

ABSTRACT

THE SOUTH AFRICAN TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION AND THE DIALECTIC OF TRUTH, MEMORY AND RECONCILIATION

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South Africa's attempt to examine her past is an example for countries that need to find a way to deal with a history of human rights abuses. This thesis focuses on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the way in which truth, memory and reconciliation is played out in the truth and reconciliation process.

The central focus is on the dialectic between truth, memory and reconciliation and the implications these concepts have for reparations. The core arguments are that truth does not necessarily lead to reconciliation and reparation is indeed an important part of any reconciliation process.

The findings reveal that while a useful engagement of the past is important the task is a complex and very costly one. Facing the past, learning the truth does not guarantee reconciliation. The results demonstrate that for many individuals, any attempt at reconciliation would be inadequate without reparations. Reparations must have a meaningful and substantial impact on their lives.

Keywords: South Africa; Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC); Truth, Memory, Reconciliation, and Reparation.