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## A garden of horror or a park of peace: Villa Grimaldi

Jacqueline Paulette Drouilly Yurich lived with her family in Temuco, southern Chile, for much of her short life. Hers was a comfortable, middle-class family that followed a life of sensibility and poise. French as well as Spanish was spoken at home. Her father was a member of the Socialist Party, her mother rejoiced in graceful soirées.

In 1971, in what was to prove a fatal act, Jacqueline joined the MIR in part through the encouragement of her boyfriend, later husband, Marcelo Salinas Eytel. Her younger sister believes that her heart was never quite in the cause. In 1973 she returned to university and resigned from the party. She did not realise that in the eyes of the security forces, the DINA, nobody ever resigned from the MIR but remained a dangerous suspect forever.

During 1974, while still at school, Jacqueline rented a room that she shared with Marcelo and a friend. Their mother Norma Yurich recalls:

On August 2, 1974, she married Marcelo Salinas Eytel at the Civil Registry in Ñuñoa. Soon after they moved to Decombe 1191, occupying the second floor, which had its own entrance. The house belonged to a fellow social work student. Five days before her arrest, my husband and I visited and had dinner with them. At 6 pm we returned to Temuco. That was the last time we saw them.

On October 30, 1974, close to midnight as she was completing an assignment for school in the first floor of her classmate's house ... men dressed as civilians arrived in two vehicles and began asking for Marcelo. She told them he was not there, that he would arrive soon and that she was his wife. They then proceeded to interrogate her, roughly forced her to the second floor, harassing and hitting her and committing every sort of abuse to obtain the whereabouts of her husband ... After barely putting on a wool coat and hat, they threw her in one of the vehicles and told the people in the house that they were taking my daughter as a HOSTAGE until they had my son-in-law 'if he arrives' (it was already past curfew).<sup>1</sup>

Jacqueline's sister Michele, then in her early teens, shudders at the memory of that night, 30 October 1974, when at about 10.15 pm the DINA burst in looking for Marcelo. Identifying Jacqueline, they dragged her upstairs and ransacked her room while searching for evidence of party connection. In the bedlam, at 14 minutes to 11, Jacqueline's alarm clock fell to the floor and smashed. Today the clock and the shards of its glass face are among Michele's most treasured possessions.

Within days Michele's father escaped to Algeria, taking Michele with him. Michele, deeply traumatised, or as she puts it, in 'a neurosis of anguish', was deeply unhappy in Algeria. Two years later she had to travel to Spain to renew her passport, but unknown to her, militant exiles had established themselves in her country of refuge. Francoist Spain was all too willing to comply with Pinochet's request to deny any Chilean further refuge. Michele crossed to France where she sought asylum and remained until 1993.

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1 'Jacqueline Paulette Drouilly Yurich', *Memoria Viva*; 'Jacqueline Paulette Drouilly Yurich', *Las Mujeres de Villa Grimaldi*, 19 May 2007; Arturo Alejandro Muñoz, '¿Quién asesinó a Jacqueline Drouilly?' [Who murdered Jacqueline Drouilly?].



Michele Drouilly Yurich.

Source: Photograph by Peter Read, editing Con Boekel.

Since then, like others mourning a detained-disappeared family member, the family continues to mark Jacqueline's absence not on the unknown day in which she was murdered, but on the day she was disappeared. Today they still do not know where she died, nor if she was pregnant at the time of her death.<sup>2</sup> All they know is that she was held progressively in Tres Alamos, José Domingo Cañas and finally in the best-known site of all the Chilean sites of torture, extermination and disappearance: Villa Grimaldi.

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Villa Grimaldi is the most infamous, nationally and internationally, of all the Chilean sites of torture, extermination and disappearance. It was the first such site to be rescued for memorialisation, then held at arm's length from government interference. Its supporters formed the earliest, best organised and most closely community-controlled collective so as to make Villa Grimaldi the first such site in Chile to be

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2 Paz Rojas, María Inés Muñoz, María Luisa Ortiz, Viviana Uribe, in *Todas Ibamos a Ser Reinas* [We were all to be Queens], Colección Septiembre, Santiago, 2002, p. 13, maintain that Jacqueline was three months pregnant at the time she was disappeared, but not all of the family agree.

recognised as an International Museum of Conscience.<sup>3</sup> The display and the Park of Peace is the only one to have retained any hard-won degree of independence, and the only one to enter a second and different phase of self-presentation. It was the first site in which serious alternative models of memorialisation were debated and acted upon by survivors and their families. It is still the only Santiago Site of Conscience capable of accommodating a large gathering of survivors or mourners.<sup>4</sup> For a time it seemed that it might become *the* national archetypal site-memorial. Theorists of national culture, national reconciliation, public history, public culture, visual communication, torture, semiotics, feminism, dark tourism, representation and sociology have all found fertile ground here for discursive exposition, through site visits, theses, books, articles, symposia, seminars and films.<sup>5</sup> The 'Corporation Park of Peace Villa Grimaldi' itself has produced dozens of publications, films and pamphlets and maintains an archive and oral history library.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps more academic and social comment has been focused on the Villa's Park of Peace than on all other Chilean Sites of Conscience put together. It was here that from 1974 some 4,500 persons were detained and tortured, and where at least 229 were murdered or disappeared.<sup>7</sup> To the tortures of beatings and electrocution, already familiar to detainees transferred to the villa,

3 'We are sites, individuals, and initiatives activating the power of places of memory to engage the public in connecting past and present in order to envision and shape a more just and humane future.' [www.sitesofconscience.org/members/](http://www.sitesofconscience.org/members/).

4 Carolina Aguilera and Gonzalo Caceres, 'Signs of state terrorism in post-authoritarian Santiago: Memories and memorialization in Chile', *Dissidences, Hispanic Journal of Theory and Criticism* 4(8), article 7 of [digitalcommons.bowdin.edu/dissidences](http://digitalcommons.bowdin.edu/dissidences).

5 Site visits: Nelly Richard, 'Sitios de la memoria: Vaciamiento del recuerdo', *Revista de Crítica Cultural* 23, 2001; Mario I. Aguilar, 'El Muro de Los Nombres de Villa Grimaldi: Exploraciones sobre la memoria, el silencio y la voz de la historia', *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe*, no. 69, October 2000, 81–88; 'Experta norteamericana Katherine Hite visitó Villa Grimaldi', Villa Grimaldi; Thomas Larsen (transcript), 'The Anatomy of Torture – Villa Grimaldi', *New Letters* 74(1), Fall 2007–08.

Films: Germán Liñero, *El Muro de los Nombres* [The Wall of Names], 1999; Quique Cruz, *Archaeology of Memory*, 2014; Carmen Rojas, *Memorias de una MIRista* [Memories of a MIRista], edición mimeografiada, Jose Miguel Bravo, Santiago, 1995.

Oral history: Mario Garcés, 'Archivo y Memoria. La Experiencia de Archivo Oral de Villa Grimaldi', *Cuadernos de Trabajo Educativos* 3(VI), n.d., c. 2010, n.p.

6 For example, National Monuments Council, *Parque por la Paz Villa Grimaldi*, documentary, n.d., c. 2006.

7 Villa Grimaldi, [villagrimaldi.cl/victimas](http://villagrimaldi.cl/victimas), accessed 13 May 2013.

was added a new method of detention. They were jammed, sometimes four at a time, into tiny cells constructed in a wooden tower standing near the swimming pool at the rear of the site.

In deep and unresolved mourning for Jacqueline, Michele was from 1993 a member of the collective seeking to preserve the site, and for more than a decade threw her formidable efforts into the prolonged and tense debate as to what should be memorialised within the site, and how, and by whom. She insisted that the lives of the victims before they were brought to Villa Grimaldi should be revered, held as precious to the educational program or, indeed, to the story of what happened to them afterwards. Today, though unacknowledged by name, her mark on the Park of Peace is profound.

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Villa Grimaldi really was a villa constructed by an aristocratic family in the nineteenth century on the eastern edge of the city, so far out that, even in the 1960s in the heyday of American westerns, it was known to taxi drivers as 'western town'. Famous or notorious for its imported Greek columns and Carrara marble, by the 1960s weekends at the villa had become spacious languorous afternoons for Santiago's literary classes, poetry, good food, red wine and music amidst surroundings inevitably matched in purple prose.

This capricious Mirror of Water, one of the three which exists in the Villa, holds in its centre the Cornetín of Fontainebleau, from which they say on nights of the full moon comes forth the music of dreams. Created in bronze and iron, no one can describe its beauty.<sup>8</sup>

In 1974 the DINA acquired the building, it is alleged, by arresting the daughter of the owner and holding her in captivity until the title deeds were made over to them. Installed, DINA kept the principal building for administration but destroyed most of the garden while constructing wooden prison huts and converting the water tower into tiny confinement cells reserved for those regarded as most dangerous. The Italian marble and the Greek columns disappeared and have

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8 'Villa Grimaldi, Historia y Características de las Grandes Mansiones', tourist brochure, n.d., c. 1960.

not been seen again.<sup>9</sup> Vacating the site in 1978, the successors of the DINA, the CNI, began seeking ways to conceal evidence of the crimes committed there. Seizing the moment, the last commander of Cuartel Terranova, as the DINA had renamed the villa, began proceedings to purchase the estate as a profitable housing precinct. In 1987 a section of the press, human rights organisations and local supporters, survivors and mourners managed to prevent the sale to save the site.<sup>10</sup> Too late: by the time it had become the property of the state, almost all the buildings had been razed. In 1991, just a year after the transition to democracy, the Rettig Report recommended the creation of public memorials and parks to honour the victims of the dictatorship. In 1993 the moderate Aylwin Government, the first elected government after the transition to democracy, was seeking ways to placate the left without antagonising the right. Funding the restoration of the precinct and the erection of a wall of memory answered both Rettig's recommendation and practical politics.<sup>11</sup>

Furious debates, neatly encapsulated in Spanish as 'polémicas intensas', centred on the kind of memorial the precinct should become.<sup>12</sup> The torture survivor Pedro Matta recalled the positions:

The group was divided in their opinions: part of the group wanted to rebuild the former torture centre as it was during the time of its functioning (which proved to be impossible as there was not enough funding to do that); another part wanted to demolish everything that remained there and build a beautiful park to the memory of those who disappeared or were killed at the site, and finally, another group, in which I counted myself, proposed that all the artefacts and buildings

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9 Jorge Escalante, Nancy Guzmán, Javier Rebolledo, Pedro Vega, *Los Crímenes que Estremecieron a Chile* [The Crimes that Shook Chile], CEIBO Ediciones, Santiago, 2013, p. 156.

10 Unusually in Santiago, a leading force in demanding recognition of the site was a local citizens' group, La Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos de Peñalolén y La Reina [The Permanent Assembly for Human Rights of Peñalolén and La Reina]; Macarena Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2009, p. 51.

11 'Report of the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation' ('Rettig Report'), 1991; Victoria Baxter, 'Civil Society Promotion of Truth, Justice and Reconciliation: Villa Grimaldi', *Peace and Change* 30(1), 2005, p. 127; Stern, *Reckoning with Pinochet*, pp. 169–71.

12 Michael Lazzara, 'Tres recorridos de Villa Grimaldi', in Elizabeth Jelin and Victoria Langland, eds, *Monumentos, Memoriales y Marcas Territoriales*, Siglo Veintiuno, Madrid, 2003, cited by Gilda Waldman, 'La "cultura de la memoria": problemas y reflexiones', *Política y Cultura*, no. 26, 2006, p. 5; Katrien Klep, 'Tracing collective memory: Chilean truth commissions and memorial site', *Memory Studies* 5(3), 262–63.

that were not destroyed by the dictatorship should be preserved for the memory of this country and a park should be built round them. This was the proposition that was hammered out.<sup>13</sup>

The unexpressed agenda of the government was assumed, as later turned out to be the case at Londres 38, to homogenise memories, to hold any discussion of those responsible to the broadest terms, to neutralise the horrors of the site, to minimise both the influence and funding of the Cuban Government, and to recast the site as a springboard of national reconciliation.<sup>14</sup> The strength of feeling against the latter can be felt, even a decade later, in the words of Viviana Diaz, executive secretary of the Group of Families of Detained-Disappeared:

[T]ime has passed, but the violations of human rights are still an inexcusable aberration; the truth of the deeds has always been here. Those of us who lived the terrible experience needed to claim these spaces, first to convince and later to sensitize our own compatriots that were confronting a situation never seen before, that people after detention, disappeared. Many did not want to know, others not even want to find out ... [We want] a society that does not mortgage justice for fear of powerful factions, a society which dares to look us in the eyes and whose authority gives us, at the least, the audiences which we seek. A society which does not believe that all that is written in the Rettig Report is the culmination of all the searches and which now leads us towards a reconciled society.<sup>15</sup>

Memories, the Corporation of the Villa Grimaldi Peace Park insisted, should be personalised and precise. Osvaldo Torres, a member of the corporation, argued passionately against what was taken to be the state agenda:

13 Matta in Baxter, 'Civil society promotion of truth, justice and reconciliation', p. 129.

14 Signage formerly displayed (2008) at Villa Grimaldi referred to the Cuban Government's financial assistance in establishing the Park of Peace.

15 'El tiempo ha transcurrido, pero las violaciones a los derechos humanos siguen siendo una aberración inexcusable; la verdad de los hechos siempre ha estado aquí. Quienes vimos la terrible experiencia tuvimos que ganar los espacios, primero para convencer y luego sensibilizar a nuestros propios compatriotas de que estábamos frente a una situación nunca antes vista ... [Lo que decimos es una] sociedad que no hipoteque la justicia por miedo de los poderes fácticos. Una sociedad que se atreva a mirarnos los ojos y cuyas autoridades nos otorguen, al menos, las audiencias que solicitamos. Una sociedad que no crea que todo lo escrito en el Informe Rettig es la culminación de las búsquedas y que ahora caminamos hacia una sociedad reconciliada'; Viviana Diaz, 'Chilean society of today in the light of human rights violations in the past', in *A Museum in Villa Grimaldi: Space for Memory and Education in Human Rights*, International Seminar, August 2005, Corporación Parque por La Paz Villa Grimaldi, Municipalidad de Peñalolén, Santiago, n.d., c. 2006, pp. 23, 25.

[A] museum of memory and human rights is of a different nature. The memory is ours, the testimonies are ours, the multiplicity of interpretations flow through our communication channels, different types of schools and family chats. In this sense it is not a museum of the republic which sets out epic lectures on the construction of representative democracy, but rather a piece of history which contains unshakeable truths and various interpretations.<sup>16</sup>

Clear enough; but very frequently, in the next decade, the rights to express the 'various interpretations' would overshadow the meaning of the 'unshakeable truths' themselves.

Throughout the planning of 1992–94 ran the constant themes of trauma, resentment, anger, frustration, nightmares and agony of those most closely associated with the Villa's Pinochet years. What should be displayed? How should the horrific events they had suffered be presented, if at all? Initially, all the guides were to be survivors, on the understanding that they would limit the accounts of what they and other detainees had suffered to generalities.

In this way, and amidst much controversy, Villa Grimaldi was by 1995 becoming a haven of peace, tranquillity and reflection: rolling lawns, a fountain, flower beds and a plaza open to concerts and plays would gesture towards the beautiful garden that Villa Grimaldi once had been. A facsimile wooden tower, from which detainees could hear the shrieking of the guards' children in the pool, would be rebuilt. A 2-metre model would reproduce the proportions of the original villa, later the headquarters of Cuartel Terranova. Among the few objects to survive the scorched-earth CNI destruction were the pool itself, a small shed nearby once used for manufacturing fake documentation, the rose garden and a huge Argentinian pampas tree, an ombú. None of them, however, could ever symbolise tranquillity, for each bore particularly anguished memories. A young man had been drowned in the pool and, when empty, a dozen people had been crammed into it and covered with blankets during an international inspection. Detainees squeezed into the tower could smell the roses; and a guard had been beaten to death hanging from the ombú. But amidst the internal dissent, one principle remained firm: for all its financial support, the state must

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16 Osvaldo Torres, in *A Museum in Villa Grimaldi: Space for Memory and Education in Human Rights*, International Seminar, August 2005, Corporación Parque por La Paz Villa Grimaldi, Municipalidad de Peñalolén, Santiago, n.d., c. 2006, p. 132.



be kept away. When, in 1998, the government officials learned that they were not to be admitted to the opening ceremony for the Wall of Memory – which the state itself had paid for – they sent in a truck to carry away all the support they had set up the day before – chairs, dais, public address system, even the refreshments. ‘But you can keep the carnations, fellers.’<sup>17</sup>

From within the corporation, almost every aspect of the planned design continued to be challenged. Yes, the destroyed tower would be rebuilt. But surely, asked the critics, this was inauthentic. Unsupervised children might frolic about and tourists use it just as a good viewpoint for photographs.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, a solid line connecting the former detainee entrance to the rebuilt tower, intersected by a second line connecting the new entrance way to the Wall of Memory, was designed to form a cross signifying ‘Nunca +’, a graffitist’s abbreviation for ‘Nunca Más’ (Never Again).<sup>19</sup> But critics again asked: might the cross so formed be mistaken for a Christian cross, or worse, imply or encourage reconciliation between victims and perpetrators?<sup>20</sup> Good intentions are ever apt to misinterpretation. In West Germany in 1992, a sculpture of a grieving mother nursing her dead son was unveiled as a crucial element of the Central Memorial for the Victims of War and Tyranny. Officially it signified that death erased all differences, but to some it suggested the possibility of honouring German soldiers in the same place as Holocaust victims. Confronted with the prospect, in 1993, of adding a reconstructed watch-tower to a section of the Berlin Wall, German critics called it Disneyland.<sup>21</sup>

Joining the discussion in 1993, Michele Drouilly could see the force of the arguments to find out the truth: in case any murdered detainee had been buried near the brick front wall of the precinct, she thought it best to excavate it to find out, even if it meant its destruction. She also understood the museological significance of the original structures and disapproved of later changes. Building the concert and convocation area she thought a mistake because it required the destruction of one

17 Roberto Merino, guided tour, 2008.

18 The predictions were noted by the authors on several tours, and by Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells*, p. 53.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

20 Rodrigo Artegabeitia, ‘Corporación Parque por la Paz Villa Grimaldi: una deuda con nosotros mismos’ [A debt to ourselves], Ministerio de la Vivienda, Santiago, 1997, cited by Waldman, p. 5.

21 Knischewski and Spittler, ‘Competing pasts’, pp. 168, 175.

recently constructed arm of the 'Nunca Más'. Behind the modern bathrooms, someone had unearthed a plaque erected in the early 1990s containing a very incomplete list of the detained-disappeared. It was thought to be out of date rubbish. Out it went. A radio communications tower had once stood above the detainees' entrance. Out that went too. 'The trouble is, we Chileans are such amnesiacs.' The curatorial committee affirmed the decision to erase any remaining evidence of the Pinochet past, not least because the corporation wished to create a Park for Peace, which preservation of the remains of the tower was seen to work against.<sup>22</sup> Within weeks even its tiled floor had vanished. Yet 10 years later, the discovery of the grand stairway used by the CNI to enter their old headquarters was hailed as the most significant discovery of all the artefacts remaining from the time.

Positions polarised further after the park was formally opened in 1997. Photographs showed the much-respected Father Aldunate leading the procession through huge piles of concrete, rubble and waist-high weeds.<sup>23</sup> The tensions between the most basic issues of public memorialisation continued to bubble. The guide Roberto Merino Jorquera in 2008 summarised the three dominant views as those supporting either the reality of blindfolds and the *parrilla*, or a park of peace and beauty, or an invitation to civil society to participate in new plans for the villa including a children's play area and a football field!<sup>24</sup> Corporation members were – and are – weighing the relative values of memory, memorialisation and education to ensure the safe future of Chilean society, the kind of emotions they wanted aroused in visitors, how to deliver justice to the victims, as an international demonstration of what Chileans had learned from the dictatorship, as a continued investigation of the past as suggested by the Rettig Report, as a reaffirmation of the values of life and peace fundamental to Chilean society, as emblem of hope, or as artistic statement!<sup>25</sup>

22 Mario Aguilar, 'The ethnography of the Villa Grimaldi in Pinochet's Chile: From public landscape to secret detention centre, 1973–1980', paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association conference, Dallas, Texas, 27–29 March 1973; cited Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells*, p. 68.

23 Discussion by writers and speakers in Dante Donoso and Coral Pey, eds, *Villa Grimaldi. Un Parque por La Paz*, Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos, Santiago, 1996.

24 Roberto Merino Jorquera, recorded guided tour of Villa Grimaldi, November 2008, video by authors.

25 Discussion by writers and speakers in Donoso and Coral, *Villa Grimaldi*, 1996.

Roberto Matta, who had summarised the quadrants of opinion back in 1997, believed that the interests of reconciliation slid all too easily into self-censorship among the tour guides. In 2000, amidst disapproval of some other members of the Corporation of the Villa Grimaldi Peace Park, he devised a tour as both guide and author that firmly placed him among those wishing to present the blindfold and the *parrilla* in their full horror.

## The first tour, 2000

Matta's tour began with a statement of condemnation of the state's efforts at reconciliation:

From the time of the Pinochet dictatorship, with its ironclad policy of cancelling freedom of the press, by putting into effect a brutal censorship in the name of 'Christian Civilization' or the 'Occidental Way of Life', there has existed a simultaneous and parallel effort of many people to ... cover over the crimes committed over a seventeen year period, to the years of the Political Transition, during which several regimes have constantly reminded the citizenry of this country of the need to 'forgive and forget', and to 'look ahead and not back'.<sup>26</sup>

After showing his visitors the position of the administrative headquarters and the entrance gate, Matta led them to the detainee point-of-arrival in words very far from tranquillity, meditation or forgiveness. One such visitor was Diana Taylor, teacher of Performance Studies and Spanish at New York University. She noticed that at the start Matta spoke only in the third person, kept his eyes downcast and his emotions restrained. Matta began:

Agents of DINA kidnapped people off the streets and from their homes, work, and schools ... On being arrested, the person was pushed into the back of the truck and forced to lie down as three agents climbed in. While one pointed a machine gun at the prisoner, another fastened the canvas cover [of the light truck] shut, while the third quickly pulled the victim's wrists behind and tied them and then the ankles. The eyes were taped shut and a blindfold tied tightly. On the ride to Villa Grimaldi, the victim endured the 'softening' during which they were punched and kicked. Hard blows were aimed at the solar plexus

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26 Pedro Alejandro Matta, 'A Walk Through a 20th Century Torture Centre Villa Grimaldi, Santiago de Chile. A Visitor's Guide' (written in English), 2000.

of the male and the breasts of the female. Kicks went everywhere. Stopping inside the gate of Villa Grimaldi and in view of the main house, the canvas of the truck was opened and the victim pushed out, falling to the ground. With ankles untied, the blindfolded victim was made to stand for the 'welcoming committee', in which six or eight agents punched and kicked him or her round the circle and into semi-consciousness, then to be dragged to the first session of torture. It happened to thousands where you now stand.<sup>27</sup>

Proceeding anticlockwise from the main gate, Matta's next point was 30 metres to the right:

Here the torture began at this place of the first *parrilla* (grill). In a shack with an iron bedstead, a desk with a tape recorder, a chair, and an electric shock device, the victim, still blindfolded but with hands free, was ordered to undress. Clothes were torn from the resisters. Forced to lie naked, the victim was tied to the bedstead with legs apart and arms at the sides. Electric shocks were then administered to the genitals and other parts of the body with increasing intensity, frequency and duration. Between the applications of electricity, the group of four to six torturers barked questions about the victim's activities and those of friends and relatives. The session could continue for two to three hours but seldom longer, because human resistance has its limits.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor observed how, several minutes into the tour, Matta began to re-enact the scenes he was describing. The personal pronouns changed from third to first, the emotions more overt. In her analysis of Matta's performance she wrote:

Being in place with him communicates a very different sense of the events than looking down on the model – it brings the past up close, past as actually not past. Now. Here ... I too am part of this scenario now; I have accompanied him in here. I am suddenly rooted to the place restored as practice. My eyes look straight down, mimetically rather than reflectively, through his down-turned eyes. I do not see really; I imagine ... I participate not in the events but in the transmission of his affective relationship to place by listening to his voice and following his steps. My presencing [being present] offers me no sense of control, no fiction of understanding. He walks, he tells, he points.<sup>29</sup>

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., pp. 9–10.

29 Diana Taylor, 'Memory, trauma, performance', *Aletria* 1(21), January–April 2011, p. 70.

At this point, for reasons that became clear later, Matta stopped his anticlockwise tour to divert across to the eastern side of the precinct. At his site 22, he stopped at a concrete slab to explain that it was:

[the] [a]rea that was used for parking the pickup trucks and other vehicles after their human cargo had been dumped on the ground in front of the main house. Prisoners were brought there after all the other techniques of torture had failed to make them 'talk'. Naked, bound and blindfolded, they were thrown down, and a truck driven over their legs, fracturing and crushing the bones. The excruciatingly painful injuries would add to the dehydration produced by weeks of torture, especially on the *parrilla*. With the meagre diet, absence of medical care, and the filthy conditions in the cells, gangrene usually developed, sentencing the prisoner to be 'disappeared'.<sup>30</sup>

Next he came to the rebuilt water tower and its minute detention cells reserved for the 'uncooperative'. Taylor continues:

The isolation cells, he says, were one metre by one metre – five men were squeezed upright, into that space. There is an original small brick semi-circle there where the captives were allowed to sit each day for a few minutes. He sits. Remembers. He says nothing.<sup>31</sup>

Matta's tour now doubled back to reach its climax, following the rear boundary across to the memorial wall naming the 229 detained-disappeared from Villa Grimaldi. In contrast to the busy, noisy memorial to Pinochet's victims at the Santiago General Cemetery, the Wall of Names was intended by its designer to encourage just such personal reflection by installing it in the quietest part of the grounds, amidst shady trees and seats for contemplation.<sup>32</sup> Mario Aguilar found its textuality 'open, waiting, luxuriant, inconclusive, disturbing, demanding'.<sup>33</sup> Others, though, have found the wall, and the whole site, uninformative: 'Here came workers, artists, academics. Who were they?'<sup>34</sup> Matta, however, had a third purpose. Taylor continued:

30 Matta, 'A walk...', p. 18. Modern signage makes no reference to this site beyond 'Aquí se torturaron con vehiculos' [Here they were tortured by vehicles].

31 Taylor, 'Memory, trauma, performance', p. 70.

32 Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells*, pp. 63–65.

33 Aguilar, 'El Muro de Los Nombres de Villa Grimaldi', 2000, p. 84.

34 Antonio Traverso and Enrique Azúa, 'Villa Grimaldi: A visual essay', *Journal of Medical Practice* 10(2&3), 2009, 218.

When he gets to the memorial wall marked with the names of the dead (built twenty years after the violent events) he breaks down and cries. He cries for those who died, but also for those who survived. 'Torture', he says, 'destroys the human being. And I am no exception. I was destroyed through torture'.<sup>35</sup>

Taylor learned later that Matta repeated this tearful performance – for performance was what it was – as part of each of his tours. Far from condemning him, she understood his reasons, while reflecting that by such emphasis on individual trauma, the risk remains that:

[the] politics may be evacuated ... Standing there, together, bringing the buildings and routines back to life, we [should] bear witness not just to the personal loss, but to a system of power relations, hierarchies and values that not only allowed but required the destruction of others.<sup>36</sup>

Such, indeed, is a common criticism of the major reports into the violation of human rights by Latin American governments that tend towards story rather than explanation, narrative rather than forensic, privileging and validating the individual experience of trauma and healing, away from the inequities of the social structure.<sup>37</sup> Survivors, especially from the highly articulate and educated MIR, have been aware of and been worried by the disjuncture.

It is true that since Matta's tour of 2000 much oral history collected by the corporation has reflected the same diabolical personal experiences. Paz Rojas:

They brought us again to Villa Grimaldi. This time the place and the situation according to prisoners was a true inferno. Every ten minutes they dragged prisoners out for interrogation. At the end of an hour or more they returned destroyed by the tortures.<sup>38</sup>

35 Taylor, 'Memory, trauma, performance', p. 70.

36 Ibid., p. 71.

37 Read, 'Reconciliation without history', p. 282; Greg Grandin and Thomas Miller Klubock, Editorial Introduction, *Radical History Review*, no. 97, Winter 2007, 3–7.

38 Paz Rojas, María Elena Ahumada and Juanita Méndez, '*Segundo Informe. Testimonios de tortura en Chile. Septiembre de 1973 a marzo de 1990s*', Archivo CODEPU, Santiago, 2003, pp. 126–27, quoted in Gabriel Salazar, *Villa Grimaldi (Cuartel Terranova). Historia Testimonia, Reflexión*, Villa Grimaldi, Corporación Parque Por la Paz, Santiago, 2013, p. 112.

Conversely, others have speculated on the wisdom of such a performance. Claudio Durán, was concerned that different experiences were represented neither in the 'blindfold and *parrilla*' theme, nor in the Park for Peace itself. Where was comradeship? Where was resistance? He reflected that, though the blindfold was the military's first weapon of control, he and others could see below it. On trips to the ablutions, he could physically feel others in the line. *Beneath the blindfold, we were clearly and definitely us*. After torture he could comfort another victim: *Compañero, tranquilízate*. On occasions when the men were placed in a larger cell, the feeling was stronger still, especially among the recently tortured:

This is ours. It was really yours, mine, everybody's. Pure undisguised humanity. Real love, without formalities. Sharing bread or the shaky bed with new arrivals, or a cigarette passed through the bars by a guard, the gaze of the one who gave it to you, just for that, Just for that. Two puffs each, hand it on. Gestures flying about on a sea of humanity.<sup>39</sup>

Roberto Merino Jorquera recalled that prisoners who were ordered to sit on a bench would rub against the skin of another, unidentifiable, detainee. He felt the sensation of two bodies close together. *It was a wonderful sensation of closeness even though we didn't know who it was*.

To be received back into human shelter and comfort after electrical torture, unable to stand, bleeding, and broken. And it was incredible, after everything that happened, while a minute later, they'd ask you in a low voice, 'How are you, comrade, are you OK?' And get you to bed, cover you with something, because you'd be trembling. 'Comrade, take it easy. Rest. Don't have any water.'<sup>40</sup> And some would stroke your hair as well. Treated you as a child. Little by little you felt surrounded by a human warmth, of men, of women, of what was outside but slowly you'd relax. Is it because you're breathing the return of humanity? But you remain sceptical and suspicious. How could it be that barely five metres away you've passed from a chamber filled with inhumanity to one recharged with humanity? How to die and be reborn in such a short time?<sup>41</sup>

39 Claudio Durán, 'Autobiografía de un ex-jugador de ajedrez', in Salazar, Gabriel, Villa Grimaldi (Cuartel Terranova). Historia Testimonia, Reflexión, Villa Grimaldi, Corporación Parque de la Paz, Santiago, 2013, pp. 44–46.

40 Drinking water after electrical torture was thought to be sometimes fatal.

41 Claudio Durán, *Autobiografía de un ex-jugador de ajedrez* [Autobiography of a ex-chess player], pp. 44–46, reproduced in Salazar, *Villa Grimaldi (Cuartel Terranova)*, pp. 209–11.

To the intellectuals of the former MIR like Roberto Merino, fresh from a sociology PhD at the Sorbonne in 2006, the defeated blindfold was more than just a way of outwitting the guards. The blindfold was a symbol of the state's attempt at hegemonising its absolute power to subjugate the body of its subjects. Detainee initiatives like peering below it, comforting a tortured victim or feeling the touch of skin, manifested resistance to that absolute power of the state. Resistance took many forms. The detainees never stopped trying to communicate with each other: one could pull the threads of the blindfold one by one so that the guards would not notice, the intention not so much to survive to tell the story, simply to get through the day with the support of one's fellow humans ranged against absolutist power. Shortly after he completed his thesis, Merino wrote an article for a multi-authored volume significantly entitled *Memories in Search of History: Further Explorations in the Political Uses of Memory*:

When we try to comprehend 'what has happened to us' it is not to explain what happened to us from analogies and generalities that have appeared a multitude of times. To comprehend the meaning we have to start from the beginning with scientific rigour but at the same time to sound deeply in order to disentangle what has been hidden and objectified within the society, and searching for the deepest significance of what has occurred.<sup>42</sup>

After he completed his thesis, Merino became a tour guide in 2008. In discarding Matta's litany of evils presented to tourists, he used his Foucauldian theorisings to *shape* the experience, to give meaning to the inexpressible, somehow to comprehend that the experience went *beyond* guards and torture, to enrich the compendium of human sociology.

This meant, Merino explained to 15 somewhat bemused tourists on a hot November afternoon in 2008 that we should recognise the epistemological rupture (he meant dwelling on the emotions) that speaks of pain, suffering and torture, and utilise the more objectified terms of punishment, internment and extermination. 'Besides, I cannot transport the pain of torture to you, for pain is individual. All I can do is explain the meaning of suffering.' Furthermore, the description of

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42 Roberto Merino, 'Memoria, olvido y silencios de un centro secreto de secuestro', in (unnamed editor) *Memorias en Busca de Historia, Más Allá de Los Usos Políticos de la Memoria*, Universidad Bolivariana, LOM Ediciones, Santiago, 2008, p. 91.



pain meant returning the observer to the state's absolute power over its victims, its disciplining of the body, its Panopticon control over its citizens. Detainees could be thought of not just as prisoners but 'that forming a social-political category'. The park itself was both aesthetic and symbolic. Beneath the violence of imperialism lay the structure of everyday violence outside the walls of the institution. Torture took place, yes: 'just here was where the flesh was thrown onto the *parrilla*'. The 'mercantilist production of social relations' allowed an array of possibilities for every individual, such as the solidarity of rubbing one's skin against an unknown fellow detainee. The traitors, the informers, the turncoats, the collaborators negotiated their own place in the social structure. Even the memorial wall, without the necessary sociological profile of the victims themselves, tended to objectify the experience. Tours such as these could return but little of the experience. *Only we can do that. If you want more, get it from the archives.* 'The essential point that I want you to remember', he concluded to his audience, 'is that in the end it is pain inflicted on bodies.'<sup>43</sup>

It was an extraordinary performance. Only occasionally had Merino referred to his own experiences as a MIRista detainee as part of 'ours'. Only a brief pause or a moment's faraway expression had signalled the prodigious attempt to drain his discourse of personal remembrance. He had every reason not to do so: Roberto Merino Jorquera, unknown to his audience, in 1998 was one of seven individuals who brought an indictment against the dictator Pinochet himself. It was Merino's own flesh that had been thrown on the *parrilla*. This man had been tied to a chair for several days and had a plastic bag tied over his head with the constant menace of asphyxiation.<sup>44</sup> In circumstances infinitely more agonising than anything proposed by the social scientist on whose

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43 For an interesting discussion on Chilean trauma testimony, including the objectification of self by use of the third person, see Jaume Peris Blanes, 'Testimonies of Chilean exile: Between public protest and the working through of trauma', in Colman Hogan and Marta Marín Domine, eds, *The Camp: Narratives of Internment and Exclusion*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, 2009, pp. 298–319.

44 'Roberto Francisco Merino Jorquera', in 'Auto de Procesamiento de 10.12.98 contra Augusto Pinochet Ugarte', [Indictment against Augusto Pinochet Ugarte], Puro Chile.

principles Merino's thought was rooted, for a full 90 minutes he had guided his audience on a tour of Villa Grimaldi without ever having used the singular personal pronoun.<sup>45</sup>

A counsellor may seek to equip the storyteller to make meaning of their experience.<sup>46</sup> Historians may hold that part of the explanation process is finding someone to blame, to transfer responsibility, generally to a higher authority, or to bring a violent past into such a state of order that no longer burdens the present.<sup>47</sup> It was as if, to the Villa Grimaldi intellectuals, there had to be more to the experience than a tale of hope, bonding, disappointment, capture, pain and catastrophic political defeat. *There must be a further meaning*. Michele Drouilly, ever the subversive, disagreed with Merino's interpretation. She thought it a misguided attempt, rehearsed by many others studying overseas, to make Latin American history fit European models. Once, she relates, she asked Merino to mend a teapot lid. He did so beautifully, but it would no longer fit the teapot!

Several women detainees at Villa Grimaldi took their reflections in quite different directions. Carmen Rojas found herself in a cell of some 20 square metres with 30 women for close company. Some she described as hostile, indifferent or bewildered, those whom Rojas supposed to have betrayed information or whose partners had done so. But she warmly recalled smiles and kindly gestures by other women. In low voices the women discussed what had gone so wrong with the socialist experiment. Had they adopted the wrong tactics? Or had the implementation of the tactics been wrong? Everyone took part; anyone who did not ran the risk of being accused of capitulating.

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45 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Vintage, New York, 1975/1995.

46 David W. Peters, 'A spiritual war: Crises of faith in combat chaplains from Iraq and Afghanistan', in Cave and Sloan, *Listening on the Edge*, Oxford University Press, London, 2014, p. 234.

47 Taylor Kruass, 'In the Ghost Forest, Listening to Tutsi Rexcapés', in Cave and Sloan, *Listening on the Edge*, Oxford University Press, London, 2014, p. 99; Mark Cave, 'What remains: Reflections on crisis oral history', in Cave and Sloan, *Listening on the Edge*, Oxford University Press, London, 2014, p. 4.

Having been kept, often, in larger numbers, the women's experience seems to have been both more collectively shared and openly reflected upon than the men's.<sup>48</sup>

Gladys Díaz Armijo was a MIRista and well-known journalist who reportedly spent more time in Villa Grimaldi – three months – than anyone else. Immediately on arrival at Villa Grimaldi she was beaten. An unidentified voice snarled, 'Leave this bitch for me'. Her blindfold was caked in old blood: 'Don't worry about it, you won't be getting out alive anyway.' Strapped to the *parrilla*, she once regained consciousness to recognise the same man, by his voice, raping her. During each of the several sessions on the *parrilla*, her screams were so high-pitched and continuous that she could not recognise her own voice. After each session she bled from every orifice, including her breasts and her navel. 'I didn't give myself permission to feel the pain ... So much electrical current that it's hard to understand that the body can resist it.' She was forced to watch her partner being tortured. Some of her many bones smashed by beatings have never healed. Afterwards Gladys Díaz, like Rojas, reflected a humanism similar to that of Claudio Durán or Roberto Merino. 'The worst part of torture is not the physical pain that you suffer – I think that the worst part of torture is to have to realise in such a brutal way that human beings are capable of doing something so aberrant to another person as torturing them.'<sup>49</sup> From Díaz's experiences grew a love of humanity: 'I believed, and still believe, in humanity despite such unbelievable crimes ... I gained a profound admiration of the human being. I felt such a capacity of love so unconditional that I had never felt before. And that remains.' Like several other women detainees, she also carried her humanism into a more feminine sensibility. She found that 'the ways that one finds to defend oneself are unlimited. I sometimes dreamt about beautiful things ... I remember having awakened to the sound of a little bird that was outside, and how I was able to keep the sound of that bird's singing in my ears for days ...' Díaz was one of few survivors of detention in the tower, after which, having been unable to stretch her legs for so long, she was quite unable to walk.

48 Carmen Rojas, *Recuerdos de una MIRista* [Memories of a MIRista], edición mimeografiada, Jose Miguel Bravo, Santiago, 1995, pp. 56–57; see also 'Chile's Villa Grimaldi remembers horror of Pinochet years' (interview with Lelia Pérez), *Santiago Times*, 7 July 2013.

49 Thomas Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and international Human Rights*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, 2007, p. 65.

Even more significant to her was the collective experience. She found that 'after using an almost bald toothbrush shared by 20 other women, one lost all one's arrogance'. The women formed their own resistance groups. They made domino tiles out of the tiny bread ration. Less restricted than the men, they celebrated each other's birthdays and explained the recipes they would use for celebration feasts. If no guards were present in the cell, they removed their blindfolds to greet old friends. 'You had a friend. A special friend at the absolute limit of the capacity and full sense of friendship.'

Humanity, in this confused situation, there was no recognising hierarchies. Only comradeship. Only solidarity. Wasn't it this, precisely this, the essential truth of our life project for our society? Wasn't it here, in these moments? In this place, in a chemically pure form, the supreme reason for our struggle? To feel this here, right here, was to take the elixir of life.

Díaz 'worked at continuing to develop myself and to find inside the feminine soul, my own soul. I had always worked with men and then I wanted to recover the best of the feminine soul.' Together many of the women became collectively stronger than ever. They embroidered a handkerchief with the dove of love and peace from threads pulled out of brooms or prison blankets. They passed from mouth to mouth a cigarette butt thrown away by a guard. They shared the remainder of a guard's pudding 'spoonful by spoonful, mouth by mouth'. They sang the Angel Parra children's song 'The three peaks'; one Saturday night they danced without music.<sup>50</sup>

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50 Drawn from Díaz, interviews, in Luz Carmen Castillo, *La Flaca Alejandra*, documentary, 1993; see also Tamara Vidaurrázaga Aránguiz, *Mujeres en Rojo y Negro*, Ediciones Escapararte, Santiago, 2006, pp. 302–314.



Fragment of electrified barbed wire, one of the few remaining artefacts surviving from Cuartel Villanova (Villa Grimaldi).

Source: Photograph by Peter Read, editing Con Boekel.

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At this point, Michele Drouilly re-enters the story of Villa Grimaldi as a major curator of its current displays. For years, as a corporation member, she had chafed at the lack of any obvious humanising impulse in the displays. The Wall of Names provided no more than a date of death, even less than the pavement inscriptions outside Londres 38. In about 2002 she began to persuade the corporation, first, to establish a 'Memory Room', to portray the lives of the victims before incarceration – and to allow her to begin work on it.

The objections of the management rested on one of those aching dichotomies that we have encountered so often, between the survivors and the relatives of the disappeared. Jacqueline's death, like that of every person taken into Villa Grimaldi and never accounted for, was unconfirmed, nor her body found. She was merely 'missing'. Apart from the Wall of Names, she and the rest of the detained-disappeared were nowhere. Passionately but coolly Michele analysed the precinct. 'You survivors', she told the committee,

are the victors. I represent the vanquished, the detained-disappeared. *Where are we represented? We have nowhere to go. Nowhere.* If you want it never to happen again, then you must allow people to empathise, and the most direct way to do this is through the objects of their daily lives.

The mostly male committee gave in, not least, in Michele's view, because they had been thus shamed by a woman.<sup>51</sup>

Michele's 'Memory Room' was to be as personal and individualised as the rest of the display was not. Eighteen months later, installed in what had been probably a store room for the swimming pool nearby, her collections were ready and the queues to see the objects enormous. On the outside wall, she invoked the emotions of her visitors in majestic Spanish rhetoric impossible to render in English:

Today, this room is a testament to the men and women who disappeared from here or who were executed here.

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<sup>51</sup> This section drawn mainly from Michele Drouilly, interview, 4 April 2015.

The objects on display here are the originals providing evidence of the past of women and men which are so simple that they are often forgotten. Today they are the Detained Disappeared or Executed in this place.

The people who disappeared from here or who were murdered here loved, created, sang, prayed, cried, wrote, read and above all, fought for a better world ... In other words, they lived, like you and the people you love do.

We invite you to enter with respect, so that you may learn something of their lives.

Out of the more than 200 victims eligible to be represented, Michele Drouilly chose some 30 based on a sample of each major political party of the left. To the family of each she wrote appealing for objects and memorabilia, which she would then display, with their personal history, in glass cases. Each family responded differently, some ignoring the request, some sending the objects, some inviting Michele to visit them. The wife of a detained-disappeared was so traumatised that she had never visited Villa Grimaldi, and asked a friend to deliver the objects. One procrastinated so long that her disappeared, and famous, father is not represented even now.

Several of Michele Drouilly's captions reiterated the authenticity of each of the mundane objects: no archetype, no substitute, but each artefact of precious everyday significance *because* it belonged to each of the disappeared. Again and again she had to stress to the donors that she did not want their own testimonies or poems. 'This is their space, not yours.' Several she had to return to them. Objects, though, were sacred. Letters, a belt, a passport photo, *Treasure Island* in Spanish, a razor, the spoon someone always stirred his maté tea with. The exception to her insistence on original objects was the cabinet containing some found objects: beach sand, shells, a thimble, a hair ribbon and photographs provided by the family, and a letter. Its author was Marta Lidia Ugarte Román, a senior member of the Communist Party arrested on 24 August 1976 and held, briefly, in the Villa Grimaldi tower. Her broken, tortured and mutilated body, thrown from a security forces helicopter, washed up on a beach 182 kilometres north of Santiago. Evidently the piece of railway line tied to the sack holding her body

had become detached, allowing the body to float to the beach.<sup>52</sup> Some 15 years after Marta Ugarte's death, Michele collected these objects from the very beach where her body had appeared. Another victim whose death meant much to the survivors of Villa Grimaldi was that of Carlos Alberto Carrasco Matus, known as Mauro, a 21-year-old conscript with leftist leanings, unfortunate enough to be detailed to the guardroom at Villa Grimaldi.<sup>53</sup> He is known to have spoken kind words and smuggled extra food to the detainees. Discovered, he was tied to the ombú tree that survived from the gracious pre-Pinochet era and flogged to death with chains. From his family Michele collected half a dozen photographs, his army insignia, and the shirt he was wearing the day he was arrested.

Naturally it is the section dedicated to her sister Jacqueline to which Michele has dedicated her most loving, sorrowful attention. Above her name she reproduced an epigram of Benedetti:

They are somewhere, in cloud or tomb,  
 They are somewhere, I am certain of that  
 Over there far beyond the reach of the soul<sup>54</sup>  
 (Tr. Paula González Dolan)

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52 'Marta Lidia Ugarte Román', Memoria Viva; Mark Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet: Recovering the Truth*, University of Pennsylvania Press, ebook, 2010, pp. 87–88. Similar to the obscene scenario invented by the DINA following the murder of Lumi Videla Moya, the conservative press speculated that she had been dismembered by a sex maniac, even by her lover.

53 'Carlos Alberto Carrasco Matus', Memoria Viva, [www.memoriaviva.com/Desaparecidos/D-C/car-mat.htm](http://www.memoriaviva.com/Desaparecidos/D-C/car-mat.htm); Steve Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London, 1988*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2004, p. 79.

54 Estan en algún sitio/nube o tumba  
 estan en algún sitio, estoy seguro  
 allá en el sur del alma





The Ombú tree, Villa Grimaldi. No signage attaches to it. Only Michele Drouilly's 'Memory room' gives an account of what happened here.

Source: Photograph by Peter Read, editing Con Boekel.

Under the caption 'Jacqueline Paulette Drouilly Yurich', Michele began:

The objects contained in the case are the originals and belonged to her. The colour and texture of the paper underneath evoke the pullover knitted by her that she wore on the day she was taken to an unknown destination.

The fragment is part of the pillowcase on which she would have laid her head on 31 October, if she had not been detained.

The fragments are the remains of a ceramic vase which she cherished dearly, and which was found broken on the floor of the house, in the days after her detention.

The book [*Treasure Island*] Jacqueline read with great enthusiasm when she was studying at the German College in Temuco.

The embroidery threads remained held in her sewing box until now.

The little flowers are the remains of a dress from the time when she was a little girl.

The photo of her with her arm raised, has written on the reverse, 'For Marcelo, on the slope at Lastarria, like the Statue of Liberty'.

And the photo of her as a little girl is the only one remaining, a little photo of a happy little girl.

Jacqueline, you are always with us.<sup>55</sup>

Not displayed, however, is the clock with its shattered glass, its hands set at 14 minutes to 11 in the evening. That remains with Michele.

Yet her work of mourning and remembrance she believed was not yet complete.

Beside the ombú tree, the major survivor of the original Villa was the rose garden. The Cuartel Terranova commandant retained the roses because his weekend visitors to the swimming pool liked them. Ironically they meant even more to the detainees, especially those in the tower nearby, whose scent they could discern when all other sensory faculties were fading. Again Michele saw her opportunity and put it to the corporation that not only should the garden be preserved but the families of each of the 36 known female detained-disappeared of Villa Grimaldi be invited to place a rose within it in her honour. Someone suggested a tree instead: no, she countered, there would be too much dissent about whose was taller. Once accomplished, the families of other women killed or disappeared elsewhere in Chile up to 1980 she invited to take part, followed by those killed or disappeared in the whole period of the dictatorship.<sup>56</sup> More than 150 roses of every hue and bloom now waft their scent only metres from the little artefacts contained in the glass case of Jacqueline.

Jacqueline was now memorialised with the other women in the rose garden – but where was her body? The only hint was the ghastly fate of Marta Ugarte, whose body had freed itself from its lump of railway line, designed to make it sink, before floating ashore. Rumours that the mass disposal of drugged or dead bodies at sea had continued until 1978 were sensationally confirmed after underwater investigations

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55 See also the extensive entries of the life of Jacqueline Drouilly online, such as Memoria Viva, [www.memoriaviva.com/English/victims/Drouilly.html](http://www.memoriaviva.com/English/victims/Drouilly.html).

56 See the rose garden in Carmen Gloria Soto Gutiérrez, 'Hoy un parque para la paz... ayer, un lugar para la muerte. Villa Grimaldi, ex Cuartel Terranova. Chile, 1974–1978: Un espacio para la memoria colectiva', *Revista Sans Soleil – Estudios de la Imagen*, No. 4, 2012, 224–242.

uncovered fragments of rusty iron at the bottom of Quintero Bay, near Valparaíso. Although not initiating the project, Michele took part in framing the requests to the Ministry of the Interior to have the remains placed in the care of the Villa Grimaldi Corporation for conservation and display. In these days before the National Museum of Memory and Human Rights, it seemed that no one in the ministry knew what to do with them: they arrived at Villa Grimaldi one day by courier, wrapped in a parcel.<sup>57</sup> The remains were at length housed in a copper coloured cube-shaped structure balanced on one corner, perhaps to make it seem that it has been dropped from a great height. Visitors entered no more than eight at a time. The silence of the darkened interior was broken only by the recorded sound of the sea. Gradually to the visitor the subdued lighting revealed the rusty fragments, some no bigger than a matchbox, some larger and recognisable pieces of railway line. In a humanising gesture of which Michele Drouilly undoubtedly approved, a button rested on a piece of iron, lying just as it had been supposedly found many metres beneath the surface. For the new exhibition Michele wrote in the brochure still given to each visitor, 'the unique evidence of this monstrous form of annihilation applied to hundreds of prisoners of the dictatorship'.<sup>58</sup> It was not difficult to imagine that Jacqueline had shared the fate of Marta Ugarte.

The flame burns, but Michele Drouilly, like all the older corporation members, feels her age. Someone wrote to her suggesting a new rose garden in remembrance of the disappeared men. 'Good idea. Go and do it.' She abandoned an attempt to organise a 40th anniversary of Jacqueline's disappearance among her sisters: too much trauma, too much dissent, too many unlaidd memories of family conflicts that had flourished not before 1974, but after. 'I just didn't have the heart to do it.' And the most sacred object of all, Jacqueline's broken clock, remains firmly in her possession.

Michele's efforts to humanise those whom she called 'the vanquished', that is, the detained-disappeared and politically executed, had quietly subverted the priorities of all the memorials we have so far considered. Her Memory Room demanded that Jacqueline and the others be recognised not as ideologues, victims, heroes, martyrs, MIRistas,

57 The Museum of Memory and Human Rights was opened in 2010, [www.museodelamemoria.cl/](http://www.museodelamemoria.cl/).

58 Anon [Michele Drouilly], 'Testimonio Rieles' [Testimony of the railway lines], Corporación Parque de la Paz Villa Grimaldi, pamphlet, n.d., c. 2008.

Communists or Socialists, but as ordinary people with extraordinary dreams, a long life of promise before them. Her display depoliticised, then recreated, their lives to be treasured as individuals, not exemplars. Unnoticed at the time, her insistence pointed to a new direction of memorialisation that would be much more apparent five years later.

This text is taken from *Narrow But Endlessly Deep: The struggle for memorialisation in Chile since the transition to democracy*, by Peter Read and Marivic Wyndham, published 2016 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.