

CHAPTER FIVE

PSYCHOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Wertz (1983) describes life before being victimized as the existence that proceeds in the manner of the usual. He postulates sequential themes about victimization which are described as living routinely, being disrupted, being violated and reintegration. In the present study, description of the victimization which these families were subjected to, though similar to Fischer & Wertz's (1979), will follow the structure below:

- 1 The 'before' of the struggle
- 2 The struggle years or victimization
- 3 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- 4 The 'after' of the TRC and the new world.

5.1 THE 'BEFORE' OF THE STRUGGLE

My discovery about the experience of victimization by the families in the present study is that they reflect it as disruption and radical re-organisation of the routine living that they enjoyed before. This 'before' is remembered as a very long time. The family structure during this time was characterized by an extended system. In describing their living arrangements at his home, Jeff in Protocol 4 (Appendix) says the following:

"For the first nine years I never knew my father, I never questioned his whereabouts or why I did not have one. This is because I lived with a big family in the same house, for example, five uncles, two grandparents and my mother".

For most families the social life was regarded as open and free as they were able to choose their own activities. This means that for these families life proceeded as usual. Some family members were unaware of the possibility of victimization as they were not potential victims due to their non-affiliative status to political organizations. Although they were not living-in-expectation of what might happen to them, there was a moderate awareness of vulnerability to their indirect involvement with potential victims who played the activists' role. For instance both Lorna and Zelda in Protocols

6 and 10 (Appendix) talked about their lack of awareness of their family members' involvement in political activities.

The alertness of those who were directly involved as activists, living-in-expectation of what might happen to disrupt their routine living was due to their perception of unbridgeable gaps which existed between people of different races and cultures. Dick in Protocol 1 (ideographic example) confirms this experience when he says:

“This was like war because, one day the police caught me while I was about to distribute pamphlets to inform people in our community not to buy from the white-owned businesses in town”.

This statement by Dick reflects the views also posited by Africanists such as Davidson (1992) and Mamdani (1996). Though it is a long time ago, they state that the political, ideological and local cultural forces, operating before and during the colonial period, have played a major role in the production of structural and direct violence in modern Africa. Dawes (1998) also mentions that the South African apartheid system is an exemplary case of structural violence as both its political design and its economic order were centered on ethnic power. The architects of the system both constructed and drew on existing ethnicities, employing them for purposes of white political and economic domination. Race classification underpinned all practices as impoverishment of those that were not classified as white was achieved by reserving a large percentage of the land for whites and by limiting educational and job opportunities for blacks. Systematic efforts were made to construct and entrench ethnic histories and practices so as to justify racial separation. These were sometimes taken up and used for personal power and ethnic chiefs appointed to oversee the black population. These ideas are also supportive of Gurr's (1970) notion of relative deprivation which increases discontent, referred to in Chapter Three. For instance the apartheid regime characterized abnormal conditions of open resistance and reactions to this resistance culminated in clashes between black and white which are referred to by Dick (Protocol 1).

Although it can be said that victims in the present study are those who suffered at the hands of the apartheid security forces due to their resistance of oppression, Hayes (1998) argues that we are all victims in having allowed apartheid to form and deform us. Thus, we awaken some conscience in us all to act in the interest of the future so as to bridge those unbridgeable gaps.

5.2 THE STRUGGLE YEARS OR VICTIMIZATION

A radical re-organization of the daily living of the families in the present study occurred during the struggle years. During this political upheaval, some family members were either abducted, detained and tortured in prison or killed. The life world of those who were not detained became limited although they were not restricted to their homes. They sought shelter elsewhere to hide for fear of being detained. Emma in Protocol 5 (Appendix) confirms this observation from her own experience as she says:

“I became scared for my other kids, as I would not sleep at home during the night”.

The struggle is perceived as the cause of more chaos amongst the family members. The parents whose children were directly involved in political activities during the Soweto uprisings became concerned about their involvement. Instead of supporting the struggle Alex and his family in Protocol 2 (Ideographic example) discouraged their son and even made attempts to remove him from schools which they thought were more active politically than they anticipated. Other parents became directly involved to support their children's activity as Pandora in Protocol 7 (Appendix) relates:

“I became involved because of the children. I joined the political group of women which supported me to press the police to look for my sons who were missing”.

Those who were detained became uncertain about what would happen to them. In prison they had to tell the truth about their political activities or withstand torture. While in detention Dick in Protocol 1 (Ideographic example) lost hope of being released alive, for the security forces threatened him with elimination if he did not co-operate with them. Dolly, in Protocol 3 (Ideographic example) on the other hand, revealed her experiences of being frightened, helpless and demoralized as inhumane strategies were used to break her down. While others were detained or missing, those remaining at home were also turned into victims as they were subjected to police harassment, made worse if the alleged victims were not found. They lived in fear and anguish of what would happen every time the police raided their homes. Macy in Protocol 2 (Ideographic example) reported her experiences this way:

“What became funny was that police now searched for my brother in my house. They would come during the night, kicking the doors while hurling stones through our windows. This was confusing”.

This kind of police behaviour created more distrust of the security system, as a result families in the present study were reluctant to report the disappearance of their relatives who were political activists. This reaction concurs with what Ndabandaba (1987) refers to, when he states that the victims may not believe that the police will do anything to solve the crime.

The damaged trust relationship between the community, the families and the police, provided in some way a bond between some family members. A sense of cohesiveness which prevailed might be attributed to the experiences of despondency and despair in their seeking help from the police. For instance, Betty in Protocol 4 (Appendix), reports her ex-husband's tireless search for their missing son which consoled her. Other family members whose relatives had disappeared were treated for psychiatric disorders as they could not cope with the thoughts that their siblings or husbands and wives might have died. Other families were pulled involuntarily into the dynamics of the circumstances of the struggle. Despite the fact that Sally and Alex in Protocol 2 (Ideographic example) initially discouraged their son from participating in political activities at his school, when he disappeared they looked for him countrywide. This reflects the deep feelings and relationship of the children and their parents during this time.

Most family members that were interviewed recount the experiences of strangeness, confusion and helplessness as their relatives disappeared or were detained. The search for missing victims was experienced as frustrating, and levels of frustrations were increased when the police could not solve the mystery of those who had disappeared. Dolly in Protocol 3 (Ideographic example) talked about how she filed a report of her missing husband with the court which yielded no satisfactory results as nobody could be blamed for his disappearance. The actions of the judiciary were experienced as an absence of a potentially helpful community by the families in the present study. This perception was also extended to the communities they belonged to. Many family members expressed how alienated and detached they felt from the very political organizations their husbands, wives and children belonged to as Sally in Protocol 2 (Ideographic example) reports:

“There was no direction from the political organizations about what to do. I felt alone and detached from the organizations my child belonged to until the TRC emerged”.

The findings point to the families in the present study discovering after many years (ranging from nine to twelve years) what became of their relatives who had disappeared. According to the information shed by the security police some died in detention while others were killed and their bodies burnt and disposed of. This news brought devastation, grief, emptiness and a sense of confusion among the families in the present study. More heartache was caused by the manner in which the relatives were killed as described by the police agents. Zelda in Protocol 10 (Appendix) explains:

“Mr Skeels from the police described to journalists how they killed my husband together with his compatriots. This was published in all the newspapers. It was shocking, devastating to read this news. I cried bitterly. The grief was too much to bear. I was not even impressed by the Amnesty applicants' testimony, as I thought they are lying about the manner in which they disposed my husband's ashes after killing him”.

Those who were detained in prison were released after experiencing both physical and psychological trauma. Some returned to disintegrated families, as parents had died while they were in prison and other family members died through senseless killings which occurred during the unrest situation in the townships. For instance Ricky in Protocol 9 (Appendix) revealed how the effects of torture in detention resulted in his psychiatric problems while experiencing loss of his younger brother who died by being necklaced during the community clashes. The actions by the police agents that are described by these family members confirm the views postulated by the theory of political violence (Chapter Three) as the individuals employed by the State exercised the exclusive of the right to use violence.

What reverberates across this analysis is the hardship experienced by the families as husbands or wives who were breadwinners had disappeared or detained. The power and the autonomy of the family was removed as roles shifted. Pete in Protocol 7 (Appendix) related his difficulties in coping with his children who did not have the guidance and discipline from their mother because she was detained. This resulted in the children being involved in unruly behaviours. All the families expressed feelings of humiliation and loss of the sense of pride when they depended on the handouts from charity organizations and neighbours.

The families also spoke about the relationship of distrust which existed between themselves and their communities while coping with their relatives who were detained or missing. This manifested itself in rumours that those who had disappeared or were detained were working for the State as *impimpi*⁷ (informers). This resulted in the families being shunned by the community, living in fear for their homes and their lives, as people who were suspected to be police informers were either killed or their homes burnt. Marlana in Protocol 4 (Appendix) related how she feared for herself and her parents' home as Jeff's father, who was missing, was rumoured to be an informer.

The worthiness of healing rituals that befit each family are reported to have played an important role in the healing and maintenance of families. The family members in the present study spoke about how they participated in cleansing rituals and memorials on behalf of their dead relatives. According to them, these were held symbolically 'to let go', even if the remains of those who were reported dead were not brought home. Although this is so, families still wish that these remains are brought to them for burial.

For these families, involvement in the struggle which began as early as 1912 (Tutu, 1999) is a reflection of Frantz Fanon's (1967a, 1967b, 1968) psychology of liberation which not only informed revolutionary action against the structural violence of the French colonists but also informed other struggles such as the Black Consciousness Movements in the United States and South Africa (Biko, 1978). In his argument Fanon (1967b) firstly sees individual psychological health as inseparable from political liberty. He further states that under conditions of structural violence, a situation of national psychological distress is present. Dawes (1988) asserts that for Fanon, the structural violence of colonization and apartheid produces a Manichean psychological state which is characterized by the defense mechanism of splitting. Internal psychological constructions of people and social groups are separated by distinct categories of good and bad. Thus, splitting ensures that the worldview and cultural goals of the colonizer are viewed as positive, while those of the colonized or the oppressed are considered to be negative and to be denied. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to detail how apartheid in South Africa succeeded in dehumanising those deemed to be inferior as the emphasis in differences between the rulers and indigenous groups were prominent. What can be argued though, is that the theme of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) which was taken up within the liberation strategy, starting amongst African

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Means whistle-blowing or informer

Americans (Burlaw, et al, 1992) and spreading to South African blacks (Biko, 1978) was the reversal of the internalized negative view of the self and culture. It is within the parameters of these liberation movements that most families referred to in the present study experienced victimization as per the findings discussed above. Their engagement in revolutionary actions of protest against the dominant apartheid structures can be seen as the beginning of the struggle years. These actions reveal Gurr's (1970) reflections in Chapter Three of this study which point to widespread discontent among the deprived as conditions such as systematic discrimination against ethnic, linguistic or religious communities existed. Discrepancies between the norms of distributive justice and the actual distribution patterns and events such as restrictions on political participation aroused protest actions which resulted in violence.

In the literature surveyed in Chapter Two of this study, congruencies about another argument posed by Fanon (1967b) seem to exist. It was his belief that the oppressed would be psychologically freed by confronting the colonizer with violence. He argued that this was because the latter relied on violence to rule and did not understand reasoned arguments for liberation. Although this call was rejected by many, such as Arendt (1970) and Bulhan (1985), there seems to be an acknowledgement that Fanon in his time, like Nelson Mandela, had tried to reason with the authorities without success (Bulhan, 1985). As this minority rule and domination was resisted by the majority of blacks through organized liberation movements in South Africa, it was met with further political and economic oppression, hence the State violence and revolutionary resistance co-existed.

5.3 THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

The turning point in South Africa, according to Tutu (1999) happened in 1990. This change paved the way for the families in the present study to tell their stories of victimization before the TRC. The families participated in the TRC process with greater expectations that they would receive more information about the detention and abductions of their relatives. The TRC was founded under the auspices of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act (Asmal, 1995). Although its inception was met with controversy, de la Rey and Owens (1998) mention that the key words that were often repeated in the motivations for a TRC, were truth, healing and reconciliation.

The families in the present study acknowledged the salutary effect of the TRC process on their well-being. Participating in the TRC hearings alleviated their suppressed emotions, made them feel relieved, and lightened the burden they seemed to carry within them. However, they re-experienced their pain of loss when they re-lived their stories during the TRC hearings. As a counsellor during the group therapy sessions after their testimonies I observed that they demonstrated some vulnerabilities as they would cry a lot, were irritable and reported lack of sleep when they thought about the stories they had told. Even during the interviews of the present study I noticed that they were still grieving. To me these observations and reports suggested that the individuals would each have built their own unique and elaborate defense mechanisms against the negative feelings associated with the original trauma. However, the act of telling their stories tended to weaken their defenses, thereby precipitating a crisis for some individuals. This suggests that violence has long-lasting effects on the people who suffer it, as victims carry the effect in their bodies, in their hearts and subconscious minds for years or even the rest of their lives.

There are also mixed reactions about the TRC process amongst the families. Some saw it as a platform to voice their experiences of torture while others relied on it to investigate further circumstances surrounding their relatives' abductions and killings. Some families saw it as a process that brought divisions rather than unity among the family members. For instance, Emma in Protocol 5 (Appendix) related how the TRC official taking her statement asked for her submission of a statement but allowed her daughter-in-law to testify in her place. This caused a rift in the family which the TRC cannot heal.

Some families were threatened by the whole process of testifying before an audience. Linksy in Protocol 6 (Appendix) explained her rationale for submitting a written statement to the TRC rather than testifying personally. According to her, the effects of torture in detention were still haunting her. Whenever she had to tell her story, she experienced the onset of new symptoms that might be related to an actual traumatisation episode. As a counsellor during the TRC hearings, I counselled many families and individuals who were experiencing anxieties and symptoms of panic as the days of telling their stories came closer. Sally in Protocol 2 (Ideographic example) experienced a setback during the TRC hearings because, although she was ready to testify, she was prevented by the judicial process. She reported this as an experience of re-victimization. However, she was humbled by the overwhelming support of those present in the hearings as they called for her testimony. All the families interviewed in the present research expressed a need to

the TRC to ask the government to help them. They stated that they were experiencing hardship with medical costs for those who returned sick from prison, education of the children who were fatherless and rebuilding of their homes which were burnt during the struggle years.

An important finding which emerged during the interviews was that the families were sceptical of the truthfulness of the disclosures made by the Amnesty applicants with regard to the disposal of the remains of their relatives who were killed. This remains a difficult issue for these families. For them the stories told by the alleged perpetrators are unconvincing. What is at stake here is whether the TRC has helped these families to find the truth or not, as their experiences of the truth as expressed by certain perpetrators does not bring relief or satisfaction. These unconvincing stories, referred to as lies by some families in the present study, have resulted in forgiveness and reconciliation being a difficult task for them. Both Alex and Sally in Protocol 2 (Ideographic example) attested that they will forgive the Amnesty applicants only if they disclose the whole truth about their son's remains. However, other families seem to have understood the issue of forgiveness as a motivation for reconciliation founded by the ex-president Nelson Mandela. The responses from Rietta (Protocol 8, Appendix), "it is said one must forgive, so that there is reconciliation in this country", and Betty (Protocol 4, Appendix), "I've forgiven them, the President of this country preaches the reconciliation daily", indicate this motivation.

Some families were open and willing to forgive the alleged perpetrators. This occurred in private, emotionally-charged face to face contacts with the Amnesty applicants where they cried, prayed and embraced each other. Jeff, in Protocol 4 (Appendix), was encouraged by his mother to speak to his father's abductors during the TRC hearings. Dolly in Protocol 3 (Ideographic example) confirms this contact, which involved trying to understand the perpetrators, to stand in their shoes and to appreciate the sort of pressures and influences that might have brought them to commit these deeds. She says:

"We prayed together and ended up embracing each other. I think he was a lost sheep when he tortured people of his own kind but I have forgiven him".

These findings from this analysis are affirmed in various ways by literature or arguments that are put forward by other scholars. Hayes (1998) states that the TRC offers an extraordinary opportunity to engage in the beginnings of a democratic conversation about the politics of change

in this country. Tutu (1999) also shares these views when he observes that the TRC was expected to promote national unity and reconciliation rather than achieving these worthwhile objectives. However, he admits to the controversial issue of the perpetrators being granted amnesty as soon as their applications were successful. However, in the case of the victims the TRC could only make recommendations of reparation to the President, some years into the process. He further comments about the criticisms levelled at the TRC as a flawed method. The arguments against the TRC, he says, were that it was packed with those who were described as struggle types and so biased in favour of the ANC. Tutu (1999), further states that the supporters of the old apartheid dispensation declared, without the benefit of any evidence, that this Commission was intended to be a witch-hunt against the old order, specifically, against the Afrikaners. Others spoke passionately about the moral requirements of justice which the TRC process seemed to undermine.

One of the pertinent points of debate surrounding the TRC (de la Rey & Owens, 1998; Hayes, 1998; Swartz, 1999) has revolved around whether storytelling in a public audience constitutes healing for the individuals who shared their stories. A further question, is whether the healing focuses on these storytellers or on the whole nation. Hayes (1999), like Swartz (1999) speaks of the TRC banner, 'Truth: the road to reconciliation, revealing is healing', as capturing the release of the emotions and accounts of apartheid atrocities. However, there are concerns and questions around these processes of revealing the truth, of telling the stories, and of how this will translate into a social process of healing, reconciliation and forgiveness. These authors see the TRC as a social process which unfortunately confirms its focus on a minority of the subjects of apartheid, that is, the victims and the perpetrators (those agents of apartheid who actively victimized people). While this involves a large number of people, it is still only a small minority of apartheid's casualties, as millions of black people who suffered under apartheid and fewer millions of those whites who benefited seem not to have been accommodated in the process of healing and reconciliation.

While acknowledging his lesser credentials as a trained psychologist, Tutu (1999) agrees that the TRC offered the kind of safe and welcoming environment that enabled catharsis to take place. This statement is congruent with de la Rey and Owens' (1998) arguments that, when used as a therapeutic technique aimed at the individual, testimony is often effective within a psycho-dynamic framework. Swartz (1998) explains how psycho-analysts and psychotherapists who attended an international psycho-analytic conference in Cape Town in April 1998, declared in various ways that

the TRC was good for the country and the peoples' mental health. These declarations were based on the TRC language which is inherently psycho-analytic. In fact Hayes (1998) attests to the fact that in psycho-analytic terms, the profoundly social and historical necessity of reconciliation is being displaced onto the TRC, as it has been given the responsibility of healing the past, healing the nation and putting us onto the road to reconciliation. The findings already discussed above have referred to this cathartic effect which was experienced by the families in the present study. After his relative had testified at the TRC's first hearings, a brother of an ANC activist who was murdered by the police made comments which according to Tutu's report (1999:33) read this way: "We have told our story to many on several occasions, to newspapers and to the TV. This is the first time, though, that after telling it we feel as if a heavy load has been removed from our shoulders".

The cathartic reactions which are expressed even by the families in the present study seem to conform to what, according to Tutu (1999) was set to be achieved by the TRC. One of the proposed achievements was for the TRC to rehabilitate and affirm the dignity and humanity of those who were marginalised and victimized. Thus it was hoped that through the TRC these people would be empowered to tell their stories, to recount their individuality by crying and opening their hearts to expose the anguish that had remained locked up for so long. The acceptance, the affirmation and the acknowledgement that they had indeed suffered is cathartic for them.

In contrast, scholars like de la Rey and Owens (1998), De Ridder (1998) and Swartz (1999) have pointed to some weaknesses of the TRC. Their views illustrate differences between the TRC as a social instrument and the role it plays on a more personal level. De Ridder (1998), for instance, mentions that those who sought counselling after the TRC process reported that this was the first time they had spoken about the psychological impact of the original violation. What was unspeakable in the past was now possible to be talked about in public. However, a worrying number of these individuals found, in the weeks following their deposition, that there was a return and intensification of symptoms associated with the original violations. This view also supports the findings in the present study as revealed by the analysis. These experiences emphasise what De Ridder (1998) refers to as the underlying tension between the TRC's role as a 'national therapeutic process' and its responsibility for caring for the individuals who have been violated. These experiences, then, seem to challenge the notion that the TRC is necessarily a positive healing experience for the individual. These arguments are reflected more by de la Rey and Owens (1998:260) as they explain the TRC public hearings:

“The South African public hearings address experiences of trauma not merely at the individual levels but also at the level of the collective-social. In this context, testimony-giving in the form of the public hearing is not simply about the reconstruction of private individual trauma, but also a social-political process through which the past abuses are reconstructed and documented as public knowledge. Thus, it is a constitutive narrative in which boundaries between individual and social are not clearly distinguishable”.

De Ridder (1998) also notes that the TRC has created an opportunity to make the ‘collective’ experience, of the survivors of gross violations of human rights, ‘individual’ by making statements about their personal stories. However, the negative outlook on this process, is its failure to provide long term counselling and support for the victims. While the public process of healing and testimony-giving has the potential to heal many members of South Africa’s new nation, the need for privacy amid the very public nature of the TRC is important. To me the TRC missed an opportunity of a private environment for the containment of these feelings. Although I contributed minimally by facilitating group therapy sessions after these families had testified, it would have been so much better had this important service been an integral part of the therapeutic process of the TRC. Tutu (1999), the Chairman of the TRC, himself admits to the fact that it was possible that there were people who, because they re-opened their wounds before the TRC, did not receive sufficient professional help to deal with the anguish and went away more traumatized than before. De la Rey and Owens (1998) assert that counselling as a source of support was viewed as problematic during the TRC testimonies. The indications were that most professionals think about counselling within a pathology model rather than a wellness model. Instead, medical and religious sources of support were seen as important in bringing about healing. Also, there was support for models of African healing from the NGO personnel who had tried to step into this yawning need for support.

The issue of forgiveness and difficulties in forgiving, as revealed by the findings in this study, has filled the TRC with much debate. The study of forgiveness has become a growing industry. It is gaining attention as an academic discipline studied by psychologists, philosophers, physicians and theologians. This undertaking by these scholars together with an International Forgiveness Institute attached to the University of Wisconsin dismisses the idea that forgiveness is only linked with spiritual and religious themes (Tutu, 1999). In the study of ‘forgiving another’, Rowe et. al. (1989) state that the need for forgiveness arises when someone has acted in such a way as to bring about a fundamental disruption in the wholeness or integrity of one’s life. On a deep, almost organic level

there is the tearing of the fabric of one's life world. One of the conditions for gaining amnesty by alleged perpetrators was to make a full disclosure of all the relevant facts relating to the offence (for example, abduction, killing, torture, severe maltreatment) for which amnesty was being sought. Those who were violated had the right to oppose the application for amnesty by trying to demonstrate that these conditions had not been met. They, however, had no right of veto over amnesty (Tutu, 1999). These conditions were met with antagonism in many community circles as the government, in its constitution of the TRC, was seen as counter-productive. It was felt that the pain of the many people who had suffered during the apartheid era was being sacrificed at the gain of the alleged perpetrators. Some believe that there should be no amnesty at all.

Tutu (1999) perceives forgiveness as crucial, especially when a relationship has been damaged. He asserts that the perpetrator should acknowledge the truth and be ready and willing to apologise as this helps the process of forgiveness and reconciliation immensely. The findings of the present study as already discussed, point to the fact that forgiveness is a risky undertaking in that the abuse, pain, degradation and truth may in the end not result in real healing. Many interviewees, expressed categorically, "I'll forgive but never forget", and "at least we can let go and forgive those who are asking for amnesty for the tortures but we cannot forget what happened". Others expressed difficulty in forgiving the amnesty applicants. The latter category hoped that with time this forgiveness would happen.

5.4 THE 'AFTER' OF THE TRC AND THE NEW WORLD

The participation in the TRC by the families in the present study raised certain expectations about some assistance that they would receive. However, after their testimony there were no instant solutions but promises that individual reports would be written and recommendations would be made to the President. This meant further waiting and frustration for most families.

The findings point to the families' expressions of suffering and hardship continuing in their lives. According to Emma in Protocol 5 (Appendix), healing is living her life as it was before she was subjected to this victimization. This she said can happen if the TRC and the government fulfil the promises of compensation for the loss of her son and her house which was burnt during the unrest period.

This is only one example out of thousands of requests for reparations by families. The requests they made through the submissions of their testimony varied from moral support, medical attention, bursary funds for education of their children, rebuilding their homes and locating the remains of their dead relatives so that they can bury them. According to them the reparations would help erect memorials to honour them since they sacrificed their lives.

Dick in Protocol 1 (Ideographic example) sees 'going on' of all those who suffered during the struggle as possible if the present government and the whole community can recognise and remember them as veterans who devoted themselves to the struggle. Many family members continue to live their lives as active participants in community projects that aim at capacity building.

Most families spoke openly about their hopes of reparation from the TRC process. (Pete in Protocol 7 and Gordon in Protocol 8 - Appendix, have since died without receiving any word from the government with regard to compensation). Although this is so, some families are positive about their spiritual belief system which they explained as making sense and meaning in their difficult life experiences and in the traumatic experiences they have encountered. Many families during the interviews commented that no matter what happened, God was with them.

All these incidents and statements point to the fact that reconciliation is a long drawn-out and difficult process. It is something that cannot be quickly accomplished, certainly not by the TRC, however effective. Tutu (1999) states that the TRC has only been able to make a contribution towards reconciliation which should be the concern of every South African.

It appears that the families in the present study experienced the TRC as similar to the help they needed in coping with the struggle to restructure their world. Their requests could only be documented and forwarded as recommendations to the President. Tutu (1999) states that their legal mandate was more to research and recommend the reparation measures than to implement them. This meant that the victims lived in anticipation and expectation of more time for the results of the recommendations to happen.

A question which needs to be raised is whether reparations are seen as a means of helping people to heal. According to Genfeugos and Moneli (1983), symbolizing the experience of suffering can be important in healing. De la Rey and Owens, (1998) state that the TRC legislation's reparations

include any form of compensation, *ex gratia* payment, restitution, rehabilitation or recognition. Bennie Bunsee (1998) who is the public relations officer for the Ministry of Justice, writes that reparations are an integral part of the process of healing and reconciliation which constitute the core work of the TRC. Although this might sound as a poor and even insulting compensation for the pain that victims have had to endure, the best international practice has shown that it can be fruitful (Sowetan, Thursday, October 29, 1998). These definitions, obviously raise expectations in the victims of gross violation of human rights as the stories of the TRC hearings were dominated by needs which seem to be visible and concrete. However, the lengthy time taken by the TRC to respond is perceived as frustrating.

Tutu (1999) also agrees that it would be less than honest and entirely counter-productive to pretend that the TRC was perfect. In fact, all the above arguments point to a system which was serviced by human beings who possess both gifts and faults, hence the TRC cannot be seen as flawless. Gobodo-Madikizela (1997:272) also comments that the TRC cannot be seen as a panacea to fix all that is not well in South Africa. She argues that:

“This is a long process that can best be addressed through the interpersonal contacts that ultimately are the best way to break down stereotypes and antagonisms. However, given the stark patterns of social segregation in this country, this may appear to be non-utopian at this point in history. The issue of reconciliation should at least be addressed in every boardroom or hall of power. There may be different ways of achieving reconciliation and none could guarantee a flawless process “.

The families in their ‘going on’ with their lives still await the results of the TRC recommendations to come forth. It was only at the end of 1998 that compiled reports of the TRC were handed to The President. Although only a few of the victims who applied through the TRC have received urgent interim reparations, this can be seen as the beginning of rehabilitation for communities that need improved access to services. In fact, many commissioners who participated in the TRC have expressed mixed feelings about what they have been able to achieve concretely for the victims. Hlengiwe Mkhize, who is the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee Chairperson, calls for the question of monetary reparations to be settled by the government as soon as possible. She says that aside from the interim reparation process, there remains the outstanding issue of a long term reparation policy. She goes to say that:

“Silence, whether it be passive or active on the issue of addressing the consequences of gross human rights violations, drives the survivors to withdraw and disengage from society. In the process of keeping to themselves, all negative symptoms are played out within the family, schoolyard, workplace, marketplace, infecting the innocents who become burdened by the transmitted symptoms of secondary victimisation” (Evening Post, 28 March 2000).

Mr Trevor Manuel, Minister of Finance, was questioned by the Chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with regard to lack of provision in the budget for the victims of apartheid and the reparation process. In response, Mr Trevor Manuel said the following:

“There is a big legal hassle about whether you could only provide relief to people who appear before the TRC, whether they are the only victims of human rights abuses, or whether you would be creating a precedent in law that you might not be able to sustain” (Eastern Province Herald, Monday, 28 February 2000).

This suggests that, for the families in the present study, the TRC is not yet the end of the road, as in their restructuring of the new world they require forms of concrete help. Above all they deserve reparation which will defend their dignity, integrity, and help them accept their own worth as people. All this will take the process of reconciliation much further than the TRC will ever be able to do.

Looking at the phenomenon of victimization, during the interviews I empathized with the families' experiences of pain and of being threatened. I have also had similar experiences as the interviewees which made it easier to understand their experiences of pain and threat. While telling their stories they relived the hardship and pain of those difficult years which made it even more difficult for them to forgive the victimizers. Molly in Protocol 3 (Ideographic example) says: “I feel that there is no room in my heart to forgive these police. What they did is unforgivable. They robbed me of a happy family life abducting and killing my father, putting my husband in jail”. (Andinayo indawo entliziyweni yam yokuxolela la mapolisa. Bafana namasela athatha ubomi obumnandi ethu ekhaya, xa babamba utata wam bambulala, bavalela nomyeni wam entolongweni)'.

This chapter deals with psychological reflection and analysis. The ideas which emerged from this chapter point to the fear and anguish that families lived through, the suspicion which existed in the communities and also the sceptical attitude by the families towards the truth disclosed in the TRC hearings. The function of the following chapter is to articulate the conclusions from this study.