

Investigating the Female Private Eye - The Hard-Boiled Formula in Sara Paretsky's and Sue Grafton's Detective Fiction

Jelige: KOLIBRI

Lezárás dátuma: 06.15.2022

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The Origins and Development of Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction.....	5
Chapter 2: Strategies of Individualism in Raymond Chandler's and Sara Paretsky's Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction.....	10
2.1.: The Place of the Private Eye in Society.....	10
2.2.: The Social Connections of the Private Eye.....	13
2.3.: The Private Eye's Investigative Techniques and Relationship with the Police.....	15
Chapter 3: Gendering the Canon - Various Faces of Feminism and the Female Private Eye.....	18
Conclusion.....	28
Works Cited.....	32

Introduction

Even after forty years, the feminist detective novels of Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton still have a determining influence on contemporary writers. Their contributions to the development of the feminist hard-boiled detective fiction paved the way for many female writers, such as the American Linda Barnes and the British Val McDermid, who have also chosen to express their feminist views through the hard-boiled genre. However, a number of critics, for instance Kathleen Gregory Klein, claim that the reformation of the hard-boiled was generally ineffective because the inherent conservative ideology of the genre overrides any feminist aspiration (237). According to Klein, Paretsky is the only feminist writer today who is able to level “the tensions between the demands of the detective novel and the feminist ideology” (230). In contrast, Priscilla L. Walton and Manina Jones consider the feminist subversion a general success with view to the intentional changes allowing the authors to remove from the white heterosexual man to women and the patriarchal oppression that affects them (92).

Nonetheless, there are disagreements even between those critics who recognize the feminist sub-genre as a valid re-gendering of the canon. Johanna M. Smith claims in one of her articles that “Warshawski “remains male-defined” while “Grafton’s novels de-masculinize hard-boiled detection by representing it simply as a job with Millhone simply the (female) person doing it” (81). According to Smith, it is rather Grafton’s books that seem to be “a feminist gendering of the canon” (81) and not those of Paretsky, because of Millhone’s gender neutral-coding. In contrast, Klein points out that Warshawski’s unfaltering feminist attitude makes her more subversive of the masculine tradition, while Millhone’s more neutral position does not allow much room for feminist criticism of patriarchy in Grafton’s novels. Based on the contesting critical views on feminist hard-boiled detective fiction, one of the aims of this study is to demonstrate why Klein’s argumentation about the form and the female sleuth is valid and prove that Smith’s claims completely disregards Warshawski’s success as a feminist private eye fighting for gender equality. Furthermore, the feminist appropriation allows female authors to bring attention to marginal groups as well, because they also include members of different social classes and cultures besides emphasizing the female experience. In this sense, Paretsky’s novels are more inclusive and representational than Grafton’s, since Warshawski is a Chicago-based detective and Chicago itself is a multi-cultural city and an

economic centre. However, both authors foreground the female experience which makes their works a fertile ground for further analysis based on a feminist reading.

The present study also intends to discuss Sara Paretsky's female hard-boiled protagonist, V.I. Warshawski and explore her idiosyncratic traits in relation to Raymond Chandler's and Sue Grafton's private detectives. The inclusion of Chandler's Philip Marlowe is necessary in order to demonstrate how far feminist writers have come with the creation of the female/feminist PI in the fundamentally masculine genre of hard-boiled detective fiction. The genre was flourishing in the 1930s and these novels exclusively featured white heterosexual men as protagonists which only underscores its male-dominated nature. Through a comparison of Marlowe and Warshawski, it can be observed how Paretsky's feminist worldview affected Warshawski's individuality which is one of the most emphasized aspects of the American hard-boiled detective. As a result of the conscious subversion of the masculine tradition, the re-gendering of the hard-boiled formula proved to be so successful that nowadays this feminist sub-genre is a distinct and well-formed counter-tradition (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 247). On the other hand, Grafton's female sleuth, Kinsey Millhone serves as an example of the diverse representation of feminist ideologies of the 1980s. The second wave of feminism allowed feminist writers to voice their "feminist message" (Hamilton 41) by enabling their private detectives to talk tough just like their male predecessors while keeping their feminine attitudes (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 264). A thorough analysis of Paretsky's and Grafton's protagonists foregrounds the fundamental differences between the female sleuths that originate from the authors' differing feminist standpoints.

Paretsky and Grafton exploited the original tradition of the 1930s in order to create their protagonists: they took the generic features of the hard-boiled formula and either applied them without modification or subverted them. One of the most important aspects of the formula is the figure of the detective who was considerably transformed to fit the feminist ideology. For Paretsky and Grafton it is the character of Philip Marlowe who serves as a basis for their female detectives. Sara Paretsky admits that Chandler influenced her as a writer (Paretsky, *Age of Silence* 79) and Kinsey Millhone is said to be "less overtly a feminist than she is a Chandlerian detective" (Beyad and Jabbari 27). The similarities between Marlowe and Warshawski raise the question whether she is only the female version of Marlowe. I argue, however, that the representation of Warshawski, along with her feminist and feminine values

show not only a clear breakaway from Marlowe, but gives her a radical voice in the second wave of feminism as well. The female PI combines the typically classical and hard-boiled traits of the previous male detectives: she is intelligent as the Golden Age detective, but also tough and physically active just like the hard-boiled private eye. However, her characterization is decisively influenced by contemporary feminist ideology she is supposed to represent. According to Klein, Grafton created Kinsey Millhone in a way that she only accommodated “her gender and self-awareness in only minor ways” (203). In other words, Millhone more closely resembles the male detective, because other than her gender and “feminist inclinations” (202), her other personality traits are left unaltered. On the other hand, Warshawski is a “self-defined feminist” (202) for “whom this identification is both a conscious act and an apparently consistent feature of [her] behavior” (202). Consequently, this paper joins the argument that Paretsky’s detective novels do not only de-masculinize the hard-boiled genre, but also adds femininity to them. This claim is also justified by Klein, who asserts that Paretsky has created a feminist version of the hard-boiled detective fiction that is an equilibrium of the original features of the formula and the newly introduced feminist elements (230).

Sara Paretsky’s *Indemnity Only* (1982), Raymond Chandler’s *The Big Sleep* (1939) and Sue Grafton’s *“A” is for Alibi* (1982) will provide the basis of the analysis, but other novels by the three authors are also included. Chandler’s *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940) has to be examined, in order to understand Marlowe’s contesting feelings about personal relationships and the reason behind his lonely lifestyle. Moreover, Paretsky’s *Killing Orders* (1985), *Bitter Medicine* (1987), *Burn Marks* (1990), and *Body Work* (2010) are incorporated into the analysis, because they show Warshawski’s development as a feminist detective and address several important issues concerning the female experience. From Grafton, the novels *“C” is for Corpse* (1986) and *“E” is for Evidence* (1988) are also included since they provide a more comprehensive picture of Millhone’s behaviour as a detective and as a private person. Although the comparison of the three protagonists will be mainly based on feminist criticism, gender studies, crime fiction studies and cultural studies will also be applied. These approaches are necessary to demonstrate how the female/feminist detective differs from the male hard-boiled detective who is her predecessor. Moreover, the contrast of Warshawski and Millhone illustrates how Paretsky and Grafton incorporate their differing standpoints into the personality and behaviour of the female PI. During the second wave of feminism there were a number of prevailing ideologies that could influence writers: while Grafton is a representative

of a moderate feminist attitude, Paretsky communicates a more radical view. Exploring the selected novels on the basis of gender studies is necessary, because the interaction of the female detectives with male characters draw attention to the inequality between the two genders and the oppression of women. The hard-boiled is one of the most realistic genres of detective fiction which enables female writers to write about the female experience as it is and formulate a critique of the patriarchal oppression that still exists in modern society. The feminist hard-boiled detective fiction provides a platform through which feminist authors can uncompromisingly deal with issues, such as reproductive rights, misogyny and sexism. As it was mentioned earlier, realism is an important feature of the hard-boiled, so the inclusion of social and economic criticism is unavoidable. Hard-boiled detectives exist and operate in social settings and the crimes that people commit are in themselves a critique of society. The motives and the people behind those crimes are the other side of the social criticism: the most common motives for committing a crime are money and power; and in the hard-boiled genre, the rich are the most likely to want more of both. Lastly, the inclusion of crime fiction studies is important in order to interpret how the previous contributions to detective fiction affected the feminist sub-genre of the hard-boiled tradition. Through a careful reading of the selected novels, this study demonstrates that due to her radical feminist standpoint, Paretsky's reconsideration of the hard-boiled tradition is more subversive than Grafton's, which also indicates that Warshawski is not just a female version of Philip Marlowe.

Chapter 1: The Origins and Development of Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction

According to Stephen Knight, novels included in the genre of ‘crime fiction’ must centre around some kind of offence against the law, but murder is one of the most investigated offences in crime fiction (*Crime Fiction* 12). Contemporary crime fiction is one of the most diverse genres with several sub-genres, such as the clue-puzzle (whodunit) story, private eye (hard-boiled) story, police procedural or psychothriller. It is worth noting that female writers have always been present in crime writing, but only the emergence of the second wave of feminism provided feminist authors the chance to create a counter-tradition. In order to see how the feminist sub-genre of hard-boiled detective fiction became so popular in contemporary crime fiction writing, the literary history of detective fiction has to be surveyed. Therefore, this chapter will provide a brief overview of the most relevant periods and authors that influenced the evolution of the hard-boiled detective fiction and its later feminist variation.

Crime itself can be seen as disorder or the disruption of the normal, so the character of the detective can be perceived as an agent of authority who is responsible for restoring and maintaining order in a society. However, the earliest accounts about crime did not have detective figures, as it is notable in the collection called *The Newgate Calendar* (1773), which is said to be “the archetype of pre-detective crime stories” (Knight, *Crime Fiction* 3). In crime fiction, the need for a character, who is able to make sense of a crime and by that containing it, became clear by the mid-19th century. Lee Horsley claims that crime fiction and the Gothic have common origins (*Twentieth-Century* 4) and their combination is exemplified in Edgar Allan Poe’s detective stories. In addition to mixing the rational process of detection and the characteristically Gothic atmosphere and macabre, Poe created the archetypal gentleman detective, C. August Dupin in 1841. Dupin is a genius-like and eccentric aristocrat, who solves crimes with the help of his lively imagination, his keen eye for details and empirical methods. The stories end with Dupin’s detailed explanation of how the criminal committed the crime, and this type of ending would be a constant element of detective fiction later on. The Dupin stories are told by a nameless narrator, who is inferior in his intellectual capacities, but is a companion or sidekick to the detective. The crimes Dupin investigates are carefully distanced from the audience and even from the detective, because Dupin pursues the culprit in a passive way (Knight, *Crime Fiction* 27). Poe definitely influenced Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,

who built on Poe's model for the detective and even developed it further in his stories featuring Sherlock Holmes. The characterization of Doyle's protagonist is similar to Dupin's in most ways, but Holmes is more physical in the sense that he engages in physical fights. Another difference is that while Dupin solves crimes for the intellectual challenge (Kayman 45), Holmes sees crime solving as a social obligation and this trait permeates in the private eyes of the hard-boiled genre. Holmes operates in the "stereotypical vision of Victorian London" (43), which requires the stories to project "a meaningful and reassuring picture of social order" (43). As a result, in Doyle's stories giving a complete explanation for each and every question at the end is a must. The 'consulting detective' is a self-taught professional who uses his knowledge and observations to deduce and reconstruct complex crimes (50). Furthermore, Holmes is a gentleman which becomes an essential trait of the Golden Age detectives, such as Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, S. S. Van Dine's Philo Vance and Dorothy L. Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey.

Golden Age detectives are more feminine and less physically engaged, which can be traced back to the negative effects that the First World War had on Great Britain. The losses that Great Britain suffered during the war caused a decrease in confidence and a sense of social uncertainty that appear in classical detective fiction writing as well. Even though there is no political or historical context mentioned in the crime novels, a sense of instability and tension interlaces the plot. The clue-puzzle stories of the era are set in a limited space, for instance a country house or a small part of the city. Other than the setting, the social circle of the characters is also quite limited, because usually the middle class is depicted. In most cases, the investigated crime is murder, which could have been committed by several people, who had relevant motives (Knight, "The Golden Age" 77). The detection itself is the rational processing of the circumstantial evidence rather than the active pursuit of the criminal. The detective is usually a man who is not a qualified investigator and is not a well-rounded character, but it does not hold him back from solving the case at the end of the story (78). The emphasis is placed on finding the culprit, and the reader is invited to solve the case with the protagonist in the spirit of 'fair play', since all clues and information is made available to the reader as well. Moreover, the tone in which the events, such as the discovery of the murder victim and the explanation of the crime, is neutral, and it does not really leave space for romantic sub-plots (79). Authors of the Golden Age had quite a reputation all around the world, and their novels inspired other authors to create their own contribution to detective fiction writing.

The hard-boiled novels are a great deal different from classical detective fiction, even though it is apparent that the hard-boiled was influenced by the British tradition. The reason behind the distinction is that American writers wanted to create an American version of the detective fiction that mirrored the American reality. In the US, the Great Depression, the Prohibition and the spreading gangsterism were the most important circumstances that shaped the American social, economic and political life. So as to make the distinction clear between the two traditions, the 'hard-boiled' label was added (Horsley, *The Noir Thriller* 19). American hard-boiled authors, such as Raymond Chandler were criticizing the classical detective fiction novels, claiming that they are too formulaic and artificial. Chandler captured the difference between the classical and hard-boiled detective fiction in terms of realness, when he commented on Dashiell Hammett's style: "Hammett took murder out of the Venetian vase and dropped it into the alley" ("Simple Art of Murder" 7). Chandler's claim supports the idea that hard-boiled writers take inspiration from the real world and try to make their protagonists as realistic as possible. In his essay, "The Simple Art of Murder" (1950), Raymond Chandler characterizes the private eye in the following way:

[...] down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of story must be such a man. He is the hero; he is everything. He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honor --by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it, and certainly without saying it. He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world. I do not care much about his private life ... if he is a man of honor in one thing, he is that in all things (9).

Another difference between earlier detectives and the private eye is that the latter lacks profound social connections, because they do not have male companions or sidekicks. One of the most typical characteristics of the P.I. is being a solitary figure who is an outsider, and a mediator between social classes. In order to navigate in the urban chaos, the private eye has to be street-wise and they are often ex-cops with legitimate P.I. licences. The use of language of the private detective is especially distinctive, because they talk in a 'tough' way called wisecracking, which means that they use slang and colloquial speech that support their masculine 'tough guy' image. They also use violence more frequently either because they want to protect themselves or others (like Marlowe) or because they can or even want to hurt

an antagonist (like Mike Hammer or the Continental Op). Their only companion is their guns, which are 'phallic' weapons that symbolize their male potency. The use of violence and guns may have a large part in hard-boiled stories, but later female writers were the ones who really reflected on how these can affect the detective herself (Reddy, "Women Detectives" 199).

Between the 1960s and 1980s, there were several movements aiming to make women equal to men in terms of legal rights, equal payment for equal work and women's reproductive rights. The Women's Liberation Movement and the Abortion Right Movement were the main influences on the changes that occurred in literature in the 1980s, when female authors started "to re-write the literary canon and to re-claim male-dominated discursive sites" (Beyad and Jabbari 26). Therefore, the hard-boiled genre was also revised by female writers between the 1970s and 1980s, which period roughly equals the second wave of feminism. The feminist appropriations meant the "borrowing [of] familiar features of detective fiction in order to turn them upside down and inside out" (Reddy, *Sisters in Crime* 2) in order to subvert those features that prevented women to be central characters. The notion itself that a woman is in the role of the private eye, is a serious change compared to the Hammett-Chandler tradition. Similarly to the traditional hard-boiled novels, the urban setting is very important, because cities are the centre of modern society and the scene of various crimes, such as murder, insurance fraud and embezzlement. The detective operates as a professional private investigator and she is exposed not only to physical danger, but sexist behaviour from men as well (102). The socio-political critique is aimed at the profit-oriented modern society, the corruption in the higher places of politics and the unfair treatment of women. Usually the culprit is a rich and powerful person who exploits other people and kills to cover up his tracks. The distrust of the rich and powerful is a characteristically hard-boiled feature, which is again a social critique of capitalist society. Since the hard-boiled formula demands a high level of realism, it lacks the resolution and reassurance at the end of the novel (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 69). Even though the case is solved, there is no illusion about the detective making a permanent change or restore order for good. After all, the detective, let it be male or female, is only one person against the unjust world.

The increasing popularity of the feminist hard-boiled detective fiction is closely related to the social changes that has occurred in the United States since the 1960s. As Maureen T. Reddy suggested, as women started to move into male-dominated spheres in real

life, such as universities and law enforcement, so did women in fiction (*Sisters in Crime* 2). Therefore, in feminist detective fiction, the same issues are depicted and discussed that real women have to face in contemporary society. For instance, Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski series is meant to demonstrate the potential female agency and the actual oppression of women (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 271) through exploring Warshawski's continuous efforts to establish her authority as a female private investigator. Her predecessors, the male protagonists of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and their contemporaries of the 1920s and 1930s, did not have the same problem simply because of their gender. Male private detectives were both resisting the corruption of society, but also conforming to the patriarchal power structure, which made them more traditional than they would seem on the surface. On the other hand, female private sleuths have to fight against corruption, but before that, they have to defy patriarchy "even to engage in the detective's struggle against evil" (Reddy, *Sisters in Crime* 102).

Chapter 2: Strategies of Individualism in Raymond Chandler's and Sara Paretsky's Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction

As the hard-boiled detective fiction is a distinctively American contribution to detective fiction, it is no surprise that individuality plays an important role in the characterization of the protagonist, the private eye. In a "world gone wrong" (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 70), the detective has to rely on his/her own abilities, intuition and experiences in order to solve the case and survive in a society that works against him/her (72). Based on this, it can be stated that both Sara Paretsky and Raymond Chandler created individualistic protagonists. The two detectives navigate in urban settings in which the overall socio-economic circumstances force them to be self-reliant, tough and assertive, but also vulnerable to some extent (74). I contend, however, that due to her femininity, V.I. Warshawski is more sociable than Philip Marlowe, which is discernible in the way they relate to their environment, form social connections, conduct their investigations and relate to the police.

2.1. The Place of the Private Eye in Society

The hard-boiled private eye is characteristically an outsider, but this marginality is also the quality that enables him/her to interact with people from different social classes during his/her investigations. Neither Warshawski nor Marlowe are considered to be members of the law enforcement, because they are only seen as amateur detectives which causes their authority to be questioned. As Horsley suggests, hard-boiled detectives are largely influenced by the "romantic images of the lone male" (*The Noir Thriller* 24), because they represent the "macho values" (24) which are important according to the American mindset. Horsley's statement can be applied to Marlowe, who justifies himself by remarking in *The Big Sleep*, "I worked for Mr. Wilde, the District Attorney, as an investigator once ... I was fired. For insubordination" (Chandler 9). However, for Marlowe insubordination means that he opposes the inherent corruption in law enforcement. Marlowe's words indicate that he refuses to act "on the basis of political favours" (Athanasourelis 101), so he would rather work alone than with dirty cops. Nonetheless, it has to be added that Marlowe is open to accepting help, not just from policemen, but from civilians as well. For instance, in *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940) Marlowe is trying to get on a gambling boat to talk to Moose Malloy, a wanted murderer, who gained Marlowe's sympathy. Marlowe fails to board the boat on his own, so he accepts Red Norgaard's help, who turns out to be an ex-Bay City cop.

On the other hand, Warshawski is an ex-public defender, who was disappointed with the legal system, because she felt that she could do much more on her own and according to her own definition of justice. After solving her first case as a private eye, she decided that it was a more suitable job for her, because it gives her more freedom and satisfaction as she has a more active part in serving justice. However, her situation is more complicated, because she is a woman and it was uncommon for women to become detectives in the 1980s. It often interferes with her investigations, because people (mostly men) do not consider her capable of solving crimes. According to Bobby Mallory, her late father's cop friend, a more feminine occupation would be more suitable for her. Mallory voices his opinion not just in *Indemnity Only* (1982), but in later novels as well. In *Indemnity Only*, several men, namely Yardley Masters, Ralph Devereux and Andrew McGraw doubt her professionalism as a private investigator, because they think women do not possess the necessary abilities. "But you are a girl, and things may get heavy" (Paretsky 7), says Andrew McGraw to V.I. in *Indemnity Only* when he hires her, claiming that he is John L. Thayer who wants her to find his son's girlfriend, Anita Hill. Men are also affronted by her asking questions, because they are not used to answering to a woman, it makes them patronizing and, at times even defensive. Furthermore, men try to undermine her legitimacy by calling her by her first name Vic, that is why she goes by V.I., to force men to call her by her surname. Men call other men by their surname as to acknowledge their equal standing and show their respect for each other. Calling Warshawski, a woman, by her surname would imply that she is an equal to them, but in their eyes she is not. Her struggle is presented in *Indemnity Only* as Masters, one of the vice-presidents at Ajax asks "What does the V stand for?" and Warshawski just replies with "My first name, Mr. Masters" (Paretsky 25). These instances suggest that Marlowe's standing is less ambiguous since he is a representative of patriarchal power while Warshawski is trying to prove herself in a male-dominated society (Horsley, *Twentieth Century* 259).

Warshawski and Marlowe are both disillusioned, and wholly aware of the corruption and the abusive use of power in their contemporary societies, but still trying to serve justice the best way they can. Warshawski feels a sense of responsibility for her community, which is located at the South Side of Chicago and even though she cannot take down every criminal, she tries to initiate changes at a personal level. She mostly deals with institutional corruption in Chicago, more precisely with insurance companies that try to exploit their clients by refusing to pay them their insurance. It is important to mention that as a feminist, Warshawski is concerned about issues concerning female oppression, for example abortion rights, sexism

and gender roles. Even though, the problem of abortion is more emphasized in a later book of the Warshawski series, *Bitter Medicine* (1987), it is also mentioned in *Indemnity Only* (1982). Sexism and the assertion of “women’s rightful place in the public sphere” (Hynynen 28) appear constantly, because Warshawski is in a constant battle for her status in a patriarchal society as a female private eye (30). As Vic prefers to take an active role in solving her and her client’s problems, she dislikes women who just accept the injustice committed against them without trying to help themselves. For example, Consuelo’s mother in *Bitter Medicine* is so engrossed in self-pity that she seems like she does not care about finding out why her diabetic and pregnant daughter has died in the hospital.

Marlowe, on the other hand, is a traditional hard-boiled detective, a “man of honor” (“Simple Art of Murder” 9) according to Chandler, who distances himself from the society and its crimes by his cynical, aloof and self-mocking attitude. It enables him to view the moral disorder of the urban setting as an outsider, which makes him a reliable narrator and commentator (Horsley, *The Noir Thriller* 37). As Sasikarn Kongsak points out, Marlowe is portrayed as a questing knight, but his efforts are in vain, because of the utter wrongness that Marlowe on his own cannot ‘fix’ (170). His knightly moral code puts him on a moral high ground, unlike Sam Spade. Dashiell Hammett’s Sam Spade is often seen as a crook himself, because in *The Maltese Falcon* (1930) he is willing to let the criminals escape justice in exchange for a certain sum of money. Although, Marlowe is not perfect either, because he makes mistakes which only adds to his realistic characterization. For example, in *The Big Sleep* he does not report the death of the blackmailer, Arthur Gwynn Geiger and it leads to Joe Brody’s murder. Carol Lundgren shoots Joe Brody, because Lundgren thinks that Brody killed his lover, Geiger. Hard-boiled detective fiction is a predecessor to the genre of thriller, so the two are very similar and likewise, the noir genre is another style that is closely related to the hard-boiled school. This kind of plot twists are a shared element between thrillers and hard-boiled detective novels, because for one, it keeps the reader interested and it shows the fallibility of the private eye as well. Moreover, as the aim of the hard-boiled detective fiction is to mirror reality as it is, it gives authors a great opportunity to provide explicit socio-cultural criticism through their protagonists (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 68).

2.2. The Social Connections of the Private Eye

On the one hand, Marlowe has an almost obsessive need to keep up his masculine image and control (Abbott 21), so he prefers to be alone. He gives fairly little information about his past, only a few details as the following quote from *The Big Sleep* illustrates: “I’m thirty-three years old, went to college once and can still speak English if there’s any demand for it ... I’m unmarried” (Chandler 9). He leads a lonely lifestyle and does not form meaningful relationships other than the occasional female company, for instance, in *The Big Sleep* Vivian Regan and Mona Mars, but not even those affections last long, because he sees women as a threat to his masculinity. As for males, Debasree Basu suggests that Marlowe is “in search of that one good man both as an ideal to set in the balance against corruption and despair and with whom he might form an idealised union, seeking exactly that which is prohibited by the laws of his arrogant, self-conditioning” (198). Even though Marlowe feels distaste towards feminine man like Arthur Geiger in *The Big Sleep* and Lindsay Marriott in *Farewell, My Lovely* his search for an ideal companion can imply an “unfulfilled homoerotic longing.” (Horsely, *Twentieth-Century* 82). He feels a certain fondness towards the criminal Moose Malloy and the ex-cop, Red Norgaard in *Farewell, My Lovely*, which is noticeable in the way he relates to them. For instance, he sees Malloy as a simple-minded man who is not aware of how strong he is, so he kills Mrs. Florian by accident. With Norgaard, he shows his vulnerability when he admits he is afraid before boarding the gambling boat. So, as to protect himself from this forbidden yearning, Marlowe only allows himself to form occasional partnerships. He collaborates with police detectives, who he considers to be good, talented and honest cops. Bernie Ohls, Marlowe’s former colleague from the District Attorney’s Office is one of the detectives Marlowe has a solid professional relationship. Their partnership is feasible, because “the two men demonstrate mutual respect” (Athanasourelis 96). It can be mentioned that in Marlowe’s city, Los Angeles in the 1930s, gangsters are more influential than politicians and he sees some of the gangsters as businessman. For example, Eddie Mars in *The Big Sleep* is a gentleman gangster with whom Marlowe has a civilized conversation, which only supports Marlowe’s role as a negotiator. His mediator position enables him to acquire information from people from both sides of the law and to mediate between his client, the police and sometimes even gangsters (Athanasourelis 70).

On the other hand, Warshawski has a close inner circle of friends, a surrogate family which provides support and even constructive criticism (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 266). V.I.’s mother passed away when she was fifteen years old and after that she was raised by her father until he, too passed away. Her mother, Gabriella had to escape from the fascist Italy

during the Second World War, because her mother was Jewish. Gabriella had a great influence on Vic in many ways: she thought her compassion by talking about her past and Vic inherited her temperamental attitude and love for music from her mother. She also urged Vic to educate herself and work, so she could be independent. Having said that, the most important and close connection she has, is with a Jewish doctor and mother-figure Dr. Lotty Herschel. Lotty has a private clinic where she provides cheap health care, and she even performs abortions for which her clinic is besieged in *Bitter Medicine* (1987), because then, abortion was a controversial question. Their relationship is based on mutual support in addition to their similar feminist attitudes and respect for each other. In *Indemnity Only*, Warshawski remarks that “She didn’t always agree with me, but Lotty respected my decisions” (Paretsky 109). Warshawski also cares for a girl named Jill Thayer, because she reminds V.I. of herself. Jill stands up for herself against her whole family when she hires V.I. to look into her brother’s death even though her father does not want Warshawski to investigate any more. As opposed to her harmonious relationship with women, she struggles to relate to men, since she is trying to defy patriarchy (Gavin 265). For her, it is more important to build a professional career than marrying and having children which is also the reason for the divorce from her husband, Dick. Warshawski even commented that “...some men can only admire independent women at a distance” (Paretsky, *Indemnity Only* 37). It turns out that at first, Dick has found it appealing that Vic is so independent and ambitious, but after getting married he wanted Vic to become an angel in the house. Dick wanted Vic to abandon her career, stay at home and glorify her husband and his quickly advancing career. In *Indemnity Only*, when V.I. and her lover, Ralph Devereux discuss their previous marriages, V.I. comments on hers by saying “Dick thought he’d fallen in love with me because I’m so independent; afterwards it seemed to me that it was because he saw my independence as a challenge, and when he couldn’t break it down, he got angry” (Paretsky 210). In contrast to Dick’s toxic masculinity, there is a positive example for supporting men in *Indemnity Only*. Murray Ryerson is a crime reporter and a friend of Vic’s who believes that she is a competent detective and they mutually share important information which contribute to both of their professional success. So, both Marlowe and Warshawski crave to be independent for different reasons: the former is afraid to give up his masculine control and the latter wants to create an atmosphere for her self-realization.

2.3. The Private Eye's Investigative Techniques and Relationship with the Police

Both detectives are fairly straight-forward and active during their investigations, although they sometimes do not proceed according to the law. Marlowe's wise-cracking, which consists of the use of slang and wit, is a very effective strategy in his investigations. His characteristic tough talk constitutes a large part of his self-image and it gives him "an aura of mastery" (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 73) that establishes "a masculine ethos" (73). With his elusive way of talking, he tries to compensate the uncertainty that surrounds him, and to establish and reinforce his masculinity (Plain 59). During his investigation of Carmen Sternwood's blackmailing, he even obstructs the police investigation by not reporting Geiger's murder, because it would not benefit his own investigation. Moreover, at the end of *The Big Sleep*, he lets Carmen Sternwood go, even though she has killed her sister's husband, Rusty Regan. Although, he tells Vivian to institutionalize Carmen because of her troubled mental state, otherwise he would inform the police about the murder. Marlowe even admits that "Me, I was part of the nastiness now" (Chandler, *The Big Sleep* 250), because by not revealing the culprit to the police, he also becomes guilty. On the other hand, Warshawski would hardly let a culprit go unpunished, even though that person might be her love interest. In *Indemnity Only*, although she is in a relationship with Ralph Devereux, she is ready to get him arrested if he is the culprit she has been investigating. Just like Marlowe, she finds the dead body of the boy, Peter Thayer, but before informing the police about it unanimously, she looks around the crime scene and even takes some evidence with her. The following quote proves that she is willing to bend the law to her purposes: "The boy had clearly been dead for some time—the police could wait another few minutes for him" (Paretsky, *Indemnity Only* 19). Even the way she gets into the dead boy's apartment is illegal, because she does not have a key to it or even permission to be there. Wise-cracking is a characteristically hard-boiled trait, so Warshawski is no exception. She is capable of talking her way out of a situation, but sometimes her smart mouth gets her in trouble. For example, in *Indemnity Only* she talks back to the men who attack her: "Beats me why well-paid hoods always dress so sloppily," I [Warshawski] commented. "Your jacket doesn't fit, your shirt's untucked—you look like a mess..." (Paretsky 76). Aside from occasional transgressions, both Warshawski and Marlowe have strict morals, so even when they are physically threatened or injured, they continue their investigations regardless of the circumstances, because they have an instinctive sense of honour (Plain 60).

Warshawski's own father had been a police detective, so she has personal ties to the police. She acknowledges the police's work, but she is also aware of their limitation by the strict regulations. As a private detective, she has a little more freedom and as an ex-public defender, she is aware of the possible loopholes in the law. She is on friendly terms with the police officers, but she is clearly instructed not to interfere with their investigations. It was mentioned already that Bobby Mallory, a homicide lieutenant squarely tells V.I. to give up her career as a private detective. Mallory says that "You know, if Tony [Warshawski's father] had turned you over his knee more often instead of spoiling you rotten, you'd be a happy housewife now, instead of playing at detective and making it harder for us to get our job done" (Paretsky, *Indemnity Only* 37). Furthermore, she aims to have autonomy similar to men's, but at the same time she wants to keep her feminine attitude, her 'communal' responsibilities and compassion towards the victims (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 264). Similarly to Warshawski, Marlowe is seen as a menace regarding police investigations. When Joe Brody is shot in *The Big Sleep*, because of Marlowe, LAPD detective Cronjager comments: "I love private dicks that play murders close to the waistcoat" (Chandler 116). There is an obvious dislike that Marlowe demonstrates towards the incompetent or corrupt policemen, but he is just as ready to acknowledge the talent certain detectives have. For instance, Detective Lieutenant Nulty, in *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940) is an unmotivated and racist cop, who Marlowe looks down on, but he "look[s] at him [Lt. Carl Randall] with admiration" (Chandler 42), when the lieutenant constructs a valid theory about Marriott's murder. Marlowe does not make a sharp distinction between honest and corrupt cops, because he tries to understand the different motives behind the actions of dirty cops. For example, in *Farewell, My Lovely* he understands Sergeant Galbraith's situation, when the man explains that some cops simply cannot escape from being corrupt if they want to keep their jobs. Marlowe's dialogue with district attorneys, police detectives and lieutenants gives him the opportunity to discuss "the often arbitrary exercise of the power of law enforcement" (Athanasourelis 91). He makes the following observation about Geiger's illegal dealing of pornographic magazines in *The Big Sleep*: "It's obvious to anybody with eyes that that store is just a front for something. But the Hollywood police allowed it to operate, for their own reasons. I dare say the Grand Jury would like to know what those reasons are" (Chandler 122). Marlowe and the police often come into conflict, and it makes it possible for the two sides to scrutinize themselves and each other, which causes them to realize that they are both prone to make mistakes (Athanasourelis 93).

In this chapter, it was examined how Warshawski and Marlowe interpret individualism differently, causing to be a distinction between their values and behaviours. It is clear, that their gender is the most important factor that prompts them to evaluate social and professional connections differently. As a feminist woman, Warshawski prefers to be in a community that supports and accepts her as she is, but Marlowe is more comfortable on his own, because having a family or close friends would mean to him that he is bound and his feelings would make him feel vulnerable. It is often argued that the re-gendering of the hard-boiled genre is a futile attempt, because the inherently male tradition cannot be transformed in a way that it is compatible with female protagonists and their feminist agendas (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 246). However, it is worth to be noted that the hard-boiled genre is immensely diverse, so its reformation also must be possible. In the following chapter, it will become clear that the subversion of the hard-boiled genre is indeed successful, and Sara Paretsky's and Sue Grafton's novels are examples of its diverse nature. Furthermore, it will be proved that the female private eye, Warshawski in particular, is not just a female version of Marlowe, but a distinct and unique hard-boiled private eye.

Chapter 3: Gendering the Canon - Various Faces of Feminism and the Female Private Eye

The hard-boiled school of detective fiction was inevitably affected by the second wave of feminism, which is apparent in the works of female authors, such as Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton, who subverted the traditionally masculine genre and made it capable of communicating a “feminist message” (Hamilton 41). Since the “second wave feminism was a fractious and multi-faceted movement” (41), female writers included differing agendas in their detective novels and thus diversified the characterization of the female sleuth. In this chapter, Sue Grafton’s protagonist, Kinsey Millhone is going to be analysed and compared with Paretsky’s V.I. Warshawski, in order to demonstrate how the varying “feminist message[s]” (41) manifest themselves in the representations of the two private eyes and their investigative methods. It can be stated that both Paretsky’s and Grafton’s strategies in the portrayal of their female protagonists reveal their own relation to the second wave of feminism and express their differing feminist views. Accordingly, I argue that Warshawski embodies a more extreme type of feminist agenda while Millhone harmonises more with the traditional ideology of the hard-boiled formula. Nevertheless, Johanna M. Smith claims that Warshawski “remains male-defined” while “Grafton’s novels de-masculinize hard-boiled detection by representing it simply as a job with Millhone simply the (female) person doing it” (81). In this chapter, this contradiction will be explored more closely so as to demonstrate that Smith’s claim is not entirely applicable to Warshawski. To explore this issue and to justify my hypothesis, I have selected and analysed other novels as well on top of the already mentioned works from Paretsky and Grafton. This chapter also discusses Paretsky’s *Killing Orders* (1985), because it explores V.I.’s and her best friend/substitute mother Lotty’s relationship, *Body Work* (2010), since it discusses the female body and with it Paretsky explores the representation of the female body in detective fiction, and *Burn Marks* (1990), because in it the resistance that Warshawski demonstrates against men’s ideal of women is a key characteristic of her feminist persona. From Grafton, “*C*” is for *Corpse* (1986) and “*E*” is for *Evidence* (1988) will be included, since the former novel foregrounds Millhone’s femininity, namely her “maternal protectiveness” (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 274) and the latter one portrays Millhone’s relationship with men as a disruption of the traditional family structure.

Grafton's first novel featuring Kinsey Millhone was published in 1982 by the title "*A*" *is for Alibi*, which is the first book of the 'alphabet series' that continued until the author's death in 2017. Unlike Warshawski, Kinsey Millhone started her career as a cop, and she gradually became independent: after dropping out of collage she joined the Santa Teresa police force, then she worked for an insurance company as an investigator. However, she soon decided to become a private detective mentored by a local PI Benjamin Byrd who also operates in Santa Teresa, which is a fictional city in contrast with Warshawski's Chicago. Millhone is "very closely modelled on the hard-boiled male" (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 272), since she has a past as a law enforcer and she is similar to Marlowe in terms of solitariness and way of talking, but at the same time her position disrupts traditional power relations. This statement is supported by Maureen T. Reddy's following claim: "the whole notion of a woman in charge, and especially a woman presumably dedicated to ideals of law and order, works against traditional expectations" (*Sisters in Crime* 6). In addition to this, according to Maryam Soltan Beyad and Mohsen Jabbari, Millhone "is less overtly a feminist than she is a Chandlerian detective" (27). Her semblance to Philip Marlowe is notable in her introduction which is very similar to Marlowe's own at the very beginning of "*A*" *is for Alibi*: "My name is Kinsey Millhone. I'm a private investigator, licensed by the state of California. I'm thirty-two years old, twice divorced, no kids" (Grafton 1). However, she gives more details about herself than Marlowe in the course of the series and we learn that she was orphaned when she was five years old. She does not have good family relations, in the sense that "she resists her own actual family" (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 272), because she feels like they had abandoned her. This aspect is one of the most controversial messages of the novels, because it can be seen as the undermining of familial values. However, she has established intimate relationships with her landlord, Henry Pitts and a Hungarian bar owner, Rosie who are quasi-parental figures for her. The roles of Henry and Rosie are also untraditional (not strictly feminine or masculine), because sometimes Henry cooks for Millhone and Rosie gives her advice in her cases (Reddy, *Sisters in Crime* 110). Furthermore, in "*C*" *is for Corpse* (1986) she feels a "maternal protectiveness" (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 274) towards a young man, Bobby Calahan who hires her to find out who attempted to kill him by forcing him off the road. She becomes so emotionally involved that even after he is killed, she keeps investigating. Millhone opens the novel by saying that "I've never worked for a dead man before and I hope I won't have to do it again. This report is for him [Bobby Calahan], for whatever it's worth" (Grafton, "*C*" *is for Corpse* 14). During working on her cases, Millhone engages in physical violence and talks tough, in this way "asserting

some measure of equality and defending female autonomy” (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 273) which is a feature she shares with her fellow female private eyes. Another common characteristic according to Horsley is that “there is a sense of essential female weakness she has to overcome if she wants to resist victimhood herself” (275). Female detectives seek romantic relationships, and this feminine urge makes them emotionally (and physically) vulnerable. This aspiration also causes a conflict, since their desire for independence can be perceived as a masculine notion. On this note, in *“A” is for Alibi*, Millhone becomes emotionally involved with Charlie Scorsoni who nearly kills her in the end. It turns out that it was Scorsoni who killed Libby Glass and Sharon Napier to cover up that he was stealing from the law firm he shared with Laurence Fife. Libby Glass was the accountant of the law firm and when she found out the embezzlement, Scorsoni poisoned her. Sharon Napier was Fife’s secretary and Scorsoni killed her as to prevent Millhone from questioning her. When Millhone wants to make sure of Scorsoni’s guilt, the man attempts to kill her with a knife, but she has a gun, and “[blows] him away” (Grafton, *“A” is for Alibi* 150). The fact that she has to kill someone, even if to save her own life, disturbs her and she says it herself: “The day before yesterday I killed someone and the fact weighs heavily on my mind” (1). Killing can be seen as the most violent act and being true to the feminist ideology, it does not fill her with closure or satisfaction, but scars her. At the end of the novel she adds that “the shooting disturbs me still” (150) and that she will “never be the same” (150). This kind of introspection, emotional turmoil and uncertainty after an act of violence is typical for female detectives, because it is what makes them different from the male detective. In conclusion, Millhone’s “obsessive independence might seem “masculine” or emotional vulnerability “feminine”, in conjunction these conventions lose their gender coding” (Smith 81). Due to this balanced characterization, Grafton’s detective is less judgemental of patriarchal institutions and heterosexual relationships. However, in *“E” is for Evidence*, she finds herself in a complicated situation when she sleeps with a married police officer, Jonah Robb after years of tension between them. In the end, Robb seems to value stability given by his family more in contrast with the unstable nature of his relationship with Millhone. At last, he chooses his family over Millhone, betraying Millhone’s feelings for him. She comments on her situation the following way: “Being rejected is burdensome that way. You’re left with emotional baggage you unload on everyone else. It’s not just the fact of betrayal, but the person you become ... usually not very nice” (Grafton, *“E” is for Evidence* 143). In this case, “the woman detective becomes the *femme fatale*” (Wilson 151), because she is “the other woman” (151) who threatens the conventional familial values.

According to Gill Plain, Warshawski is depicted as a “superwoman” (qtd. in Thompson 60) and “a feminist detective hero” (60) based on the way she is pushing her body’s limits. However, Paretsky also emphasizes that even if Warshawski is a strong-willed person, her intellectual and physical capacities are limited which endorses her credibility (61). Vic’s authenticity is supported by her feminine interests and concerns as well: for instance, she pays attention to eat healthily, she is concerned about her weight and how she dresses. Moreover, in opposition to male detectives, she is actively trying to heal her body: when she is hurt, she takes a hot bath and medication so she can get back to work as soon as possible. When she is in pain, she turns to Lotty who helps Vic in any way she can. However, their relationship is not unproblematic since both of them are head-strong women and this causes strains in their friendship. In *Killing Orders*, Lotty describes their relationship the following way: “You have been the daughter I never had, V.I. As well as one of the best friends a woman could ever desire” (Paretsky 337). Despite of their occasional conflicts, their affection toward each other runs deep and even though it is tested sometimes, they cannot deny it. Nonetheless, Paretsky “criticizes the potentially blind, self-delusional, and harmful myth of the universal sisterhood ... by showing us various sites where female friendship goes through crises and challenges” (Rhee 103). For instance, in *Bitter Medicine* “V.I. struggles to feel any sympathy whatsoever for the stoical resignation to passive suffering of the archetypal Latino mother figure” (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 265). Usually, Vic is able to be compassionate to others, but she is firmly against the kind of female passivity that Consuelo’s mother has demonstrated after her daughter’s death. All of the above mentioned underpin Priscilla L. Walton and Manina Jones’s claim that feminist detective fiction is a “reverse discourse” (92) since it provides “a critique of the formula by reproducing it with strategic differences, thus redirecting the trajectory of dominant discourse” (92). One other differences in Paretsky’s novels is that there is an inclusive female community, whereas Marlowe’s Los Angeles does not welcome Marlowe as a member. He is described by Debasree Basu “as a man of the city but a man against the city” (198), because he is an inhabitant of LA and unavoidably a member of that society, but he also tries to fight against corruption that is inherent in the city. Moreover, Paretsky and Grafton’s “novels link a particular investigation to wider social problems that are usually related ... to women’s continuing oppression” (Reddy, “Women Detectives” 198), while Raymond Chandler avoids expressing a harsh social criticism of his time. The fact itself that a female actively and physically fights back against violence, in this way denying further oppression, goes against gender norms. On this note, Warshawski’s role is not just to expose the criminals, but also to show other women the way out of their

oppressed state. Vic's demonstration of independence and self-respect is to let other women know that it is their choice to decide how they want to live (Klein 230). Furthermore, Millhone's and Warshawski's tough-talking is also a reformation of the male-centred tradition as they use it "to express [their] emotions and sensibilities, and power over situations and circumstances" (200), while the male PI employs it to re-assert his "masculine ethos" (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 73). The hard-boiled detective has a "very direct, self-confident voice" (265) with which Paretsky endowed Warshawski for her "to speak, to say those things that people in power want to keep unsaid, unheard" (Paretsky, "The Detective as Speech" 17). In other words, Paretsky wanted to give voice to the female experience through her protagonist and to show that women can and should fight against oppression. According to Kathleen Gregory Klein, Paretsky's feminist detective fiction is the best example for the successful subversion of the hard-boiled genre as of yet, because Paretsky recognized that there is much more to turning the hard-boiled genre into a feminist platform than just substituting the male PI with a feminist one (235). Klein considers Paretsky's choices concerning the characterization of the female gumshoe, the structure of the plots and the overall atmosphere of the novels, the key factors that help balancing "the tensions between the demands of the detective novel and the feminist ideology" (230).

Unlike Kinsey, Warshawski ages realistically throughout the series, which makes her a "dynamic detective" (qtd. in Vanacker 101). Her development as a character is a shared quality with the *Bildungsroman* genre, as we can follow how the various experiences affect her emotionally and how her mindset transforms over time (102). Warshawski being in her fifties also gives Paretsky the opportunity to provide an evaluation of her detective's character, its development and her feminist behaviour. Furthermore, the latest Warshawski novels can be seen as "state of the nation" (103) novels, because through Vic, one can see how socio-economic circumstances change as a result of modernization and how they affect her and her society. Moreover, one can gain an insight into how feminism itself became more inclusive. The second wave centred more around white, middle-class, heterosexual women, while the third wave promoted "a feminism of 'multicultural inclusion, identity politics, and intersectionality'" (104). This meant that people recognized the need for acknowledging the different identity markers, such as race, class and sexuality in order to include other women other than white, middle class and heterosexual. In *Body Work*, Vic's niece, Petra Warshawski is a representative of the third wave feminists and her attitude often makes Vic dissatisfied and frustrated. V.I. is aware that it is the merit of her generation that Petra's generation of

women have the possibilities they have. For example, Vic's following comment reveals that she thought Petra was ignorant of the issues of feminism: "In the seven months I'd spent around my cousin, this was the first time she'd revealed any awareness of women's issues, in the arts or anywhere else" (Paretsky, *Body Work* 14). In *Body Work*, Petra Warshawski defends the actions of the "Body Artist" saying that it is her own choice what she does with her body. V.I.'s neighbour and father-figure Mr. Contreras and even V.I. herself see the artist's actions as improper and disturbing. However, the fact that the artist willingly offers her skin to be painted on by the audience, is ironically a protest against the objectification of the female body. Watching the Body Artist's performance, Vic wonders about "Who was exploiter, who was exploited?" (22), because she finds it hard to understand how her performance would help women's situation. Although later on, she comments "[w]hether we like it or not, we live in a world where the exposed female body is a turn-on. Music only suggests the erotic or the private self. The Body Artist forces you to see the private" (12). *Body Work* is Paretsky's attempt to discover and discuss the female body and sexuality, but even in previous novels Warshawski is represented as a sexually active woman. According to Smith, both Warshawski and Millhone are portrayed as sexual beings, but "these women detectives seem free of the sexual difficulties male detectives groan under" (80). Feminist authors wanted to normalize the depiction of female sexuality as to dismantle the highly popular trend of the 1930s that depicted sexual women as villainous and manipulative. In this sense, the female PI is similar to the *femme fatale* of the male-centred hard-boiled tradition. Even though sexuality has an important role, Warshawski is threatened with rape only once in Paretsky's novels, in *Indemnity Only*, because "Paretsky wanted to avoid blending sex and violence in a way that pandered to a male, power-oriented sensationalism that objectifies women" (Hamilton 56). The themes of prostitution, lesbianism and homophobia are more pronounced in *Body Work* which presents the provocative and controversial occupation of the performance artist, Karen Buckley. Paretsky writes: "The Artist was completely at ease ... [i]t was the audience that was disturbed" (*Body Work* 8) and even Vic is uncomfortable watching her. This suggests that the association of the naked female body with sexual desire is so close and deeply ingrained in contemporary society that even a feminist woman is affected by it. It is worth noting that Warshawski's reaction to the performance has a homoerotic subtext: "The spotlight on the Artist's breasts, the sense that this was a mannequin sitting there, not a woman, was both arousing and unpleasant, and I resented my body for responding to what my mind rejected" (8).

Feminist authors address another issue that concerns gender which is the double standard that exists between sexes. For instance, the female PI considers her career more important than maintaining a relationship, but her male partner protests. He claims that a woman's priority should be their relationship over her profession, but this does not necessarily apply to him (Reddy, *Sisters in Crime* 106). In *Indemnity Only*, Warshawski's lover, Ralph Devereux admits that he did not consider V.I. a professional PI and it almost costs him his life, because his boss, Yardley Masters shoots him at the end of the novel. Ralph says the following when Vic visits him in the hospital: "... I should have listened to you. I couldn't believe you knew what you were talking about. I guess deep down I didn't take your detecting seriously. I thought it was a hobby, like Dorothy's [his ex-wife's] painting" (Paretsky, *Indemnity Only* 312). Furthermore, in *Burn Marks*, Warshawski is in a relationship with Michael Furey, a corrupt cop who says the following to V.I.: "You're not interested in the things a normal girl is" (Paretsky 409). His comment indicates that because of V.I.'s "refusal to conform to his ideal of woman" (Wilson 152) he feels that his masculinity is threatened. Warshawski's unwillingness to change who she is for her lovers is a protest against the domination of men over women in romantic relationships and a choice to keep her authenticity intact. Paretsky aims to highlight gender equality with the help of V.I.'s character by claiming Vic has "the same freedoms that men have to act, to move, to make decisions, to fall in love, experience sex, even to be wrong" (*Age of Silence* 62). Warshawski often refers to male detectives in general and to Philip Marlowe in particular and she often thinks about what Marlowe would do in her situation. These kind of musings suggest some self-irony and they also highlight how different Marlowe and Warshawski are. For example, in *Body Work* V.I. ponders what to say why she was at the scene of a shooting: "When I was younger and more insouciant, I would have quoted the great Philip Marlowe and said, 'Trouble is my business,' but tonight I was cold and apprehensive. 'I don't know'" (Paretsky 4). Warshawski's response and sarcastic comment on Marlowe suggest that she realizes that her old habit of comparing herself to Marlowe was unfounded. Marlowe's 'greatness' comes from his ability to remain emotionally detached and resistant toward his environment. Now, however, she acknowledges that she is deeply affected by the violence inflicted on her and on others; the criminality and corruption of her Chicago; and even her own age leaves a mark on her not just physically, but also mentally. Warshawski's reactions reflect Paretsky's feminist ideology, while Chandler created Marlowe to continue "the glorification of masculine traits" (Klein 237) that were so popular in the 1930s.

In feminist detective fiction, the past of the protagonists plays a determining role in their characterization. Female sleuths carry “a kind of emotional baggage ... unknown to the hard-boiled, masculine, sturdy-individualist PI” (Smith 80). For instance, “many of Warshawski’s injuries are long-term, and memories of them often carry over into the next novel” (Irons 14). This contributes to the fact that female detectives are more deeply influenced by violence psychologically, than male ones and it is worth to point out that the people who inflict pain on V.I. are exclusively male. Furthermore, Warshawski is defined by her past as a child of immigrant working class parents, as her father was Polish working as a cop and her mother was Italian. She grew up in the South Side of Chicago which is the centre of the working-class and the different immigrant groups. As a result, she became conscious of class and race which made her feel sympathy towards other blue-collar people and be tolerant with the members of other cultures. As her mother had Jewish predecessors, she also feels for her Jewish friends, Lotty Herschel and Max Lowenthal. As for Millhone, when she was five years old she got into a car crash with her parents and she was the only survivor. She is still haunted by hearing her mother’s crying before she also passed away. The losing of her parents determined her life, because after their passing, she was raised by Aunt Gin who later got her the investigator job at the insurance company where she had worked. Both Warshawski and Millhone think about their mothers, but V.I.’s relationship with her mother is a more determining one. V.I. often wonders about what her mother would think about her being a private detective: she would be proud, because she is educated, has a job and is independent, but would not approve of her occupation. Furthermore, there is a typical quality that female detectives possess: they do not follow “a hard-and-fast moral code” (Reddy, *Sisters in Crime* 118) like their male counterparts. Their “tendency to think contextually” (119) and their female solidarity makes them more adaptable to particular situations which makes them morally more flexible than the male PI. Furthermore, as private detectives, they prioritize their clients and their interests, even if they get into a conflict with the police as a result. For example, Marlowe is serious about protecting his client which is clear in *The Big Sleep* when he tells Mr. Sternwood the following: “I do my best to protect you and I may break a few rules, but I break them in your favour. The client comes first, unless he’s crooked” (Chandler 231). However, Chandler does not uncover corruption in high places which is the opposite of what Warshawski achieves after each solved case. For instance, in *Indemnity Only*, she proves the guilt of Yardley Masters, the vice-president of the Claim Department of a successful insurance company called Ajax. Because of her gender, V.I. is often underestimated by men and even by Masters, because unlike her male predecessors she does

not enjoy an equal standing with the male criminals in terms of gender, and they are usually of a higher social standing as well (Irons 14). On the one hand, Warshawski perceives crime as an epidemic that affects the whole city and in a wider sense, Illinois (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 270). On the other hand, Millhone's cases are never extended to the whole of society, but blamed on one corrupted individual. As a result, Grafton's novels are socio-politically less critical than Paretsky's, and they do not criticize society as a whole, since Millhone is an "individual solving individual crimes" (272). One of the most notable similarities between V.I. and Millhone is that both of them carry guns and use them if they have to. Their handling of guns serves the purpose of the demystification of the gun, "moving it from the realm of the symbolic, where it signifies male power and control, to the actual" (Reddy, *Sisters in Crime* 99). As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, the female PI is usually reluctant to use a gun, but if she has to she uses it to protect herself or others. In this way, feminist writers put the gun in a new light, because they transformed it into "something that can be wielded by either women or men, that can be used responsibly or irresponsibly" (99). Making the gun available for women and normalizing it as a tool that simply comes with the profession of the private eye, breaks down "the stereotypes of women becoming distraught under pressure, being the weaker sex both emotionally and physically, and requiring male protection" (113). This dismantling of gender roles is especially notable in Millhone's personality, because she "combines conventional "masculinity" and "femininity" so as to blur the distinction between them" (Smith 81). The comparison of Millhone and Warshawski shows that Millhone is less feminine than Warshawski, which is noticeable in the different ways they dress, because Warshawski likes fashionable clothes which are not always comfortable during an investigation, while Millhone rather focuses on keeping her attire practical and comfortable. The lack of personal possessions with sentimental value in the case of Millhone is another sign that Warshawski is more sensitive, especially when it comes to her mother's Venetian glasses. Moreover, Warshawski has people and dogs that are dependent on her, while Millhone avoids such commitments. According to Klein, Warshawski is a "self-defined feminist[s] whom this identification is a conscious act and apparently consistent feature of [her] behavior" (202). On the other hand, Millhone does have "feminist inclinations" (202), but she does not explicitly define herself as a feminist (202).

Paretsky's and Grafton's feminist hard-boiled detective novels are great examples for the "counter-discursive deployment of the noir subgenre for feminist purposes" (Vanacker 100). Because of their inclusion of feminist elements and values, they "turned the ideology

against itself” (100), since the hard-boiled detective fiction has a sexist, even a misogynistic undertone. Paretsky’s reworking of the genre is more radical than Grafton’s approach because of her more extreme feminist ideals; nonetheless, they both contribute to the feminist counter-tradition of the hard-boiled genre. Even if Grafton’s feminist message is more moderate, the character of her female detective serves “to disrupt the implicit norms as well as the gender codes associated with the genre” (Horsley, *Twentieth-Century* 264). As a result of Paretsky’s reformations of the genre, the “essentially sexist and racist genre now has in its centre a feminist and anti-racist detective” (Vanacker 100) that is Warshawski. In conclusion, the selected feminist detective novels combine the characteristically hard-boiled features, such as the self-confident voice, tough-talking, individuality, realism, urban setting, corruption with feminist elements, for instance the female protagonist herself, the importance of her community and its inclusiveness, and the female experience and the depiction of sexuality. Furthermore, to refer back to Smith’s initial claim, it is true that Grafton neutralizes the gender coding of the detective, but Paretsky subverts the hard-boiled formula more, since Warshawski is an openly feminine/feminist detective. Smith’s claim that Warshawski is “male-defined” (Smith 81) is incorrect, because even though she does not reject men altogether, she keeps fighting for her autonomy in her personal and professional relationships with them.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore the subversion of the hard-boiled detective fiction based on feminist ideology with a special focus on Sara Paretsky's detective novels and her female PI, V.I. Warshawski. In order to carry out a more comprehensive analysis, Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe and Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone were also investigated. The hard-boiled detective fiction genre originates from the USA and it was created around the 1920s and 1930s by Carroll John Daly, Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. However, the forerunners to the genre of detective fiction, such as Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the writers of the Golden Age (Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, S. S. Van Dine) all contributed to the emergence of the hard-boiled formula. Raymond Chandler and his contemporaries customized detective fiction to fit their American values and to represent the American way of life which was a backlash to the 'unrealistic' Golden Age detective fiction. The hard-boiled detective integrated some of the characteristics of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, namely the detective's commitment to crime solving and his occasional use of physical violence. The intellectuality of the gentleman detective also permeates the characterization of the hard-boiled private eye, but it mostly manifests itself in the P.I.'s knowledge of and ability to deal with the illegal practices in the urban jungle. The male private detective is a tough-talking, ready-for-action loner who reveals the corruption that interlaces modern society. He is an average man who relies mostly on his own abilities, because he is wary of other people's intentions and also wants to protect his threatened masculinity against women. Because of the highly realistic approach of the genre, the PI is not infallible and untouchable; he is vulnerable to physical violence that criminals and even police officers put him through. His only defence is his wisecracking and his gun which both represent his male potency and masculinity.

The representation of the male private eye and the female characters was bound until 1960s when the various movements supporting women initiated changes in social circumstances and philosophical views. In the 1980s, the second wave of feminism was flourishing which encouraged women to share their experiences, raised awareness of and reoriented attention to women's inferior position within patriarchy. Feminist writers reformed the male-defined hard-boiled genre and created its feminist counter-tradition, which focuses on the female experience that is represented by the female detective. Both Paretsky and Grafton started writing in the hard-boiled style during the second wave of feminism and they

both created their own female detectives based on their different feminist standpoints. The present thesis has argued that Paretsky created a female private detective who reflects both the fundamental values and characteristics of the hard-boiled detective and expresses her feminist ideology through her behaviour and professional practices. The similarities between Marlowe and Warshawski, their marginality and ever questioned authority is rooted in the fact that Warshawski is a descendant of the Hammett-Chandler tradition. However, Warshawski is not just the female version of the traditional private eye, because her feminine/feminist attitude and values are a clear opposition to the sexist 1930s tradition. Furthermore, I claimed that because of Paretsky's more extreme feminist agenda, she subverted the hard-boiled formula to a greater extent as Warshawski is a truly feminine and proudly feminist character. On the other hand, Sue Grafton created her protagonist, Kinsey Millhone to be "less overtly a feminist than she is a Chandlerian detective" (Beyad and Jabbari 27). The disparity between the two authors and their protagonists originates from the authors' differing feminist views which is a result of the fractiousness of the second wave of feminism. The feminist sub-genre aims to disrupt gender norms, normalize the depiction of female sexuality and discuss women's issues, such as sexism, the double standard between men and women and patriarchal oppression. Warshawski's and Millhone's occupation itself is a disruption of social norms, since women are usually expected to become wives, then mothers. After their unsuccessful marriages, however, they both realize that married life does not suit them. Warshawski faces the double standard existing between genders, when her husband disregards her ambitions in life and expects her to stay at home while he is building his own career. Men are also quick to judge her, they openly disrespect and belittle her especially because they consider her incompetent in her job due to her gender. Her situation is more complicated than Marlowe's in the sense that she is trying to defy patriarchy as a woman pursuing a job which is considered a masculine occupation. However, her relationship with women are more balanced, for which Dr. Lotty Herschel is the best example as Lotty is her best friend and substitute mother. Lotty and V.I. mutually respect each other both professionally and personally, but even their relationship goes through hardships which can be seen as a protest against the idea of the universal sisterhood. As a hard-boiled detective, Warshawski is individualistic and self-reliant, but she is not a solitary figure, because she is an active member of her community of close friends. In turn, Marlowe does not have a family, only acquaintances who are honest police officers, such as Bernie Ohls. Marlowe is looking for a man who would be his ideal partner and who would counterbalance the disorder around Marlowe. He comes close to fulfil his idealised partnership in *Farewell, My Lovely* when he finds an ally in the person of Red

Norgaard who is a former, but honest cop. Marlowe's conflict with the police originates from his commitment to his clients, because he breaks the law to protect their identity and interest, but he also wants to resist the corruption of the law enforcement. In Warshawski's case, even though her own father was an officer, she has an "antagonistic relationship" (Wilson 150) with the police which "reflects the difficulties women face in dealing with institutions dominated by men" (150). She is also prone to break the law, but she would never let a culprit go unpunished, unlike Marlowe in *The Big Sleep* when he lets Carmen escape imprisonment. Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone is a female private detective who is more similar to Marlowe, since she is neutral in terms of gender coding. Grafton believed in a less radical feminist approach, so she made her female dick conform to the Hammett-Chandler tradition, because Millhone is not as overtly feminist like Warshawski and she is even less feminine than her. Millhone combines the masculine traits of individualism and toughness with the feminine desire for intimate relationships and the rejection of violence. However, Millhone is comfortable with the existing patriarchal order which reveals itself how she relates to men and heterosexual relationships. The reason behind this is her past as a police officer and the fact that her superiors and mentors were all men. In Chapter 3, I argued, however, that with her actions, Millhone undermines the conventional familial values, when she sleeps with a married police officer, thus behaving like the *femme fatale*, or "the other woman" (Wilson 151). What is similar between Millhone and Warshawski is their wisecracking, because they use their language to communicate their emotions and thoughts, while Marlowe is reinforcing his masculinity with it. In the hands of women, the 'phallic' weapon, the gun loses its symbolic quality and instead of representing "male power and control" (Reddy, *Sisters in Crime* 99), it is reduced to a tool used by both male and female detectives. Moreover, female sleuths are physically, emotionally and psychologically affected by the violence, corruption and injustices they experience, while they also have to endure the sexist behaviour of men. The different kinds of traumas, both physical and emotional, such as the loss of their parents, play an important role in the character development of the female PI. For example, Warshawski and Millhone continuously think about their parents and how their presence and loss have shaped them. On this note, Warshawski is more sentimental than Millhone, because she created a romanticized image of her mother (Reddy, *Sisters in Crime* 119), while Millhone rejects familial relations after her parents 'abandoned' her. As it was mentioned, Warshawski represents a radical feminist standpoint because she points out that the oppression of women is present in every aspect of modern life and it is rooted in the domestic sphere (Minardi 4). Warshawski investigates crimes that start out as personal misdeeds, but

later it is revealed that a wider social problem is responsible for them which are related to women's oppression. Paretsky and her female detective aim to popularize gender equality by representing the different issues modern women deal with and inform other women (in reality and in fiction) that their desires, careers and happiness are just as important as men's. To conclude this thesis, it can be said that Sara Paretsky successfully counterbalanced the tension between the fundamental elements of the hard-boiled detective fiction and her "feminist message" (Hamilton 41).

The present topic offers a fertile ground for further research as feminist crime fiction has developed further in the forms of lesbian crime fiction and "humanistic crime fiction" (qtd. in Gavin 267). Lesbian crime fiction emerged in the 1970s, written by authors such as M. F. Beal (*Angel Dance*, 1977), Eve Zaremba (*A Reason to Kill*, 1978) and Katherine V. Forest (*Amateur City*, 1984). However, the most famous lesbian amateur detective is Barbara Wilson's Pam Nilsen who first appeared in *Murder in the Collective* (1984) and by the end of the novel she resolves her first case and comes to terms with her sexuality. "Humanistic crime fiction" (267) has been developing from the 1980s and it is less hard-boiled than it is psychological and concerned with "human and social issues" (267), such as race, class, domestic violence, abortion and child abuse. In this sub-genre, the most well-known female detective is Barbara Neely's Blanche White (*Blanche on the Lam*, 1992) who is an African-American woman solving crimes and dealing with racism. Nowadays, female detective fiction keeps getting more varied, but also continues to add to the already established genres, such as the 'cozie' mysteries, hard-boiled detective fiction and forensic detection. Contemporary female writers are still concerned with issues of female community and violence against women, but they also seem to be more conscious about the question of motherhood. In the twentieth century, the dilemma about becoming a mother was less discussed than today, but "detection and motherhood in fiction still rarely mesh" (268). Furthermore, the depiction of violence against women is still another central issue as well, and in feminist context, some consider that "in describing confrontations with violence the feminist detective and writer are simply telling it like it is, and in so doing are asserting, if not control over violence, then the power to express it in their terms" (268). The representation of violence against women in feminist detective fiction is different from that of traditional detective fiction, because the female detective is there to fight back and to help the innocent who are somehow connected to the traumatic experience.

Works Cited

- Abbott, Megan E. *The Street Was Mine: White Masculinity in Hardboiled Fiction and Film Noir*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Athanasourelis, John Paul. *Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe: The Hard-boiled Detective Transformed*. Jefferson, NC, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012.
- Basu, Debasree. "Philip Marlowe: The (In)Different Threshold." *The Real and the Reflected: Heroes and Villains in Existent and Imagined Worlds*, edited by Rachel Franks and Susan E. Meindl, Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2012, pp. 193-203.
- Beyad, Maryam Soltan, and Mohsen Jabbari. "Feminism and the Hard-Boiled Genre: Breakdown in Sara Paretsky's Breakdown." *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, vol. 45, 2015, pp. 24-34.
- Chandler, Raymond. *The Big Sleep*. 1939. Penguin Books, 2011.
- . *The Simple Art of Murder*. E-book, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950.
- . *Farewell, My Lovely*. E-book, Alfred A Knopf Inc., 1940.
- Gavin, Adrienne E. "Feminist Crime Fiction and Female Sleuths." *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, edited by Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2010, pp. 258-69.
- Grafton, Sue. "*A* is for Alibi." E-book, Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 1982.
- . "*C* is for Corpse." E-book, St. Martin's Paperbacks, 2005.
- . "*E* is for Evidence." 1988. Pan Books, 2012.
- Hamilton, Cynthia S. *Sara Paretsky: Detective fiction as trauma literature*. Contemporary American and Canadian Writers, edited by Nahem Yousaf and Sharon Monteith, Manchester University Press, 2015.
- Horsley, Lee. *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . *The Noir Thriller*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

- Hynynen, Andrea. "Following the Footsteps of Sara Paretsky: Feminism and the Female Detective in Maud Tabachnik's Crime Novels." *Out of Deadlock: Female Emancipation in Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski Novels, and her Influence on Contemporary Crime Fiction*, edited by Enrico Minardi, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, pp. 19-36.
- Irons, Glenwood. Introduction. *Feminism in Women's Detective Fiction*, by Irons, University of Toronto Press, 1995, pp. 9-24.
- Kayman, Martin A. "The short story from Poe to Chesterton." *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, edited by Martin Priestman, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 41-58.
- Klein, Kathleen Gregory. *The Woman Detective*. University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- Knight, Stephen. *Crime Fiction, 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- . "The golden age." *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, edited by Martin Priestman, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 77-94.
- Kongsak, Sasikarn. "Chivalrous Tough Guys: Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction and the Crisis of Masculine Individuality." *Journal of English Studies*, vol. 11, 2016, pp. 166-98.
- Minardi, Enrico. Introduction. *Out of Deadlock: Female Emancipation in Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski Novels, and her Influence on Contemporary Crime Fiction*, by Minardi, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, pp. 1-10.
- Paretsky, Sara. *Indemnity Only*. 1982. Dell Publishing, 1990.
- . *Bitter Medicine*. 1987. Berkley, 2010.
- . *Burn Marks*. E-book, Dell Publishing, 1990.
- . *Body Work*. E-book, Berkley Publishing Book, 2010.
- . *Killing Orders*. 1985. Signet Book, 2005.
- . *Writing in an Age of Silence*. E-book, Verso, 2007.

- . "The Detective as Speech." *Out of Deadlock: Female Emancipation in Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski Novels, and her Influence on Contemporary Crime Fiction*, edited by Enrico Minardi, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, pp. 11-18.
- Plain, Gill. *Twentieth Century Crime Fiction: Gender, Sexuality and the Body*. Edinburgh University Press, 2001.
- Reddy, Maureen T. *Sisters in Crime: Feminism and the Crime Novel*. The Continuum Publishing Company, 1988.
- . "Women Detectives." *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, edited by Martin Priestman, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 191-207.
- Rhee, Jooyeon. "Are You My Friend or Enemy? Female Friendship at the Crossroads of Class, Race, and Gender in Sara Praetsky's and Natsou Kirino's Detective Fictions." *Out of Deadlock: Female Emancipation in Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski Novels, and her Influence on Contemporary Crime Fiction*, edited by Enrico Minardi, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, pp. 101-115.
- Smith, Johanna M. "Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction: Gendering the Canon." *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol. 26, no. 1/2, 1991, pp. 78-84.
- Thompson, Elizabeth. "Turning Toward the Things That Make You Afraid": Growing Pains in Sara Paretsky's Feminist Hard-Boiled Fiction." *Out of Deadlock: Female Emancipation in Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski Novels, and her Influence on Contemporary Crime Fiction*, edited by Enrico Minardi, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, pp. 51-65.
- Vanacker, Sabine. "Series Fiction and the Challenge of Ideology: The Feminism of Sara Paretsky." *Serial Crime Fiction: Dying for More*, edited by Jean Anderson, Carolina Miranda and Barbara Pezzotti, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 99-111.
- Walton, Priscilla L. and Manina Jones. *Detective Agency: Women Rewriting the Hard-Boiled Tradition*. University of California Press, 1999.

Wilson, Ann. "The Female Dick and the Crisis of Heterosexuality." *Feminism in Women's Detective Fiction*, edited by Glenwood Irons, University of Toronto Press, 1995, pp. 148-156.