

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis, *Ethical Dilemmas of Cultural Repatriation*, is to present and subsequently examine the acquisition claims made for the repatriation of cultural objects from an ethical perspective.

The process of cultural repatriation involves the return of cultural property, usually acquired illegally, to its country of origin or to its original owner. The owner may be an individual, heritage organisations, ethnic groups or the state.

However, the fairness of repatriation claims may prove questionable. Claims for acquisition are based on different arguments and may follow different values. Therefore, several ethical pitfalls arise in dealing with such claims. In this thesis I will therefore aim to present some of the ethical dilemmas associated with acquisition claims. Subsequently, I will examine, present and compare the arguments underlying the different perspectives. The thesis will focus exclusively on repatriations involving tangible cultural artefacts and will deal primarily with arguments based on the value that the object represents to a cultural group. In the conclusion of the thesis, I will attempt to summarize the issue of repatriation and present one perspective on the resolution of repatriation disputes.

## **Key words**

cultural group continuity, cultural identity, cultural heritage, cultural property, repatriation.