites references supporting her argument. Generally,

the essays have a strong theoretical emphasis leaving the reader wondering to what extent the South African reality matches her arguments.

Despite such shortcomings, the author can nevertheless be lauded for stimulating a discussion on human rights by opening up interesting avenues of thought drawing on a wide scope of academic disciplines and theoretical stances. Anyone involved in human rights in general and in South Africa in particular will benefit from reading the essays in this publication.

Alexander Rödlach

McCauley, Robert N., and **E. Thomas Lawson:** Bringing Ritual to Mind. Psychological Foundations of Cultural Forms. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 236 pp. ISBN 0-521-01629-0. Price: £ 16.95

McCauley and Lawson here engage their theory of religious ritual competence (Rethinking Religion. Cambrigde 1990) with Melanesian material, principally Harvey Whitehouse's "Inside the Cult" (Oxford 1995). Their theory lies between – or rather links – cognitive anthropology and social anthropology; it is they say general rather than particular, systematic rather than idiosyncratic, and favours explanation over interpretation. The introduction poses some initial problems: Why do some rituals allow substitution (a cucumber in exchange for the Nuer ox)? Why are some rituals reversible (i. e., undoable) and others not? Why do some necessitate specialised personnel?

They start by affirming that in ritual, religious cognitive processes are essentially the same as in everyday cognitions. There is little here on religious thinking in general beyond noting that humans tend to attribute agency (here to divinities) beyond what conditions warrant. We can look at rituals by noting at what point divinity (the gods, God, spirits, the ancestors) intervene in a ritual, whether at the final stage or earlier on in the sequence of enabling rituals. (Holy Water is only efficacious because it has been *previously* consecrated by the priest through ultrahuman agency.) This has certain consequences: notably that divine intervention with an active human agent is more direct (say with the consecration of a priest) than divine intervention on a mediating instrument (Holy Communion), and thus might quite rarely need to be reversed (defrocking) in a way the Mass does not; and similarly, intervention with a human agent does not have to be repeated, nor can it be substituted (the cucumber); and the more proximal to a direct agent the divine intervention is, the greater the centrality that ritual has (compare Baptism with the Mass – or the latter with Holy Communion among born-again Pentecostalists).

The authors suggest that with religious fragmentation, the successor groups will not identify with one another if one or other has abandoned a central ritual (compare Roman Catholics with Orthodox and with Quakers in relation to Holy Communion). They proceed to the question of how in nonliterate societies, religious ritual constantly maintains the same form. (And we must take it that it does.) They follow Dan Sperber in arguing that religious ritual, like other cultural transmissions, may be potentially unstable and therefore (by selection) rituals tend to one of two types: (a) instrumental and special patient (i. e., humans acted upon) rituals where there is little sensory stimulus or emotional arousal but which are relatively frequent; (b) special agent rituals which are infrequent but more likely to involve immediate divine intervention at the level of the performing agent (what they describe as high sensory pageantry). The former is memorable by sheer repetition and the second because of the high arousal "flashbulb memories" it involves. McCauley and Lawson note that flashbulb memories work not only through emotional arousal but through rehearsal and consolidation: arguing against Whitehouse's implication of emotional arousal alone as enhancing memory, they argue that "emotion" may merely signal a quite independent increased cognitive awareness.

They describe Whitehouse's ethnography of the Kivung, a routinised (cargo) cult in New Britain with its frequent and repeated staid rituals; and a chiliastic splinter group which moves out holding more ecstatic practices including "emotionally exciting" nudity. Whitehouse labels the Kivung as "doctrinal," the splinter group as "imagist." McCauley and Lawson share Whitehouse's idea that manipulation of emotion in ritual is tied to mnemonic issues, whilst arguing for the more fundamental variables outlined above (the "ritual form" hypothesis). They argue that Whitehouse's notion is a hypothesis simply of "ritual frequency" (the frequency of any ritual leads to lower sensory pageantry or emotion), whilst the ritual form hypothesis includes actors' own tacit knowledge about ritual form which influences performance frequency (which by itself as an independent variable would remain rather mysterious). The "ritual form" hypothesis also addresses the question of motivation and thus again subjectivity. Special instrument and special patient rituals do not involve the immediate intervention of divinity, unlike special agent rituals where the agents (priests, rabbis, prophets, etc.) act in the gods' stead as ritual intermediaries. The former rituals are thus repeatable and are repeated. (Getting a second blessing may be helpful but being initiated a second time is redundant.) The ritual frequency hypothesis assumes that infrequent rituals need an injection of emotion to make them memorable, to which the authors oppose their ritual form hypothesis which explains, they argue, both frequency as well as emotion (or high ritual pageantry).

After dealing with the problems of what counts as "frequency," what as "participation," they proceed to apparently contradictory cases (infrequent low pageantry, and frequent high pageantry), and thence to some general conclusions: that the tedium of the doctrinal mode will lead to particular moves towards high pageantry special agent rituals but that these may fail through habituation to high emotion, and thus have to be seldom or risk being pushed through an impossible sensory overload. And breakaways from "balanced groups" (which contain