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# GIRLHOOD DURING WARTIME: UTILIZING TESTIMONIAL LITERATURE TO REFRAME SECURITY AND VULNERABILITY THROUGH A FEMINIST LENS[1]

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The field of Security Studies has begun to explore how women experience war differently from men, but there is still limited research on how girls experience war differently from women (Kearney 95). The English translations of the autobiographical and episodic writings of Anne Frank and Nellie Campobello document personal experiences of girlhood during war, revealing not only how conflict affects the lives and development of girls and the communities that surround them, but also how issues of war, security, and vulnerability have gendered dimensions. An analysis of the translated works of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Cartucho* by Nellie Campobello, using the frameworks of Literature and Girlhood Studies, Security Studies, and Feminist Theory, provides insight into how girls experience, interpret, and represent changes during war. Likewise, this research acknowledges the importance of considering the politics of place when discussing the testimonies of girls and the contexts from which they originate (Mitchell and Rentschler 3). *Cartucho* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* encourage us to think about security and vulnerability through a feminist lens. Both Nellie's and Anne's families/communities exemplify the necessary strategy, planning, negotiating, and care associated with "maternal thinking" (Cohn 54), allowing for the conceptualization of girls' security outside of patriarchal conceptions of safety that only consider the public sphere once they are forced into the domestic sphere by war.
Keywords: Girlhood during wartime; testimonial literature; vulnerability and safety; intersectionality and agency; maternal thinking; girlhood literature

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# NIÑAS BÉLICAS: RECONCEPTUALIZACIONES FEMINISTAS DE LA SEGURIDAD Y LA VULNERABILIDAD A TRAVÉS DE LA LITERATURA TESTIMONIAL

Resumen: En el campo de los Estudios de Seguridad se ha comenzado a examinar cómo la guerra impacta de manera diferenciada a hombres y mujeres. No obstante, hasta la fecha existen pocos estudios que analicen las diferencias entre las experiencias de niñas y mujeres durante los conflictos armados (Kearney 95). Los textos autobiográficos y episódicos de Anne Frank y Nellie Campobello documentan sus vivencias personales de la infancia en contextos bélicos. Estas narrativas revelan no solo cómo el conflicto influye en la vida cotidiana y el desarrollo de las niñas y sus comunidades, sino también que la guerra, la seguridad y la vulnerabilidad son conceptos atravesados por dimensiones de género. A través del análisis de las narrativas traducidas *The Diary of Anne Frank* y *Cartucho*, de Nellie Campobello, mediante metodologías provenientes de los Estudios de Niñas, los Estudios de Seguridad y la Teoría Feminista, este trabajo explora cómo las experiencias infantiles en tiempos de guerra permiten replantear nuestra propia conceptualización del conflicto. Asimismo, la investigación subraya la importancia de considerar las políticas del contexto al analizar los testimonios de niñas y los entornos de los que emergen (Mitchell y Rentschler 3). En *Cartucho* y *The Diary of Anne Frank* se presenta un acercamiento a las nociones de seguridad y vulnerabilidad desde una perspectiva feminista, articulado a partir de lo que se ha denominado "razonamiento maternal" (Cohn 54). Tanto las familias como las comunidades de Nellie y Anne ejemplifican este enfoque mediante estrategias de cuidado, planificación y negociación orientadas a la protección de quienes consideran vulnerables. Esta perspectiva permite repensar la seguridad de las niñas más allá de las concepciones patriarcales centradas exclusivamente en la esfera pública, las cuales tienden a excluirlas al relegarlas al ámbito doméstico una vez iniciado el conflicto armado.
Palabras clave: Niñez femenina en tiempos de Guerra; literatura testimonial; vulnerabilidad y seguridad; interseccionalidad y agencia; pensamiento maternal; literatura sobre la niñez femenina

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Although at first glance there are few similarities between the story of a girl who wrote a diary while hiding from the Nazi occupation of Holland and a girl who experienced the Mexican Revolution from the side of the Villistas, these experiences of girlhood occurred within the war matrix and were recorded through episodical and autobiographical narratives. The war matrix can be defined as the "transhistorical and transcultural social institution of war in its various particularities" (Sylvester 5), or in other words, war can be viewed as an experience that engulfs everyone and everything it touches. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and Nellie Campobello's *Cartucho* can both be read as

invitations to think about war as an experience that also intersects with girlhood, and girlhood as a testimony that can tackle the complexities of war.

Discussions around armed conflict has tended to skip the question of gender until a recent feminist intervention in international politics and security studies (Enloe 317). Although individuals of all age groups and identities can form part of the war matrix, war affects girls in a unique way because they face discrimination on account of both their age and gender (van der Gaag et al. 95). Post-conflict studies have found that girls experience high levels of risk before, during and after war time, yet they also develop the skills to respond to and negotiate their vulnerabilities (Sharkey 56). Since girls tend to disappear from public spaces as conflict develops, policy making rarely considers the specific needs of young women (van der Gaag et al. 96). Hence, there is a pressing necessity to recognize the experiences of girls within the war matrix to be able to create effective policy responses to girls affected by armed conflict (van der Gaag et al. 103).

Responding to Laura Sjoberg's call to create ethical and critical scholarship by taking account of women's and girl's presences in armed conflict (186) and the urgency of studying girl's experiences of war to promote appropriate counteractive policies, this essay will analyze and compare the experiences of girlhood during armed conflict in *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and *Cartucho* by Nellie Campobello. Both *Anne's diary* and *Cartucho* are autobiographical stories that provide valuable testimonies that reinterpret war through the angles of the private and communal spheres, thanks to the unique spaces that girls occupy once war turns them away from the public dimension. This retelling will also bear witness to the challenges of girlhood due to not only the development of conflict but also the struggle that young women face when dealing with autonomy and nuanced self-representation. By using primarily the feminist Security Studies ideas of Carol Cohn, Anne McClintock, Angela Raven-Roberts, and Christine Sylvester, amongst others, *Anne Frank* and *Cartucho* can be reframed reveal how the effects of war go way beyond the battlefield and affect family dynamics, livelihoods, and personal and local identities and narratives. I argue that Frank's and Campobello's autobiographical and anecdotal narratives offer an alternative way of rationalizing survival during war that moves away from masculinized action and instead uses "maternal thinking" (Cohn 47) to address girls' security once they are forced to retract into the private sphere.

## 2. *ANNE FRANK'S DIARY* AND *CARTUCHO* AS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL AND EPISODIC NARRATIVES

Anne Frank started writing her diary in 1942 on her thirteenth birthday. Her diary entries document how she and her family went into hiding to avoid imprisonment until August of 1944, when the members of the Secret Annex were found and arrested. Anne's writings were then published in 1947 to tell the testimony of a girl who had to hide for two years alongside seven other people in a cloistered section of an office building (Sönser 40). Anne recorded the challenges she faced when adapting to a new life of confinement, boredom, depression, and fear and the difficulties of coexisting with others under those conditions. Yet, even under the extremity of her circumstances, *Anne's diary* bears witness to the resilience of a girl who was able to explore new passions, her desire for romance, and her developing sexuality.

*Cartucho* (1931), on the other hand, was written by Nellie Campobello with the purpose of telling the version of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917) that she experienced as a child in Parral, Durango (Hurley 2003, 35). Campobello wrote a sensorial and episodic narrative that stylizes the simple and local orality of her past-child self to retell the stories of the villista men and women of the Revolution that she heard as a girl and to give testimony to her personal encounters with soldiers, executions, battles, heroic and abusive generals, and the wounded. *Cartucho* also captures the anxiety Nellie experienced fighting for the attention of her mother who was preoccupied with aiding the villistas and procuring the safety of her family.

Both texts are of an episodic and autobiographical nature, and they are narrated from the girl's point of view. However, an important distinction is that Anne wrote her diary while being an actual girl meanwhile Campobello wrote her novel as an adult, which made the stylistic choices necessary to give the impression of a girl writing her recent experiences of war. Nonetheless, both texts follow premeditated and preexisting narrative structures. Anne follows the classical conventions of private journaling and Campobello writes what Richard N. Coe calls a Childhood, which is "an extended piece of writing, a conscious, deliberately executed literary artifact, usually in prose . . . in which the most substantial portion of the material is directly autobiographical, and whose structure reflects step by step the development of the writer's self" through its infancy (9). Regardless of these distinctions, both texts occur during a life-altering armed conflict, and they happen in its majority in enclosed and private spaces. Likewise, *Anne's diary*

and *Cartucho* emerge in contexts that challenge the autonomy of the writers to tell their stories with their intended nuances and their voices as narrators reveal a complex and ever-changing relationship with their community and family during times of warfare.

## 3. GIRLHOOD'S FIGHT FOR AUTONOMY AND NUANCED SELF-REPRESENTATION

Even though *Anne's diary* was published soon after she died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945 (Pressler 367), it was not until the American play adaptation of 1955 and the 1959 Hollywood film that she became an "infantilized, Americanized, homogenized, sentimentalized" icon of naïve positivity and hopefulness, who "in spite of everything" still believed that people were good at heart (Marcus 17). Stemming from a desire to acknowledge the horror of the genocide without having to face the burden of its legacy, *Anne's diary* became a way of allowing audiences to approach the Holocaust without being threatened by its real implications (Marcus 18).

Likewise, during its first editions, Dutch publishers alongside Frank's father Otto Frank, censored the diary's entries to leave out Anne's experiences as a woman growing into her maturing body and psyche. Thus, the passages that have to do with her anatomy, menstruation, and sexual desire, as well as her conversations with Peter about sex and her complicated relationship with her mother, were cut out (Sönser 48). An example of such a passage is when Anne recalls a moment of her pre-war life, in which during a sleep over, she wishes to touch her friend Jacque's breast and kiss her. She also talks about the ecstasy she feels when she sees a female nude and her desire to have a girlfriend (Frank 175). This censorship transformed Anne into the portrayal of an innocent and pure girl that could be palatable to larger audiences at the price of compromising the autonomy of her voice as a complex and ever-evolving writer. Instead, a sanitized and toned-down version of Anne is presented that is untrue to Frank's nuanced self-representation.

Anne's anti-German sentiments were also altered to avoid alienating German audiences. In several instances, the word "Germans" was substituted by "the occupying force" or the "oppressor" (Sönser 49), for example, in the following quote: "Fine specimens of humanity, those Germans, and to think I'm actually one of them! No, that's not true, Hitler took away our nationality long ago. And besides, there are no greater enemies on earth than the Germans and the Jews" (Frank 61). This decision, however, underplays Anne's complex identity as a German Jewish girl who had to flee from her own country due to the growth of antisemitic policies. As she herself suggests, her identity

as a Jewish person and a German now seems irreconcilable, as Hitler took away her nationality long ago, and she does not wish to be identified with those who want to hurt her.

As Anne writes after a raid scare in the Annex, "We've been strongly reminded of the fact that we're Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights but a thousand obligations" (Frank 282). After this incident she wishes to renounce to her German citizenship and instead, become a Dutch, "my first wish after the war is to become a Dutch citizen" (Frank 283), which is something that she brings up again in other entries. Just as the adaptations of her diary wanted to tell her story without the horrific truth of her death in a concentration camp, this muffling of her natural distaste for her persecutors fails to attest to how war made Anne want to pursue a new legal identity as a Dutch person to sever her ties with the Nazis.

It is interesting to note that the censorship that Anne's voice was subjected to focused on her experiences of girlhood and war, as if the rawness of the realities were too uncomfortable. However, new definitive editions of *Anne's diary* have rescued these passages to show the full complexities of becoming a girl during wartime and having to deal with developing an identity as a teenager amidst religious/ethnic persecution. Because of her status as an already deceased person and a young girl, it was easier for her father, the publishers, and the adaptations to twist her words and omit certain passages. But as Anne said herself in her journal, "Even though I'm only fourteen, I know what I want, I know who's right and who's wrong, I have my own opinions, ideas and principles, and though it may sound odd coming from a teenager, I feel I'm more of a person than a child" (Frank 240). Anne's complex character and development as a person "should not be reduced to an asexual and politically naive abstraction of mid-century Western girlness" (Sönser 47), as this not only renders an untrue portrayal of Anne, but it also omits crucial parts that shed a light upon the intersections between girlhood and war.

Although Nellie Campobello's *Cartucho* did not have to deal with censorship, the novel was produced in a context in which the dominating narratives of the Mexican Revolution left out the experiences of decentralized pro-*Villistas* like Campobello. As post-revolutionary Mexico searched for a national literary canon (Bowskill 20), the first

National Prize of Literature was awarded to *La region más transparente*[2], written by Carlos Fuentes. Fuente's novel focused on a detailed description of the nation's capital and portrayed the Mexican Revolution as a fight that had been betrayed, which echoed the critiques being made to the president of the time, Miguel Alemán. Alemán was accused of forgetting the purpose of the Mexican Revolution, which was land redistribution from landowners to farmers, and instead catering to businessmen and alienating the peasants that had fought the war (Bowskill 50-51).

Part of this new narrative regarding the Revolution also meant slandering the image of the head of the Revolution in the north, Francisco Villa. An example of such a novel could be L*os de abajo*[3] of Mariano Azuela, which tells the story of a group of revolutionaries of the north that become corrupted with power and start raiding every town they encounter. As Campobello herself said, she wrote *Cartucho* to "avenge an insult", since post- revolutionary texts "are full of lies against the men of the revolution, mainly against Francisco Villa" (Hurley 36). *Cartucho* not only operates as an opposition to the Mexican literary canon in formation through its defense of Villa but also expresses its dissidence by focusing on a girl narrator who lives in the town of Parral, Durango, instead of the metropolis. The girl's voice is affirmed as autobiographical, since Campobello writes "tragic events seen by my girlish eyes" (Hurley 7-8).

*Cartucho* and *Anne's diary* both dealt with or responded to an imposed, unnuanced narrative that was made to further a particular political discourse about the war; meanwhile, the lived experiences told by their versions show a different reality of the conflict. Their experiences of girlhood were not published without a fight for autonomy and self-representation, which is further proof of how institutions fail to listen and consider the testimony of girls during war. Anne's girlhood was censored to give a digestible image to American audiences that are used to burying their tragedies (Marcus 18). However, girlhood does not need to be considered as a disadvantaged source of discourse. Nellie Campobello was able to take her girlhood experience of the Revolution as a tool to give credibility to her testimony. The childishness that permeates her memories provides her with an honest and unapologetic voice. This makes her a

[2] Translated into English as *Where the Air Is Clear*
[3] Translated into English as *The underdogs*

somewhat impartial narrator who mainly shares what she sees and what she hears without weighing it with opinions or complex moral judgments (Vanden 50).

According to Wayne C. Booth, a story with an unreliable narrator is one "narrated, whether in the first or third person, by a profoundly confused, basically self-deceived, or even wrong-headed or vicious reflector" (340). Nellie is, by definition, the opposite of an unreliable narrator as she sticks to the facts. As N. Coe rightly points out, childhoods are rarely sentimental or emotional but rather tend to prefer the sensory (10). Likewise, in most of the narrative, Nellie acts as a witness and not as a participant (Pasternac et al. 96), so her interventions as narrator are few.

When it comes to narrating war through the experiences of girlhood, there is a conversation to be had about the autonomy that is given or taken from their testimonies. In the case of Anne, her words and persona have been censored and altered. Campobello, in her agency as a conscious and adult author, has managed to make her infantile memories the strength behind her text. This, in turn, provokes the question of what new theoretical frameworks we can apply to analyze girlhood, war, and security without questioning the validity of girls' voices.

## 4. Girlhood and its Sensibility towards the Disruption of Communities Subjected to War

As Christine Sylvester explains in "War questions for feminism and International Relations," everybody is part of the transhistorical and transcultural social institution of war or war matrix in its various particularities. This assertion allows for the ordinary person, alone or as a member of a community, to be the essential unit for war analysis, regardless of how close or distant they are to the heart of the conflict (5). All experiences of war can shed light on the true depth of its effects, which is why it has been established that both Anne and Nellie partake in the system matrix of war.

Anne and Nellie experience the war matrix through similar spaces and mediums, which are from enclosed spaces, looking out of their windows and listening to other people's retelling of what has happened. Nellie, however, has a lot more range of freedom, as she is still allowed to go outside. She is nonetheless still mostly confined to the premises of her home because of her young age and gender. Nellie has a panoramic and panoptic vision of the war, as she can directly see the fights that occur on the streets by looking down from her window (Vanden 61): "The bullets continued in a more sedated

fashion . . . me and my sister jumped to a window; we opened our eyes in interrogation. We looked and there was not even one corpse" (Campobello 112).

Anne's capacity to look out is a lot more limited because she cannot risk being seen by the neighbors. The windows operate more as a leitmotif that reminds her of the constant threat of being found out by the police: "Of course, we can't ever look out the window or go outside. And we have to be quiet so the people downstairs can't hear us" (Frank 31). However, the windows also carry a positive connotation, as they are Anne's one visual connection to the outer world and its beauty: "This morning, when I was sitting in front of the window and taking a long, deep look outside at God and nature, I was happy, just plain happy" (Frank 213).

Because of the limits that come from experiencing the war within a closed space with windows, both Anne and Nellie rely on the news they are told by characters/people that can inhabit the outer world. This, in turn, makes them sponges of the stories that start emerging within the war matrix. In Anne's case, she is always very attentive to the news that Miep Gies, Bep Voskuijl, Johannes Kleiman, and Victor Kugler bring to the Annex. Their accounts reveal a community that is slowly disintegrating as their Jewish members are forced to flee, hide, or are arrested:

> Mr. Dussel has told us much about the outside world we've missed for so long. He had sad news. Countless friends and acquaintances have been taken off to a dreadful fate. Night after night, green and gray military vehicles cruise the streets. They knock on every door, asking whether any Jews live there. If so, the whole family is immediately taken away. If not, they proceed to the next house. (Frank 76)

The stories told to Anne, which she records in her diary, serve as testimony of how everyday life is interrupted by the effects of war. As Angela Raven-Roberts writes in "Women and the Political Economy of War", "wars destroy long-evolved bonds of trust among individuals and within communities, and leave communities devastated both directly, in "war-torn" societies, and indirectly" as conflict ripples from the battlefield into "economic disruptions, refugee flows, infrastructural damage, and political instabilities" (36). As Anne's narration reveals, her community has not only begun to be torn apart, but now it has started to turn on itself because of the persecution: "They often go around with lists, knocking only on those doors where they know there's a big haul to be made. They frequently offer a bounty, so much per head. It's like the slave hunts of the olden days" (Frank 76).

Anne's interest and reception to narrations about how Amsterdam has been affected also bring to light the economical instabilities and social changes that warfare brings upon the communities that exist within the war matrix: "We can hardly believe what Jan, Mr. Kugler and Mr. Kleiman tell us about the prices and the people on the outside; half a pound of tea costs 350.00 guilders, half a pound of coffee 80.00 guilders, a pound of butter 35.00 guilders, one egg 1.45 guilders" (Frank 306).

As Raven-Roberts also points out, armed conflict affects livelihood systems, which in turn aids the development of "war economies." The term "war economies" is characterized by the instauration of informal or illicit systems in the wake of crisis (41). According to Anne's narrations, in wartime Amsterdam:

> Everyone's trading on the black market; every errand boy has something to offer . . . the milkman can get hold of ration books, an undertaker delivers cheese. Break-ins, murders and thefts are daily occurrences . . . Everyone wants to put food in their stomachs, and since salaries have been frozen, people have had to resort to swindling (Frank 306).

Apart from pushing people to practice illegal methods of obtaining food and resources such as informal sales, robbery, and swindling, Anne's written testimony also shows that "the damage done to livelihood systems has intensely gendered impacts because livelihood is an arena where gendered relations and ideologies are very pronounced" (Raven-Roberts 42). This, in turn, makes women into "resources", a key feature of illicit economies (Raven-Roberts 45): "The police have their hands full trying to track down the many girls of fifteen, sixteen, seventeen and older who are reported missing every day" (Frank 306). *Anne's diary* can thus be interpreted as a valuable narrative that allows audiences to understand wartime from the position of girlhood as it bears witness to the way communal bonds and livelihoods are altered and how precarity becomes the new norm.

At the same time, Anne's narrative also reflects how living through occupation changes the experience of being a girl. Not only do girl's bodies become a commodity, which makes them live in an environment of high risk (Sharkey 57), but girls who must go into hiding like Anne also miss out on events that are crucial to their development such as meeting friends, attending social clubs and going to school (van der Gaag et al. 98). As Anne herself says, she does not feel jealous when she hears about other kids "hockey clubs, canoe trips, school plays and afternoon teas with friends", but she "longs to have a

good time for once and to laugh so hard it hurts" instead of being stuck in a house like lepers (Frank 166).

Just as Anne, Nellie also provides an estimable testimony of the Mexican Revolution that, through the experience of girlhood, brings a different perspective about armed conflict. Likewise, Nellie interacts with the war mainly through listening to others' stories. Nellie is very attentive to the news she overhears her mother discuss with revolutionaries who visit her: "Bustillos had been born in San Pablo de Balleza. Whenever he came to visit Parral, he brought with him two or three friends who visited my mother at her house" (Campobello 97). As Nellie confesses, her smallness (the way Campobello writes suggests that Nellie is much smaller than Anne) allows her to sneak into her mother's private conversations and access exclusive information about the war: "A lot of times I came close to her conversations without her feeling me" (Campobello 121). But oftentimes, her mother fills her in on the latest events: "Mom's eyes stop upon the image of the man . . . Stories for me, that I have not forgotten. Mom had them in her heart" (Campobello 126).

Stemming from a context in which the government sought to discredit *Villismo* through the aid of a literary canon that reiterated that the revolutionaries were sinister bandits who answered to their own interests (Valadés 51), her already discussed impartiality as a child narrator and her panoptic vision manage to legitimize a totally different version of this conflict. In *Cartucho,* Pancho Villa is a local hero that the town of Parral sees with great affection, not a terrifying criminal: "The people helped Villa. They sent boxes of bread to the hills, coffee, clothes, bandages, armories, pistols, rifles of all brands for him" (Campobello 138).

The girl narrator lends her voice so that the people of Parral can give their version of the events, which is directly opposed to the type of versions that received awards with the government. Nellie, through her testimony, has given the people of Parral an outlet for their stories. For example, when talking about the *villista* general Tomás Urbina, one of the townsfolk tells Nellie that "My great uncle knew him very well. What is being said

about el *Chapo*[4] are lies- my uncle said-; El *Chapo* was a good man of the Revolution. Those *curros*[5] that are trying to defame him didn't even know him!" (Campobello 127)

In fact, a large chunk of *Cartucho* is composed of Nellie repeating the stories of the Revolution that she hears: "There on Second Street, Severo tells me, laughing, his tragedy" (Campobello 145), "Those that meet him say he was a very brave man" (Campobello 151). By using this metafictional method, Campobello manages to tell the version of the Revolution that belongs to her and the people of the north (Hurley 38), thus contradicting the official version that, according to the epigraph in *Cartucho*, belongs to "a country where legends are fabricated, and people live numb with pain listening to them" (Campobello 93).

This does not mean, however, that Nellie presents an idealized and nostalgic version of the Revolution. Similar to the way Anne captures the struggles that come with war and how these affect women in particular, Campobello also narrates a dark aspect that comes with every armed conflict, which is the practice of massive rape during wartime. As K. R. Carter explains in "Should International Relations Consider Rape a Weapon of War?", rape is a common war tactic because it is available at no monetary or labor cost, it is a renewable resource (Carter 348), and it serves to exercise power, domination, and control of one body over another (Carter 350).

Because of Nellie's girlhood, she is primarily exposed to the indoor private sphere. This, in turn, allows her to give testimony to the dangers that women and girls face during wartime. Nellie narrates that when her mother first met General Agustín García, she said, "This man is dangerous." After their encounter in the streets, "She came home in a hurry." She further elaborates on the predatory intentions of the general and explains that "Irene was fourteen, she was Mom's niece. We heard a troop. Mom anxiously ordered her to get inside of the chimney and reach the rooftop and go all the way to miss Rosita's house . . . They were surrounding the house" (Campobello 99). Nellie's mother, aware of the way rape operates during wartime, manages to sneak Irene out of the house before the troops of Agustín García can take her away to violate her:

[4] El *Chapo* is a nickname given to short and robust men such as general Tomás Urbina.
[5] *Curros* is a local term used to describe upper-class and light-skinned males.

"General Agustín García had come to steal Irene, but he had to be satisfied with the guitar. He began to sing 'Proud dark girl, I won't see your face again'" (Campobello 100).

As the very fact that it was not until the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and Yugoslavia that rape became a crime against humanity in 1998 shows, sexual violence has been grossly overlooked in narratives surrounding war. However, testimony that comes from the point of view of girlhood has recorded this incident long before the *Rome Statute* of the International Criminal Court established jurisdiction to try crimes of sexual violence (Carter 343). Hence, war through the eyes of girl narrators can also serve to understand what specific dangers young women face during these times.

Another aspect to which Nellie is particularly sensitive, as a girl that experienced the Mexican Revolution firsthand, is the way in which the stories of female revolutionaries are altered to fit gender molds. Nellie denounces the fake story that had been divulged about what happened to Nacha Ceniceros, a *villista* colonel of the Revolution. According to the "Web of lies that was spread to defame general Villa by the fakers" (Campobello 107), Nacha, "who used a pistol and wore braids," left the frontlines of the fight because she accidentally shot a boy named Gallardo, with whom she was in love (Campobello 2007, 106). This, however, is not what really happened. Nacha simply returned home "disillusioned of the attitude of the few ones that wanted to keep the victories that were won by many" (Campobello 107).

According to Joanna Tidy's "The operation and subversion of gendered war discourses: soldierhood, motherhood and military dissent in the public production of Kimberly Rivera", masculinity is associated with war and femininity with peace and anti-violent sentiments (428). Because of this, to make sense of women that cross this gendered view of war, which is the case of Nacha Ceniceros, who could "ride horses better than most men" (Campobello 107), it becomes necessary to appeal to their loving or nurturing "nature" (Tidy 436). Hence, under war logic, these women are portrayed as either mothers or lovers to avoid disrupting notions of femininity and masculinity.

Nacha's "black legend"[6] (Campobello 107) framed her as a woman who left the war because of love, thus inserting her in an acceptable gender role.

## 5. Girlhood and its Sensitivity towards the Way War Affects Family Dynamics and Personal Development

It has been argued so far that, through testimonies of girlhood and a feminist interpretation of Security Studies, the way war affects communities and livelihoods can be understood as a gendered impact. But as Raven Robers states, wars "not only feed off the power structures and inequalities that exist within societies; they also affect and sometimes reshape those power structures at the community, family, and household levels" (37). In turn, war tends to increase domestic oppression and family disputes (44). Anne and Nellie's testimony of girlhood bears witness to the way conflict not only affects the macro level of society but also its micro level, meaning the institution of family.

Anne starts her journey to puberty at the Secret Annex. The Frank family goes into hiding alongside another family, the van Daans, and Mr. Dussel. Because of the need for cooperation for the sake of survival and closeness that the families and Mr. Dussel are subjected to, they are fused into one unit: "From the first, we ate our meals together, and after three days it felt as if the seven of us had become one big family" (Frank 34). This means a shift from the typical nuclear family into a heterogeneous group due to the circumstances of the war. Because of this, Otto, Anne's father, loses his place as the sole patriarch and has to share his authority with the new members of the family. When referring to decision-making in the Secret Annex, Anne describes the process as something that is "not as simple as all that; the various authorities who had to approve such a step were unable to reach a quick decision" (Frank 116).

This newly fused family unit comes with its own challenges. Due to the stress of the situation, the smallness of the Annex, and the complications that come with living in a precarious war economy, the van Daans, the Franks and Mr. Dussel start having quarrels regularly: "Mother has expressed a wish, which isn't likely to come true any time soon: not to have to see Mr. van Daan's face for two whole weeks. I wonder if everyone who

[6] "La leyenda negra" or the black legend was a term that was used in the context of the Mexican Revolution to refer to the defamatory narratives that were spread to delegitimize the triumphs of Pancho Villa and other revolutionaries.

shares a house sooner or later ends up at odds with their fellow residents" (Frank 183), "The house is still trembling from the aftereffects of the quarrels. Everyone is mad at everyone else: Mother and I, Mr. van Daan and Father, Mother and Mrs. van D. Terrific atmosphere, don't you think?" (Frank 106).

Anne resents living in such an atmosphere and identifies the fights as something that is preventing her development as a healthy, normal adolescent:

> The war is going to go on despite our quarrels and our longing for freedom and fresh air, so we should try to make the best of our stay here. I'm preaching, but I also believe that if I live here much longer, I'll turn into a dried-up old beanstalk. And all I really want is to be an honest-to-goodness teenager! (Frank 183)

Anne feels as though living in the Annex under those hostile conditions is robing her out of her teenage years and the positive experiences she is supposed to have: "I sometimes wonder if anyone will ever understand . . . and not worry about whether or not I'm Jewish and merely see me as a teenager badly in need of some good plain fun" (Frank 167). Anne sees herself as an adolescent who is missing out on several aspects of her girlhood because of the war and her religious/ethical identity.

Likewise, as Anne experiences puberty while hiding in times of war, another aspect that affects her development greatly is her increasingly deteriorating relationship with her mother. According to Anne, her, and her mother's personalities tend to clash. She also starts forming a grudge against Edith because she feels as though she tends to prefer her older sister Margot, "Mother took Margot's side; they always take each other's side" (Frank 151) and nitpicks at Anne's imperfections: "I forgive Mother too, but every time she makes a sarcastic remark or laughs at me, it's all I can do to control myself" (Frank 184).

Her lack of emotional connection towards her mother leaves her feeling isolated and motherless, as she longs for a sympathetic maternal figure that understands her internal struggles and can comfort her: "Despite all my theories and efforts, I miss—every day and every hour of the day—having a mother who understands me. That's why with everything I do and write, I imagine the kind of mom I'd like to be to my children later on" (Frank 167). The constant clashes and fights lead her to feel so removed from her mother that, during her final entries, she expresses feeling as though she does not need a mother after all she has been through and how much she has changed: "now the battle is

over. I've won! I'm independent, in both body and mind. I don't need a mother anymore, and I've emerged from the struggle a stronger person" (Frank 305).

Although wanting freedom from your parents and experiencing clashes with your mother is a normal teenage experience, the added stress of the war and living in the Annex leads Anne to experience depression and anxiety, which in turn affects her development. As the fighting in the Annex becomes more intense and the families spend more and more time confined to a shared and small space, Anne's mental health starts being greatly affected:

> Relationships here in the Annex are getting worse all the time. We don't dare open our mouths at mealtime . . . because no matter what we say, someone is bound to resent it or take it the wrong way. . . . I've been taking valerian every day to fight the anxiety and depression, but it doesn't stop me from being even more miserable the next day (Frank 145).

Her mental health struggles also appear through different signs, like the amount of time she sometimes spends sleeping and her lack of appetite: "I've got no appetite . . . The atmosphere is stifling, sluggish, leaden. . . . Sleep makes the silence and the terrible fear go by more quickly, helps pass the time, since it's impossible to kill it" (Frank 150-151).

The biggest thing that was taken away from her, though, was her life. On Tuesday, August 1st of 1944, Anne writes her last diary entry. She was never able to get out of the Annex and experience the normal teenage things she so desperately longed for. She was not allowed to become an adult either. Her journey through girlhood was interrupted forever. However, coming to terms with this reality and not giving in to the "redemptive figure" that has conveniently been removed from "the impurity of adulthood" (Bernard 22) of Hollywood Anne is important, because it is only through this confrontation that ethical and true conversations about the repercussions of war can happen.

Nellie's lived experiences of the Revolution also portray the family changes in hierarchies that occur because of the war. Raven Robers points out that "as a result of armed conflict and the loss of men to the battlefront or death, women have both to work at home to raise the family and also seek outside employment to secure an income" (43). Since Nellie's father is away fighting in the Revolution, her mother is in charge of the household and becomes the matriarch of the family.

As Aili Mari Tripp points out in *Women and Power in Postconflict Africa,* since countries in post-conflict contexts experience disrupted gender relations, this in turn

provides new opportunity structures for women to pursue their agency, suffrage, and take on more roles as leaders (31). In the case of Nellie's mom, the Revolution grants her a new sense of political importance. Being pro-*Villista* and the wife of a revolutionary, Nellie's mom opens her home to the fighters of the Revolution. She provides the men with meals and mends their clothes: "*Cartucho*[7] did not say his name. He did not know how to sew or fix buttons. One day they took *Cartucho's* shirts to the house. *Cartucho* came to say thank you" (Campobello 95). She also stores weapons and munitions in her house. This makes her a trusted person of Pancho Villa, which gains her recognition in the Revolution and also allows her to build friendships with important generals of the North, such as Colonel Bustillos:

Colonel Bustillos loved watching Mom get angry when somebody said the slightest thing against Villa. Colonel Bustillos did not hate the "Boss"—as he called him—but he never liked to hear people praise him; he believed that Villa was like everyone else, and that the day it was his turn to die, he would die just like the others. (Campobello 2007, 97)

This recognition, however, just as much as it brings her protection, it also makes her a target of the enemy of the *villista* forces, the *carrancistas*[8]. As Nellie vividly recalls in *Cartucho,* one terrible day, General Alfredo Rueda Quijano came to her house alongside 10 more men and started insulting and intimidating her mother so she would give them the provisions she was hiding for the *villistas*:

> "Are you not a person Villa personally trusts? Try denying it. There are weapons here. If you do not give them to us alongside the money and armories, I will burn your house down." . . . They were pushing us, stomping on us, the man of the blonde moustache wanted to hit my mom, then he said: "Tear everything apart, search everywhere." (Campobello 116)

This moment of her childhood greatly affected Nellie. She felt an immense sense of powerlessness and injustice. As she further narrates, "I have never been able to forget my mother pushed to the wall, made a painting, with her eyes focused on the black table, hearing the insults" (Campobello 116). At the same time, the traumatizing experience

[7] *Cartucho* means cartridge in English. In this case, *Cartucho* is the nickname that Campobello gives to the man of his memories to also signify that he was only a soldier.
[8] *Carrancistas* is the name given to the military troops that fought to defend the government against the threat of the revolutionaries.

exposes another truth about girlhood in the war, which is the vulnerability that women and girls feel amidst violent groups of men.

Nellie's mother's role in the Mexican Revolution was not limited to her capabilities as a hostess. She also served as a nurse to the wounded in Parral: "Mom spoke to the sisters of the Hospital of Jesus and was allowed to go treat the most wounded. . . . She treated fourteen, I held the tray for her" (Campobello 136). Nellie's mother's also uses her importance in the Revolution to exert her agency and fight for what she believes is morally correct. The president of Parral had ordered to let the wounded "bandits" die and denied them medical care. Nellie's mother, not caring whether the wounded men were *villistas, carrancistas* or outlaws, used her voice so these men would not die of negligence:

> Mom spoke in person with the municipal president and she asked, she begged, she implored; if these words are not enough to give an idea of what happened, I will say that Mom, crying for the fate that awaited the wounded, personally went as far as paying people to help her save those men by transferring them to the Hospital of Jesus (Campobello 137).

This, in turn, brought Nellie a sense of great pride because of her mother's actions and gave her a sense of purpose and usefulness as she herself helped her mom treat the wounded, and hence a great deal of lives were saved because of them (Campobello 137). Although warfare does leave women and girls in vulnerable situations, as it turns out that during war women die at higher rates than men (Raven Robers 36), armed conflict can also provide women with opportunities to exercise their agency and voice to engage in forms of activism (Tripp 31). Girlhood also becomes a politicized force once it becomes intertwined in these actions, just as Nellie did and felt "happy to be able to be useful in something" (Campobello 137). As Nikki van der Gaag, Sarah Henriks, and Feyi Rodway argue in *Because I am a Girl: In the Shadow of War*, outbreaks of instability and violent conflict can bring additional responsibilities outside the home for girls (97), which can be a positive and empowering possibility.

Another way in which Campobello shows how development can be impacted by warfare is by portraying herself as a girl that became desensitized to the violence that occurred to others outside of her family circle. Through out the novel, Nellie comes across several cadavers and body parts. However, she does not appear to feel frightened or disgusted by them but intrigued. Nellie narrates that one time she was walking down the

streets with her siblings when she encountered soldiers carrying a platter. The girls inquire what is inside, since a "very pretty pink" caught their eye. The soldiers told them that they were carrying the remaining guts of General Sobrazo, to which the girls answered: "Guts! How pretty they are!" (Campobello 117).

Likewise, Campobello also shows in her narrative the very particular way in which she processed the war as a girl. When she encounters the men of the Revolution, like for example, the "gorgeous José Díaz", she thinks of whether they would make suitable prospects for her princess doll Pitaflorida (Campobello 113). José Díaz, however, "never became the boyfriend of Pitaflorida". Instead, "José Díaz, beautiful young man, died devoured by the dirt; he got bullets so he would stop complaining about the sun" (Campobello 114). Nellie's thought process regarding traumatic events of the war can serve to open a window towards how children experiment and deal with the experiences that come with armed conflict. As N. Coe points out, Childhoods are rarely sentimental, and instead they portray the world through the logic of children (Coe 10). If Nellie's reality is that of doll princesses that deserve handsome boyfriends, then war and death will be filtered through that vision of beauty and ugliness.

## 6. Protecting Girls: A Necessary Step towards Maternal Thinking

Lastly, both *Anne's diary* and *Cartucho* provide us with a different way of thinking about security that distances itself from the usual masculinized logic and instead exemplifies what Carol Cohn calls "maternal thinking." According to Cohn, technocratic states view themselves as masculine identities that must become impenetrable, otherwise they risk feminization. Hence, to ensure its security, masculinized states prepare for worst-case scenarios, attack before being attacked, and equate more armed power with more security (Cohn 59). Maternal thinking, on the other hand, occupies itself with the preservation, nurturance, and training of those who are helpless (Cohn 48) and scrutinizes situations to prepare not for the worst, but to be on the lookout for dangers before they appear (Cohn 55).

Otto Frank's organization of the Annex as a hiding place not only for his family but also for other members of his community is a prime example of maternal thinking. Otto scrutinized the political situation in Holland and planned ahead of time to secure a hiding place in his office assuming that the most likely scenario would be that his family would be in danger of being arrested and deported: "Only when we were walking down

the street did Father and Mother reveal, little by little, what the plan was. For months we'd been moving as much of our furniture and apparel out of the apartment as we could" (Frank 25). Notice how the fact that they have been moving furniture for months proves that Otto had been accommodating the Annex for his family for quite some time, which shows an outstanding amount of scrutinizing.

Even though living in the Secret Annex did take a toll on everybody's mental health, Anne is also able to appreciate how lucky she is to have a safe space to hide during the Nazi invasion: "The Annex is an ideal place to hide in. It may be damp and lopsided, but there's probably not a more comfortable hiding place in all of Amsterdam. No, in all Holland" (Frank 30). Otto also had to have a series of positive bonds beforehand with his employees so they would risk their lives helping them hide and getting them resources (Sönser 42). This follows too the logic of maternal thinking and its favoring of communal connection.

Likewise, Otto not only provided two families and a single man with a secure hiding place, but he also found a way to continue his daughter's education regardless of the war. This is especially true of maternal thinking, which not only worries about the preservation of those in vulnerable positions, but also their nurturing. Anne can continue her school lessons thanks to the scholarly resources her father manages to secure for her: "Today, French grammar and history. I simply refuse to do that wretched math every day" (61). Anne even comes to develop a love for Greek mythology. Otto shapes Anne's education so it would be grounded in humanistic values, as he oversees her study of Goethe and Schiller, the most important German writers of the Enlightenment (Sönser 42). As Nikki van der Gaag, Sarah Henriks, and Feyi Rodway argue, educating girls during and after conflict is key to securing a successful inheritance of an unstable society and should be on the priorities of policy makers during wartime (104). Hence, Otto's maternal thinking can be viewed as a positive example of protecting and helping the development of girls during conflict.

Similar to Otto Frank, Nellie's mother also showcases a way of ensuring her family's security that resonates with maternal thinking. Just as Nellie's mother planned her nieces' escape from the General by scrutinizing the situation and preparing beforehand, Nellie's mother is also able to save one of her children's lives by using this mode of acting. Nellie's older brother was detained by the police because of a wanted man he helped escape, and Nellie's mother was able to foresee that this meant he was in

danger of being shot as punishment. Nellie's mother went to the county jail in search of him and tried talking to the chief of arms unsuccessfully. Her mother, however, did not resign and instead, she hid her jailed son under a plastic lone until one of his allies, el "Chapo" Marcelino, encountered her, and authorized her son to be released. Nellie's mother, nonetheless, being aware of the grudges men of the Revolution hold, knew that her son wouldn't be safe until he was outside of Mexico. Hence, she packed him a bag full of money and a precious heirloom and sent him away (Campobello 140-141).

Nellie's mother's form of thinking also shows a great deal of scrutinizing to ensure the safety of the vulnerable, which emulates maternal logic. This case also proves that, although maternal logic is particularly helpful to address approaches to maintain girls' safety once they are outside of the public sphere and thus outside of the consideration of policy makers, maternal thinking is also helpful to keep all family members safe. In other words, maternal thinking can be used as a method that helps keep safe any vulnerable person from either gender.

Since both Anne and Nellie are in positions of vulnerability because of their girlhood, they are constantly in situations in which the adults around them have to act in order to protect them and their families. This, in turn, allows for scenarios where protective and defensive means of reaction are the best choices. Thus, the examples of maternal thinking that appear in *Anne's diary* and *Cartucho* invite us to think about war not in terms of masculinized logic, which means acting through aggression and attacks, but in terms of prioritizing security and nurturing. This new way of thinking should also call for different forms of policy making that not only include girls and their particular necessities but also consider aiding their development as coming-of-age individuals.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, *Cartucho* and *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* are two powerful testimonies of how war affects girls. Both texts show the complexities of how girlhood is experienced from within the war matrix just as much as they shed light upon how war can be understood through the eyes of girlhood. Nellie Campobello's novel and *Anne's diary* highlight the importance of considering women and gender identity when analyzing armed conflict, as the lenses of girlhood have a special sensibility regarding how war disrupts communal and family relations and livelihoods. This sensibility also extends to the way conflict affects the development and psyche of girls. At the same time,

girlhood can be utilized as a tool for storytelling that prioritizes nuanced self-representations and the stories that are produced within their communities instead of the discourses promoted by powerful institutions.

Anne Frank and Nellie Campobello's works exemplify how masculinized and feminized notions of warfare affect people and their modes of thinking in real-life situations. *Cartucho* and *Anne's diary* also invites us to think about war in terms of security/maternal thinking instead of offensive or masculinized operations. Overall, Nellie and Anne prove that our understanding of war will never be complete until we start asking ourselves how girls experience it. This effort also starts with providing girls' voices with the autonomy and agency they need and ends with the appropriate creation of policies to protect and nurture them before, during, and after conflict emerges.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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