

'Every Reader Is Guilty, Every Text Is Murderous': Witnessing Femicide through Complicity and Perpetration

Sofía Forchieri

Abstract: One of the cornerstones of femicide memory culture as it has evolved in Latin America over the past three decades is that memory work should focus on the victims and not on the killers. Increasingly, however, writers, filmmakers, and artists are venturing to explore the mind, voice, and motives of femicide perpetrators. This article aims to make sense of how this stream of commemoration intervenes in present femicide memory culture. Drawing on scholarship in perpetrator studies, complicity studies, and decolonial feminisms, it argues that perpetrator-centred narratives can productively diversify femicide memory culture by opening up witnessing positions that are structured by complicity and implication. To develop this argument, the article analyses a recent creative engagement with the figure of the femicide perpetrator: María Eugenia Cerutti's experimental, multimodal work *Con toda la muerte al aire* (With All the Death Laid Bare, 2021). The article concludes by suggesting that because they ground testimony in implication and complicity, perpetrator-centred works of memory can enable alternative ways of witnessing femicide that are shaped by discomfort and, potentially, self-reflexivity.

Keywords: femicide, cultural memory, complicity, perpetration, perpetrator, María Eugenia Cerutti, fascination, discomfort

Introduction

The concept of femicide refers to the murder of a woman or girl in which there is a gender component that frequently overlaps with other elements related to race, class, and/or sexual orientation.¹ Even though it is often framed as a problem endemic to the Global South, femicide is, in fact, a global phenomenon that cuts across 'boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity,

1 Myrna Dawson and Saide Mobayed Vega, 'Femicide and Femicide: A Growing Global Human Rights Movement', in *The Routledge International Handbook on Femicide and Femicide*, ed. by Dawson and Mobayed Vega (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 3-14 (p. 6).

and age.² To be sure, context-specific histories and dynamics shape femicide in distinct ways. And yet, misogynistic killings of women by men across varying geopolitical locations are interconnected. For one, because they are instances of political violence rooted in unequal gender structures and often tolerated by states that allow femicide to continue with impunity. For another, because they produce, as Rosa-Linda Fregoso argues by drawing on the work of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub on the Holocaust, 'crises of witnessing.'³ Femicide aims to silence its victims, annihilating them as witnesses. The fact that 'one cannot bear witness from inside femicide'⁴ poses substantial challenges to the articulation of testimony when it comes to extreme gender violence.

One of the most remarkable collective efforts at creatively overcoming these challenges can be found in Latin America, which has some of the highest femicide rates worldwide.⁵ With the aim of breaking the silence that femicide leaves in its wake, in the past three decades family members and friends of victims, along with feminist activists and artists throughout the region have been struggling to construct witnessing positions from where to speak out and remember extreme gender violence. Their combined efforts have given rise to a thriving and transnational memory culture. Following Elizabeth Jelin, I understand memory as a struggle through which the meaning of the past is constructed 'in the present and in relation to a desired future,'⁶ and memory culture as the manifestation of that struggle in various cultural practices and products.⁷ Femicide memory culture, in this sense, includes media such as literature, photography, film, theatre, (digital) archives, monuments, and memorials, as well as a repertoire of embodied performances—all of which make past instances of extreme violence against women present. These mnemonic practices are characterised by a distinct sense of urgency, as they evolve not after the violence has occurred, but concurrently with it. They are therefore less concerned with working through a violent past in order to avoid

2 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Suhad Daher-Nashif, 'Femicide and Colonization: Between the Politics of Exclusion and the Culture of Control', *Violence Against Women*, 19.3 (2013), 295–315 (p. 297).

3 Rosa-Linda Fregoso, *The Force of Witness: Contra Femicide* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2023), p. 7.

4 Ibid.

5 Dawson and Mobayed Vega, p. 6.

6 Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, trans. by Judy Rein and Marcial Godoy-Anatívia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 3.

7 Ibid., p. 42.

it from happening again, than with working against ongoing violence. Hence, femicide memory culture tends to fall within the scope of memory activism, which Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg define as '*the strategic commemoration of a contested past to achieve mnemonic or political change*'.⁸ Femicide remembrance, in other words, is often inseparable from anti-femicide activism.

So far, the work of femicide memory activists, those who mobilise memory as a way of 'of intervening in the process of societal change from below',⁹ has been largely focused on articulating and making gender violence visible. This is especially true for the initial stages of femicide commemoration. Memory activists had to work against an entrenched 'historic system of classification that privatised and thereby rendered invisible gendered forms of violence'.¹⁰ Making the invisible visible, naming what had no name, and achieving recognition for an experience long obscure, barely speakable, and poorly understood were vital for pushing the memory of femicide from the private to the public and political realm. These efforts at visibilisation have had tangible effects. Femicide memory activism has been key to the consolidation and cross-border expansion of the feminist movement #NiUnaMenos throughout Latin America in the last decade.¹¹ And it has certainly played a significant role in the gradual modification of shared interpretive frameworks for understanding and perceiving extreme gender violence. Recently, however, evidence indicates that there might be problematic aspects to visibilisation as a means for generating awareness, empathy, and solidarity. A study on social perceptions of gender violence conducted in Argentina, for instance, found that the increased visibility of femicidal violence is often linked to sensationalist practices of representation that risk turning femicide into a form of entertainment.¹² Echoing these findings, a

8 Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg, 'Introduction: The Activist Turn in Memory Studies', in *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, ed. by Gutman and Wüstenberg (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 1–11 (p. 5). Emphasis in original.

9 Ibid., p. 6. Emphasis in original.

10 Fregoso, p. 73.

11 Marcela A. Fuentes, '#NiUnaMenos (#NotOneWomanLess): Hashtag Performativity, Memory, and Direct Action against Gender Violence in Argentina', in *Women Mobilizing Memory*, ed. by Ayşe Gül Altınay and others (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), pp. 172–91.

12 Brenda Focás and Gabriel Kessler, 'Ni Una Menos: Los femicidios no son una novela', *Revista Anfibia*, 3 June 2021, <<https://www.revistaanfibia.com/ni-una-menos-femicidios-no-son-novela>> [accessed 6 August 2024]. See also Gabriel Kessler and others, *El delito televisado: cómo se producen y consumen las noticias sobre inseguridad y violencia en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2022).

study led by Mexican anthropologist Rossana Reguillo demonstrates that the heightened public attention towards femicide coexists with sensationalistic media coverage and pervasive fascination.¹³

The realisation that the politics of visibilisation has 'become a problem'¹⁴ seems to be gradually setting across the arenas of academia, activism, and the arts. There is a growing body of scholarship by feminist academics who decry the violence that often underlies the cultural representation of femicide.¹⁵ Artists and activists, for their part, increasingly reflect on the implication of the arts and culture in the trivialisation of gender violence. These critical reckonings can be understood as indications that femicide memory culture is entering a new, highly self-reflexive stage. Whereas, in this sense, early stages of femicide commemoration were largely focused on countering pervasive practices of silencing and structural forgetting from below, present femicide memory culture, having attained some – albeit always contingent – degree of stability, is increasingly turning to critically observe its own activity.

One of the most heated debates in this moment of intense and simultaneous 'memory-productivity and memory-reflexivity'¹⁶ is whether perpetrators should have a place in femicide memory culture. This article zeroes in on this controversy. The first section presents a stream of commemoration that is venturing to explore the perpetrator, challenging the active resistance to engaging with this figure that has prevailed until now. Taking these observations as a point of departure, the second section then asks how this insurgent work of remembrance intervenes in femicide memory culture. Drawing on scholarship from the fields of perpetrator studies and complicity studies, I argue that there is value to be found in certain artistic works that invite audiences to identify with the perpetrators of femicidal violence. Specifically, the central contention of this article is that artistic engagements with

13 @Signa_Lab, 'Ingrid Escamilla: Apagar el Horror', *Signalab*, 14 February 2020, <<https://signalab.mx/2020/02/14/ingrid-escamilla-apagar-el-horror>> [accessed 6 August 2024].

14 Irmgard Emmelhainz, *The Tyranny of Common Sense: Mexico's Post-Neoliberal Conversion* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2021), p. 171.

15 See, e.g., Rita Segato, *Contra-pedagogías de la crueldad* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2018), Mariana Berlanga Gayón, 'El feminicidio y la estética del horror', in *Condiciones de la globalización, políticas neoliberales y dinámicas de género: Aproximaciones desde el Sur*, ed. by Helena López and Adriana Arreola (Mexico City: UNAM, Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios de Género, 2018), pp. 77–79; Rossana Reguillo, 'Ensayos sobre el abismo: políticas de la mirada, violencia, tecnopolítica', *Encartes*, 6.11 (2023), 5–36; and Sayak Valencia and Sonia Herrera Sánchez, 'Pornomiseria, violencia machista y mirada colonial en los filmes *Backyard: El traspatio* y *La mujer del animal*', *Anclajes*, 24.3 (2020), 6–27.

16 Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, trans. by Sara B. Young (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 151.

the figure of the perpetrator can productively diversify feminicide memory culture by opening up witnessing positions that are structured by complicity and implication. Because they are uncomfortable and unfamiliar, these witnessing positions can draw attention to the process of witnessing *itself*, raising pressing questions about our practices of reading and spectating when it comes to extreme gender violence. The self-critical potential of many perpetrator-centred works of memory, I argue, is especially meaningful in the broader context of critical reflection about existing structures of feminicide commemoration. To develop these arguments in more depth, the third section of the article turns to a recent artistic engagement with the figure of the feminicide perpetrator: Argentine photographer María Eugenia Cerutti's *Con toda la muerte al aire* (With All the Death Laid Bare, 2021). This experimental, multimodal work recalls the feminicide of Alcira Methyger, killed by her partner Jorge Burgos in Buenos Aires in 1955, and comprises two volumes. The first one brings together photographs, archival material, and news clippings related to the case. The second volume is the reedition of the self-exonerating testimony titled *Yo no maté a Alcira* (I Didn't Kill Alcira) that the perpetrator wrote from jail in 1955, followed by present-day images of the scenes of the crime. Cerutti's work of memory-making is rooted in two core accusations that are printed on the inner side of the slipcase enclosing the two volumes: 'every reader is guilty' and 'every text is murderous.'¹⁷ By taking complicity as the starting ground for testimony, I hope to show, *Con toda la muerte al aire* disrupts familiar structures of feminicide witnessing and develops an original response to the crisis of witnessing produced by the killing of women.

The Turn to the Perpetrator in Feminicide Memory Culture

One of the cornerstones of feminicide memory culture as it has evolved in the past three decades is that feminicide memory work should centre on the victims and not on the killers. This ethical premise has been an important beacon for feminicide memory activists ever since the earliest attempts at publicly bearing witness to feminicide in Ciudad Juárez in the 1990s. One of its most impactful articulations can be found in *El silencio que la voz de todas quiebra* (1999), a testimonial work co-written

¹⁷ María Eugenia Cerutti, *Con toda la muerte al aire* (Buenos Aires: SED Editorial, 2021), n.p.: 'Todo lector es culpable, todo texto es asesino.'

by a group of writers and journalists from the border city that lead the way in countering the official, victim-blaming narrative of femicide prevalent at the time. In the prologue to the book, the writers state that their goal was to write 'a book of life, not death.'¹⁸ To ensure this outcome, they explain, throughout the book they deliberately refuse to give voice to the murderers and instead consistently spotlight the victims and their life stories.

The belief that femicide remembrance should actively draw focus away from the perpetrators and toward the victims persists to this day. In a recently published essay, Pulitzer Prize-winner Cristina Rivera Garza warns us against the fascination exerted by femicide perpetrators and calls on us to look to the victims instead:

Let's not lose our compass or give prominence to those who don't deserve it: the road is long. Let's keep inventing [...] more ways of seeing them [femicide victims], of hearing them, of producing language and presence and memory with them.¹⁹

Rivera Garza's entreaty has deeply resonated within debates about the ethics of femicide representation and has been widely endorsed by Latin American feminist writers and intellectuals. To name but one example, in her 2024 essay *Coloquio de las quiltras* (Dialogue of the Bitches, 2024) Chilean writer Lina Meruane backs the claim that remembering femicide requires narratives that place the victim's life front and centre 'without granting her killer prominence, without giving him a single word.'²⁰

There are powerful reasons behind the feminist postulate to avoid making perpetrators the object of femicide narration and remembrance. On the one hand, as Rivera Garza and Meruane argue in the interventions mentioned above, there is a long history of patriarchal narratives that glorify femicide perpetrators, while at the same time

18 Rohry Benítez and others, *El silencio que la voz de todas quiebra: mujeres y víctimas de Ciudad Juárez* (Chihuahua: Ediciones del Azar, 1999), p. 6: 'Quisimos construir un libro de vida, no de muerte.' All translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

19 Cristina Rivera Garza, 'Verlas a ellas: El invencible verano de Liliana', *Washington Post*, 8 July 2022, <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/es/post-opinion/2022/07/08/verlas-a-ellas-el-invencible-verano-de-liliana-cristina-rivera-garza/>> [accessed 8 August 2023], n.p.: 'No perdamos la brújula ni le cedamos el protagonismo a quienes no les corresponde: el camino es largo. Sigamos inventando [...] más maneras de verlas a ellas, de oírlas a ellas, de producir lenguaje y presencia y memoria con ellas.'

20 Lina Meruane, *Coloquio de las quiltras: Argumentos caninos ante las crisis del feminismo* (Barcelona: Debate, 2024), p. 104: 'sin otorgarle protagonismo, sin darle ni una sola palabra, a su asesino.'

obscuring the agency of the victims and naturalising or even embellishing their suffering. On the other hand, narratives that purposefully attempt to dodge the risk of constructing femicide perpetrators as mythical, all-mighty figures risk falling into a different trap: that of neutralising them. Mexican writer Fernanda Melchor refers to this representational outcome as the 'normalization' of the femicide perpetrator²¹ and contends that, while diametrically opposed to the glorification of this figure, it is similarly harmful in its effects. Texts that portray femicide perpetrators as 'ordinary men,' argues Melchor, risk reversing roles by presenting killers as victims of circumstances and women as instigators of those circumstances. Such texts also threaten to lend indirect support to femicide perpetrators' own self-exonerating narrative: one in which perpetrators present themselves as 'normal' men driven to violence by exceptional circumstances over which they hold no control.²²

In our present moment, in sum, the dangers of imaginatively engaging with the perspective of men who kill women are the object of intense discussion in public feminist debates. Cognisant of these risks yet refusing to be daunted by them, in the last couple of years artists throughout Latin America have begun to turn to the figure of the femicide perpetrator. This trend is particularly striking in the arena of literature,²³ yet there are also examples in other media.²⁴

21 Fernanda Melchor, 'Baladas del "hombre normal"', *Revista de la Universidad de México*, 2017, <<https://www.revistadelainiversidad.mx/articles/515ad51f-1343-424d-8111-aae74e354ebb/baladas-del-hombre-normal>> [accessed 8 August 2023], n.p.: 'normalización del feminicida.'

22 Dabney P. Evans and others, 'Male Perpetrators' Accounts of Intimate Femicide: A Global Systematic Review', in *The Routledge International Handbook on Femicide and Feminicide*, ed. by Myrna Dawson and Saide Mobayed Vega (New York: Routledge, 2023), pp. 542-53.

23 See, e.g., Liliana Blum, *El monstruo pentápodo* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2016); Laura Restrepo, *Los divinos* (Bogotá: Alfaguara, 2018); Fernanda Melchor, *Paradaís* (Barcelona: Literatura Random House, 2021); Ariana Harwicz, *Degenerado* (Buenos Aires: Anagrama, 2019); Nicolás Poblete, *No me ignores* (Santiago: Editorial Planeta, 2010); Gonzalo Unamuno, *Lila* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Marea, 2018); Rafa Fernández de Castro, *Los objetos en el espejo* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 2019); and Alicia Plante, *La sombra del otro* (Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo Editora, 2016).

24 See, e.g., Ana Laura Pérez Flores, 'Caníbal: Indignación total, cómo falla la serie sobre la crisis de feminicidios', *Gatopardo*, 5 July 2022, <<https://gatopardo.com/noticias-actuales/canibal-indignacion-total-serie-feminicidios>> [accessed 8 August 2023]; Ainhoa Vázquez Mejías, 'Feminicidio en la telenovela *Alguien te mira*: Metáfora de un país misógino', *Polis*, 15.44 (2016), 435-56; Ainhoa Vázquez Mejías, 'Yo solía amarla, pero tuve que matarla: Cancionero del romance feminicida' in *La rueda mágica: Ensayos de música y literatura: Manual para (in)disciplinados*, ed. by Rubi Carreño Bolívar (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2017), pp. 135-54; and Karen Genschow, 'Mirar, violar, matar: políticas y estéticas de la violencia de género en el cine latinoamericano actual', *Revista de Estudios de Género y Sexualidades*, 43.2 (2017), 25-38.

While perpetrator-centred narratives are characterised by a similar attempt to probe the mind, voice, and motives of men who kill women, the ways in which they do so differ greatly. Some narratives involve readers in encounters that are carefully modulated to prevent identification with the perpetrators and to guide readers to adopt an ethical stance towards gender violence. Other narratives, by contrast, conduct more risky experiments, exerting a lower level of control over readers' engagement with perpetrators. We can thus situate cultural narratives centred on the figure of the feminicide perpetrator along a continuum ranging from a higher didactic impulse involving lower ethical risks to a lower didactic impulse involving higher ethical risks. Regardless of their position along this continuum, narratives that facilitate an encounter with the figure of the perpetrator are similarly disruptive against the backdrop of the present feminicide memory landscape. Not only do these narratives challenge the ethical premise that feminicide memory work should turn its back on the figure of the perpetrator. They also diverge from the emerging feminist consensus that the primary task of writers, artists, and filmmakers today is to conjure the life and experience of feminicide victims. In taking up a task that appears diametrically opposed to this, what kind of work do the writers and artists driving the turn towards the perpetrator carry out? And what are the mnemonic, ethical, affective, and political implications of this work?

From Perpetration to Complicity and Implication

Scholarship in perpetrator studies provides important tools for better understanding the gradual turning towards the feminicide perpetrator, but also for making sense of how creative engagements with this figure can play into feminicide memory culture. To begin with, from a perpetrator studies perspective, the heightened focus on violent masculinities and, particularly, on men who kill women, appears not as an isolated phenomenon. Instead, it can be understood as a micro-turn within a larger cultural turn towards the figure of the perpetrator that has been increasingly ascertained over the course of the past decade. The awakening of interest in the mind, motives, and education of subjects who perpetrate violence cuts across diverse cultural memories and has been identified by scholars working on different geopolitical locations and language areas, and on topics as varied as the South American

dictatorships, slavery, the Holocaust, the Spanish Civil War, and other forms of political violence in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.²⁵

To a great extent, perpetrator studies has consolidated as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry in response to this turn. Interestingly, feminicide has received scant attention from scholars in the field, despite the staggering scale of this violence: globally, one woman or girl is killed every 11 minutes.²⁶ Clare Bielby and Jeffrey Stevenson Murer offer one possible explanation for this oversight, arguing that what tends to count as 'political violence' within perpetrator studies is often gendered,²⁷ leaving out forms of violence that are often framed as 'personal,' 'private,' or 'domestic,' yet are, in fact, of political nature. Taking this idea on board, I believe that positioning feminicide as an object of inquiry for perpetrator studies can lead to a productive form of cross-pollination. At the same time as the tools and insights offered by perpetrator studies can illuminate the cultural representation and memory of feminicide perpetrators, exploring feminicide as a case for perpetrator studies can contribute to troubling exclusionary constructions of 'political violence' within the field, thereby pushing its purview beyond its typical limits.

Ever since its emergence, the field of perpetrator studies has been committed to developing theoretical and methodological tools for critically approaching a category – that of the perpetrator – that is politically contested as well as socially and historically contingent.²⁸ A crucial part of this larger endeavour is addressing the issue of representation, that

25 See, e.g., Jonathan Dunnage, 'Perpetrator Memory and Memories About Perpetrators: Editorial,' *Memory Studies*, 3.2 (2010), 91-94; Rick Crownshaw, 'Perpetrator Fictions and Transcultural Memory,' *Parallax*, 17.4 (2011), 75-89; Claudia Feld and Valentina Salvi, 'Presentación. Cuando los Perpetradores Hablan. Dilemas y Tensiones en Torno a una Voz Controvertida,' *Rubrica Contemporánea*, 5.9 (2016), 1-10; Kara Critchell and others, 'Editors' Introduction,' *Journal of Perpetrator Research*, 1 (2017), 1-27; Michael J. Lazzara, 'Familiares de Colaboradores y Perpetradores en el Cine Documental Chileno: Memoria y Sujeto Implicado,' *Atenea*, 521 (2020), 231-48; and Vicente Sánchez Biosca and Lior Zylberman, 'Perpetradores de Crímenes de Masas a la Luz de la Imagen: A Modo de Introducción,' *Papeles del CEIC*, 2 (2021), 1-12.

26 Dawson and Mobayed Vega, p. 6.

27 Clare Bielby and Jeffrey Stevenson Murer, 'Perpetrating Selves: An Introduction,' in *Perpetrating Selves: Doing Violence, Performing Identity*, ed. by Bielby and Stevenson Murer (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 1-17 (p. 5).

28 See Claudia Feld and Valentina Salvi, '¿Qué Hacen los Perpetradores Cuando Hablan? Aportes Metodológicos a Partir de una Investigación Sobre Declaraciones Públicas de Represores (Argentina, 1976-2018),' *Quaderns de Filologia: Estudis Literaris*, 26 (2021), 181-204 (p. 189); Susanne C. Knittel and Zachary J. Goldberg, 'Introduction,' in *The Routledge International Handbook of Perpetrator Studies*, ed. by Susanne C. Knittel and Zachary J. Goldberg (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 1-4 (p. 3).

is, grappling with questions related to how perpetrators represent themselves, but also, no less importantly, to how they are represented by others in different cultural and artistic media.²⁹ Pursuing this line of inquiry, scholars in the field of perpetrator studies have provided sustained explorations of the risks that attend the cultural and artistic representation of perpetrators. For instance, the danger of naturalising perpetrators, or, by contrast, of 'reify[ing] them as abstract embodiments of radical evil';³⁰ the potential of 'dangerous identification'³¹ leading to exoneration; or the risk of condoning the perpetrator's perspective in the process of imaginatively exploring it.³² At the same time, this body of scholarship converges in the idea that, despite – and, for some, precisely *because* – of the risks involved, creative engagements with the figure of the perpetrator have an important role to play in the cultural memory of mass violence as 'catalyst[s] to ethical thought.'³³

One of the first formulations of this argument can be traced back to Tzvetan Todorov's influential essay 'Memory as a Remedy of Evil' (2009). There, Todorov argues that the 'constant identification with heroes or victims'³⁴ and the 'high barrier'³⁵ we tend to raise between perpetrators and ourselves prevents a real understanding of past violence. Acknowledging that perpetrators are not monsters but rather 'as human as we are,'³⁶ in Todorov's view, can open up more critical ways of relating to the violent past. In a related fashion, Rick Crownshaw explores the 'antidotal use of the perpetrator'³⁷ to counterbalance the prevailing structure of identification across cultural memories in which audiences identify with the figure of the victim. Perpetrator-centred narratives,

29 Critchell and others, p. 21; Claudia Feld and Valentina Salvi, 'La construcción social de la figura del perpetrador: procesos sociales, luchas políticas, producciones culturales', *Kamchatka: Revista de Análisis Cultural*, 15 (2020), 5–15 (p. 12).

30 Erin McGlothlin, 'Empathetic Identification and the Mind of the Holocaust Perpetrator in Fiction: A Proposed Taxonomy of Response', *Narrative*, 24.3 (2016), 251–76 (p. 271).

31 Ibid.

32 Stephanie Bird, 'Perpetrators and Perpetration in Literature', in *The Routledge International Handbook of Perpetrator Studies*, ed. by Susanne C. Knittel and Zachary J. Goldberg (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 301–10.

33 Jenni Adams, 'Reading (as) Violence in Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones*', in *Representing Perpetrators in Holocaust Literature and Film*, ed. by Jenni Adams and Sue Vice (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2013), pp. 25–46 (p. 28).

34 Tzvetan Todorov, 'Memory as Remedy for Evil', *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 7.3 (2009), 447–62 (p. 449).

35 Ibid., p. 454.

36 Ibid., p. 453.

37 Crownshaw, p. 75.

he argues, are important means for countering the universalisation of the figure of the victim since they offer possibilities of 'entertaining less palatable forms of identification.'³⁸ More recently, in her essay 'The Ethics of Discomfort' (2019) Susanne Knittel contends that creative encounters with the figure of the perpetrator can 'elicit a productive sense of discomfort'³⁹ in audiences. This affective stance, in turn, can foster self-reflection 'with regard to the continuities between the past and the present and our own implicatedness in structures and processes of violence.'⁴⁰ Knittel's suggestion, in other words, is that an affective and ethical engagement with perpetration can facilitate an uncomfortable reflection about complicity and implication.

Since the early 2000s, scholars across various disciplines have mobilised the concepts of complicity and implication to reflect on how individual and collective actions contribute to different forms of violence and injustice, and to locate responsibility for some of the large-scale harms we face today – including environmental destruction, structural racism, systemic gender violence, poverty, and exploitation. The critical discourse around complicity and implication, in this sense, stems from a dissatisfaction with 'the paradigm of individual, intentional wrongdoing'⁴¹ and, specifically, with its ineffectiveness for capturing indirect, often unconscious, and unintentional relations to violence and harm. To develop a more sophisticated analysis that can grasp the indirect role ordinary subjects play in sustaining the culture, norms, and conditions that allow violence and injustice to occur, some scholars have turned to the concept of complicity. Moving beyond the narrower, legal definition of complicity as conscious and deliberate cooperation in a crime, they retrieve the broader, etymological meaning of 'complicity' as a fundamental form of interlacement or intertwinement. Mark Sanders's work has been pioneering in theoretically framing complicity as an inescapable state of entanglement. In *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (2002), the literary scholar proposes that thinking about complicity is not about 'accusing or excusing,'⁴² but about reflecting on

38 Crownshaw, p. 75.

39 Susanne C. Knittel, 'The Ethics of Discomfort: Critical Perpetrator Studies and/as Education After Auschwitz', in *The Routledge International Handbook of Perpetrator Studies*, ed. by Susanne C. Knittel and Zachary J. Goldberg (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 379–84 (p. 380).

40 Ibid., p. 383.

41 Christopher Kutz, *Complicity: Ethics and Law for a Collective Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 1.

42 Mark Sanders, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p. x.

our positionality within a 'continuum of foldedness'⁴³ or entanglement with the other. Sanders's concedes literature an important role in the process of acknowledging and responding to complicity as it can, he argues, 'reveal an opening to responsibility.'⁴⁴ Attuned to Sanders's understanding of complicity, Debarati Sanyal approaches this concept as 'a structure of engagement that produces ethical and political reflection,'⁴⁵ and centres literature's capacity to alert us to our 'entanglement with distant others and ongoing histories of violence and loss.'⁴⁶ Mihaela Mihai similarly departs from the idea of a basic 'folded-together-ness of being,'⁴⁷ arguing that 'no one acts out of time, out of discourse, out of a power-structured material space.'⁴⁸ In her work, too, complicity emerges as an analytical tool for teasing out the range of positions individuals can occupy on 'the spectrum of involvement in systemic violence,'⁴⁹ and artworks are enlisted as resources for expanding our imagination to detect instances of complicity.⁵⁰

In *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators*, Michael Rothberg presents a case for 'the relational understanding of human action'⁵¹ articulated by Sanders, Sanyal, and Mihai through the concept of complicity. Much like them, Rothberg also probes how artistic works can render complex involvement in structures and histories of violence 'tangible and perceptible.'⁵² Nonetheless, he favours the term implication over complicity. In his view, implication is better suited for describing 'indirect forms of participation' as it is 'more capacious'⁵³ than complicity and less 'tied to legalistic models of responsibility.'⁵⁴ As Ivan Stacy argues, distinguishing implication from complicity, as Rothberg does, can be helpful for better differentiating between 'shades

43 Sanders, p. 11.

44 Ibid., p. 17.

45 Debarati Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), p. 17.

46 Ibid., p. 267.

47 Sanders, p. 11.

48 Mihaela Mihai, *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: The Art of Complicity and Resistance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022), p. 33.

49 Ibid., p. 25.

50 See Mihai, p. 53.

51 Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), p. 13.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., p. 14.

of involvement'⁵⁵ that are shaped by varying degrees of culpability and forms of agency. In this article, however, I approach the two terms as complementary tools for thinking about indirect, complex, and diffuse 'relations between the individual and phenomena that exist in realms different—and vaster— than our own';⁵⁶ systemic gender violence being one such phenomenon. Moreover, I draw on scholarship on complicity *and* implication alike, as each offers resources for addressing one of the key concerns of this research: how artistic works, particularly those that engage with perpetration, can foster a reckoning with questions of complicity, implication, and responsibility.

The notion that engaging with the figure of the perpetrator through narrative and art might be conducive to less universalising memory cultures and more self-reflective forms of witnessing violence has by now become more or less consolidated within multiple scenarios of remembrance, from the memory of the dictatorships and internal conflicts in Latin America, to the Holocaust, and beyond. And yet, it has only recently begun to take root in the scholarly discussion about femicide cultural remembrance and imagination. This, I would argue, has to do with the long-standing reluctance to engage with perpetrators and the cultural products that portray them; a reluctance that, as outlined in the opening paragraphs of this section, still shapes present femicide memory culture.

The reasons behind this defensive stance are well justified. It is indisputable that, historically, patriarchal narratives that centre male perpetrators' agency and psychology at the expense of the female victims have shaped our perception of gender violence, preventing a real grasp of the phenomenon we now call femicide. To be sure, moreover, a thriving cultural industry continues to capitalise on the allure that perpetrators, as well as dead and wounded female bodies, hold for audiences.⁵⁷ And lastly, it is clear that much work needs to be done to reclaim and preserve the memory of femicide victims. Still, I wish to make the case that artistic works and narratives that engage with the voice, motives, and perspectives of men who kill women deserve to be

55 Ivan Stacy, *The Complicit Text: Failures of Witnessing in Postwar Fiction* (London: Lexington, 2021), p. 4.

56 Susanne C. Knittel and Sofía Forchieri, 'There Is No "Elsewhere": Scales of Complicity and Implication in the Contemporary German Generation Novel', in *Violence Elsewhere: Imagining Distant Violence in Germany Since 2001*, ed. by Clare Bielby and Mererid Puw Davies (London: Camden House, 2023), pp. 70–92 (p. 76).

57 Glen S. Close, *Female Corpses in Crime Fiction: A Transatlantic Perspective* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

studied systematically – both with regard to their potential affordances and to their inherent risks – for two key reasons. First, because creative engagements with the perpetrator are an undeniable (and growing) part of femicide memory culture. And second, because they can pay a distinct contribution to caring for what Mihaela Mihai refers to as ‘the health of the hermeneutical space of memory.’⁵⁸

Building on scholarship in perpetrator studies and the theorisations of complicity and implication discussed above, this article makes two arguments. First, that by inviting readers to inhabit positions of perpetration and implication, perpetrator-centred narratives proffer audiences unfamiliar witnessing positions. And second, that by unsettling structures of femicide witnessing that have consolidated over the course of the last three decades, artistic engagements with the perpetrator can – yet do not always – promote alternative practices of witnessing extreme gender violence that are shaped by discomfort and, potentially, self-reflexivity. Let us unpack these interrelated arguments a little more carefully. In victim-centred narratives of femicide, artists tend to respond to the crisis of witnessing inaugurated by femicide by reclaiming the voices of the victims, becoming, in a way, ‘speakers for the dead.’⁵⁹ These testimonies address an ‘empathetic listener, the witness to the witness’⁶⁰ who might be moved into solidarity and political action. Perpetrator-centred narratives, by contrast, conduct the work of femicide remembrance by confronting readers with the motives, discourses, and perspectives of perpetrators. The addressee these narratives tend to construct, moreover, is not an uninvolved, unknowing subject who may be enlisted as an ally, but, rather, a non-ideal, impure subject who might be unsettled into acknowledging their implication in gender violence. Through this specific mode of address and the discomfort it elicits, creative engagements with the figure of the perpetrator introduce an innovative form of witnessing femicide. That is why, I argue, they have a significant role to play in present femicide memory culture. At a moment when memory activists are searching for more self-reflexive forms of visualising, representing, and narrating femicide, perpetrator-centred artworks and narratives can carry out an important work of ‘mnemonic care for the health of the hermeneutical space of memory.’⁶¹ Specifically, by disrupting existing

⁵⁸ Mihai, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Fregoso, p. 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶¹ Mihai, p. 9.

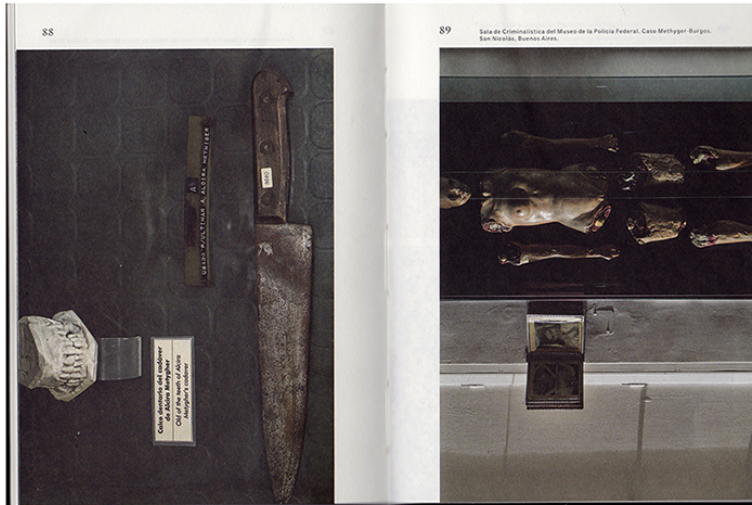


Figure 1: Exhibit of the Methyger-Burgos case at the Federal Police Museum, Buenos Aires.

practices of femicide witnessing, they can encourage self-reflection about how we receive representations of femicidal violence, but also, potentially, about where we stand in relation to that violence.

María Eugenia Cerutti's *Con toda la muerte al aire*

Con toda la muerte al aire recalls the femicide of Alcira Methyger, killed by her partner Jorge Burgos in Buenos Aires in 1955. The creative process that culminated in the book started with a visit Cerutti made to the Federal Police Museum in Buenos Aires in 2014. There, the photographer found a whole exhibition room dedicated to the case displaying images, a dental impression, forensic pictures, and even a replica of Methyger's dismembered body, while shielding the perpetrator from public scrutiny (see Figure 1).⁶² Provoked by the uninterrupted violence towards the victim over six decades, Cerutti set out to perform a work of counter-memory aimed at disputing the official memory of Alcira Methyger's femicide.

62 'María Eugenia Cerutti, *Con toda la muerte al aire*, SED, 2021', *Punto de fuga: Plataforma experimental del arte y de la fotografía*, 1 March 2021, <<https://puntodefugabogota.com/2021/03/01/maria-eugenia-cerutti-con-toda-la-muerte-en-el-aire-sed-2020/>> [accessed 9 August 2024].

Cerutti's visit to the Federal Police Museum led, first, to a photo exhibition that had its debut in Tucumán, Argentina, in 2018. A few months later, the photographic material became part of an interactive performance installation in Buenos Aires featuring large-format prints, two actors, and a voice-over narrator. The book on which I am focusing here marks the third and definitive stage in Cerutti's artistic exploration of Methyger's killing. Published in 2021, it comprises two volumes that are conceived and numerically marked to be read one after the other. The first one creatively combines, juxtaposes, and reworks archival material connected to the crime. The second volume is the reedition of the book *I Didn't Kill Alcira* that the perpetrator from jail and which sold out at least two editions,⁶³ followed by a photographic coda consisting of present-day images of the places where Burgos dumped Methyger's body after killing and dismembering her.

Cerutti's decision to retrieve Burgos' voice from cultural forgetting by launching a reprint of his testimony is a risky one. On the one hand, she risks allowing the perpetrator's version of the events to once again shape how Alcira Methyger's feminicide is remembered, while the victim remains silent. Put differently, Cerutti risks perpetuating a collective memory that erased the victim and instead centred the perpetrator, his perspective, and agency by referring to the crime as the 'Burgos case' or 'the case of the Barracas ripper.'⁶⁴ On the other hand, the book also threatens to cater to contemporary audiences' appetite for true crime, without enabling any form of critical reflection about feminicide. Cerutti, I hope to show in what follows, makes subtle yet significant efforts to mitigate these risks. It is worth noting, in this sense, that the photographer refuses to tell readers how to interpret crime, avoiding the use of explanatory text such as captions, footnotes, prologues, or epilogues to introduce and contextualise the case. Still, through the carefully curated paratexts and materials surrounding and preceding Burgos's testimony, Cerutti orients readers in their encounter with the perpetrator. Moreover, she invites them to witness feminicide against the grain of conventional testimonial work and from a position shaped by implication.

63 Sebastián Ortega, 'Con toda la muerte al aire', *Cosecha Roja*, 7 February 2019, <<https://www.cosecharoja.org/con-toda-la-muerte-al-aire>> [accessed 17 August 2024].

64 María Eugenia Cerutti, 'Con toda la muerte al aire', *Vist Projects*, <<https://vistprojects.com/con-toda-la-muerte-al-aire>> [accessed 17 August 2024].



Figure 2: The two volumes enclosed in the slipcase.

Let us start with the paratexts. The two volumes are contained by a black-and-white removeable slipcase (see Figure 2). The front part of the slipcase features an amorphous, black figure with a shiny, laminated surface that creates a sensorial contrast with the rest of the book, which is matte and non-laminated. The book's title and the author's name are partly printed over this figure (see Figure 3). The phrase that gives the book its title is taken from a short story by Rodolfo Walsh titled 'Esa mujer' ('That Woman'). Published in 1965, the story revolves around the disappearance of Eva Perón's embalmed corpse by the military government that overthrew her husband Juan Domingo Perón's administration in 1955, the same year Methyger was murdered. Through this intertextual reference, Cerutti situates *Con toda la muerte al aire* in a particular historical moment – the 1955 military coup known as the 'Revolución Libertadora' – and in connection to both local and global traditions. On the one hand, the reference enables Cerutti to inscribe her project (and herself) in a national

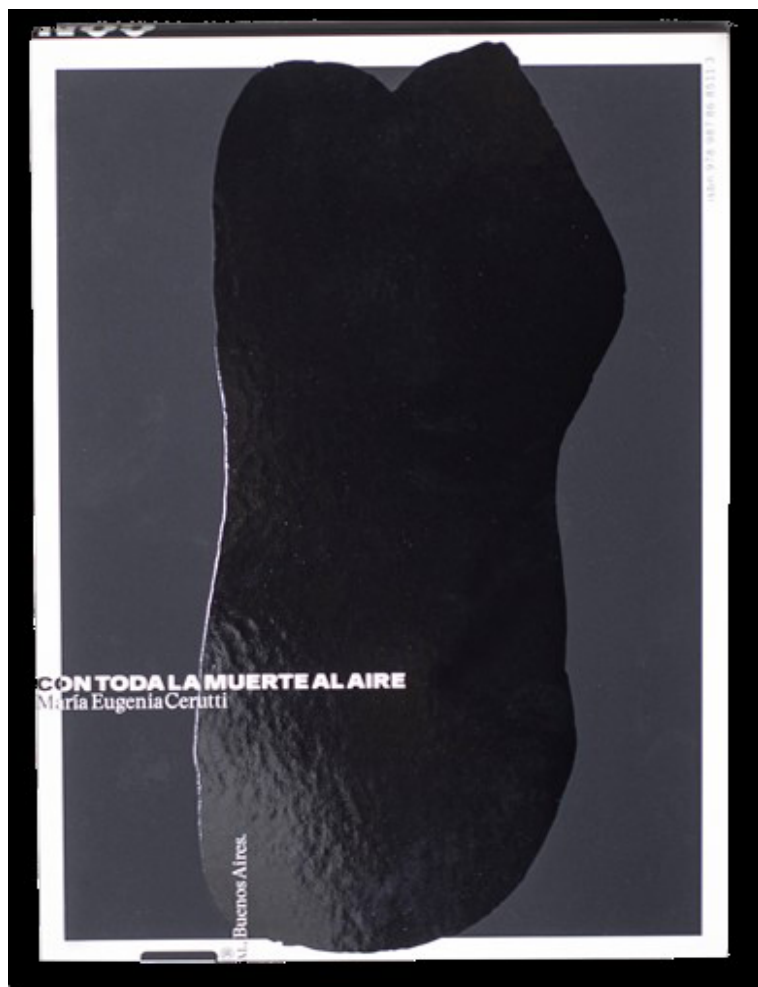


Figure 3: Outer front of the slipcase.

tradition of engaged leftist writing, inaugurated by Walsh with his famous 1957 investigative nonfiction work *Operación masacre* (*Operation Massacre*, 2013), which works with documents to uncover silenced histories. On the other hand, through her allusion to Walsh's story, Cerutti links the widespread fetishistic fantasies surrounding Eva Perón's corpse, as described in the story, to the voyeuristic fascination with Methyger's killing – a fascination still palpable in the exhibition Cerutti visited in

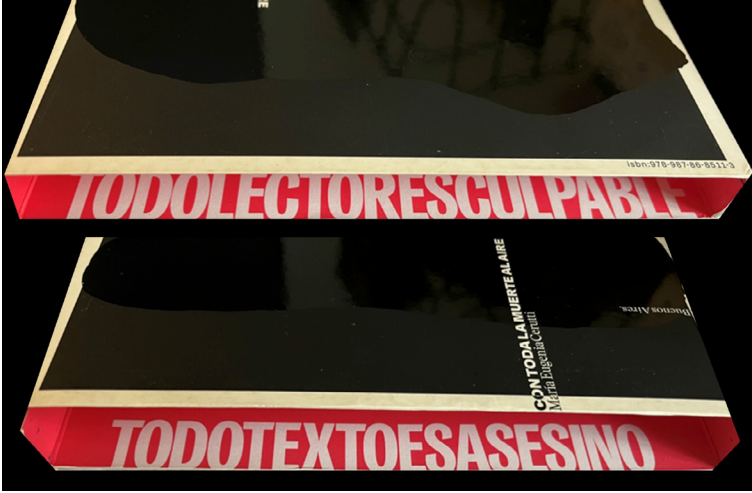


Figure 4: Inner side of the slipcase.

2014. In so doing, the photographer hints at one of the central themes of her project: the fascination with ‘the conjunction of femininity and death’⁶⁵ that extends far beyond the Argentina of the 1950s.

Returning to the paratexts, once we pick up the book to remove the slipcase holding the two volumes together – the first step for interacting with them – the laminated figure printed in the front visibly retains our fingerprints. This detail takes on greater significance in connection with the two accusations that are printed on the inner side of the slipcase, facing each other, and that become visible as soon as the two volumes slide out through the case’s open ends (see Figure 4). The first one, ‘*todo lector es culpable*’ or ‘every reader is guilty’, recalls the long-standing idea that being a spectator to or reader of violence somehow implicates us in it. Think, for instance, of Lactantius’s assertion that ‘to be a spectator involves us in one common guilt with the perpetrator’,⁶⁶ of Frantz Fanon’s famous dictum that ‘every spectator is either a coward or a traitor’,⁶⁷ or of Susan Sontag’s contention that looking at pictures of suffering we cannot alleviate makes us ‘voyeurs,

65 Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 205.

66 Qtd. in Thomas De Quincey, *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (London: Penguin Classics, 2015), p. 3.

67 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1966), p. 199.

whether or not we mean to be.⁶⁸ The second accusation, '*todo texto es asesino*' or 'every text is murderous', points to the violence of representation. It suggests that there is 'a form of perpetration in the repetition of an act of violence—in linguistic, artistic and/or bodily form'.⁶⁹ The phrase evokes, furthermore, the motif of 'the artist as murderer', famously developed by Thomas de Quincey in his essay 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' (1827), which explores the ethical dilemmas involved in the aesthetic engagement with violence and suffering.

Through these two accusations, Cerutti unsettles conventional structures of feminicide witnessing from the start by situating artists (as the issuers of testimony), readers (as the recipients of testimony), and the book (as the medium of testimony) as impure, ambiguous, and contaminated. By accusing readers, as she explains in an interview, Cerutti's goal was to 'implicate them in what they are about to witness'⁷⁰ and to prompt them to reflect on how reading about feminicide can contribute to normalising and even condoning extreme gender violence. Designing the book's surface to capture readers' fingerprints further strengthens her indictment: the book becomes a crime scene, and the reader, a suspect. At the same time, by stating that *every* text is murderous, Cerutti acknowledges that her own artistic work is also entangled in the violence of representation and in the ethical conundrums of aesthetically representing gender violence. Through the book's paratexts, in short, she makes tangible the implication of artist, work, and reader in feminicidal violence.

And yet, Cerutti does more than merely break the fiction of purity and non-involvement by situating the triangle artist-work-reader in the realm of implication. In addition, she offers readers the possibility of taking implication and affective discomfort as a starting ground for articulating an ethical response to Methyger's murder. The specific demands that come with this invitation, however, are different in the two volumes. In volume 1, readers are asked to actively engage with the archival material in order to carry out the work of feminicide witnessing and remembrance. While Cerutti takes on the role of a 'visual detective',⁷¹ collecting clues and evidence, 'guilty readers' are offered the opportunity to step in as advocates or witnesses, testifying to both the violence of the crime and of its collective interpretation and memory. Although, in this vein, it is up to readers to restore meaning and create a coherent

68 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 38.

69 Bielby and Stevenson Murer, p. 4.

70 'María Eugenia Cerutti, Con toda la muerte al aire, SED, 2021', n.p.

71 Ibid.

narrative from the evidence presented, Cerutti's work of curation and creative intervention offers guidance along the process.

The cover of the first volume announces and prefigures the kind of work that the book as a whole can carry out in dialogue with an active reader. The front cover features the image of the perpetrator that Cerutti found in the Federal Police Museum, with the eyes covered with black tape, as if to protect him from the scrutiny of the museum audience and, perhaps, to protect the audience from the perpetrator's gaze as well. The back cover features a photograph of the same image, but this time taken after Cerutti partly removed the tape protecting the perpetrator, revealing his right eye. By bookending the volume with these two pictures, the photographer suggests that the text block between the two covers leads up to and somehow enables the final gesture of exposition.

The evidence collected in the volume is arranged roughly chronologically and comprises crime scene reenactment pictures, forensic pictures, press photographs, new clippings, and archival images. Cerutti's careful work of montage allows readers to piece together the timeline of the events: the fight leading up to the murder, the sequential discovery of the different parts of Methyger's dismembered body in various corners of Buenos Aires's suburbs, the eventual identification of the victim, and the arrest of the perpetrator. Cerutti's curation of the material, moreover, both contextualises and adds important nuances to this basic chain of events. For one, the archival images interspersed throughout the murder-



Figure 5: Front and back covers of the first volume.

sequence help readers locate Methyger's killing in the tumultuous Buenos Aires of 1955 and, specifically, against the backdrop of the bombing of civilians by the military in Plaza de Mayo in June, the 'Revolución Libertadora' in September, and the subsequent fall of Perón's government. For another, by sequencing and at times juxtaposing sensationalistic newspaper headlines and snippets covering the case, Cerutti presents evidence of the role broader society played in the aftermath of Methyger's killing (see Figures 6 and 7). The press snippets refer to the crime as a 'sensational murder' and a 'fascinating case', and are filled with morbid speculations. They also report how masses of people filed through the morgue to get a closer look at Methyger's dismembered body. Through these various press snippets, Cerutti reveals the widespread fascination for the murder at the time. Additionally, she lays bare the patriarchal discursive mechanisms through which victim and perpetrator roles were reversed in public discourse. While Methyger, in this sense, was constructed as promiscuous, vain, and scheming, Burgos was stylized as shy and innocent, the tragic victim of his own passion. The fragments of letters to the editor interspersed throughout the book that unanimously blame the victim and call for the absolution of the perpetrator show just how powerful these mechanisms are in shaping the social perception of victims and perpetrators.

The evidence gathered in the first volume, then, not only exposes and incriminates the perpetrator, but, in fact, society as a whole. For one, for avidly consuming the news of Methyger's killing. For another, for collectively engaging in victim-blaming and contributing to the construction of the perpetrator as victim. The volume shows, furthermore, that the violence of femicide extends long after the act of killing a woman and highlights the role of ordinary citizens and cultural media in that violence. I would argue that it is above all in this respect that the work of memory that Cerutti invites readers to undertake resonates with the present. Actively engaging with the material collected in the volume can lead us to acknowledge that despite the advances of feminism in the past decades, there are concerning continuities between past and present. Today, much like in 1955, practices of victim-blaming and perpetrator-exculpation still prevail when it comes to femicide, impacting how victim and perpetrator figures are publicly perceived and understood. The fascination with (representations of) the bodies of female victims similarly prevails, and mainstream media – in its new forms – continues to exploit it, perhaps more effectively than ever before.



Figure 6 and 7: Press snippets from newspaper articles reporting on the crime.



Throughout the first volume, Cerutti grapples with this fascination and hints at the dangers and dilemmas surrounding the ethics of visualising feminicide. Through practices of repetition, reframing, cropping, and overlaying she makes a passive, automatic engagement with the materials difficult. By thus de-automatising our engagement with textual and visual materials, Cerutti nudges readers to critically think about practices of visualisation, selection, and framing. Some examples can make this more concrete. Cerutti frequently adjusts the framing of the original materials gathered in the book, often magnifying parts of them while leaving out others. At other times, she repeats one single image in different formats. The only picture of Alcira when she was alive, for instance, appears seventeen times, slightly modified through different techniques (see Figure 8). Perhaps most importantly, throughout the whole volume Cerutti consistently seeks to revert the codes of visibility that structured the official memory of the crime in the Federal Police Museum. While, as we have seen, she exposes the perpetrator by removing the tape covering his eyes, Cerutti consistently shields the victim from our gaze by overlaying the forensic pictures of her dismembered body with white paint (see Figures 9 and 10). By this point, at the latest, readers are made to realise that the black, shiny, and amorphous figure printed on the book's slipcase, where they left their fingerprints while sliding out the two volumes, is actually a black reproduction of the image of the victim's torso overlaid with paint. By resorting to this technique of overpainting, the photographer manages to denounce the violence perpetrated on the



Figure 8: Two of the seventeen reproductions of Alcira's picture.

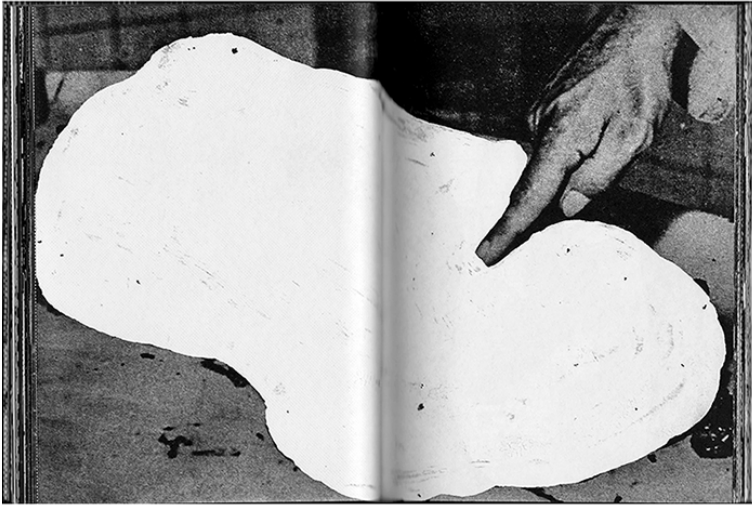


Figure 9: Forensic photograph of the victim overlaid with white paint.

victim's body without, to borrow from Fregoso's words, 'doubl[ing] the abjection and victimization'⁷² in the process. Through her various formal interventions, in sum, Cerutti calls on us to attend to practices of visualising and concealing, inviting us to reflect on our own modes of gazing (or looking away) when confronted with texts, images, and documents bearing witness to feminicide.

Admittedly, readers could choose to flip through the first volume of *Con toda la muerte al aire* passively and absentmindedly: without picking up Cerutti's orienting cues, accusations, and demands, and without transforming the evidence presented to them into a coherent narrative. In that case, they would likely move on to the second volume without having shifted their positionalities in relation to feminicide in any meaningful way. But if, on the contrary, readers take up Cerutti's invitation to witness from implication and complicity, and if they consent to actively engage with the materials in order to co-construct testimony of the events, a differently positioned ethical subject can emerge. This is a subject that embraces complexity, ambiguity, and impurity. From a position of implication, this subject draws on and interprets the evidence presented to them to attest to the multi-layered violence inflicted on the victim: first, by the perpetrator; then, by the society who collectively codified her as

72 Fregoso, p. 108.



Figure 10: Forensic photograph of the victim overlaid with white paint.

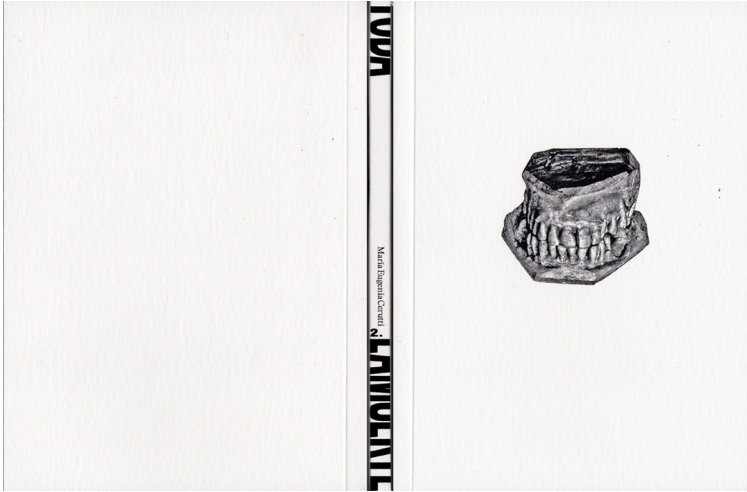


Figure 11: Front and back covers of the second volume.

guilty of the harm inflicted on her; and, lastly, by the agents of memory who, in the process of officially remembering her death, re-victimised her. Potentially, this reflection on responsibility and implication extends to the artistic work enabling it and the readers performing it. *Con toda la muerte al aire* can be understood as implicated in femini(ni)cidal violence, first, for making this violence aesthetically captivating. And second, for deploying, to use Elisabeth Bronfen's words, the 'death of a woman' as 'a condition and pretext for a meaning that lies elsewhere'⁷³ – in this case, the broader issue of how we receive feminicide. Readers, for their part, can come to understand themselves as involved, or, in Cerutti's vocabulary, as 'guilty,' because of their participation – visual and tactile – in the activation of the work of art and in the construction of meaning. In the unlikely – though not impossible – scenario that this complex and multidirectional mode of witnessing emerges, readers encounter the perpetrator's testimony in volume 2 not as uninvolved, neutral parties, but as implicated, self-aware witnesses.

Burgos's account is brief. It is meant, as he puts it in the opening sentences, to reveal what he sees as a neglected dimension of 'his case': 'the human aspect of the issue, the intimate and personal side.'⁷⁴

⁷³ Bronfen, p. 51.

⁷⁴ Jorge Burgos, *Yo no maté a Alcira*, ed. by María Eugenia Cerutti (Buenos Aires: SED Editorial, 2021), p. 7: 'el aspecto humano de la cuestión, la parte íntima y personal.'

He chooses to proceed chronologically, which means that, while he ultimately confesses to the crime in the final pages of the book, the larger part of his account is devoted to describing the circumstances, that, in his view, 'forced him to perpetrate something he could never have imagined.'⁷⁵ Before delving into the causes of his suffering, Burgos is careful to align himself with power, remarking that he has so far enjoyed excellent treatment both from the police force and the judicial personnel. The reconstruction of the events following this caveat is effective in portraying himself as the 'victim,' while vilifying Methyger as the source of his disgrace. In his account of their romance, Burgos constructs his younger self in opposition to Alcira through a series of dichotomies. While he is 'naïve, pure, and good',⁷⁶ she gradually reveals herself to be scheming, cruel, and cynical. While he is educated, 'a sentimental young man who read a lot and cried at the movies',⁷⁷ she is vulgar, callous, and uncultured. While he is patriotic – he makes sure to point out that he carried out his military service – and committed to traditional family values, Alcira is uninterested in marriage and domestic life.

Burgos's years-long misery due to the on-and-off romance with Methyger acquires increasingly melodramatic tones and takes up the larger part of his narration. His suffering reaches a tipping point when he allegedly discovers a love-letter from another man hidden in one of her books. In less than a page, he narrates how he confronts Methyger and how, 'blinded by the passion that consumed [him]',⁷⁸ he inadvertently responds to her verbal and physical aggressions, accidentally killing her in the fight. After this 'occurrence',⁷⁹ as he terms it, and 'acting like a sleepwalker'⁸⁰ Burgos dismembers Methyger's body. Following the 'operation',⁸¹ he disposes of the remains 'by pure instinct and with no rational intervention'.⁸² As if this choice of language was not explicit enough in its attempts to exonerate him, Burgos makes an unmistakable case for his innocence a couple of sentences later:

75 Burgos, *Yo no maté a Alcira*, p. 70: 'a ser autor de lo que nunca hubiera podido ni imaginarse'.

76 Ibid., p. 8: 'ingenuo, puro y bueno'.

77 Ibid.: 'un joven sentimental que leía mucho y lloraba en el cine'.

78 Ibid., p. 63: 'cegado por la pasión que me dominaba'.

79 Ibid., p. 64: 'lo ocurrido'.

80 Ibid., p. 66: 'obrando como un sonámbulo'.

81 Ibid.: 'la operación'.

82 Ibid., p. 67: 'por puro instinto y sin ninguna participación de la razón'.

Before my conscience, I do not feel guilty for Alcira's death, and I believe I did not kill her. It could be said that it was an accident [...]. I know that the law is the law, and I accept its verdict in advance, which I am sure will be fair, but as far as my conscience is concerned, I am nothing more than a victim of fate, which has caused things to happen in such a way that my responsibility or lack thereof in the event is not clearly established on its own.⁸³

This proclamation of innocence is followed by an appeal to the public and the magistrates. His hope, as he puts it, is that his manuscript will move them to 'feel'⁸⁴ his suffering and to consider that suffering when judging him.

Burgos's hopes materialised. Even before his manuscript came out, as the press material gathered in volume 1 reveals, public opinion had turned in his favour. Justice, moreover, was ultimately lenient to him. Burgos served only nine years in prison and, once released, went on to become an evangelical pastor. His testimony remained, up until Cerutti's artistic 'exhumation' of the case, the one and uncontested version of Alcira Methyger's murder. All the while, the victim's perspective of the events remained unknown. The image of Methyger's closed dental imprint in the front cover of the second volume would seem to underscore the victim's unyielding silence over decades (see Figure 11). Against the background of the painful asymmetries in the capacity to bear witness of victim and perpetrator: Why craft a return path from forgetting to memory, from past to present, for Burgos's testimony? Why offer his discourse a new platform, when he himself irrevocably destroyed the victim's ability to testify?

A key contention of this article is that Cerutti deploys the perpetrator (and his testimony) as a catalyst for uncomfortable reckonings. In so doing, the artist facilitates unfamiliar, deeply uncomfortable and therefore potentially self-reflexive modes of witnessing feminicide from positions of complicity and implication. Besides making an intervention on the level of the ethics of feminicide witnessing, I would also argue, by recalling the perpetrator's testimony in the present *Con toda la muerte al aire* engages in two other forms of work; of critical

83 Burgos, *Yo no maté a Alcira*, p. 68: 'Ante mi conciencia no me siento culpable de la muerte de Alcira, y creo que no la maté. Puede decirse que se trató de un accidente [...]. Sé que la ley es la ley y acato de antemano su fallo, que estoy seguro que será justo, pero para los efectos de mi conciencia no soy más que una víctima de la fatalidad que ha hecho que las cosas ocurran de tal modo que mi responsabilidad o irresponsabilidad en el hecho no quede claramente establecida de por sí.'

84 Ibid., p. 70: 'hacer sentir'.

and reparative nature respectively. On a critical level, by inviting us to engage with Burgos's testimony in the present moment, the artist prompts us to acknowledge that, while much has changed since 1955, much remains concerningly the same. While, in this sense, femicide perpetrators are unlikely to secure publishing deals or to be overtly exculpated in public discourse, feminicidal discourses, as Cerutti argues in an interview, 'are still among us.'⁸⁵ The paradoxes at the core of Burgos's testimony, indeed, reappear in present-day femicide perpetrator's accounts. More specifically, perpetrators still tend to present themselves 'as victims, even blaming their partners',⁸⁶ and to describe themselves 'as in an "exceptional state" during the femicide',⁸⁷ thereby deflecting responsibility for their acts. This suggests that even though Burgos's testimony might appear as the product of a distant past to today's readers, the patriarchal logic underlying his account (and his actions) endures in the present. From a reparative angle, we can understand Cerutti's exhumation of the case as opening up an avenue for repair. Specifically, the photographer sets up the conditions for the emergence of the kind of witness that was seemingly absent in the Buenos Aires of 1955: one we could describe, with Leigh Gilmore, as an 'adequate witness.'⁸⁸ With this term, Gilmore refers to a kind of witness who is able to receive testimonies to gender violence, 'resisting the rush to judgment' or doubt, even when those testimonies involve 'impure victims'.⁸⁹ By resurfacing the case, in this vein, Cerutti offers her audience the possibility to step up as belated, implicated witnesses capable of an ethical response to extreme gender violence. In so doing, the photographer paves the way for Methyger to be remembered as a victim; for her killing to be retrospectively condemned as a femicide – rather than the 'crime of passion' the perpetrator framed it to be – and for Burgos to be remembered as a perpetrator.

85 Javier Sinay, 'Crimen: cómo se renueva el género literario que nunca muere', *Redacción: Periodismo humano*, 8 June 2021, <<https://www.redaccion.com.ar/crimen-como-se-renueva-el-genero-que-nunca-muere>> [accessed 18 August 2024].

86 Evans and others, p. 550.

87 Ibid., p. 548.

88 Leigh Gilmore, *Tainted Witness: Why We Doubt What Women Say About Their Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), p. 2.

89 Ibid., p. 6.

Conclusion

As has hopefully become clear from the discussion of *Con toda la muerte al aire*, creative engagements with the figure of the perpetrator can intervene in present feminicide memory culture on multiple levels. By grounding testimony on complicity and implication, they can pluralise existing structures of feminicide witnessing and foster self-reflexive forms of reading about and spectating this phenomenon. Additionally, narratives and artworks that explore the perspective of the feminicide perpetrator can – yet do not always – offer unexpected possibilities of reparation. Because of this set of affordances, the growing stream of feminicide commemoration that turns to the perpetrator can contribute to the processes of critical self-interrogation that feminicide memory culture is currently undergoing.

In centring the ethical and critical – as opposed to the political – affordances of creative engagements with the feminicide perpetrator, however, I do not mean to suggest that there is not a politics to exploring this figure. Nor do I wish to argue that artistic explorations of the perpetrator's perspective fall beyond the scope of memory activism. Admittedly, because of their reliance on ambiguity and their investment in ethical complexity and discomfort, perpetrator-centred performances of memory do not seem to be primarily geared towards political action, nor do they bear an immediate political message. *Con toda la muerte al aire* showcases this particularity effectively. Yet, this does not mean that the forms of implicated witnessing proposed and enacted by works of art and literature such as Cerutti's preclude the possibility of resistance or solidarity. What I would argue, though, is that these works offer a vision of solidarity that is shaped by an uncomfortable awareness of how we, as readers, indirectly enable or participate in feminicidal violence.

Narratives and artworks that witness feminicide through perpetration invite readers to join in a form of witnessing structured by the discomfort of 'feeling implicated'.⁹⁰ This strategy, as Michael Rothberg points out, can provoke negative responses, such as 'a resistance to acknowledging implication' that might, in turn, 'eventuate in forms of resentment or rage'.⁹¹ But testimonies grounded in implication and complicity might also pave the way for what María Lugones has

90 Michael Rothberg, 'Feeling Implicated: An Introduction', *Parallax*, 29.3 (2023), 265–81.

91 *Ibid.*, pp. 273–74.

conceptualised as 'impure resistance'.⁹² With this concept, Lugones describes a practice of resistance that consists in cultivating an active stance of 'autoreflexion' and 'self-aware experimentation'.⁹³ The art of impure resistance involves shifting from an ideal subject position of non-involvement, where we 'remain ignorant of [our] own impurity',⁹⁴ to a less comfortable position that embraces implication, complexity, and ambiguity. Although the cultivation of impure resistance is an individual process, Lugones suggests that it can have larger-scale consequences, becoming 'an act of social creative defiance'.⁹⁵ Taking Lugones's argument a step further, Alexis Shotwell argues that 'turning purity aside'⁹⁶ and perceiving 'complexity and complicity as the constitutive situation of our lives'⁹⁷ is, in fact, a necessary pre-condition for taking collective action. Building on these ideas, I would like to conclude by suggesting that, while witnessing feminicide through complicity and implication might not lead to political action in a straightforward manner, it might help set the ethical and affective foundations for it.

92 María Lugones, 'Purity, Impurity, and Separation', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 19.2 (1994), 458-79 (p. 459).

93 Ibid., p. 478.

94 Ibid., p. 468.

95 Ibid., p. 478.

96 Alexis Shotwell, *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), p. 203.

97 Ibid., p. 8.

Works Cited

- Adams, Jenni, 'Reading (as) Violence in Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones*', in *Representing Perpetrators in Holocaust Literature and Film*, ed. by Jenni Adams and Sue Vice (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2013), pp. 25-46
- Benítez, Rohry and others, *El silencio que la voz de todas quiebra: mujeres y víctimas de Ciudad Juárez* (Chihuahua: Ediciones del Azar, 1999)
- Berlanga Gayón, Mariana, 'El feminicidio y la estética del horror', in *Condiciones de la globalización, políticas neoliberales y dinámicas de género: Aproximaciones desde el Sur*, ed. by Helena López and Adriana Arreola (Mexico City: UNAM, Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios de Género, 2018), pp. 77-79
- Bielby, Clare, and Jeffrey Stevenson Murer, 'Perpetrating Selves: An Introduction', in *Perpetrating Selves: Doing Violence, Performing Identity*, ed. by Clare Bielby and Jeffrey Stevenson Murer (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 1-17

- Bird, Stephanie, 'Perpetrators and Perpetration in Literature', in *The Routledge International Handbook of Perpetrator Studies*, ed. by Susanne C. Knittel and Zachary J. Goldberg (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 301-10
- Blum, Liliana, *El monstruo pentápodo* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2016)
- Bronfen, Elisabeth, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992)
- Burgos, Jorge, *Yo no maté a Alcira*, ed. by María Eugenia Cerutti (Buenos Aires: SED Editorial, 2021)
- Cerutti, María Eugenia, *Con toda la muerte al aire* (Buenos Aires: SED Editorial, 2021)
- , 'Con toda la muerte al aire', *Vist Projects*, <<https://vistprojects.com/con-toda-la-muerte-al-aire>> [accessed 17 August 2024]
- Close, Glen S., *Female Corpses in Crime Fiction: A Transatlantic Perspective* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)
- Critchell, Kara and others, 'Editors' Introduction,' *Journal of Perpetrator Research*, 1 (2017), 1-27
- Crownshaw, Rick, 'Perpetrator Fictions and Transcultural Memory', *Parallax*, 17.4 (2011), 75-89
- Dawson, Myrna, and Saide Mobayed Vega, 'Femicide and Feminicide: A Growing Global Human Rights Movement', in *The Routledge International Handbook on Femicide and Feminicide*, ed. by Myrna Dawson and Saide Mobayed Vega (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 3-14
- De Quincey, Thomas, *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (London: Penguin Classics, 2015)
- Dunnage, Jonathan, 'Perpetrator Memory and Memories About Perpetrators: Editorial', *Memory Studies*, 3.2 (2010), 91-94
- Emmelhainz, Irmgard, *The Tyranny of Common Sense: Mexico's Post-Neoliberal Conversion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2021)
- Erll, Astrid, *Memory in Culture*, trans. by Sara B. Young (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)
- Evans, Dabney P. and others, 'Male Perpetrators' Accounts of Intimate Femicide: A Global Systematic Review', in *The Routledge International Handbook on Femicide and Feminicide*, ed. by Myrna Dawson and Saide Mobayed Vega (New York: Routledge, 2023), pp. 542-53
- Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1966)
- Feld, Claudia, and Valentina Salvi, '¿Qué Hacen los Perpetradores Cuando Hablan? Aportes Metodológicos a Partir de una Investigación Sobre Declaraciones Públicas de Represores (Argentina, 1976-2018)', *Quaderns de Filologia: Estudis Literaris*, 26 (2021), 181-204

- Feld, Claudia, and Valentina Salvi, 'La construcción social de la figura del perpetrador: procesos sociales, luchas políticas, producciones culturales', *Kamchatka: Revista de Análisis Cultural*, 15 (2020), 5-15
- , 'Presentación. Cuando los Perpetradores Hablan: Dilemas y Tensiones en Torno a una Voz Controvertida', *Rubrica Contemporánea*, 5.9 (2016), 1-10
- Fernández de Castro, Rafa, *Los objetos en el espejo* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 2019)
- Focás, Brenda, and Gabriel Kessler, 'Ni Una Menos: Los femicidios no son una novela', *Revista Anfibia*, 3 June 2021, <<https://www.revistaanfibia.com/ni-una-menos-femicidios-no-son-novela>> [accessed 6 August 2024]
- Fregoso, Rosa-Linda, *The Force of Witness: Contra Feminicide* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2023)
- Fuentes, Marcela A., '#NiUnaMenos (#NotOneWomanLess): Hashtag Performativity, Memory, and Direct Action against Gender Violence in Argentina', in *Women Mobilizing Memory*, ed. by Ayşe Gül Altınay and others (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), pp. 172-91
- Genschow, Karen, 'Mirar, violar, matar: políticas y estéticas de la violencia de género en el cine latinoamericano actual', *Revista de Estudios de Género y Sexualidades*, 43.2 (2017), 25-38
- Gilmore, Leigh, *Tainted Witness: Why We Doubt What Women Say About Their Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017)
- Gutman, Yifat, and Jenny Wüstenberg, 'Introduction: The Activist Turn in Memory Studies', in *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, ed. by Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 1-11
- Harwicz, Ariana, *Degenerado* (Buenos Aires: Anagrama, 2019)
- Jelin, Elizabeth, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, trans. by Judy Rein and Marcial Godoy-Anatívia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)
- Kessler, Gabriel and others, *El delito televisado: cómo se producen y consumen las noticias sobre inseguridad y violencia en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2022)
- Knittel, Susanne C., 'The Ethics of Discomfort: Critical Perpetrator Studies and/as Education After Auschwitz', in *The Routledge International Handbook of Perpetrator Studies*, ed. by Susanne C. Knittel and Zachary J. Goldberg (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 379-84
- Knittel, Susanne C., and Sofía Forchieri, 'There Is No "Elsewhere": Scales of Complicity and Implication in the Contemporary German Generation Novel', in *Violence Elsewhere: Imagining Distant Violence in Germany Since 2001*, ed. by Clare Bielby and Mererid Puw Davies (London: Camden House, 2023), pp. 70-92

- Knittel, Susanne C., and Zachary J. Goldberg, 'Introduction', in *The Routledge International Handbook of Perpetrator Studies*, ed. by Susanne C. Knittel and Zachary J. Goldberg (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 1-4
- Kutz, Christopher, *Complicity: Ethics and Law for a Collective Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Lazzara, Michael J., 'Familiares de Colaboradores y Perpetradores en el Cine Documental Chileno: Memoria y Sujeto Implicado', *Atenea*, 521 (2020), 231-48
- Lugones, María, 'Purity, Impurity, and Separation', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 19.2 (1994), 458-79
- McGlothlin, Erin, 'Empathetic Identification and the Mind of the Holocaust Perpetrator in Fiction: A Proposed Taxonomy of Response', *Narrative*, 24.3 (2016), 251-76
- Melchor, Fernanda, 'Baladas del "hombre normal"', *Revista de la Universidad de México*, 2017, <<https://www.revistadelauniversidad.mx/articles/515ad51f-1343-424d-8111-aae74e354ebb/baladas-del-hombre-normal>> [accessed 8 August 2023]
- , *Paradís* (Barcelona: Literatura Random House, 2021)
- Meruane, Lina, *Coloquio de las quiltras: Argumentos caninos ante las crisis del feminismo* (Barcelona: Debate, 2024)
- Mihai, Mihaela, *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: The Art of Complicity and Resistance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022)
- Ortega, Sebastián, 'Con toda la muerte al aire', *Cosecha Roja*, 7 February 2019, <<https://www.cosecharoja.org/con-toda-la-muerte-al-aire>> [accessed 17 August 2024]
- Pérez Flores, Ana Laura, 'Canibal: Indignación total, cómo falla la serie sobre la crisis de feminicidios', *Gatopardo*, 5 July 2022, <<https://gatopardo.com/noticias-actuales/canibal-indignacion-total-serie-feminicidios>> [accessed 8 August 2023]
- Plante, Alicia, *La sombra del otro* (Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo Editora, 2016)
- Poblete, Nicolás, *No me ignores* (Santiago: Editorial Planeta, 2010)
- 'María Eugenia Cerutti, Con toda la muerte al aire, SED, 2021', *Punto de fuga: Plataforma experimental del arte y de la fotografía*, 1 March 2021, <<https://puntodefugabogota.com/2021/03/01/maria-eugenia-cerutti-con-toda-la-muerte-en-el-aire-sed-2020>> [accessed 9 August 2024]
- Reguillo, Rossana, 'Ensayos sobre el abismo: políticas de la mirada, violencia, tecnopolítica', *Encartes*, 6.11 (2023), 5-36
- Restrepo, Laura, *Los divinos* (Bogotá: Alfaguara, 2018)
- Rivera Garza, Cristina, 'Verlas a ellas: El invencible verano de Liliana', *Washington Post*, 8 July 2022, <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/es/post-opinion/2022/07/08/verlas-a-ellas-el-invencible-verano-de-liliana-cristina-rivera-garza>> [accessed 8 August 2024]
- Rothberg, Michael, 'Feeling Implicated: An Introduction', *Parallax*, 29.3 (2023), 265-81
- , *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019)

- Sánchez Biosca, Vicente, and Lior Zylberman, 'Perpetradores de Crímenes de Masas a la Luz de la Imagen. A Modo de Introducción,' *Papeles del CEIC*, 2 (2021), 1-12
- Sanders, Mark, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002)
- Sanyal, Debarati, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015)
- Segato, Rita, *Contra-pedagogías de la crueldad* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2018)
- Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera, and Suhad Daher-Nashif, 'Femicide and Colonization: Between the Politics of Exclusion and the Culture of Control', *Violence Against Women*, 19.3 (2013), 295-315
- Shotwell, Alexis, *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016)
- 'Ingrid Escamilla: Apagar el Horror', *Signalab*, 14 February 2020, <<https://signalab.mx/2020/02/14/ingrid-escamilla-apagar-el-horror>> [accessed 6 August 2024]
- Sinay, Javier, 'Crimen: cómo se renueva el género literario que nunca muere', *Redacción: Periodismo humano*, 8 June 2021, <<https://www.redaccion.com.ar/crimen-como-se-renueva-el-genero-que-nunca-muere>> [accessed 18 August 2024]
- Sontag, Susan, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2003)
- Stacy, Ivan, *The Complicit Text: Failures of Witnessing in Postwar Fiction* (London: Lexington, 2021)
- Todorov, Tzvetan, 'Memory as Remedy for Evil', *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 7.3 (2009), 447-62
- Unamuno, Gonzalo, *Lila* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Marea, 2018)
- Valencia, Sayak, and Sonia Herrera Sánchez, 'Pornomiseria, violencia machista y mirada colonial en los filmes Backyard: El traspaso y La mujer del animal', *Anclajes*, 24.3 (2020), 6-27
- Vásquez Mejías, Ainhoa, 'Yo solía amarla, pero tuve que matarla: Cancionero del romance feminicida', in *La rueda mágica: Ensayos de música y literatura: Manual para (in) disciplinados*, ed. by Rubi Carreño Bolívar (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2017), pp. 135-54
- , 'Feminicidio en la telenovela *Alguien te mira*: Metáfora de un país misógino', *Polis*, 15.44 (2016), 435-56

Sofía Forchieri is a PhD candidate at Radboud University Nijmegen in the Netherlands. Her dissertation explores how literary works interrogate and expand existing structures of femicide remembrance. Her work has appeared in journals like *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *Memory Studies*, and *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*.