



# Temporalities, bodies and affections in the narrative configurations of dead girls

*Temporalidades, corpos e afetos nas configurações narrativas de garotas mortas*

*Temporalidades, cuerpos y afectos en las configuraciones narrativas de Chicas Muertas*

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## Abstract

With this work, we seek to put ourselves in dialog, in a writing that is guided by the circuit of affections (Safatle, 2016) and qualitative research in the affective dimension (Moriceau; Soparnot, 2019), with the book *Dead Girls*, by Argentine writer Selva Almada. Our proposal is to trigger notions of temporalities, bodies and affections, through authors who reflect on everyday life and ordinary events (Das, 2020; Lingis, 2018; Stewart, 2007), narratives (Jácome, 2020; Ricoeur, 1994) and the challenges of countering the romanticization of journalism (Carvalho, 2019). We bring into the discussion three researchers on gender violence: Caldeira (2017), Prates (2022) and Santos (2022). Selva's poetic but not romanticized narratives drive the discussion throughout the text.

**Keywords:** Temporalities; corporealities; affections; ethics; narrative.

## Resumo

Buscamos, com este trabalho, nos colocar em diálogo, em uma escritura que se pauta pelo circuito dos afetos (Safatle, 2016) e pesquisa qualitativa em dimensão afetiva (Moriceau; Soparnot, 2019), com o livro *Garotas Mortas*, da escritora argentina Selva Almada. Nossa proposta é acionar noções de temporalidades, corpos e afetos, por meio de autores que refletem sobre o cotidiano e eventos ordinários (Das, 2020; Lingis, 2018; Stewart, 2007), as narrativas (Jácome, 2020; Ricoeur, 1994); e os desafios de contraposição à romantização do jornalismo (Carvalho, 2019). Trazemos para a discussão, três pesquisadoras sobre violência de gênero: Caldeira (2017), Prates (2022) e Santos (2022). As narrativas poéticas, mas não romantizadas de Selva, conduzem a discussão ao longo de todo o texto.

**Palavras-chave:** Temporalidades; corporalidades; afetos; ética; narrativa.

## Resumen

Con este trabajo buscamos ponernos en diálogo, en una escritura que se guía por el circuito de los afectos (Safatle, 2016) y la investigación cualitativa en la dimensión afectiva (Moriceau; Soparnot, 2019), con el libro *Chicas muertas*, de la escritora argentina Selva Almada. Nuestra propuesta es disparar nociones de temporalidades, cuerpos y afectos, a través de autores que



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reflexionan sobre la vida cotidiana y los acontecimientos ordinarios (Das, 2020; Lingis, 2018; Stewart, 2007), las narrativas (Jácome, 2020; Ricoeur, 1994) y los desafíos de contrarrestar la romantización del periodismo (Carvalho, 2019). Traemos a la discusión a tres investigadores sobre la violencia de género: Caldeira (2017), Prates (2022) y Santos (2022). Las narrativas poéticas pero no romantizadas de Selva conducen la discusión a lo largo del texto.

**Palabras clave:** Temporalidades; corporalidades; afectos; ética; narrativa.

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## Dead bodies, alive in affections

Argentine writer Selva Almada was 13 years old when the announcer's voice broadcasted on the radio the murder of a young girl inside her own home. It was from what she calls "revelation" that she saw that home, the theoretically closest, safest, and most everyday place in most people's lives, can be a place as threatening as it is deadly for women. Psychology student Andrea Danne's life was ripped from her body by a stab wound to the heart while she slept when she was 19. This case, which had repercussions in local Argentine media, is in line with what Leal, Carvalho and Antunes (2020) identified from studies in different countries about how journalistic reports tend to treat physical and symbolic violence against women committed in "zones of proximity", that is, when there are bonds of trust between the perpetrator and their victim. As they point out, about "the recurring coverage of proximity crimes committed by intimate partners, international studies highlight the recurrence of framings that reiterate myths and stereotypes that blame women and obscure the responsibility of aggressors" (Leal; Carvalho; Antunes, 2020, p. 45). In Andrea's case, however, this narrated life demanded existence, from Selva Almada's affections, every time she came across the death of another girl.

Ever since she was in her backyard in the 1980s, with her father, listening to the radio, still considered today one of the means of communication that is part of the daily lives of families around the world (Pessoa, Mantovani and Salgueiro, 2022; Pessoa, 2008), Almada saw her attention change focus, and years later this entire journey would materialize in the non-fiction book entitled *Dead Girls* (2014). The work, whose translation into Portuguese was published by Editora Todavia (Sérgio Molina) in 2018 and into English by Charco Press (Annie McDermott) in 2020, addresses this relationship, as brutal as it is banal, insofar as, from the memory of Andrea's death, an entire network of "*chicas muertas*" (dead girls) is present in the narrative construction, revealing subjective aspects, survival strategies and coincidences that are very important for us to understand how the fear of femicide (and its materialization) is perennial in women's daily lives:

We're in summer now and it's hot, almost like the morning of November 16th, 1986, when, in a way, this book began to be written, when the dead girl crossed my path. Now I'm forty and, unlike her and the thousands of women murdered in my country since then, I'm still alive. Purely a matter of luck. (Almada, 2020, p. 143).

The Argentine writer was dealing, while listening to the news on the radio, with the birth of a domestic animal: a cat. The female cat had given birth and the liquids from the birth of the cubs were there, on top of Selva's bed, staining the sheets. Meanwhile, in another home, and especially in Andrea's room, other stains gave the dimension of everyday life traversed by a catastrophic event, which breaks the sequence of daily habits, suddenly invading the lives of family members by exposing the mysteries of her death. "After a bit she woke up, got out of bed, went to her daughters' bedroom and switched on the light. Andrea was still in bed, but she had a bloody nose." (Almada, 2020, p. 21). Selva began to notice the narratives about the lives of young women who died in situations as enigmatic as they were insoluble from a police and judicial point of view. Amid the statistics and the media coverage of cases, she even made a list, naming them, always as a link in search of information about the impunity in Andrea's case.

For more than twenty years, Andrea was always close by. She returned with the news of every other dead woman. With the names that, in dribs and drabs, reached the front pages of the national press, and steadily mounted up: Maria Soledad Morales, Gladys McDonald, Elena Arreche, Adriana and Cecilia Barreda, Liliana Tallarico, Ana Fuschini, Sandra Reitier, Carolina Al6, Natalia Melman, Fabiana Gandiaga, Maria Marta Garcia Belsunce, Marela Martinez, Paulina Lebbos, Nora Dalmasso, Rosana Galliano. Each one made me think of Andrea and her unpunished murder. (Almada, 2020, p. 4).

It was Andrea who came to Selva's mind when she read a newspaper from Chaco, in northeastern Argentina, about the 25th anniversary of the death of Maria Luisa Quevedo, 15 years old, whose body was raped and strangled. No one was prosecuted for the crime. A third unsolved case, involving Sarita Mundín, 20, revealed the girl's remains on the banks of a river in Córdoba province, but no culprits. In the 1980s, when the three young women who guided the journalistic investigations and Almada's writing had their bodies torn apart and the criminals went



unpunished, the term femicide was not part of everyday legal practice or media narratives in most countries. Shortly before, in the second half of the 1970s, South African sociologist Diana Russell argued at the International Tribunal on Crimes against Women in Brussels, Belgium, on the importance of creating a definition of homicides against women. As Cecília Santos (2022) points out, together with Radford, Russell tries to conceptualize the term “femicide” with the publication of the book *Femicide: the politics of woman killing*, in 1992. In the book’s introduction, we have the following definition: “Femicide is the misogynistic murder of women by men, being a form of sexual violence”. This violence, Santos (2022) highlights, is connected to many expressions such as rape, sexual harassment, physical abuse, representing a kind of “*continuum of violence*”.

Bárbara Caldeira (2017) argues that, even when faced with expressions so ingrained in everyday life, in general journalism tends to be concerned with highly commotional crimes, treating them in isolation or as, in the case of serial killers, serial murders. Using statistics from different countries, the author argues that when “several murderers are responsible for the death of several women, this ‘grouping’ is not constituted a priori” (Caldeira, 2017, p. 42), which is why the specific term helps in understanding a “series of murders” sustained by misogyny.

In this sense, Almada’s gesture seems unusual to us from the perspective of journalistic narratives, as it connects these particular deaths to a common story that unites murdered girls with other girls, who live under this permanent tension. If, from a legal point of view, the deaths depicted in the book did not have closure, the author takes this ethical responsibility upon herself as the basis for her narrative: “Maybe this is your mission: to gather the bones of these girls, piece them together, give them a voice and then let them run, free and unfettered, wherever they have to go.” (Almada, 2020, p. 32).

Andrea, Maria Luisa and Sarita give name to the bodies of victims of femicide in Argentina, whose impunity mobilized the affections (Spinoza, 2007) of Selva Almada, distancing her from an “objectifying” gesture, typically journalistic, to expose her anxieties, fears, memories along the *continuum* of violence shared with other women. When reflecting on “ordinary” affections, that is, everyday ones, Stewart (2007) reminds us that this proposal must be an experiment, not a judgment, that pays attention to the forces that appear as habit, shock, resonance or impact. The anthropologist refers to a set of events, scenes, contingencies, and emergencies that are present in our daily lives, wrapped in a series of sensations, impulses, modes of attention, and social worlds of various types, which give rise to public sentiments in circulation. Similarly, we believe that Almada’s narrative work also sheds light on everyday affections and their multiple tensions with corporealities in the recognition of the right to time (Jácome, 2020). Based on this assumption, in this article, we would like to approach the work from two central aspects: a) temporal relations worked there, b) bodily and affective aspects mobilized there.

## Temporalities and narratives

In *Dead Girls*, the narrative work developed by Selva Almada is striking, especially in the way she deals with violent events without distancing herself from them. The book is divided into ten chapters and an epilogue, in which the author blends different temporalities, covering the three main crimes, but without a memorialistic or archival tone. On the contrary, the composition is willing to demonstrate the current relevance of the events it reports. If the relationship between time and narrative can be interpreted as indissoluble: “time becomes human time to the extent that it is articulated in a narrative way; in compensation, the narrative is significant to the extent that it outlines the features of temporal experience” (Ricoeur, 1994, p. 15), we are also interested in arguing the intrinsic relationship of the gesture of narrating and the tensions made visible by the ethics of inquiring into the other.

In Paul Ricoeur, the composition of the plot can be understood as a synthesis of the heterogeneous, that is, the composition of a story that has a configuration beyond the mere succession of events. By organizing intelligibility, the narrative makes events related not “one after the other,” but “one because of the other.” In this sense, the gesture of narrating mixes heterogeneous components and circumstances (found and unwanted), the relationship between different social subjects and their interactions, as well as the actions carried out and suffered. The possibility of bringing together what was previously unrelated reveals aspects that speak of, at least, the bodies in relation: the one that tells a certain story and the one that, through this configuration, is also capable of following it.

The story told, says Ricoeur, is a temporal totality, and the poetic act is a mediation between time as flux and time as duration. Something that endures and remains through what escapes and passes. In this sense, it is not “what happened,” but “how was it possible?” that truly matters. Certainly, these configurative elements are present in Selva Almada’s poetic composition, including in the contrast she creates with journalistic narratives:



The violent death of a young person, in a small community, is always a shock. The news of Maria Luisa Quevedo's murder was covered, almost from the outset, with fantastical flourishes by the local press. It took a couple of days to appear, as a tiny piece in Norte, the biggest newspaper in Chaco province. Headlined Mysterious Death of Underage Girl, it sat alongside another: Underage Boy Missing. (Almada, 2020, p. 119).

As Caldeira (2017, p. 119) highlights, journalistic agents have difficulty recognizing gender aspects in proximity crimes committed against women. These crimes are often labeled as “passionate” to give uniqueness to the narrative configuration of these reports. The deaths of women, then, are generally seen as isolated cases, narrated by male voices that tend to justify the crime committed. As a consequence of failing to mobilize the marker “gender violence,” a network of patriarchal causality tends to hold the dead girls themselves responsible. This criticism, made by Caldeira, is also frequently present in Almada's assessments (2020, p. 127):

The crime that, in 1986, hadn't spread beyond the local press, caught the attention of national papers like Cronica and Clarin. In characteristic style, Cronica used the headline: Chinaman Goes Down Nine Years After Murder. And when Shaw went free: Chinaman Victim of Scorned Young Lover.

Therefore, beyond the typical temporal aspects of any narrative, it seems to us that *Dead Girls* offers a bodily dynamic that directly impacts the way in which this time of the “continuum of violence” is narratively configured. They are mutilated, violated bodies, but they demand agency and responsibility from their aggressors. In this sense, far from perceiving the gesture of narrating as a sweetened and romanticized metaphor, we align ourselves with Carvalho (2019) when he proposes that, in cases of violence, we are not faced with plots with silky threads that emerge without fissures or contradictions. Instead, we have “exposed high-voltage wires” that involve ethically painful, uncomfortable, and necessary work.

The author draws our attention to the importance of carefully considering the highly complex theoretical and methodological challenges: “they are metaphorical warnings about contextual conditions that require specific protection, indicating the enormous difficulties of handling highly lethal material, potentially causing suffering” (Carvalho, 2019, p. 51).

If for Ricoeur, narrative would function as a human condition to deal with the aporias of time, we would also like to think along with Veena Das (2020), who argues that the subject does not belong to the world, but is rather the limit of the world itself, which is why it is also the first condition of experience. In *Life and words: violence and its descent into the ordinary*, the author confesses frustration and discomfort in the repeated times in which she set out to write about violence. She reflects on her own limits and experiences when discussing two major violent events in India: the Partition of 1947, and the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her personal bodyguard, as revenge for the massacre of Sikhs in 1984, in her own home, a supposedly safe and trustworthy environment.

In this sense, the listening gesture proposed by Das seems similar to that implemented by Almada. In both, there is a warning not to allow ourselves to become detached from the relationship between language, narratives, times and affections: “[...] It is as if one of the aspects under which a person can be understood is as a victim of language - as if words could reveal more about us than we are aware of” (Das, 2020, p. 29). As in an ethnography of violence, the Argentine writer does not present herself as an objective or eyewitness account of the events she reports. On the contrary, she does not lose sight of the attempt to locate the subject (not the object) through the experiences of these limits. “The new year began a month ago. In that time, at least ten women have been killed for being women. I say at least because these are the names that appeared in the papers, the ones that counted as news.” (Almada, 2020, p. 143). The “dead girls” - in other times in which their experiences become public through the journalistic focus that tries to capture what is obscured, “revealing” - are nothing more than bodies, stretched out on the bed, in a domestic and supposedly unsuspecting environment, in a thicket or on the banks of a river. “It's a photo of her in the morgue, he says eventually. My stomach turns over. I don't know if you'll want to see it. I bought it off a police photographer.” (Almada, 2020, p. 72).

Coming out of the silence of the traumas experienced in everyday life to speech makes me feel like I'm trying to make a distress signal by holding onto live wires. I live with

the embarrassment of showing myself tied to the violence I experienced. I write, but I hesitate. I fear that by sharing how I was hurt and exposing my vulnerabilities, I will end up labeling my intellectual activity as an “attacked woman,” as a researcher who is a victim of patriarchal violence, as if that were all there is to it (Prates, 2022, p. 37).

Thus, an important aspect linked to the work’s ethical gesture is that of proposing another network of causality, which does not aim at “enlightenment” in the modern-colonial sense of the term, but rather, to delve into the shadows produced by these ties of exposed high-tension wires. Selva activates a circuit of affections, starting from a time that originates from listening to the news on the radio, mentioned at the beginning of this text, without, however, sticking to chronological cuts. She seems interested in narratives, composed of testimonies and images, faded or never made possible by politics, media and justice, over the years. This gesture by the author would be related, in our understanding, to the summoning of the affections that emerged with the violent crimes and other affections that triggered the proposal to remake the narratives about the dead girls from perspectives that rescued them from the universe of blame and other violent acts after their murders.

### **Affections, violence and the descent into everyday life: killing and dying**

*I’ve never been so afraid and I’ve never been so brave as I was then, she said.*  
Selva Almada (2020, p. 146).

In 2022, 252 women were victims of femicide in Argentina, according to data from that country’s Supreme Court of Justice. This is equivalent to one woman killed every 36 hours, an average that has remained relatively stable in recent years, despite the greater visibility of this type of violence and the existence of legal mechanisms to combat and prevent it. Many of these deaths occurred in contexts of trust, in so-called “proximity crimes,” in which the main perpetrators are part of the victims’ family and emotional circle. This type of crime also happens in other countries on the continent. According to the Gender Equality Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean, the highest rates of femicide were recorded in Honduras (4.6 cases per 100,000 women), the Dominican Republic (2.7 cases per 100,000 women), El Salvador (2.4 cases per 100,000 women), Bolivia (1.8 cases per 100,000 women) and Brazil (1.7 cases per 100,000 women). Far from being a problem of recent years, the murder of women based on gender is, unfortunately, a historical and structural problem in our societies.

As Rita Segato (2016) points out, there is a true “war against women”, sustained by structural and everyday practices of violence, the result of what can be called “pedagogies of cruelty”, a term coined by the Argentine anthropologist. The exercise of cruelty on women’s bodies can be materialized in different ways, both from the point of view of physical violence and discursive violence, by naming them pejoratively, often with hatred, judging and blaming them for their experiences, or minimizing and erasing their suffering, disregarding the impact that gender-based violence has on ordinary life.

We believe that Almada’s narrative proposition can function as a counter-pedagogy of cruelty, by proposing other networks of causalities, beyond another form of violence against the dead women depicted there. Almada’s meticulous and careful work seeks to contemplate violated bodies and their agencies, in order to rescue the experiences and experiences of three women, who, there, in the book, symbolize all.

*Ni Una Menos!!!!*

Thousands of women chanted this which in English means “Not one [woman] less,” on June 3, 2015, in a historic march to the Argentine National Congress in Buenos Aires. The immediate motivating event for the movement at that time was the murder of 14-year-old Chiara Páez, killed by her partner. However, the march was a way of expressing outrage over the incessant murders of women, the silenced voices, and the invisible or hyper-exposed bodies that have persisted for decades. From then on, June 3rd became a mark in the fight against femicide.

They told me those bones were Sarita’s. A load of white bones. They picked one up and showed it to me. Look: long bones, from a tall woman. They took a skull out of a box, with a few hairs stuck to the crown. They opened the jaw and showed me the teeth with fillings. Sarita had had some things done to her teeth, but what do I know, it could have been her but it could have been someone else. All it looked like to me was a pile of bones. (Almada, 2020, p. 96).

Confronting gender-based violence is an important action in a serious, structural social problem that involves diverse bodies, in different social, political, economic and cultural conditions, exposing a daily life that one seeks to escape or at least obscure in the face of the cruelty with which it presents itself. On the other hand, facing this everyday life and bringing it to the scene, once again, in Selva's book and in this text, constitutes, with the author, a choice of journalistic investigation, and with us, of scientific investigation. "My father raised one hand as if to slap her. And my mother, not messing around, plunged a fork into his other hand, which was resting on the table. My father never tried to play the big man again." (Almada, 2020, p. 37).

It would not be an exaggeration to think that the very way of doing science and being in research awakens our modes of attention and impacts not only the themes and approaches chosen by each researcher, but an epistemological set that constellates ideas, scientific choices and the reception of social problems based on critical vision, conceptual reflections and sensitivity. In particular, when we focus on the affective dimension of the investigation, it indicates less analysis and more dialogue with the *corpus*, other people involved, and ourselves, being open to an immersion that is daily, but also constitutes theoretical-methodological abstraction, without a dichotomous separation between the phases of the research and its own writing, which constitutes a fundamental part of the entire process. As it is possible to see, we seek to be in a dialogical position with Selva Almada and other authors who accompany us in this writing. This is how we organize ourselves in this work, using a qualitative method, following, with our own initiatives and decision-making, the steps of an organization that invites researchers to expose themselves, walk, reflect and compose their own method (Moriceau; Soparnot, 2019).

The double movement of affectation impacts the lives of thousands of women and their families around the world - killing and dying simply for being a woman or because the condition of being a woman is, in itself, a situation of explicit and incontestable vulnerability: "I didn't know a woman could be killed simply for being a woman, but I'd heard stories that gradually, over time, I pieced together. Stories that didn't end in the woman's death, but that saw her subjected to misogyny, abuse and contempt." (Almada, 2020, p. 5).

This vulnerability accompanies people who identify as female in their daily lives, regardless of the time of day, the region they walk around, the clothes they wear, the body parts they choose to expose, just to mention a few elements always used in narratives of femicide. There are, of course, indicators among potential vulnerability situations that can aggravate them, depending on factors that constitute the living conditions of victims and aggressors. We are talking about their very existences. "From her poor-girl's wardrobe, she picked out a vest and a floaty cotton skirt, with a little leather belt pulled tight around her waist." (Almada, 2020, p. 11).

If, on the one hand, the above statements may lead us, mistakenly, to think of deterministic discourses, on the other hand, we cannot give up bringing them up, given the ethical and political implications necessary in the treatment, in the case of research, of what Pessoa (2018) calls a "sensitive corpus", that is, a set of elements of scientific investigation that unequivocally awaken affectations that are fundamental for understanding the "immersion" that researchers need, the approach, and the openness to deal with the necessary sensitivity about themes, subjects, everyday events, among other factors and events that emerge during the journey of scientific research. The "sensitive *corpus*" is not a distance from the investigation; on the contrary, it requires that we walk and dialogue together, with the engagement of the researchers. The events of everyday life constantly nourish us with elements of research, as in the work of the American philosopher Alphonso Lingis, who inspires us here.

An astrologer who caught the attention of visitors to Deer Park in India explained to those present the relationships between necessity, choice, and chance. At that moment, Alphonso Lingis came across the seemingly simple, yet highly complex, thought about how every day we expect the causalities that determine our physical well-being or the conditions of the environment, but a good dose of chance, which is related to our birth, which involves several events throughout life such as the teachings of a teacher to a child, how and with whom we fall in love, whether the child is born with a disability or dies, whether we are struck by serious illnesses, etc. Often, these relationships between need, choice and chance are categorized as a matter of minor importance, restricted to professionals who work as tarot readers, astrologers and fortune tellers, common in small towns located in the interior of Latin American countries. They are also considered initiatives of women or mystical people who seek in the spiritual field and in predicting the future some understanding for events that, in principle, escape any rational explanation of the present and the past, as did some relatives of some "dead girls", and as did the author of the book herself: "It's never too late. But I think everything in the next world is tangled up together, like a ball of wool. You have to be patient and keep tugging at the end, a little at a time. Do you know the story of the Bone Woman?" (Almada, 2020, p. 31).

In everyday experiences, we are thrown into all kinds of trouble when it comes to our own and other people's affectations. Chance is something unpredictable, incalculable and incomprehensible, it can be a surprise,



a good shock or bad luck. And what happens does not depend on us, but on how the other body with which we are relating may react. With Lingis (2018), we remember that we are never able to know the affections and movements of other people's bodies, that is, how they think and how they act. "But they were serious. These prickteasers needed to be shown. They both left early as well. And they waited on a patch of wasteland by her house. No matter what, the girl would have to pass that way." (Almada, 2020, p. 6).

For Lingis, interactions between bodies also occur based on the trust we establish with some and not with others, which can impact ordinary and extraordinary events in life. Like the day Selva and a friend, who always hitchhiked because they had no money and wanted to travel to see their family, came across a truck driver who made numerous advances, with words and touching one of them, while driving the car along the highway. The two girls faced a delicate situation, tried to interact calmly and discreetly and relied on luck so that the outcome, despite the fear, would not be worse: "We got out and walked to the bus stop. The orange car started up and drove off. When it was a long way away, we dropped our bags, hugged each other and burst into tears." (Almada, 2020, p. 18).

If, for research, the "sensitive *corpus*" demands the ethical and political engagement of the researcher, we can, by analogy, think of journalistic activity, whose movement and immersion in the daily lives and narratives of those involved to address certain themes and/or events can become, as in the case of a detailed and careful work like Selva's reportage book, a sensitive incursion into the daily lives of other people. At the heart of this incursion is, paradoxically, the life associated with the death of bodies, and vice versa, which were insensibly violated, whose vital energy was cut off: "Rosa staring at him, still not understanding. Taking a long time to die. Him on top of her, thrusting the knife in and out. Her beneath him, just like in the cheap hotel bed. Him splattered all over with blood." (Almada, 2020, p. 67).

A daily life abruptly interrupted and from which many people wish to distance themselves, sometimes to avoid problems, sometimes to deal with pain, sometimes to learn to be and to grieve, sometimes to preserve the bodies that are no longer here and without which time and narratives are not necessarily capable of reconstituting them or doing justice to the victims.

### Between the blowing of the wind and the threat of sounds

*The north wind made the rough leaves of the corn rub together and the stems sway from side to side, producing a menacing sound that, if you listened closely, could also be the music of a small victory.*

Selva Almada (2020, p. 146).

The dialogue we establish with Selva Almada and her *Dead Girls*, through other authors and also our own reading, aims to highlight the poetic aspects of the author, which operate in a state of opposition to journalistic narratives about femicide. It is important to emphasize that the poetic gesture of narration does not mean romanticizing. On the contrary, as Carvalho (2019) states, "exposed high-tension wires" emerge. The violent events are brought to the scene, through a dive, an approaching and, why not say, with Veena Das, proposing to descend into everyday life. In these writings, which present typical temporal aspects commonly found in diverse narratives, including journalistic ones, bodily dynamics are constituted, in a "continuum of violence". They are violated bodies, which at the time of the narrative are already dead, but remain alive, affecting and provoking their own agency, through the author's ethical gesture, establishing a demand for the identification and accountability of the aggressors.

Selva Almada's writing was articulated in our writing with a movement of double affectation, simply to keep us within our own limits and the limits of what we can address here. The first is to respect the author's own movement of affectation, who was touched by the sense of urgency to place her own body in an incessant conversation with the bodies that had already departed and with the others she encountered along the way in search of information about the murders. The second resides in the rescue of fragments that promote the articulation of the memory of others, of the victims and of the author herself, between narratives, temporalities and bodies.

The impact that the radio news about the first murder of a young woman had on Selva's attention, symbolically on the day her cat's kittens were born, is centered on another movement of double affect: of life and death. The quotations taken from the book *Garotas Mortas*, which make up the body of our thinking, anchor, beyond constituting a rhetoric of death, a kind of guide, with speeches by the writer, witnesses and suspects, towards the dead bodies, but present in Almada's life.

Through the quotations, from which we are able to place our body in proximity to crime scenes, personalities and styles of the victims, family relationships, among other elements, we compose a conceptual and informational network that emerges from the author's own experience in dealing with the series of murders and the victims, with limits, which were composed by the discourses and narratives of others. The victims' presence was so effective in the author's life that it required her to be open to freeing them and moving on, just like the day she and her aunt were threatened in an isolated cornfield. After the reaction to get rid of the attacker, "We carried on walking, pressed closer together now, our arms sticky from the heat." (Almada, 2020, p. 146).

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