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This article provides us with hope that many times the Truth and Reconciliation Commission actually does foster truth and sincere regret from those who committed the heinous crimes against the Black population of South Africa. In June of 2009, Christian Amahoro held a gathering in South Africa. This gathering was to witness Sean Callaghan’s public feet washing. The interesting part about this event is that Sean Callaghan is “a young white South African man who had been conscripted as a medic into former apartheid-era Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok.” Volk was the Minister who washed Sean Callaghan’s feet (he also washed Reverend Frank Chikane’s feet). The most shocking part of this article and the part that caught my interest was when it stated that in 1999, Adrian Vlok was granted amnesty by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Now he is a Minister. This makes me ask such questions as how sincere were the apologies of those seeking amnesty? Many doubt that their apologies were sincere at all but this Adrian Vlok case appears to be different. This is a very important question to consider when analyzing Truth and Reconciliation Commissions.


This article is about how in the past 20 years Canadian natives have rejected their ward status and asserted their sovereignty. In the past, they have been subordinated to the point that their children were removed and placed in boarding schools in order to “remerge as imitation white adults.” Their cultures were purged through the oppression of their religious symbols, names, and language. Evidence is now emerging of thousands of unnecessary deaths that occurred at the boarding schools due to the conditions being “criminally negligent and the teaching was backed up by corporal punishment.” Due to these allegations, the Canadian government was forced to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission which lacks punitive and investigative powers. Because this commission has no rights, the First Nations are now establishing their own commissions since these crime that occurred in Canada can be technically classified as “ethnic cleansing” This article also asks questions such as “Will the redress the IHRTGC is seeking stand the test of evidence that proves beyond reasonable doubt the culpability of the accused? Can the appropriation and abuse of aboriginal children be abated? What kind of compensation will be payable once guilt has been proved?”

Ballard, Richard. "'Slaughter in the suburbs': livestock slaughter and race in post-apartheid
This article helps us to realize some of the continuous issues about discrimination post apartheid, through the important custom of lives and slaughter. During apartheid, raising and slaughtering cattle was a way of life for Black South Africans in both rural and urban townships. This way of life helped the Black South Africans economically, spiritually, and socially. Naturally, it is something that is very close to their hearts and something that they will want to preserve and carry on with. But due to the ever changing government and the growth of the Black middle class in South Africa, new South African residents, usually white residents, are now being exposed to this cattle slaughter. This article speaks on the affects of this activity and how now whites are condemning Blacks on this custom. This article very closely explores the “liberality,” tolerance, rights to space and citizenship and how all these factors affect the residents of South Africa, especially the Black residents, today. White people are now expressing various types of anxiety because they are now being exposed to these traditions and feel extremely uncomfortable. Throughout this article we explore race, difference, space, and identity. This article raises questions such as how much are we willing to sacrifice to make others feel comfortable? Should we compromise customs and traditions that are close to hearts to accommodate to our ever-changing societies?


This book by Stanley Cohen discusses what it means to be in denial before, during, and after an atrocity such as apartheid in South Africa. Stanley Cohen is a South African from Johannesburg who grew up as part of the South African middle class in the mid nineteen fifties and had personally experienced the age of apartheid. As a child, he never understood why he was to be locked up in his home with a guard, a “night watch boy” (Cohen, x) who was a black male adult. He just never understood the dangers of the time. Then, as Cohen grew up, he began to ask himself serious questions about the world and the society in which he lived in. One of these questions was: “Why did others, even those raised in similar families, schools and neighborhoods, who read the same papers, walked the same streets, apparently not ‘see’ what we saw?” (Cohen, x). Cohen came up with two possible answers for this question. One possible answer was that they must have lived in another “perceptual universe” where they were incapable of seeing the terror of apartheid and the existence of Black people all together. The other possible answer that Cohen arrived at was that these people did in fact observe exactly what Cohen and the oppressed observed but they simple just did not care or found nothing wrong with it. Therefore, Cohen wrote this book to research denial in awful situations while questioning why there was not adequate acknowledgement of atrocities. This book will help me to form a good argument in my PSA about why atrocities are not dealt with properly in many cases.

This book gives us a review of past atrocities in places such as Haiti, South Africa, and Guatemala, compares these atrocities from various countries in the 20th century and strives to figure out why they occurred, and how they can be prevented in the future. But the main goal of this book is to examine truth commissions or analogous bodies that took place in various countries in the aftermath of the atrocities. This book describes truth commissions as:

- temporary bodies, usually with an official status, set up to investigate
- a past history of human rights violations that took place within a
- country during a specified period of time. In contrast with tribunals or courts, truth commissions do not have prosecutorial powers to bring cases to trial. Nor do they act as judicial bodies to investigate individuals accused of crimes. Their role is truth finding, or more precisely, documenting and acknowledging a legacy of conflict and human rights violations as a step toward healing wounds. (Chapman, 2)

After all of my research I would like to question, agree with, disagree with or add to this statement by Chapman and what truth commissions actually are, should not be, and/or should be. How effective are truth commissions? Which have been the most effective? Why or why not?


In this essay William Danaher Jr. explores “how the doctrine of the Resurrection informs theological reflection on reconciliation in post-Apartheid South Africa.” This article begins by explaining to us how difficult and fragile the reconciliation process actually is, despite the process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. An interesting point that this article argues is that “the Resurrection offers an ecstatic and relational understanding of the human, which in turn provides a basis for advancing claims regarding human dignity and well-being.” Through examinations and conversations regarding the work of Oliver O'Donovan and James Alison on the Resurrection, this view is further examined by involving insights from ubuntu and from the work of Judith Butler regarding grieving. The essay commences with various proposals on how the church after Apartheid in South Africa, can be used as evidence and witness “to the Resurrection in its immediate life and work through advocacy and carrying on the politics of grieving.” This article interests me because it is completely different from all the other articles that I have found. It involves the church and how it can help facilitate reconciliation which none of the other articles that I have read do. I honestly do not know to what degree I concur with this argument, but I enjoy learning about it because of how skeptical I am with the church being associated with state/ governmental factors. In the United States, we claim a separation of church
and state but do not always follow through on this. I would like to see what the relationship between church and state is like in South Africa.


This book, written by John Dugard, a renowned South African jurist who was part of the main body of the judicial system and apartheid legislation, examines human rights through jurisprudence. Jurisprudence can be defined as the science or philosophy of law that leads to and allows courts and/or those in power to make the decisions that they make. This book discusses and breaks down the system of law in South Africa and examines why and how many laws can and have been interpreted to help those in power arrive at the decisions they make. Dugard tries to focus on how human rights decisions are settle on in South Africa and whether these decisions are morally or immorally determined. Throughout his research, Dugard compares and contrasts the South African government to those governments of the United States and Britain. I chose to utilize this book for my PSA because this book will help me to delve into the deeper issues of who makes the decisions for an entire country or a region of that country. Why do they make the decisions that the make? What do they take into account when pondering over whether to instate a law and/or fix issues that include injustices? Do they even care about the decisions that they make and how these decisions affect many communities and, more specifically, the people in those communities? Hopefully, this book will help me form ideas about how to restructure governments to fight for those who require the most help.


This book asks many key questions about those marginalized and traumatized even before the actual trauma takes place. I would like to pose and possibly use this book to help me answer/research some of these questions regarding specific genocides. I cannot ask these questions any better myself; therefore, these are just some of the questions that Michael Dyson poses to us:

- Why did the black and poor people get left behind? What took the government so long to get to the Gulf Coast, especially New Orleans?
- What do politicians sold on the idea of limited governance offer to folk who need, and deserve, the government to come to their aid? Why is it that the poor of New Orleans, and, really, the poor of the nation, are hidden from us, made invisible by our disinterest in their lives? Why was it a surprise that they are in as bad shape as the storm revealed? Do well off black people care about poor black people? (Dyson, xiii)

Michael Dyson poses many more questions in this book. What I really enjoy about this book and the reason that I would like to use it in my public service announcement is because Dyson’s book
is radical. He is not afraid to be over the top and/or hurt/offend certain people. He finds his truth from his critical analysis of history and I find this to be a great skill in a writer. He is able to support his opinions and I would love to use his book to support mine.


The first thing and also the most important thing that I noticed about this article Gibson’s opinion on what the objective of a truth commission actually is. In his abstract Gibson states that “Throughout the world, truth commissions have been (and are being) constructed under the hope that discovering the truth about a country’s past conflicts will somehow contribute to ‘reconciliation’” (Gibson, abstract). Gibson obviously states South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission as being one of the most memorable and influential because of its findings. But then Gibson also poses are very important question for the goal/ objective and final results of the truth commission which is: “But has truth actually contributed to reconciliation in South Africa” (Gibson, abstract). This question can be broadened to be asked about all truth commissions not just the one that took place in South Africa. Gibson gives support the he personally feels that the question that he posed can not yet be answered because “no rigorous and systematic assessment of the success of the truth and reconciliation process has ever been conducted” (Gibson, abstract). Therefore, the actual significant question for the effectiveness of truth and reconciliation commissions should be “Does truth lead to reconciliation?” This paper by Gibson analyzes and researches this hypothesis based on the 2001 surveys of 3,700 South Africans. Based on all the survey results, Gibson’s final analysis begins with a clear and concise definition of both truth and commission and the moves on to claim that in memory alone, the South African TRC was successful because it help people remember instead of block all past memories. This process will help them one day forgive and maybe even heal. The final question is if South Africa’s TRC was unique or can it be applied to other places for similar results? This article was actually one of my favorite articles and I plan to use it to further explore and support my opinions on truth and reconciliation commissions.


This article by John Inazu is one that I found most interesting because of its concept of personal forgiveness being “extended by a single human victim who has been harmed by a wrongdoer. The victim forgives only that harm which has been done to him or to her.” The article also differentiates between personal forgiveness, group forgiveness, legal forgiveness, and political forgiveness. In this article, Inazu argues three main points:
(1) personal forgiveness is a necessary condition for political forgiveness;
(2) group forgiveness (including legal forgiveness), while not without a normative function, cannot effectuate either personal or political forgiveness
(3) personal forgiveness requires a shared narrative framework to lead to political forgiveness.

I chose to delve further into this article because of how linear it is. Inazu writes in a step by step method which is easy to understand and analyze. This concept of forgiveness can truly help me further understand the TRC.


Rina Kasyap begins this article by stating that “Prior to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), gender was seldom explicitly invoked as a lens into human rights abuse or an organizing principle for the commission’s work.” This article interests me because it leads me to believe and helps support my idea that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a starting point for many new ideas and in this way was extremely successful. The TRC was a trailblazer in that it helped truth commissions in other countries which also included the gender component. In this article, Rina Kasyap argues that “the feminist perspective offers a nuanced scrutiny of narrative and truth, two major themes of the TRC.” The feminist perspective fosters listening during the TRC which is a crucial component in obtaining truth. The feminist perspective also allows for the TRC to be all inclusive (i.e. including both the experiences of men and women). The feminist perspective helps “create an argument and language for the articulation of the needs of the powerless and dispossessed in society.” This article interests me because of how the feminist perspective has helped make the TRC more democratic and fair. Being a communication major, I feel that theory is a very important component to arriving at success and this is why this article has caught my attention.


This book written by Ben Kiernan runs through many genocides that have occurred since the beginning of time and gives us a brief but very concise history of each one. The book starts by describing the Spanish conquest of the New World and then continues to examine genocides in East and Southeast Asia. Afterwards, it moves on to discuss the English conquest of Ireland, the colonization of North America, and genocide and violence in Australia during the nineteenth century. Subsequently, Kiernan writes about what I truly want to further delve into with my PSA, genocide in the United States of America and in the continent of Africa. Throughout the rest of the book, Kiernan examines the genocides that occurred in Germany, Japan, Russia, China,
Cambodia, and Rwanda. He also includes maps of where all of these countries are located for those of us who lack a great deal of knowledge about geography. This book will be very helpful for my PSA because of all the quick knowledge and history about certain genocides that it provides. From skimming this book, I can narrow down my research to the exact genocides and atrocities that I would like to discuss and provide a brief history about each one of them during my public service announcement. I feel that it helps to know background information on genocides in order to know what steps I should take next. In other words, what will I need to research next?


I have never been to New Orleans but I am dying to visit. Why? Because I have heard great things about the city both pre and post Hurricane Katrina. I have heard that the music scene in New Orleans is the most amazing music scene in all of the United States. This paper goes in to depth about place and how it helps determine and create music. “New Orleans musical practices are shaped by the combination of three pivotal factors: economic contingencies, a rich interactive network, and a deep-seated attachment to New Orleans” (Le Menestrel & Henry, abstract). This article may seem insignificant and very detached from the topic to my public service announcement. But the reason why I find this article to be interesting, important and necessary to my public service announcement is because of how after atrocities people need and find ways to cope with what they have just been through and many times their stress outlet is music. Music was such an important part of New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina and has/ will continue to be a huge part/ attraction of the city after it. I feel some of these coping methods, not just truth and reconciliation committees, must be mentioned and recognized because they may be crucial to restructuring certain places like a New Orleans.


This book explains the South African Truth and Reconciliation commissions in a very logical manner. It starts off with how the TRC was set up and the role that Nelson Mandela played in this commission. It then explains different theories of reconciliation such as Tutu’s and then attempts to explain what “forgiving the unforgivable” really means. It then describes amnesty as a “controversial compromise” and gets into personal accounts of those who went through the process or attempted to forgive those who help to kill their loved ones. There are testimonies before the TRC. There are also media hearings and an explanation of the church’s respond. In various chapter the book also examines “innocent bystanders” and what this means. Is there such a thing as an innocent bystander or should all of those who watched and chose to do nothing be at fault s well? The book the goes on to evaluate the South African Truth and Reconciliation
Commission overall and poses the question “Is it a workable model?” In other words “should other commissions follow in the TRC’s footsteps? What can be bettered? Are TRC’s miracles or evil compromises? Why or why not? How can those oppressed work with the oppressors for a common good for all?


This book will be helpful in my public service announcement simply because of all the graphic imagery that should get to people and make them think; “Damn, did this really happen?” One of the beginning passages in this book is “There was a girl, aged about six, with a machete wound in her head and a boy with a gaping hole in his shoulder from a bullet. He did not cry. One man had a hand almost severed from a machete blow” (Melvern, 1). The first thing that I thought about when I read this passage was “Wow, really? There is nothing in the world that could make someone, anyone, want to hurt children besides pure evil. No matter the situation anywhere, there should never be this amount of violence, hate and disorder. Where do they go from here? How do we insure that this does not happen in the future?” This book describes in detail the lives of many in Rwanda during the genocide and their attempts to flee to places such as schools, churches, hospitals, and any other place that they noticed a United Nations sign or flag hanging up. The incredible thing was that even in those places which were meant to be sacred and safe, died bodies were found by the hundreds. How can a killer repent for all the harm and damage that they caused? Do they even want to? This book will help me to shed some light on matters such as these.


How valuable is educating for peace? Tim Murithi examines this very question in this article. Murithi does this through “a consideration of the African cultural world-view known as ubuntu, which highlights the essential unity of humanity and emphasizes the importance of constantly referring to the principles of empathy, sharing and cooperation in efforts to resolve our common problems.” The essay does not concern itself with field research, but instead focuses on a discussion of the issues that pertain to peace education and ubuntu. The main focus of the discussion is on how, during his leadership of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Desmond Tutu used the principles of ubuntu. This article also outlines the ubuntu societies’ five stages of the peacemaking process: “acknowledging guilt; showing remorse and repenting; asking for and giving forgiveness; and paying compensation or reparations as a prelude to reconciliation.” Potential lessons for reconciliation and educating for peace are emphasized based on the basis that “the ubuntu approach to human relationship-building can offer an example to the world.”

How many times in class how we discussed the politics regarding access to public space, place, and ownership during our class? This article discusses all of these issues in the New South Africa, post apartheid South Africa. The articles brings up the Rainbow Nation ideology, which is a theory of multiculturalism in South Africa. So how does multiculturalism work? What does it mean? How can we discuss issues of multiculturalism in a country that is still extremely divided? Can multiculturalism lead to color blindness? Do we even want to bring ourselves to color blindness? Or, will color blindness not allow us to see and celebrate the various differences in people through their culture, religions, beliefs, etc.? This article interests me because of how realistic it is. It does not surgar coat anything and does not claim the Truth and Reconciliation Commission solved all of the issues that South Africa was facing because there are still a million more issues to deal with. South Africa must force the government to deal with these issues and not fall to complacency now that the laws of their nation are no longer “racist”. I strongly recommend this article to those struggling with the idea of multiculturalism and color blindness.


This article states that “community-based restorative transitional justice is an important feature of peace consolidation, maximizing access to justice and facilitating reconciliation.” This article is a case study that examines how Sierra Leone dealt with issues post all the conflict and genocide that the country underwent. Throughout the article, Augustine Park draws on the justice practices that existed in Sierra Leone as valid examples for restorative responses to war criminality and focuses more specifically on the “traditional reintegration of former male and female combatants and the emergence of a new project, Fambul Tok, are detailed.” The interesting aspect about this article is that Park not only discusses but also compares the Special Court for Sierra Leone with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa in order to “point to gaps in transitional justice that call for community-based restorative strategies” and question how affective these processes may or may not be. This article interests me because in order to find out if something is effective, it must be compared to something else that is similar to it or is trying to accomplish a comparable goal. This paper will help me to better evaluate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

This book details the experience of Scott Peterson, a journalist who had to report from the battlefields in Africa. His experience began in Eritrea, Africa where there had been guerrilla warfare for generations because Eritrea was fighting for its independence from Ethiopia. In this book, Peterson provides us with his most personal information and feelings of his experiences in Africa during war times. In Eritrea, one night he had written that he “grew more and more apprehensive as we neared the front” (Peterson, xi). Peterson was obviously afraid for his life through his entire experience there. His days would commence at 4:30 am every day, when he and those with him would march to the front lines of the battlefield to look for trenches to capture footage in. They would march right by died bodies and those still alive who were fighting for their country and attempting to stay alive. Every once in a while, Peterson would write letters home to his mother to inform her that he was still alive. In his book, Peterson begins by providing us with a brief history about the ways in which many African countries had entered into these horrendous wars. He presents us with this very significant quote: “Africa has always known violence and war, its soil regularly stained with the blood of its people” (Peterson, xii) in order to capture our attention. When he finally does, he proceeds to describe his experiences in Africa. This book will be very important for my PSA because of how personal and emotional it is. This book can help me capture my audience by speaking about Peterson’s experience and how nobody should ever have to endure what he went through but yet millions have and still do.


This book details such genocides that were occurring all over the world, specifically in Bosnia, where many were being killed on a daily basis by Serbs because of utter hate. Young children playing in their school yards where being bombed to death as were those leisurely shopping at local malls. The problem facing the Balkans became terrifying. Yet, neither NATO nor the United States during the Bill Clinton administration would get their hands dirty to help the crisis in the Balkans. In this book, Samantha Power describes Bill Clinton’s mindset as such: “treating Bosnia as a problem from hell---a problem he hoped would burn itself out, disappear from the front pages, and leave his presidency alone” (Power, xii). This statement hints at Power’s belief that the United States did not do enough to prevent innocent lives from being taken and questions the loyalty and intentions of the United States in such horrific matters. How can the most powerful country in the world sit back and witness the death of thousands of innocent people without a fight or a care in the world? This book will help me to tackle this question in my public service announcement. It will also help me to compare the United States government’s actions then to their actions most recently before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina hit. What were the
United State’s true intentions? What could they have done to prevent this or lighten the blow? Did they do enough during the aftermath? Did the U.S. government even care?


This article touches up on something that I feel has not been touched up on too much and should be mentioned at least briefly in my public service announcement because of how important technology is in located lost family members during atrocities. Shklovski says it best when she says:

> Advances in communication technologies have given people more ways to seek information and communicate—a redundancy that can help people cope with disaster situations and support subsequent recovery. This article presents results from a longitudinal study of New Orleans musicians in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The authors found that in the immediate aftermath, musicians used cell phones and the Internet to locate family and friends and obtain information unavailable in broadcast news reports. Seeking and redistributing information resulted in the creation or discovery of online spaces that became virtual instantiations of the physical environments from which the musicians were barred. For those who had to leave New Orleans, these online spaces helped them maintain connection with their local communities. As recovery continued, many musicians discontinued or adjusted their use of technologies that did not fit the cultural and social context of their everyday lives. (Shklovski, abstract)

This aspect of technology must be mentioned in order to capture the ways in which families where reunited or found out about their deceased friends and family members.


The article’s focus is on the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and it’s comparisons with other global justice movements. This article focuses on public communication and how “alternate media” was formed. This article poses and addresses a bunch of major questions such as:

> What were the main strategies of public communication of the anti-apartheid movement — and what was their impact? How did the counter-public(s) of anti-apartheid relate to the established media dominating the global public sphere?
What are the implications of the case of anti-apartheid for contemporary research? and theorizing on transnational/global public spheres and counter publics? What are the similarities and differences between the anti-apartheid movement and the global justice movement regarding strategies of public communication? Theoretically, it raises the question about the concept of ‘society’ and its empirical referent in the context of increasing globalization. (Thärn, abstract)

This article is also important to me because of my interest in media and how the media frames and portrays history such as apartheid in South Africa. This article describes the media during the time that apartheid was actually taking place during apartheid and can be analyzed for its strengths and weaknesses. It can also be compared to how the media frames and deals with atrocities today.


This book would have been great for me to find when I wanted to research more about atrocities and the media’s role and effects on them. But unfortunately I was unable to find sufficient information on this topic; therefore, I will use this book as a snippet for how the media has dealt with atrocities in the past and how they should deal with them in the future/how can they improve. I know this book only speaks about the media in Rwanda during the genocide there, but I feel that the genocide in Rwanda was one of the hugest, worst genocides ever and what the role that the media played there can be examined to figure out what role the media should be during atrocities. I feel that Allan Thompson does a great job of analyzing the different types of mediums in this book. How does the radios role differ from the televisions, and newspapers, etc. role? Should it differ? How can these different mediums work together to capture the most truth for the actual residents of these places and the rest of the world to know and see? These are some of the questions that I would like to further research through this book for my public service announcement.


Did South Africa have an actual notion of truth and justice before the Truth and Reconciliation process was initiated? How did this contribute to the success or lack of success with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? The goal of this article is to “trace the intellectual and political antecedents of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in the longer perspective of South African history” (Toit, abstract). Therefore, I must research what other previous truth and justice projects were both pre and post the apartheid and compare and contrast their actually structure and there results. One of these other truth and justice initiatives took place in the 1830’s when Stockenstrom stood for justice and truth on the frontier. Other initiatives included is the
Gandhi’s mobilization of the truth-forces in the beginning of the 20th century. Even though this initiative occurred outside of South Africa, it still had a huge affect on how the world viewed justice simply because of how mainstream and documented it was. This article also states that the truth commission’s objectives have also shifted from obtaining truth to providing amnesty and forgiveness for certain individuals. I would like to further explore this statement. I would also like to explore whether or not the TRC is related to other truth commissions. Why or why not?


In this article, Annelies Verdoolaege uses theories on change in footing and participation framework by Goffman and applies them to analyze the discourse from South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Through her research, Verdoolaege discovered that:

- A discursive setting such as the public hearings of a truth and reconciliation commission can be highly intricate and layered when considering the role of the various discourse participants. The testifying victims, the TRC commissioners and the audience engaged in various forms of subordinate communication – byplay, crossplay and sideplay -- in addition to the standardized and expected interaction between victims and commissioners.

This is important because we always discuss in class how detrimental the audience is in any situation. The TRC would have probably had completely different results if the audience that was allowed to participate were banned from the premises. In my opinion, this action would have decreased the success of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by a great amount. The experience for the individual testifying would have not been as touching or honest/sincere if the families and friends of the victims were not allowed to be present in person to hear the “offender” reveal the truth. We must always keep this idea in mind when evaluating the TRC.