

**“One day, we’re all gonna be running things”- Feminism in James
Patterson’s “Women’s Murder Club” Series**

Sanna Tuhkanen
University of Tampere
School of Modern Languages and Translation Studies
English Philology
Pro Gradu Thesis
Spring 2008

Tampereen Yliopisto
Kieli- ja Käännöstieteidenlaitos
Englantilainen Filologia

Tuhkanen, Sanna: "One day, we're all gonna be running things" – Feminism in James Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" Series
Pro gradu – tutkielma, 88 s.
Kevät 2008

Tutkimukseni tarkoituksena oli selvittää voidaanko James Pattersonin Naisten Murhakerho – sarjaa pitää feministisenä. Pattersonin sarja tarjoaa mielenkiintoisen tutkimuskohteen, sillä sarjan päähenkilö on nainen, mikä ei ole kovin yleistä mieskirjailijoiden kirjoittamassa rikoskirjallisuudessa. Sarja sijoittuu poliisiromaanin genreen, sillä päähenkilö Lindsay Boxer työskentelee etsivänä San Franciscon poliisilaitoksen murharyhmässä. Boxerin lisäksi sarjassa on myös viisi muuta naista, joiden kanssa Boxer tekee tiivistä yhteistyötä. Naispäähenkilöt työskentelevät rikostutkinnan eri alueilla ja näin ollen he päättävät auttaa toisiaan varsinaisen rikostutkinnan ulkopuolella ja samalla heidän välilleen kehittyi lämmin ystävyys. Naispäähenkilöiden välinen ystävyys nouseekin yhdeksi sarjan keskeisistä teemoista.

Tutkimuksessani valitsin lähempään tarkasteluun neljä sarjan kirjaa: *Ist to Die* (2001), *3rd Degree* (2004), *4th of July* (2005) ja *7th Heaven* (2008). Yritin selvittää esiintyykö kyseisissä kirjoissa feministisen dekkarin piirteitä tarkastelemalla kolmea teemaa, jotka olivat seksismi, naiset ja väkivalta sekä naisten ja miesten väliset suhteet. Koska tutkimuksessani tarkastelin Pattersonin sarjan feministisiä piirteitä, käytin tutkimukseni teoriakehyksenä feminististä kirjallisuuden tutkimusta. Feministinen dekkarikirjallisuus on pyrkinyt uudelleen kirjoittamaan maskuliinista dekkarigenreä ja luonut vahvoja naisetsiviä, jotka eroavat miespuolisista kollegoistaan olemalla empaattisia, turvautumalla väkivaltaan miehiä harvemmin, sekä ystävyysuhteillaan. Feministisen dekkarikirjallisuuden keskeisiin teemoihin kuuluvat seksismi, rasismi, naisten ja väkivallan suhde, sekä homofobia.

Seksismin teema on Pattersonin sarjassa läsnä sekä päähenkilöiden, että rikosten kautta. Sarjan kaikki naispäähenkilöt työskentelevät ammattissa, jotka on perinteisesti nähty hyvin miehisinä: Boxer poliisina, Washburn kuolinsyöntutkijana, Bernhardt ja Castellano syyttäjänä sekä Thomas rikosreportterina. Näin ollen he kohtaavat seksistisiä asenteita työssään niin pomojensa kuin kollegoidensakin taholta. Rikosten kautta sarjassa käsitellään myös seksismin äärimmäistä ilmenemismuotoa naisvihana, joka aiheena sivuaa naisiin kohdistuvaa väkivaltaa.

Toisena teemana tutkin kuinka naisten suhde väkivaltaan on sarjassa kuvattu. Pattersonin sarja käsittelee naisiin kohdistuvaa väkivaltaa, joka ilmenee fyysisenä, henkisenä sekä seksuaalisena väkivaltana. Sarja käsittelee myös naisten väkivallan käytön problematiikkaa eli millainen väkivalta on naisille hyväksyttävää. Pattersonin sarjassa päähenkilö kohtaa väkivaltaa työssään päivittäin ja joutuu myös turvautumaan fyysiseen väkivaltaan puolustaessaan itseään.

Kolmantena teemana tarkastelin päähenkilöiden sosiaalisia suhteita. Feministinen naisetsivä on usein naimaton tai eronnut ja hyvin itsenäinen, mutta hänellä on myös romanttisia suhteita. Myös Boxer on eronnut ja hänellä on sarjan aikana useita miessuhteita. Boxer kuitenkin kokee vakituisen parisuhteen olevan osittain uhka hänen itsenäisyydelleen, mutta toisaalta hän kaipaa läheisyyttä toisen ihmisen kanssa. Sarjan muista naispäähenkilöistä osa on naimisissa ja osa naimattomia ja

näin ollen sarjan mukaan nainen voi olla halutessaan naimaton ja itsenäinen tai saada sekä menestyvän uran ja perheen.

Miesetsivät ovat perinteisesti olleet yksinäisiä toiminnan miehiä, kun taas feministisillä naisetsivillä on yleensä jonkinlainen sosiaalinen tukiverkosto, joka estää heitä olemasta täysin vailla sosiaalisia suhteita. Tämä tukiverkko koostuu useimmiten toisista naisista, jotka voivat olla taustoiltaan hyvinkin erilaisia. Tällainen feministinen solidaarisuus ja verkostoituminen on hyvin tyypillistä feministisessä dekkarikirjallisuudessa ja se on esillä myös Naisten Murhakerho – sarjassa. Kaiken kaikkiaan Pattersonin sarjaa voidaan pitää feministisenä, sillä se käsittelee useita feministisessä dekkarikirjallisuudessa esiintyviä tyypillisiä teemoja.

Asiasanat: Patterson, dekkarikirjallisuus, feminismi, väkivalta, seksismi, naisten välinen ystävyys

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The theory behind the study	11
2.1 Defining the terms <i>feminism</i>, <i>feminine</i> and <i>female</i>	11
2.2 From feminist literary criticism to men in feminism	13
2.3 The question of genre: the conventions of police procedurals	17
2.4 Women rewriting the popular genres and the creation of feminist detective hero	19
3. Women in a man’s world: sexism	24
3.1 Successful women in masculine workplaces	25
3.2 The degradation of women	35
4. Women and violence	42
4.1 Women as victims of violence	44
4.2 Women using violence	51
5. Women, men and relationships	60
5.1 Women detectives, family and romance	60
5.2 The importance of female friendship	70
6. Conclusion	77
References	81

1. Introduction

Detective fiction has been a very popular genre for both writers and readers for several decades and it has also inspired a vast amount of critical studies. In my thesis I will be looking at James Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series (2001). What makes this series special is the fact that it has a female main character, which is not so common in detective fiction written by male authors. The author of the series, James Patterson, is a contemporary American crime novelist who has written a great number of detective novels and he is probably best-known for his series featuring an African-American male detective Alex Cross, who works as a profiler in the FBI.

Lindsay Boxer, who is the main character of the "Women's Murder Club" series, works as a homicide detective in San Francisco police department. Her mother has died and her father left her mother when Boxer was young. Boxer's father is a well-known former police officer Marty Boxer and Lindsay has had to make her career in the shadow of her father. Boxer is divorced and dedicates her life to her job. She is very independent and also quite stubborn sometimes and thus often defies even her boss.

In addition to her partner Warren Jacobi, Boxer also works closely with her best friends Claire Washburn, Cindy Thomas, Jill Bernhardt and Yuki Castellano. Together the women form the "Women's Murder Club" as they join forces to catch criminals. All of Patterson's female main characters work in professions that have traditionally been seen as masculine: Boxer as professional detective, Washburn as medical examiner, Bernhardt and Castellano as district attorneys and Thomas as crime reporter. While all of these women have their individual professions, they meet with one another outside their regular work hours to discuss the cases and to act as both a professional and a private support group for one another (Kotker, 2004, 137). These meetings take place usually at Susie's, where the women enjoy Mexican food and margaritas.

In fact, the main characters in Patterson's novels do not just work together, but also become very close friends. Washburn has been Boxer's closest friend for years when the series begins, and in *1st to Die* (2001), Boxer meets Thomas at a crime scene where Thomas has sneaked into with the attempt to write a story about the killings that have taken place there. Boxer, Washburn and Thomas decide to work together to solve the case and later Boxer invites Bernhardt, who the case is assigned to, to join the group. The four women share information as all of them have a specialty in the field of crime investigation and have their own sources of information. They discuss the progress of the case and feed off one another's ideas and expertise. Castellano is introduced in the fourth novel of the series and she, too, becomes a member of the "Murder Club".

So far the "Women's Murder Club" series includes seven novels. The first novel of the series *1st to Die* was published in 2001. It soon became a bestseller and second novel of the series *2nd Chance* followed in 2002. Patterson wrote both *2nd Chance* and the third novel of the series *3rd Degree* (2004) with Andrew Gross, who is an American author and ghost writer. The series continued with the novels *4th of July* (2005), *5th Horseman* (2006), *6th Target* (2007) and *7th Heaven*, which was published in February 2008. All of the novels from *4th of July* to *7th Heaven* have been written in collaboration with Maxine Paetro, an American novelist and journalist. The use of co-writers enables Patterson to publish several books in a year and he has said that it also brings new ideas to the novels.

Even though he has published a great amount of novels, Patterson has not gained interest among literary critics since his first novel *The Thomas Berryman Number* (1976). The only available study on Patterson is Joan G. Kotker's *James Patterson – A Critical Companion* (2004), which offers information on Patterson's novels. Lev Grossman interviewed Patterson for an article which was published in the *Time Magazine* in 2006 and wrote that

Patterson probably outsells Toni Morrison 10 books to 1, but his success comes at a price. He will never get respect from the literati. Most reviewers ignore him. In a culture that

values high style over storytelling, pretty prose over popularity and pulse-pounding plots, he's at the extreme wrong end of the spectrum, and he knows it. (Grossman, 2006)

Yet many other crime writers have been critically examined by detective fiction critics and that is why it is interesting that Patterson's novels have not been considered meaningful for some reason. One reason for the lack of interest among critics might be Patterson's use of co-writers, which raises the question of authorship. Thus it is essential that I include the first novel of the "Women's Murder Club" series to my study, because it is the only novel of the series which has been written without the help of co-writers.

I think Patterson's work offers interesting study material because of his female main characters, for there are not many male authors of detective fiction who have female detectives as main characters. Neither are there many male crime writers who discuss feminist themes in their novels. It has been more common for male authors to have women as secondary characters and as partners of male detectives. One of the few male authors of crime fiction to have a female main character is Alexander McCall Smith. He has written the *No.1 Ladies Detective Agency* series, which features Precious Ramotswe, a private investigator in Botswana, and another series featuring a Scottish amateur detective Isabel Dalhousie. Another example is Swedish author Henning Mankell, who is best known for his series of detective novels featuring his police detective Kurt Wallander. Mankell has also written the novel *Before the Frost* (2005), where Kurt's daughter Linda is the main character.

The focus of my study is mainly on four novels of the series, but I will use the other three novels as well. I will concentrate on novels *1st to Die*, *3rd Degree*, *4th of July* and *7th Heaven*. In *1st to Die*, Boxer is investigating several brutal murders of wedding couples and in the course of the novel she decides to work together with her best friend and medical examiner Claire Washburn, crime reporter Cindy Thomas and assistant district attorney Jill Bernhardt in order to gather clues outside the official investigation. While working closely together, the four women become very

good friends and solve the identity of the killer. In *3rd Degree* Boxer is trying to catch a group of terrorists, who fight against capitalism by murdering business men and other influential people. Here again Boxer needs the help of her friends, but this time the terrorist attacks claim Bernhardt's life as she becomes one of the murder victims. In *4th of July* Boxer is involved in a shootout with her partner Jacobi and in order to save their lives, she is forced to shoot two teenagers. She is then sued by the children's father and suspended from her job till the end of her trial. She escapes the publicity surrounding her case to Half Moon Bay, where she encounters a number of murders and cannot resist investigating them on her own time. *4th of July* also introduces a new member to the "Women's Murder Club" as Boxer's lawyer Yuki Castellano joins the group. In *7th Heaven* Boxer investigates the murders of wealthy couples who have become victims of arsons. *7th Heaven* also concentrates on Boxer's private life as she struggles to handle both her job and relationship with her boyfriend, Joe Molinari.

I will study the novels in order to find out if the series can be considered feminist, by looking at some themes which are typical in feminist detective fiction. These themes are sexism, women and violence, and the relationships between men and women. These themes are present in all of the novels, but because studying all seven novels of the series would offer too much research material for a pro gradu thesis, I will concentrate on those, where these themes are most clearly present. The theme of sexism can be found in several novels but it is especially evident in *1st to Die*, where the masculine workplaces of the four main characters are discussed. Also the crimes in *1st to Die* relate to sexual abuse and degradation of women. The question of women and violence is present both in *3rd Degree*, which deals with domestic violence, and *4th of July*, where Boxer goes to trial for shooting two teenagers for self-defence. The theme of women, men and relationships includes romantic relationships the main characters have with different men, as well as the friendships between the main characters. Both are present throughout the series, but the friendships between the

main characters become one of the central themes in the novels. However, in 7th *Heaven* Boxer faces the difficulty of having a romantic relationship and a full time job as a homicide detective.

Patterson's "Women Murder Club" series cannot clearly be classified as belonging to one specific subgenre of detective fiction, because it has characteristics from different subgenres. However, it could be seen as being closest to the police procedural, because the main character works as a homicide detective and the crimes are investigated by several detectives using police routines. It also has characteristics from the amateur detective novel, because Washburn, Thomas, Bernhard and Castellano could be considered as being amateur detectives as they participate in solving the crimes.

Because my study is situated in the field of detective fiction, I will next map a short history of detective fiction. After that I will introduce the key concepts of my study in my theory part. My research is related to the field of feminist literary criticism, which has its roots in the emergence of women's movements in the United States and Europe during the 1960s. The changes taking place in the society of that time were also seen in popular fiction, which reflected the changes in women's roles and their perceptions of themselves. It is important to understand the relationship between feminism and literature, and in chapter two I will outline the historical background of feminist literary criticism. I will also discuss the conventions of police procedural genre and the emergence of the feminist detective hero, both of which are essential to my study. The latter part of my thesis will concentrate on the analysis of the novels; in chapter three I discuss the theme of sexism, chapter four concentrates on the question of women and violence and the last chapter deals with the relationships between men and women.

Detective fiction, as we know it today, began in 1841, when Edgar Allan Poe introduced his detective hero Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin in his story *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and set the basis of other detective fiction novels to come. According to Binyon, in Dupin "Poe created the prototype of the great detective, the eccentric genius with stupendous reasoning powers, whose

brilliance is given added refulgence by the fact that he is always accompanied...by a loyal, admiring, but uncomprehending, and imperceptive friend and assistant” (1989, 5). In France Émile Gaboriau wrote a series of novels featuring two heroes: the amateur detective Tabaret and the police detective Lecoq.¹ He first became popular with his novel *L’Affair Lerouge*, which was published as a newspaper serial in 1865. Gaboriau was an important link between Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle in the development of the genre (Scaggs, 2005, 22). Doyle’s first novel featuring Sherlock Holmes was *A Study in Scarlet*, published in 1887. While creating his detective Holmes, Doyle borrowed characteristics from both Poe’s Dupin and Gaboriau’s Lecoq. While Dupin is an amateur detective and Lecoq a professional police, Holmes as “a consulting detective” represents a mixture of the two: a professional amateur (Binyon, 1989, 6). Like Monsieur Dupin, also Holmes has a loyal sidekick, Dr. Watson. With the appearance of Sherlock Holmes, the detective figure matured into an archetype: a man with supreme intellect (Munt, 1994, 2).

The Golden Age of detective fiction usually means the period between the two world wars, even though critics are not all unanimous about it. Some mark the point of origin of the Golden Age to the publication of Agatha Christie’s first novel *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in 1920.² Agatha Christie, who is often called “the Queen of Crime”, had an enormous impact on detective fiction genre. Her most famous characters are Hercule Poirot, the eccentric Belgian amateur detective, and Miss Jane Marple, an old lady with a sharp logical mind. The Golden Age detective fiction continued the tradition that Poe and Doyle had started, shaping and honing it. This type of detective fiction is often referred to as the ‘whodunit’ or the ‘clue-puzzle’, where the reader is provided with clues from which the identity of the perpetrator of the crime may be deduced before the solution is revealed in the final pages of the book. The investigation is usually conducted by an eccentric amateur or semi-professional detective.

¹ Lecoq as a reformed criminal who became a police detective echoes Eugène Francois Vidoq, who was a real detective and before that a real criminal. Vidoq’s *Mémoires* (1828) influenced both Gaboriau and Poe’s work and Gaboriau’s Lecoq resembles Vidoq both in background as well as in name. (See Scaggs 2005, 22 and Knight, 2004, 23).

² See Scaggs p. 26 and Knight p. 85.

According to Scaggs, the Golden Age in Britain, in addition to Christie's contribution, was defined by three other authors, all of them women: Dorothy L. Sayers, Margery Allingham and Ngaio Marsh (2005, 26). All of these women chose male detectives as main characters: Sayers created the character of Lord Peter Wimsey, who first appeared in *Whose Body* (1923), Allingham's Albert Campion appeared six years later in *Black Dudley* and Marsh's detective Roderick Alleyn of Scotland Yard made his first appearance in 1934 in the novel *A Man Lay Dead*. There were of course other important authors like Anthony Berkley (the pseudonym of Anthony Berkley Cox), who was the author of *The Poisoned Chocolates Case* (1929). Even though the Golden Age classic detective fiction is considered to be a British phenomenon, there were numerous practitioners in the USA who were well regarded, like S.S. Van Dine, Rex Stout and Ellery Queen.

However, in the 1920s and '30s USA the tradition of the class-bound British country-house murder diverged into a more indigenous product known as the hard-boiled detective story, which then became the more dominant form (Munt, 1994, 2). Hard-boiled detective fiction is characterized by action, violence and colloquialism, and the hard-boiled stories were initially published in pulp magazines, most famously in *Black Mask*. The best-known authors of the hard-boiled genre are Dashiell Hammet with his Continental Op, Mickey Spillane with his character of Mike Hammer and Raymond Chandler with the character of Philip Marlowe. According to Scaggs, it was Hammet who set the foundation for a type of fiction that was characterized by the 'hard-boiled' and the 'pig-headed' figure of the private investigator, around which the subgenre developed (2005, 55). This private eye is tough, loyal to his own values and often a solitary man who works outside the social order which is inherently corrupt. Thus, the American hard-boiled private investigator was quite different from the earlier amateur detective characters of Holmes and Poirot.

After the diversion between the British and the American forms, detective fiction evolved into new subgenres. The police procedural, where Patterson's series can be categorised as belonging to, first emerged in the United States after the Second World War. As a subgenre of detective fiction,

the police procedural was very masculine. According to Stephen Knight, “the new acceptance of collective procedures against crimes derives in part from the wartime sense that a disciplined, cooperative, well-equipped body of men is the most valid form of defence against disorder” (2004, 154). In the police procedural the individual and self-employed private investigator is replaced with a professional police detective or a police team and it often concentrates on teamwork as the crimes are solved by using police routines. Hence, police procedurals are also more realistic, as the crimes are solved by using actual police routines, similar to those in real life. Lawrence Treat's novel *V as in Victim* (1945) is often cited as perhaps the first ‘true’ police procedural (Dove, 1982, 9). Another early example of the subgenre is Hillary Waugh’s *Last Seen Wearing...*, which was published in 1952. Meanwhile, *Dragnet*³ became a hit radio show and it was soon thereafter that the police procedural genre began to flourish.

Over the next few years the number of authors writing police procedurals began to grow. Perhaps the most famous and the best example of the police procedurals is Ed McBain, who published his first 87th Precinct novel *Cop Hater* in 1956 and continued to write the series until his death in 2005. Although these novels focus primarily on detective Steve Carella, they encompass the work of many officers working alone and in teams, and Carella is not always present in any individual book. The substantial police team represents the multiracial character of city life, as Carella is of Italian origin and the other characters represent Irish, African-American, Jewish and German cultures (Knight, 2004, 156). Multiracial characters can also be found in Patterson’s books, as Washburn is African-American and Castellano is part Japanese, part Italian-American.

At the end of the 1960s the first professional female detectives appeared and they made their first appearance in the police procedural genre (Walton and Jones, 1999, 13). British author Jennie Melville and the Americans Lillian O’Donnell and Dorothy Uhnak were the first women authors to have female police officers in their novels. Uhnak’s first novel to feature detective Christie Opara

³ *Dragnet* was a long-running police procedural drama, which ran first on radio from 1949 and then on television from 1952. It was created and produced by Jack Webb, who also starred in the leading role as Sgt. Joe Friday with Bart Yarborough as his partner Sgt. Ben Romero.

was *The Bait*, which was published in 1968. *The Phone Calls*, which was the first book of O'Donnell's series featuring a female police officer Norah Mulcahaney was published four years after Uhnak's.

More female detectives continued to appear in other subgenres: in 1972 British novelist P.D. James published her book *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* which had a female private investigator Cordelia Gray as main character, and in 1977 emerged Marcia Muller's *Edwin of the Iron Shoes*, which was the first book of the series featuring private investigator Sharon McCone. Soon after that the first lesbian private eye novel was published by Canadian Eve Zarembo (*A Reason to Kill* in 1978). During the early 1980s the number of novels featuring a female professional investigator began to multiply and achieve recognition among authors, publishers and readers that constitute the world of popular fiction (Walton & Jones, 22). Among those was Liza Cody's series with detective Anna Lee, which began with the novel *Dupe* in 1980. Two years later American crime novelists Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton published their first books, *Indemnity Only* (1982) and "*A*" is for *Alibi* (1982). Both Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski and Grafton's Kinsey Millhone were detectives in the framework hard-boiled detective novel.

As detective fiction was a very masculine genre, feminist writers faced many challenges when they started to write their stories. It was important that female detectives were not just male detectives in women's clothes, but convincing as characters. The feminist detective hero has usually more social relationships than her male counterpart (especially the hard-boiled male detective) and these relationships prevent her from being a complete loner. This means that even though female detectives are independent, they still have romantic relationships and often a network of friends to support them. Female detectives do not usually resort to violence as easily as male detectives, but there are, of course, exceptions to this. Feminist authors of detective fiction also wanted to discuss issues that were important to women and some of the typical themes of feminist detective fiction include sexism, violence against women and children, as well as women's use of violence. These

features of feminist detective fiction are essential in my study of Patterson's novels as I am examining the feminist characteristics of the "Women's Murder Club" series.

After the rise of feminist and lesbian detective fiction, there emerged an interest in ethnic detective fiction. Many authors created protagonists of different ethnic backgrounds and an example of this is Earl Derr Bigger's Charlie Chan character, a detective who was born in China but immigrated to Hawaii. Another example is Chester Himes with his African-American characters of 'Grave Digger' Jones and 'Coffin' Ed Johnson, who are Harlem detectives.

2. The theory behind the study

In my study I am examining the feminist characteristics of Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series and hence my study is related to the field of feminist literary criticism. In this theory chapter I will map out the historical background and development of feminist literary criticism and after that examine further the conventions of the police procedural genre. Finally I will take a closer look at how women began to rewrite popular genres, including detective fiction, and how the feminist detective hero was created. Because feminism is the key term in my study, it is crucial to specify what the term feminism actually means. Therefore, I will start my next subchapter by defining the terms *feminism*, *feminine* and *female*.

2.1 Defining the terms *feminism*, *feminine* and *female*

In order to discuss the feminist characteristics of "Women's Murder Club" series, I need to explicate what is meant by the terms *feminist*, *female* and *feminine*. These terms have been widely used in different ways by feminists and it is important to recognize the difference between them. The terms *feminist* or *feminism* refer to political position and indicate support for the women's movement known as the second-wave feminism, which originated in the late 1960's. Thus feminist criticism can be seen as a political discourse, which according to Toril Moi, is "a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature, at least not if the latter is presented as no more than another interesting critical approach on a line with a concern for sea-imagery or metaphors of war in medieval poetry" (1986, 204).

The term *female* is a biological category which defines the sexual characteristics of a body: female describes the biological sex (Robbins, 2000, 6). This term is often used when talking about

the writing of women, which is referred to as female writing. This must not, however, be confused with feminist writing. As defined above, *feminism* and *feminist* are political terms and thus female writing (writing by women) is not necessarily feminist writing. Moi discusses the confusion of feminist and female texts and states that it is often assumed that the mere describing of experiences typical for women is a feminist act. However, the fact of having the same experience as someone else does not guarantee a common political front; or, for example, the experience of child birth is not shared by all women and it does not cause a need for a deep political liberation. Moi argues that feminism cannot be reduced to a product or a reflection of female experience, even though it is strongly shaped by its anti-patriarchal emphasis on that experience (208).

While it is easy to confuse the terms *female* and *feminist*, there is yet another term to be added to the list: the term *feminine*. While the term *female* marks the biological sex, *feminine* represents the patterns of behavior and sexuality imposed by social and cultural norms. According to Robbins, “feminine is a sociological category which describes the behavioral characteristics associated in different contexts and at different times with female biology: feminine describes gender” (2000, 6). Hence, the difference between *female* and *feminine* refers to the difference between *sex* and *gender*: while *sex* marks the biological sex of a person, *gender* is culturally constructed. As Judith Butler argues, “gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex” (1997, 280).

The patriarchal society imposes certain standards of femininity on women and these standards are seen as being natural to all women. If a woman rejects these chosen standards, she is seen as both unfeminine and unnatural. Moi argues that it is in the patriarchal interest that the terms female and femininity are and stay confused: patriarchy wants women to believe that there is an essence of femaleness, called femininity. She continues by arguing that feminists must fight this kind of

essentialist thinking and insist that even though one is biologically female, this does not mean that she is automatically feminine (209).⁴

Tuulevi Ovaska discusses the difference between a *female* detective novel and a *feminist* detective novel and argues that a *female* detective novel is a novel which has a female main character and has been written by a female author, while a *feminist* detective novel criticises the traditional stereotypical gender roles, deals with issues concerning women's life and contemplates the world from a woman's point of view (1997, 149). Therefore, according to Ovaska's definition, a feminist detective novel does not have to be written by a woman if it addresses issues concerning women and observes the world from a woman's point of view.

As stated above, the terms *feminist* or *feminism* are not the same as *female* or *feminine*. Whereas *female* signifies the biological sex of a person and *feminine* expresses certain expectations of the behavior and characteristics of women set by social and cultural norms, *feminist* refers to a political position. Therefore being a feminist does not necessarily mean that one is a woman, or being a biological woman does not automatically mean one is feminine. This brings us to the question whether men can be feminists. This is an ongoing debate and probably a never ending one and there are as many opinions on the dilemma as there are people discussing it. If we consider Ovaska's definition of a feminist detective novel, we can surely say that yes, men can write feminist texts. I will explore the discussion of men and feminism in more detail in my next chapter.

2.2 From feminist literary criticism to men in feminism

As I study Patterson's novels from a feminist point of view it is important to shed some light on the history and development of feminist literary criticism. In this subchapter I will firstly provide an

⁴ Many leading feminist thinkers of the 1970s and 1980s rejected this kind of essentialist thinking, particularly on the grounds that universal claims about women are invariably false and effectively normalize and privilege specific forms of femininity. (See Stone, 2004, 135)

outline of the history of feminism and feminist literary criticism and secondly examine men's place in feminism.

Elaine Showalter argues that

Whether concerned with the literary representations of sexual difference, with the ways that literary genres have been shaped by masculine or feminine values, or with the exclusion of the female voice from the institutions of literature, criticism and theory, feminist criticism has established gender as a fundamental category of literary analysis. (1986, 3)

During its history the aim of feminism has been to assert a belief for sexual equality and to eradicate sexist domination in patriarchal society.⁵ Feminism in Europe and North – America has a long history, as it developed as a strong political force in Britain and America during the 19th and early 20th centuries. During this time the Suffragette and the Women's movements strived for social, economic and political equality. Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir were the two most important feminists of that period. They both produced key texts, which have been very significant to feminist theory: Woolf's *A Room of One Own* (1929) and *Three Quineas* (1938) and De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949).

Second-wave feminism and feminist criticism emerged in the late 1960s. Although the second-wave of feminism shared the agenda of the first-wave's fight for equality, it also concentrated on the politics of reproduction, women's experience and sexual difference (Widdowson, 1993, 211). In the United States feminist criticism was created by academic and literary women, who had been involved in the women's liberation movement and shared its agenda. As Showalter asserts, during the first years feminist criticism "concentrated on exposing the misogyny of literary practice: the stereotyped images of women in literature as angels or monsters, the literary abuse or textual harassment of women in classic and popular male literature, and the exclusion of women from literary history" (1986, 5). Thus women started rereading literature written by men and analysing

⁵ Over the years the names of different concepts tend to change and today, instead of patriarchy, we talk about *hegemonic masculinity*, which was first introduced by R.W. Connell in his book *Gender and Power* (1987).

the representations of women in that literature and by doing so, revealed the patriarchal and misogynist attitudes behind the texts (Morris, 1993, 52). Feminist writers such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Ellen Moers and Elaine Showalter went on to make visible an extensive history of women's writing and constituted women's literature as a specific field (Humm, 1992, 58). Women discovered their own literature, whose artistic importance as well as historical coherence had been covered up and belittled by dominating patriarchal values. The focus on women's literature led to the discovery of numbers of forgotten female novelists. Literature influenced women's lives as they found role models in novels, and hence reading literature became an important part of women's socialisation process.

According to Showalter (1986, 128), feminist criticism can be divided into two different varieties: the first one is concerned with women as readers and the other one with women as writers. The first one concentrates on women as the consumers of male produced literature and the way in which the hypothesis of a woman reader changes our apprehension of a given text. Showalter refers to this type of feminist criticism as *feminist critique*. It is concerned with the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the misconceptions about and the omissions of women in criticism, the exploitation and manipulation of female audience (especially in popular culture and film) and the analysis of woman-as-sign in semiotic systems. However, Showalter recognises the problems with this kind of criticism: if one studies the stereotypes of women, the limited roles they play in literary history and the sexism of male critics, one only sees what men have thought what women ought to be, not the real experiences of women. Thus feminist critique is very male-oriented.

The second type of feminist criticism is therefore concerned with women as the producers of textual meaning, with the themes, history, genres and structures of literature written by women. Showalter calls this type of feminist criticism *gynocriticism* (1986, 128). It concentrates on the psychodynamics of female creativity: linguistics and the problem of a female language, the course of female literary career, the study of particular writers and literary history. According to Showalter,

“the feminist critique is essentially political and polemical, with theoretical affiliations to Marxist sociology and aesthetics; gynocritics is more self-contained and experimental, with connections to other modes of new feminist research” (1986, 129).

However, there was a growing discontent among some women (especially women of colour) towards the essentialist definitions of femininity emphasized by the Anglo-American feminism, which often assumed a universal female identity and seemed to concentrate only on the experiences of Western women. As Chela Sandoval has written: “the U.S. women’s movement of the seventies was officially renamed the ‘the white women’s movement’ by U.S. feminists of color, a re-naming which insisted on the recognition of other, simultaneously existing women’s movements” (Loomba, 1993, 3). African-American women, as well as working-class and lesbian women criticised second wave feminism of presenting the point of view of white middle-class heterosexual women as the point of view of all women (Morris, 1993, 198). These women argued that the forms of oppression experienced by white middle-class women were different from the forms of oppression experienced by black, lesbian, disabled or poor women. This led to the creation of different branches of feminist criticism, including Marxist, black and lesbian feminism.

Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term *intersectionality* in 1989, when she discussed issues of black women’s employment in the US, although the use of the term did not become popular until later (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 1). Intersectionality means that the classical modes of oppression based on, for example, race, gender, religion, nationality, sexuality and class, do not act independently from each other, but interrelate and create a system of oppression, which reflects the “intersection” of multiple forms of discrimination (Collins, 2000, 18).

There have also been many discussions about men and their place in feminism. Since the 1980s men have entered the field of feminism in different ways and for different reasons (Smith, 1987, 33). This has generated an ongoing debate about this so called *male feminism*. Cary Nelson argues that “to be a man in feminism can mean simply a man reading a feminist book...or it can mean a

man writing about/within/without feminism...feminism is part of my social and intellectual life, has been so for many years, and so...it is natural that I write about feminism” (1987, 153). When men first started to show interest in feminism in the 1980s, women critics were concerned that men were interested in feminism for the wrong reasons. Showalter wrote in her essay, first published in the literary journal *Raritan Quarterly Review* in 1983, as follows: “there is more than a hint in recent critical writing that it’s time for men to step in and show the girls how to do it” (1987, 119). Other women argued that whilst men cannot share feminine experiences they can study, analyse and come to understand women’s experiences as different from their own (Madsen, 2000, 17). Although women critics were a little suspicious about the concept of male feminism, they were ready to give it a chance.

Over the years the concept of feminism has changed and developed into different branches. The debate on men and feminism has been going strong since the first men entered the field of feminism in the 1980s. The development of feminism has made it possible for men also to write feminist texts, but male authors with female main characters and feminist texts are still quite rare today and Patterson, then, is one of the few. In my next chapter I will move on to discuss the generic conventions of police procedurals and the creation of feminist detective hero.

2.3 The question of genre: the conventions of police procedurals

“Genre” is a French term, which is used to indicate that texts can be divided into different groups by their common characteristics. According to Helen Carr, the word “genre” has two very different associations: “often it’s now used in the context of popular literature, where it frequently implies ‘not literature’ but some low-level formulaic production. But its older use is by formalist academic literary critics, for whom it means established literary forms, such as the epic, tragedy, comedy,

realist novel and so on” (1989, 6). John Frow claims that “all texts are strongly shaped by their relation to one or more genres, which in turn they may modify” (2005, 1).

Even though detective fiction has diverged into different subgenres, all detective stories share certain basic conventions: a serious crime, usually murder, is committed and a detective, who can be either an amateur or a professional police, comes to investigate the crime. The detective or a group of detectives gathers clues and information and when this is completed, the solution to the crime is announced and the order is usually restored. Finally the fate of the criminal is resolved in some manner, usually by imprisonment or death of the criminal and sometimes by the criminal escaping.

In the classical detective stories the crime is often committed in a confined place and there is a small circle of suspects to be considered. The crime is then solved by a mastermind detective, like Holmes or Poirot, who solves it with his sharp logical thinking. Therefore, there was a radical change in crime fiction when writers began to depict the work of police detectives as having a greater relationship to reality. As Knight asserts: “monocles and shoulder-holsters were no longer the only central motifs in the citizens’ imaginative against crime” (2004, 153). In police procedurals the actual methods and procedures of police work are central to the structure (Scaggs, 2005, 91). The crime is solved by the police by using police routines in contrast to the ratiocination of the classic detective story and the pursuit and the infiltration of the private-eye story (Dove, 1982, 49). The police procedural often concentrates on team work, underlining the police team instead of a single superior detective. However, in most police procedural series, the attention tends to focus on an individual, like Christie Opara in Uhnak’s series or Kurt Wallander in Mankell’s series. The basic difference between the police detective and an amateur detective or a private investigator is the fact that the police is an official representative of the community, which allows him to make arrests, to invade premises denied to the civilian detective, and even to have access to information that would otherwise be considered confidential (Dove, 51).

Because the police procedural concentrates on the actual routines of police detectives, it can be considered a very realistic genre. The difficulties of the job are usually present in the novels: low pay and long hours, and the stresses these conditions place on the home life of the detectives (Kotker, 2004, 9). The setting is also central to procedurals, although it is sometimes portrayed and explored in different ways on either side of the Atlantic. In the British procedural, the focus on a relatively localised beat during the genre's development is still echoed in contemporary procedurals, whereas in the USA the procedurals are often localised in larger urban settings (Scaggs, 2005, 92-93).

Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series can be considered belonging to the police procedural genre, because the main character is a homicide detective and police work is in the focus of the series. Although there are many detectives investigating the murder cases, the focus of the series is on Boxer and the other detectives in the department remain in the background. However, the idea of team work is still there because Boxer's colleagues do take part in the investigation even though they remain almost invisible, as the reader hears about them only when they report to Boxer. The collaboration of the female main characters can also be seen as teamwork, as they work together to solve the crimes. The series takes place in San Francisco, hence it follows the urban setting, which is typical for American procedurals.

2.4 Women rewriting the popular genres and the creation of feminist detective hero

According to Anne Cranny-Francis, genre is a form of social practice as well as a literary or linguistic category (17, 1990). She argues that feminist genre fiction reveals genre as a social strategy on a number of levels and that feminist analysis of generic fiction shows that genres have a specific social function to perform as an expression of conservative ideological discourses. Cranny-Francis claims that genres work "by convention and those conventions are social constructs...those

conventions are themselves subject to social pressures and social mediation. As society changes, formerly accepted conventions become unacceptable or are revised” (1990, 17).

The changes in the society are reflected in different genres and this is also the case in feminist fiction. During the second-wave feminism women started to write popular fiction in order to create different representations of and role models for women. This popular fiction includes science fiction, utopian fiction, detective fiction, fantasy and romance. Cranny-Francis argues that “feminist writers...may find that the use of popular or generic literary forms can operate as a political practice. Generic fiction may be a site for the allegorical description of social injustices displayed in time and/or place from the reader’s own society” (1990, 9). Feminist writers chose popular literature also because through it they could reach large markets, which would otherwise be closed to them. The changes that were taking place in the society, especially in women’s roles, were reflected in popular literature: women were entering the workplace and training for jobs, which were not possible for them before, like fire fighters, soldiers, police officers and machinists. This led to the emergence of many women writers and fictional female heroes in the late 1960s.

The phenomenon of feminist activity and the changes in the society and gender roles during that time made shifts also in the fictional detective hero (Walton & Jones, 1999, 12). Detective fiction was known as a very masculine genre and thus women faced many challenges in rewriting it. Even though there had been earlier women writers of detective fiction, for example Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers and Margery Allingham, as well as female detectives like Amelia Butterworth and Miss Marple, consciously feminist detective heroes were still missing. While creating a convincing feminist detective hero, women writers had to take into account the generic conventions of detective fiction as well as the feminist discourse. The very idea of a feminist hero was to challenge and subvert the traditional gender roles of women. Cranny-Francis argues that “feminist generic fiction is not simply masculinist generic fiction with female heroes telling the stories of oppression; as such it would risk becoming even more effective apology for patriarchy” (1990, 9).

Hence the substitution of a male character with a female one would fail badly, because a feminist detective is more than a male detective in woman's clothes. As Cranny-Francis asserts: "to make a female detective convincing as a character, to have her operate as more than just an honorary male... requires a radical reassessment of the characterization of the detective and the narrative in which she operates" (143).

Sabine Vanacker argues that feminist women writers seek to retain the features of male detectives they see as liberating and empowering to women (like independence) and reject the characteristics which are usually associated with male detectives (like solitude) (1997, 63). Thus the authors of feminist detective fiction vested in their female detective heroes such attributes as compassion, communal solidarity, and reluctance to act violently, unless it is a matter of life and death (Horsley, 2005, 264). Women detectives are often active and brave, but they also recognise the dangers of their profession and accept fear. Whereas the male detective hero works alone and is admired for his separateness, the woman detective works between independence and dependence (Vanacker, 1997, 71). However, one must take into account the differences between the different subgenres of detective fiction: the conventions of a certain subgenre have an affect on the detective hero. Therefore, a female detective in the hard-boiled genre can be more violent than, for example, in police procedurals because the police detective's behaviour is guided and restricted by the codes and regulations of her profession.

According to Cranny-Francis, fictional female detective

may be either married but relatively independent...in a committed heterosexual relationship and independent...single and heterosexual... or lesbian...in other words, she may have a man and a career, have a career and not to be bothered about having a man, or she may have a woman and not to be at all interested in having a man (1990, 165).

And even if the detective is not married and has no children, she often has some kind of supportive network of friends. This network of women may include different friends, family members or

neighbours and they can be from different generations and backgrounds. This is also the case in Patterson's series where Boxer, Washburn, Thomas, Bernhard and Castellano form a network of supportive friends. This kind of binding feminist solidarity is very important in feminist detective fiction (Vanacker, 73).

Women detective heroes usually have a different kind of relationship with violence than their male counterparts and Paula Arvas argues that even though violence plays a big part in detective fiction, women resort to it surprisingly rarely (1997, 267). In Western society violence is often seen as a masculine quality, which is not suitable for women. Feminist authors have discussed the problem of women and violence and it is one typical theme in feminist detective fiction. Women detectives often carry a gun, but do not use it if they do not have to and if they use it, it is usually for self-defence. In addition to the question of women and violence, feminist detective fiction usually deals with other issues, like sexism, homophobia and racism, although ethnic writers have discussed racism in their work as well.

As I mentioned in the introduction, the professional female investigator made her first appearance in the police procedural genre. Police procedurals have originally been very masculine and this masculinity is evident even today; as Maureen Reddy asserts, police departments remain largely male and are hierarchically organized (1988, 70). Because of its almost exclusive masculinity, the organisation representing police officers is called the Fraternal Order of Police in many cities. This name underlines that police officers are members of a brotherhood, which by definition excludes women (Reddy, 70). It is hard for women to try to fit into this brotherhood because they are seen as outsiders simply because of their sex. This is often present also in police procedurals. George Dove describes the position of the woman police detective in detective fiction:

Her position in the [police] department is a dubious one. She is every man's little sister, the squad pet who is protected by the older brothers, but she is at the same time resented and scorned because, as everybody knows, police work is a man's business. She is regarded as a sort of necessary nuisance who can do the typing and filing for the squad, and the men

are usually glad to turn the “matron duty” and “baby-sitting” jobs over to her. If she is attractive the male cops will almost inevitably consider her a sex-object, but she can take satisfaction in her ability to do certain things a man can not be expected to handle. (1982, 151)

Thus a woman police detective is often seen as the weaker sex; the little sister that needs to be protected by the big brothers. If she happens to be beautiful, she becomes the object of male desire. The woman police officer is often signed to desk duty, where she is in charge of answering the phone and writing reports. However, it is important to notice that Dove’s book was published already in 1982 and there were not many consciously feminist detectives at that time.

Reddy argues that the police procedural genre is especially resistant to feminist rewriting, because of its masculine origins and because it is “dependent on a masculinist system of power together arming it against female intruders, particularly against serious novelists with feminist questions to raise” (1988, 84). According to Walton and Jones, the early female police procedural addressed two issues central to women’s liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s: women’s equal access to the institutional workplace and the problems of social justice, as it is administered by the law and conducted within the law itself (1999, 14).

It could be argued that in this framework of feminist detective fiction, Patterson represents a new shift of feminist writing. He is writing his “Women’s Murder Club” series forty years after the first feminist detectives emerged and these forty years have made it possible for him as a man to write feminist detective novels.

3. Women in a man's world: sexism

One issue that was in the heart of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s was equality of access to professional positions. The strive for equality was seen also in detective fiction, where professional women detectives started to emerge in the late 1960s. As I noted earlier, among those detectives were Dorothy Uhnak's Christie Opara and Lillian O'Donnell's Norah Mulcahaney, who were both female police officers. The professional women detectives often had to face sexist attitudes in their male-dominated profession. The term "sexism" refers to discrimination or hatred towards a person based on his or her sex. It usually includes the belief that one sex is inferior to the other and the attitude of misogyny or misandry. Hence sexism and sexist attitudes can be found outside workplaces as well.

According to Cranny-Francis, feminist discourse "operates to make visible within the text the practices by which conservative discourses such as sexism are seamlessly and invisibly stitched into the textual fabric, both into its structure and into its story" (1990, 2). Sexism is, then, one of the typical themes feminist detective fiction deals with and also feminist literary critics have analyzed it. For example, Reddy discusses the sexist attitudes Opara and Mulcahaney face in their professions as female police officers in her book *Sisters in Crime* (1988) and also Vanacker studies the challenges the more recent fictional women detectives deal with while working in large masculine organisations in her article "V.I. Warshawski, Kinsay Millhone and Kay Scarpetta: Creating a Feminist Detective Hero" (1997). As I am examining Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series in order to find out whether or not it can be considered feminist, the theme of sexism is very relevant to my study. In this chapter I will look at the theme of sexism in Patterson's novels and concentrate on *1st to Die* and *3rd Degree*, because the theme of sexism is most clearly present in those novels, even though there are traces of it in the other novels of the series as well. I will start

by examining the sexist attitudes the main characters face in their workplaces and then move on to discuss a more extreme feature of sexism: misogyny and the degradation of women.

3.1 Successful women in masculine workplaces

Boxer, Washburn, Bernhardt and Thomas all have professions which have usually been associated with men: police detective, medical examiner, district attorney and crime reporter. Thus all of the women have crossed the limits of their gender role with their choice of 'unfeminine' professions. Boxer is the only woman detective in the homicide unit, hence her workplace is very much male dominated. Washburn works as a medical examiner, which means that she performs autopsies and tries to find out the cause of death of crime victims. Therefore, instead of being associated with giving life (like women often are), Washburn examines the corpses of victims and decaying bodies with a cool manner. Her job is similar to that of Patricia Cornwell's female hero Kay Scarpetta, who also works as a medical examiner. Jill Bernhardt works as a district attorney, putting away murderers and other criminals and this way she represents a woman who administers justice. Thomas on the other hand, makes a living as a crime reporter. While it is true that both men and women have been journalists, women have often been seen as writing stories about society, fashion and food (Kotker, 2004, 148). Instead, Thomas deals with the same violent world as Boxer, Washburn and Bernhardt.

The fact that these fictional women work in masculine fields reflects the change in the roles of real life women, due to the second-wave feminism. As I explained earlier in my theory, feminism taught women to question their gender roles and because of it, women pursued many different professions previously held almost exclusively by men. Like Innes asserts, in the workplaces women demonstrated that they could be tough and aggressive by becoming soldiers, fire fighters and construction workers (2004, 5).

All of the women in the series have male superiors, but the question of sexism is most clearly present in Boxer and Washburn's cases. In *Ist to Die*, Boxer is thirty-four and has worked as a homicide detective for six years, the last two as lead homicide inspector. Boxer says she joined the police force because "I wanted to prove I could make a difference in a man's world" (*Ist to Die*, 132). Boxer's conscious, feminist statement epitomizes feminism's drive for women to be accepted as equals outside the domestic arena (Kotker, 2004, 148). Boxer was the first female homicide detective in San Francisco and she was quite young when she joined the homicide unit. She is very motivated and her goal is to be the head of the homicide department some day: "With any luck, when my lieutenant was up for promotion, I'd be in line for his job. The department needed strong women. They could go far" (21).

Even though Boxer is a hard working and talented detective, she feels that her boss, Lieutenant Sam Roth often undermines her and treats her like a child: "Roth likes me – *like another daughter*, he says. He has no idea how condescending he can be. I'm tempted to tell Roth that I like him – *like a grandfather*" (51). Roth sees Boxer as a daughter; a young girl who needs to be protected. This echoes back to my theory part, where I presented Dove's ideas about female detectives' roles in fictional police departments. Female detectives are often seen as the little sisters or daughters of the male detectives and treated like the weaker sex (Dove, 1982, 151). This is also the case with Boxer, who feels that she is not taken seriously by her boss and thus has to prove herself in order to show that she is a detective, not just a woman.

Cindy Thomas has a similar situation with her editor Sid Glass and she tells Boxer that her boss "has *no clue* how demeaning and condescending he is" (*Ist to Die*, 135). Thomas is trying to prove herself as a crime reporter and tries to sneak into the crime scenes Boxer is investigating. Boxer is taken by Thomas' persistence and Thomas reminds her of herself: "I remembered when I was a recruit trying to elbow my way in. How the police world had been barred, closed off, until someone had opened the tiniest crack to let me crawl through" (*Ist to Die*, 77). Boxer's statement attests

Reddy's ideas of police departments as largely closed masculine systems, which exclude women (Reddy, 1988, 70). Thus Boxer can relate to Thomas' situation, because they both are trying to make a career in professions that have traditionally been seen as very masculine and unfriendly to women.

Claire Washburn works as the chief medical examiner of San Francisco, "which everyone in Homicide knew was as undeserving a title as there was, since she virtually ran the office for Anthony Righetti. Righetti is her overbearing, power-thumbing, credit-stealing boss, but Claire rarely complains" (*Ist to die*, 56). Boxer's description of Washburn's situation makes it clear that Washburn does all the work for her boss, but does not receive credit for it. With this situation Patterson discusses the issue of the so called glass ceiling, the term that refers that women can only go so high professionally, while men with equal qualifications are free to pass by them (Kotker, 2004, 148). Boxer articulates this when she thinks that "maybe the idea of a female M.E. still didn't cut it, even in San Francisco. Female and black" (*Ist to Die*, 57). Hence in Boxer's eyes Washburn is a victim of both sexism and racism. This is an example of intersectionality, which I presented in my theory part. In intersectionality the modes of oppression do not work independently, but interrelate and form a system of oppression (Collins, 2000, 18). That is why Washburn seems to be discriminated for both her sex and race.

Bernhardt's situation with her male boss is not discussed in the novels and there is no indication whether or not Bernhardt faces sexism from her boss. Bernhardt seems to be quite lonely in her job, because there is no mention of any female colleagues. Boxer's thoughts about Bernhardt describe her motivation in her job:

All you needed to know about Jill was that as a third-year prosecutor, it was she who had tried the La Fade case, when the mayor's old law partner was indicated on a RICO charge for influence peddling. No one, including the D.A. himself, wanted to submarine his or her career by taking on the powerful fundraiser. Jill nailed him, sent him away for twenty years. Got herself promoted to the office next to Big Ben himself. (*Ist to Die*, 265-266)

Boxer also notices how determined Bernhardt is in her profession and wonders what makes her work so hard: “I didn’t know what made Jill tick. Power? An urge to do right? Some manic drive to outperform? Whatever it was, I didn’t think it was far from what had always burned through me” (*Ist to Die*, 269). Also Washburn admires Bernhardt for her determination and dedication in her work, which becomes clear from Boxer’s thoughts: “Claire had met her [Bernhardt] a few times when she testified at trials. They had developed a mutual respect for each other’s rise through their male-dominated departments” (*Ist to Die*, 278). This implies that Bernhardt is motivated in her job and also wants to prove herself in a male dominated institution, like Boxer and Washburn. She is not afraid to take risks, in order to forge ahead in her career, which becomes clear in her courage to take on a high profile case. As it can be seen, there is a systematic examination of sexism through the main characters in the series.

Boxer often feels like an outsider in her workplace because of her sex. As police departments remain largely male-dominated, female police officers often feel lonely. Boxer feels that she is undermined and that her male superiors as well as her male colleagues do not include her in decision making. At the beginning of *Ist to Die* Roth assigns a new partner, Captain Chris Raleigh, to work with Boxer, so that the case would be solved as quickly and discreetly as possible. Boxer thinks that her superiors want to “put a real detective” on the case (*Ist to Die*, 90) and is not at all happy about having a superior officer watching over her shoulder: “I’m getting royally screwed, a voice inside me declared. They wouldn’t do this to a man” (53). She is sure that the only reason for her new partner is the fact that she is a woman. Later, the Honeymoon case is handed over to the FBI by Boxer’s superiors. Boxer is furious and thinks that Roth and Mercer have given the case over to the FBI because they do not trust Boxer’s ability to handle the case: “I felt knifing pain deep in my chest. I rushed into the bathroom, closed the door behind me, pressed my back against the cold, chipped tile. *Goddamn, son-of-a-bitch controlling men. Goddamn Roth and Mercer!* (180)”.

Boxer feels that she is being overridden because she is a woman.⁶ At the same time, she does not want anyone to see her reaction and thus she runs to the bathroom. She does not want to show anger or rage in front of her colleagues, because this way she would be losing control. She does not want to let her colleagues think that she is acting like a woman by being emotional. A similar situation can be found in *3rd Degree*, where Boxer arrives at a murder scene and sees that the victim is her close friend Jill Bernhardt. Boxer feels the tears welling in her eyes but is determined to stay strong:

Then things fell into a daze. I kept reminding myself, *it's a crime scene, Lindsay, a homicide scene*. I wanted to be strong for Claire and Cindy, for all the cops around. I asked, "Did anyone see how she got here?" I looked around. "I want the area canvassed. Someone could have seen a vehicle." Molinari tried to pull me away, but I shook him off. (214)

Boxer, Washburn and Bernhardt's loneliness resemble Kay Scarpetta's situation, as she, too, is a woman outsider in a patriarchal organisation that has its own unspoken and unshared rules. According to Vanacker, the Kay Scapetta novels "recurrently discuss the loneliness and vulnerability of the successful woman in a masculine hierarchy and ease, with which she can be ousted from her professional role" (1997, 76). Boxer's position as the only female detective in the homicide unit resembles also the character of Lilly Rush, who appears in the American police procedural television series *Cold Case*. When the series begins, Rush, too, is the only woman detective in her department, which concentrates on investigating old murder cases. Later on in the series, another female detective joins the department.

Boxer's fight to be acknowledged as a capable police reminds Lillian O'Donnell's Norah Mulcahane novel *No Business Being a Cop* (1979), which deals with the professional status of police women. In the novel half of the female police officers in the department are fired because of

⁶ Boxer is excluded from decision making also in *2nd Chance*, where she finds out that she has not been invited to a task force meeting. She rushes into her boss' office and finds "five boys seated around the table - minus me, the woman." "What is this? - some kind of men's club?" (251). Boxer yells and as it turns out her superiors are about to hand her case over to the FBI. Boxer's comment about the men's club highlights the need for their women's club: because women are often overridden by men and excluded from decision making, women need to band together to show that they are just as capable as men.

a budget cut and when it later becomes possible to hire back some of the ones that were fired, only one woman is reinstated. Apart from making her main character angry about the injustice of female police officers' status, O'Donnell does not take this issue very far, as Reddy argues (1988, 74). According to Dove, Mulcahney is not a women's right activist (1982, 154) and also Reddy asserts that O'Donnell's plots and themes tend to be antifeminist (1988, 74). The theme of sexism in workplaces is more clearly examined and discussed in Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series.

Because she feels being undermined and seen merely as a woman, Boxer often revolts against authority by not abiding by the rules and codes, which are important in police work. When she meets Cindy Thomas for the second time in another crime scene, she needs to gain Thomas's allegiance so that the investigation is not compromised by the early release of information. Boxer offers to give the early scoop to Thomas, if she promises to keep quiet until Boxer authorises her to publish the story. Giving any information to reporters, other than the one given in a news briefing, is strictly forbidden and Boxer knowingly defies this rule by making a deal with Thomas. She does not want to follow the rules set by her male superiors: "Maybe I just wanted to say *screw it* in the face of authority. To Roth, to Mercer. To play things my own way" (129). By doing things her own way, Boxer also feels in control and empowered. On the other hand, not abiding by the rules is also a generic convention with male detectives, who often do things their own way, and this way Boxer's character is following the conventions of detective fiction genre.

Boxer continues to ignore the rules and codes of police work by sharing information about the on-going investigation with Washburn, Bernhardt and Thomas: "we could reassemble whatever clues came out of the official investigation, share what we had, cut through the political cover-your-ass and bureaucracy. Three women, who would get a kick out of showing up the male orthodoxy" (*1st to Die*, 140). Also the other three women want to prove themselves and show that they are just as capable in their jobs as men and can work even in a more effective way together, without men. When Boxer asks Thomas whether she would be interested in working together outside the

investigation she answers: “I have no idea what Sid Glass would say – but fuck him. I’m in” (*Ist to Die*, 141). The four women ignore their male superiors and decide to join forces to solve the murders of several wedding couples. Vanacker argues that opposed to the closed patriarchal worlds are the progressive forces of detectives, journalists and doctors which effectively constitute a mutually supportive feminist network (1997, 77). This kind of supportive feminist network is present in Patterson’s series, as the female main characters are also supporting each other as women and helping each other to advance in their careers. This becomes clear in Boxer and Thomas’ dialogue where they are talking about their Murder Club:

“Women. Climbing the ladder in their careers” ...

“One day, we’re all gonna be running things,” Cindy said. “Homicide Chicks,” she came back with a satisfied grin. “That’s who we are. That’s what we do.” ... We looked around the table. We were bright, attractive, take-no-shit women. We were going to run things – some day. (*Ist to Die*, 279-280)

This kind of co-operation is an example of female networking, which I introduced in my theory part. The networks of women are groups of mutually supporting female friends, who can come from different backgrounds. The theme of female solidarity and networking is very important in feminist detective fiction, as it prevents the female detective from being a complete and separate unit (Vanacker, 1997, 73). I will discuss the theme of this binding network of women in more detail later in my study.

As a female police detective, Boxer is sometimes an object to sexist remarks in her workplace. Her partner is Warren Jacobi, who is thirteen years older than Boxer and has been on the force longer. Although Boxer and Jacobi’s teamwork runs smoothly, Jacobi sometimes tends to make sexist remarks about Boxer, especially at the beginning of the series. In *Ist to Die* Boxer and Jacobi investigate gruesome murders of brides and grooms, who are murdered on their honeymoon. When Boxer sees the crime scene of the first bride and groom murder, she is shocked by the brutal violence of the killings. Boxer is also still emotional from her visit at the doctor, where she heard

that she is suffering from a serious blood disease, and she leaves the crime scene with tears falling down her face. Jacobi and crime scene investigator Charlie Clapper are left on the scene:

“What the hell is wrong with Boxer?” Charlie Clapper asked.
 “You know women”, I heard Jacobi reply. “They always cry at weddings.” (31)

Jacobi’s comment implies that it is typical for women to cry at weddings, because they are always so emotional and easily moved by a beautiful ceremony. Hence, it is typical for Boxer to cry at a crime scene, because she is a woman and thus she feels sad for the victims. According to Vanacker, “the Western male epistemological ideal is that of unemotional, objective, distanced knowledge” (1997, 80). Traditionally the male detective has distanced himself from the crime victims and stayed objective, not being affected by the crimes or victims he investigates. However, in feminist detective fiction some authors like Sara Paretsky and Patricia Cornwell, have rejected the concept of a detective who can remain objective and unaffected by her research (Vanacker, 81). Thus women detectives feel compassion and are affected by the victims and this is true also with Boxer, as well as the other members of the Murder Club. As Boxer asserts: “we shared a heartfelt empathy for the victims” (*1st to Die*, 140). The compassion and empathy for the victims function also as motives for their policing.

After solving the Honeymoon murders Boxer is promoted to Lieutenant and hence reaches her goal to become the head of the homicide department. The other detectives have to adjust to the fact that the department is now run by a woman. Even though Boxer has earned her status with her merits as an excellent detective, she is still the object of sexist remarks and jokes. In *3rd Degree*, Boxer has been stood up on a date and in the next morning Jacobi and another detective ask her how her date went:

They were standing there, chewing their grin like two oversized teenagers.

“It didn’t,” I said. “Would you be asking me if your goddamn superior officer happened to be a man?”

“Damn right, I’d be askin’,” Cappy said.

“And might I add, for my goddamn superior officer” – the big detective threw his bald head back – “you’re looking mighty fine here in those tights. That Fratelli brother, he must be quite a fool.”

“Noted.” I smiled. It had taken me a long time to feel in charge of these guys. Both of them had double my time on the force. I knew they’d had to make peace with Homicide being run by a woman for the first time. (2003, 37)

Cappy teases Boxer for her unsuccessful date and even makes a remark about her clothes.⁷ However, Boxer seems to accept the fact that older male detectives joke about her private life and appearance and probably thinks that they do not mean any harm by it. Elizabeth A. Stanko defines sexual harassment as being “men’s behaviour that women define as annoying and/or threatening” (1997, 50). This behaviour can range from leering, sexual teasing, comments or questions through unwanted touching, unwanted pressure for sexual favours or dates to sexual assault (Stanko, 56). Stanko claims that sexual harassment is merely women’s problem, but men can, of course, be victims of sexual harassment as well. In Boxer’s case the jokes and remarks resemble more friendly banter than harassment.

Also the crime scene investigator Charlie Clapper makes a sexist comment to Boxer:

I hung up with Cindy, and Charlie Clapper was knocking on my door.

“Nice bust, Boxer.”

“That’s a little sexist, even from you,” I said with a smile. (*3rd Degree*, 61)

Clapper is referring to Boxer finding a missing baby earlier in the novel. His choice of the word ‘bust’ could be interpreted that he is referring to Boxer’s breasts and Boxer notes that his statement is sexist. Boxer’s smile indicates that she understands Clapper’s teasing as a joke and does not take it too seriously. Even though Boxer does not seem to mind the sexist remarks and jokes in her

⁷ Another example of sexist remarks can be found in *2nd Chance*, where Boxer and Jacobi are investigating a crime scene and Boxer recognises a bullet casing belonging to an M sixteen. Jacobi is surprised by Boxer’s expertise: “Little lady’s been brushing up during her time off?” Boxer replies by saying: “*Lieutenant Little Lady* to you,” underlining that she is now his boss (19). Jacobi’s comments are belittling and reflect his patronising attitude toward Boxer.

workplace, they are, however, marking her as being a woman, in other words, the outsider in the department. There are no jokes between the men in the department, but that might be because the male detectives are minor characters who remain in the background. It seems that through the sexist remarks Patterson is highlighting Boxer's position as the only woman in a large patriarchal organisation and pointing out how the men in Boxer's department have had difficulties accepting a woman as their superior.

Boxer faces sexism also outside the department. When she goes to interview the employees of a murdered businessman with Jacobi, the men automatically assume that Jacobi is the lieutenant:

The door to the conference room opened and two men stepped in. One had salt-and-pepper hair and ruddy complexion, a well-cut suit. Lawyer. The other, heavy and balding, with an open plaid shirt. Tech.

"Chuck Zinn," the suit introduced himself, offering a card to Jacobi. "I'm X/L's CLO. You're Lieutenant Boxer?"

"I'm Lieutenant Boxer." I stared at the card and sniffed. (*3rd Degree*, 47-48)

Just because Boxer is a woman, the men automatically assume that she cannot be the Lieutenant.

This shows how rare women still are in leading positions of the police organisation.

After Boxer is shot in *2nd Chance* by the antagonist Rusty Coombs, Jacobi becomes more protective with her, like "a protective uncle" (*3rd Degree*, 15). In *3rd Degree* Boxer wants to check a knapsack which she thinks might be bomb, but Jacobi takes her by the arm and tries to stop her:

"No way LT." Jacobi reached for my arm. "You don't get to do this, Lindsay."

I pulled away from him. "Get everyone out of here, Warren."

"I may not outrank you LT," Jacobi said more impassioned this time, "but I've got fourteen more years on the force. I'm telling you, don't go near that bag." (19)

Jacobi does not want Boxer to hurt herself and tries to protect her from harm. His concern over Boxer resembles the Little Sister Syndrome, where male police detectives feel both protective and resentful towards a female police officer (Dove, 1982, 156). However, in this incident Jacobi's

behaviour is positive as he is worried for Boxer's safety. Hence Jacobi's behaviour toward Boxer has changed and according to Boxer, he "had even cut down on his sexist jokes" (*3rd Degree*, 15). This might be because of Boxer's own attitude, as she does not take the jokes about her too seriously and also takes part in the joking.

3.2 The degradation of women

As I mentioned earlier, sexism can take different forms and one of the extreme examples is misogyny. In this subchapter I will examine the misogynist characteristics of the novels, which are most clearly present in *1st to Die*, where Boxer is investigating the murders of several brides and grooms. Patterson discusses the issue of hatred of women and their degradation through the character of Nicholas Jenks, who is the antagonist of *1st to Die*. Jenks is a popular author of crime novels and a sadist, who enjoys humiliating the women he is involved with. Jenks beats his wife and the violence often promotes his sexual desire. His first wife Joanna Wade describes Jenks to Boxer as follows:

"I know he's capable of completely debasing another human being...he's what they call a sexual sadist. His father used to beat his mother in their bedroom closet as an aphrodisiac. He preys on weakness. Yes, the famous Nicholas Jenks humiliated me... But let me tell you the worst thing, the very worst. He left me Inspector. I didn't leave him." (303-304)

Even though Jenks abused his first wife, she could not leave him. She admits to Boxer that it was Jenks who left her, not the other way around. This implies that Jenks broke Joanna's will by the years of humiliation and sexual abuse. In real life this kind of abuse does take place and according to Radford and Stanko, "sexual violence is used by men to a way of securing and maintaining the relations of male dominance and female subordination, which are central to the patriarchal social order" (1997, 65). By discussing misogyny, Patterson raises the question of sexual abuse and

female subordination under male dominance. There is no mention that Joanna would have formed a new relationship after the divorce, even though she is an attractive woman. Instead, she has become a martial arts instructor, which suggests that she never wants to be weak or vulnerable again.

Joanna believes that Jenks' second marriage is repeating the same pattern. She says that she sees Jenks' new wife Chessy in different events and tells Boxer that in Chessy's face "I see fear. I know how it is. When she looks in the mirror, she no longer recognises the person she once was" (304). Jenks continues to abuse his wives the same way his father had abused his mother by beating her up in a dark closet. Jenks feels empowered by beating and humiliating women: "That's what he liked, her fear of him, even though she never showed it in public" (297). After Boxer has been to question Jenks at his house, he loses his temper and takes it out on his wife Chessy. He hits her and then drags her to the bedroom closet, where he sexually violates her:

"Say it," he gasped. "You know how to make it stop. Say it."

"Ruff..." she finally murmured in a tiny whisper.

Now she was loving it, as she always did. It wasn't bad – it was good. They all ended up wanting and loving it. He always picked them so well. (298)

Jenks wants to make Chessy totally submissive to his commands. In the dark closet Chessy remains faceless, like an object and not a person. Jenks sees her as an animal by making her bark like dog. He justifies his actions by telling himself that Chessy, like all of his other women, likes the way he treats her. It is clear from Jenks' thoughts that he picks vulnerable women with low self-esteem, who are easy targets to his sadistic behaviour and who are not brave enough to stand up for themselves and leave him.

This kind of sexual sadism is a recurrent theme in the "Women's Murder Club" series as well as the Alex Cross series. The depiction of detailed violence against women by men is popular entertainment in crime fiction, but it also raises the question of the politics of representation: why do we enjoy reading about sexual abuse of women by men? The question of the politics of

representation extends to the narrative structure of stories as well. In “Women’s Murder Club” series the stories are told from Boxer’s perspective most of the time (and sometimes from other main characters’ perspective), but there is also the killer’s point of view. Thus the story is narrated from different perspectives and the reader sees the crimes taking place through the killer’s eyes and the murders are described in detail. However, this way the reader also receives more information than the detectives of the story.

Jenks also uses Chessy as a tool to commit the murders of the brides and grooms, which he himself has planned. Jenks’ first novel was about the murders of wedding couples and hence he is fulfilling his fantasy by executing the murders in real life. Jenks’ childhood trauma of his father beating his mother and abusing her sexually, makes Jenks repeat the same hatred to all women. The murders of the wedding couples actually seek out women, because although both the bride and the groom are murdered, it is always the bride that is sexually violated after death.

All the leads point to Jenks and nobody suspects Chessy, because while committing the murders she has been dressed in Jenks’ clothes and appearing as a man. The fact that Jenks manipulates his wife to commit the crimes underlines female subordination under male dominance. Finally Chessy turns against Jenks and double-crosses him. First she murders Joanna and then she tries to kill Jenks. She points a gun to Jenks’ face and makes him swallow the wedding rings Jenks made her take from the victims:

“Swallow them. Each one is someone you’ve destroyed. Someone whose beauty you’ve killed. They were innocent. Like *me*. Little girls on our wedding days. You killed us all, Nick – me, Kathy, Joanna...You love games, so play the game. Play *my* game this time...That was Melanie, Nicky. You would have liked her. Athletic...a skier...a diver. You’re type, huh? She fought me to the very end. But you don’t like us to fight, do you? You like to be in total control.” (448)

Chessy feels that Jenks has killed her like he has killed all the other women they murdered. He has killed her innocence and beauty, the woman she once was. Jenks has taken her self-respect by

humiliating her over and over again. Chessy wants to free herself from Jenks' control by killing him. However, when Chessy shoots him, she misses and at the same time Boxer fires at her. Chessy dies and hence justice is done, by Chessy's death and Jenks' capture and imprisonment.

There is another example of this kind of manipulation in *3rd Degree*, where the antagonist Stephen Hardaway, or Mal as he calls himself, manipulates Michelle Fontieul to commit murders for a terrorist organisation by bullying and intimidating her. Fontieul becomes involved with the terrorist organisation through Hardaway and ends up helping them because she is in love with Hardaway and wants to prove herself to him. First Fontieul plants a bomb into the house of the family, where she has been working as an au pair. The father of the family is a famous businessman and he is targeted because the terrorist attacks are meant to show the injustice of the capitalist society, where the gap between the rich and the poor keeps widening. Fontieul does not take part in the other attacks, but she can still be considered an accomplice, because she knows where the attacks are going to take place and does not stop them. Fontieul loses herself the same way Joanna Wade and Chessy Jenks have done. As she looks in the mirror she feels that her old self "was gone forever. A new face began to emerge in the mirror. She said goodbye to the au pair she had been for the past five months. Cut away the past" (*3rd Degree*, 42).

Later on when the murderous terrorist attacks continue and Jill Bernhardt is murdered, Fontieul wants them to stop the killings. Fontieul suffers from asthma and when Hardaway questions her loyalty and threatens her, she feels shortness of breath. However, Hardaway is holding her inhalator:

Her breathing was starting to get heavy now, ragged. And Mal was making it worse, scaring her like this. She didn't know what he was capable of.

"You can trust me, Mal. You know that," she whispered...She grabbed the puffer out of Mal's hand and depressed it twice, shooting the soothing spray into her lungs.

"You know the cool thing about ricin?" Mal smiled. "It can get into your bloodstream in hundred ways." He depressed his index finger twice, as though he was triggering an imaginary inhaler. He smiled. "Chht, chht." He had a glint in his eye she hadn't seen before.

“Whoa, now that would really get that chest of yours into a state, wouldn’t it, hon? Chht, chht.” (224)

By holding her inhalator Hardaway wants to show Fontieul that he is the one in control. He also makes a clear threat to Fontieul’s life, inferring that he might put ricin into her inhalator, if she tries to escape. Like Jenks, Hardaway enjoys the empowerment he feels when oppressing women. Fontieul feels guilty for being part of killing several innocent people and finally tips Thomas about the last terrorist attack and gives her the address where the terrorists are staying. Thomas delivers the address to Boxer and the police raid the house. Hardaway detonates a bomb and both he and Fontieul die in the explosion, thus she receives her punishment by poetic justice. The fact that Fontieul is partly forced to take part in the attacks makes her a problematic criminal. This ambiguity is seen through Thomas, who feels sympathy for her. When the bomb explodes she hopes that Fontieul has survived and Boxer reminds her of the fact, that Fontieul was still responsible for the killings and she was involved in the murder of Bernhardt:

“Michelle,” Cindy muttered. “Come on, Michelle.” ...
 “Maybe she wasn’t in there.” Cindy shook her head, still staring at the devastated house.
 I put my arm around her. “They killed Jill, Cindy.” (299)

Another example of sexist behaviour can be found in the character of Dennis Agnew, who appears in *4th of July*. He is an arrogant former porn star, who owns a porn shop. Agnew tries to make a pass at Boxer in a restaurant, but Boxer turns him down. Agnew automatically assumes that Boxer is a lesbian and as it turns out that she is not, Agnew keeps pressing her to have dinner with him. Finally Boxer is forced to show him her badge to make him leave. Agnew’s sexist behaviour is even more eminent later, when he is still angry about Boxer’s rejection and tries to drive Boxer’s car off the road and Boxer follows him to his porn shop to confront him. She feels sick when she sees that his office is full of pictures of female porn stars:

It was infuriating. Not just that Agnew was a creep with a fast car who didn't give a shit, but his mocking attitude really fried me.

"See these girls?" he said, hooking a thumb towards his "wall of fame." "You know why they do these flicks? Their self-esteem is so low they think that debasing themselves with men, they'll actually feel more powerful. Isn't that ridiculous? And look at you. Debasing yourself by coming here. Does it make you feel *powerful*?" (184)

Agnew's profession in itself is a sexist one, because in the porn industry women are objectified and become mere objects of male desire. Agnew admits that women who do pornographic films have low self-esteem and he takes advantage of that. He also thinks that women in the porn industry debase themselves to feel powerful, but they only humiliate themselves more and can never be as powerful as men.

As can be seen, there are several male characters in the novels whose behaviour is somehow sexist towards women. The sexism which the main characters face in their workplaces by their male superiors and colleagues reflects the situation in real life where women often become victims of sexist attitudes, especially in male dominated professions. The characters of Jenks, Hardaway and Agnew present the more extreme form of sexism, where the hatred of women is shown through verbal and physical abuse. In Jenks' case the behaviour is explained by the childhood trauma of an abusive father, while in the character of Agnew Patterson discusses the larger problem of the porn industry in relation to women. According to Jenkins, pornography often depicts the subordination of women and thus extols aggressive male sexuality, and sexually explicit pictures that focus solely on female breasts or genitals presents the woman as a "dehumanized tool for sexual pleasure" (1994, 148). Hence through Dennis Agnew's character Patterson underlines the social problem present in the ever growing porn industry, which distorts the status of women into mere sex objects. Hardaway's character is described as "truly a killer, probably a psychopath" by Charles Danko, the leader of the terrorist organisation, and he feels that Hardaway even scares him sometimes (3rd Degree, 46). This way Hardaway is seen as an individual psychopath and his behaviour is not motivated by social problems or traumas.

Because Patterson discusses the theme of sexism in his novels, they can be considered feminist, for sexism is one typical issue in feminist detective fiction. With his four female main characters in male dominated professions he deals with the problem of sexism in workplaces. He also addresses other aspects of sexism through the crimes and criminals in his novels, which show both misogyny and degradation of women. With these issues Patterson highlights the problem of sexism and male domination women face in patriarchal social order. However, Patterson's depiction of sexual abuse against woman by men is slightly problematic when it comes to the politics of entertainment. This problem is not limited merely to Patterson's work, but concerns detective fiction in general. Why is male sexual violence against women popular entertainment and why do we enjoy reading about it? When does the detailed description of male violence against women cross the line of what is accepted and what is not? In my next chapter I will move on to discuss male violence against women in further detail and I will also examine women using violence.

4. Women and violence

The question of women and violence is a problematic one. In Western cultures men and women are still often expected to act according to traditional gender roles. Those gender roles tell us what to wear, how to speak, what to do for a living and they also set norms to our behaviour, sexuality and aggression. Kirsti Lagerspetz has studied female aggression and she argues that while violence or violent behaviour is more easily accepted with men and has even been seen as a “natural” part of masculinity, violent women are often seen as unnatural (1998). Women have traditionally been associated with giving life, motherhood and nurture, and thus aggressive women transgress the boundaries of their gender roles and violate the idea of femaleness.

However, since the beginning of the 1990s there has been a growing fascination with women and violence in popular culture. Tough women have appeared on Hollywood’s screens as well as on television, videogames and comic books. The traditional male action hero has had a control over his own body, which has historically been denied to women, the weaker and “softer” sex (Heinecken, 2003, 1). Now the tough female heroines escape the traditional gender roles by being muscular, strong and fearless. In addition to fiction and popular media, tough women are also appearing in real life; in the gym women strive for muscles with weight lifting and take up boxing, which have typically been male sports (Innes, 2004, 3). I outlined the developments and aims of the feminist movement in my theory part and discussed how women fought for equality both in public and in private spheres. According to Innes, feminism questioned the notion that women are “naturally” not aggressive, incapable of handling the same challenges as men and taught women to question the gender status quo (2004, 5). Hence feminist movement “created a new vision of womanhood, one tougher than before” (Innes, 6).

In addition to female action heroes, there has been an increase in the number of films of women killers in Hollywood. Holmlund argues that many films still promote female violence as self-

defence or revenge for rape or abuse and represent women as killing to protect family members, in the line of duty, as well as greedy, seductive vamps who murder for personal gain (1994, 127-128). However, in real life female serial killers do exist although serial murder is typically presented as a male phenomenon (Skrapec, 1994, 241). According to Skrapec, the notion of women as a serial killers “so violates the idea of femaleness, tied to her traditional nurturing role, that a woman is denied her identity as a multiple murderer” (1994, 243).

The issue of women and their relationship to violence is also present in detective fiction. There have been violent women in the genre in the past: Christie has several female killers in her stories and in the hard-boiled genre there is the so called ‘femme fatale’, a dangerous woman who charms the male protagonist and leads him to deadly situations. The authors of feminist detective fiction, on the other hand, have created female detectives who sometimes resort to violence.

The problematic relationship between women and violence can also be found in Patterson’s “Women’s Murder Club” series and hence this topic is very relevant to my study. The series discusses women both as victims of male violence and as using violence. In this chapter I intend to take a deeper look at women’s relationship to violence and I will start by examining women as victims of violence and then move on to discuss women and their use of violence in the novels. While discussing women using violence, I intend to study both the main character as sometimes using violence in her profession and women as murdering criminals. I will examine all of the four novels (*1st to Die*, *3rd Degree*, *4th of July* and *7th Heaven*) because the theme of women and violence is present in all of them. Domestic abuse is a central theme in *3rd Degree* and *4th of July* concentrates on the problem of women and the use of violence in general, while *1st to Die* discusses both women as victims of violence and violent women through the crimes in the novel. Male violence against women is present also in *7th Heaven*, where one of the main characters becomes a victim of it.

4.1 Women as victims of violence

As I mentioned earlier, the authors of feminist detective fiction introduced the theme of violence against women to the genre and it is a very typical theme in feminist detective fiction. It is also present in Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series, where it is shown through the main characters, who face male violence, as well as through the crimes in the novels. In addition to Lindsay Boxer herself, also the other characters in the series become victims of violence by men. This violence can be either physical or emotional. By emotional violence or emotional abuse I mean psychologically harmful behaviour towards another person, like controlling through scare tactics, intimidation or oppression.

Male violence against women can take different forms and an example of a female victim is one of the main characters, Jill Bernhardt. Bernhardt works as an assistant district attorney and is one of the members of the "Women's Murder Club". Bernhardt is married to Steve, who is an ambitious investment banker who abuses her both physically and mentally. In *3rd Degree* Boxer notices the bruises on her:

"Jill", I gasped, "what the hell is *that*?" Peeking out through the strap of her exercise bra were a couple of small, dark bruises, like finger marks. She tossed her sweatshirt over her shoulder, seemingly caught off guard. "Mashed myself getting out of the shower", she said. "You should get a load of how it looks." She winked. I nodded, but something about the bruise didn't sit well with me. (5)

Boxer suspects that there is something wrong with her friend, but she does not press Bernhardt to tell her about the situation. It turns out that Bernhardt's husband has been abusing her for several years, but she has not told anyone. She works late in the office, because she is afraid to go home. Bernhardt feels ashamed of her situation, because she is normally the one in court trying men who beat their wives. This becomes clear in her thoughts:

Jill Meyer Bernhardt. Superlawyer. Everybody's alpha dog. She was afraid to go home. Slowly she massaged the bruise on her backbone. The newest bruise. How could this be happening? She was used to representing women who felt like this, not hiding a secret in the dark herself. (64)

Later on she decides to tell Boxer, who then shares her concern for Bernhardt with their two other friends, Washburn and Thomas. Bernhardt tells them how the violence began:

“It was always something. What I would wear, something I would buy to the house that didn't fit his style. Steve's very big on telling me I'm stupid...At first he would just squeeze me, like *here*, in the shoulders. Always pretend that it was inadvertent. Once or twice he threw things when he had a fit”. (107-108)

According to Kelly and Radford, men use violence and the threat of violence to control women, either to enforce their will or punish women for perceived transgressions (2002, 29). They continue by saying that “control over and limitation of women's daily lives is a central feature of ‘degrading and belittling talk’” (2002, 29). These features match Bernhardt's case, as her husband clearly wants to control her: the clothes she wears, the things she buys for their house or to herself. Steve also oppresses Bernhardt by telling her she is dumb. This kind of emotional abuse is meant to crush Bernhardt's self-esteem and make her feel weak. The three women urge Bernhardt to leave her husband and move in with one of them, but she insists that she can handle the situation. Boxer makes Bernhardt promise that the next time her husband even threatens her, she walks out the door.

Even though Bernhardt's husband has been abusing her for several years, Bernhardt is still willing to try to make their marriage work. One night she comes home early and prepares one of Steve's favourite meals. But when Steve comes home and sees her cooking, he announces that he is going out for a business dinner and does not seem to be at all sorry about it:

There was a part of him that seemed almost to be gloating, amused that he'd ruined the evening...He took a bite out of the peach and laughed. “You break one night before eight and get it in your head to play Alice on *The Brady Bunch* and I'm the one blowing the script?”

“It’s not a script Steve.”

“You wanna talk” – he sucked out another bite of the peach – “go ahead. In case you’ve forgotten, it’s still my check that pays for those Manolo Blahniks. The market the way it is these days, the only thing scarcer than the Ice Queen with an urge to have sex is a promising deal. Given the odds, I’ll throw in with the deal.”

“That was really cruel.” Jill glared at him. She was determined to hold herself together. “I was trying to do something nice.” (166)

Steve clearly enjoys insulting Jill; he calls her Ice Queen and he says that the only reason Jill is cooking is because she wants to have sex. By calling her Ice Queen, he refers to Jill as being sexually frigid, making her asexual. He also reminds Jill that he is the man in the house, who pays the bills, even though Jill also works and earns her share of their money. Steve makes her feel ridiculous for even trying to work for their marriage. This emotional abuse finally makes Jill feel that she has had enough:

“You belittle me. You criticize. You make me feel like crap. You want to walk out that door, go...get out of my life. Everyone thinks I’m crazy for wanting to keep this together anyway.”

“*Everyone...*” She saw the venom in his eyes, the switch suddenly tripped. He grabbed her by the arm and squeezed hard, forcing Jill down on the floor. “You let those bitches run your life. *I* run your life. *Me*, Jill...” (167)

When Jill talks back to Steve and tells him to get out of her life, Steve becomes physically violent. By forcing Jill down on the floor Steve wants to subdue her, but this time Jill will not submit herself to Steve’s bullying any longer. Even though he is physically hurting her by twisting her arm, she tells him their relationship is over:

“You’re gone, Steve. It’s over.”

“It’s over when I say it’s over,” he said hovering close to her face. “When I make your life so miserable, you beg me to leave. And I will Jill. Until then, this is the way it is. It’s not over, honeybuns... Things are just starting to warm up.”

“Get out,” she said, and pulled away from him. He cocked his fist, but she didn’t even flinch. Not this time. Not even a blink. Steve moved fast, as though he was going to strike, and Jill just held her ground.

“Get out, Steve,” she seethed again. (167)

After years of abuse, Bernhardt finally has the courage to stand up for herself. With the support of her three best friends, Jill will no longer accept the role of the victim, but has the courage to hold her ground against her abusive husband. This is an example of the feminist solidarity of a supportive group of friends, which I introduced in my theory. As Vanacker asserts, these kinds of personal ties between a group of both supportive and demanding friends “influence the actions of the woman detective” (1997, 73).

According to Tenkanen, it is not the mere depiction of violence against women that makes a detective novel a feminist one, but the way the violence is contemplated and more importantly, how women survive from the violence they face (1997, 101). After Steve leaves, Jill calls the locksmith and has all the locks changed. When Boxer calls her, Bernhardt tells her that she has kicked Steve out:

“You locked him out? Wow! So where is he now?”

Jill coughed out a laugh. “I don’t have any idea. He went out about seven and when he came back, about eleven-thirty, I heard him pounding on the door outside. It would have been worth the past ten years of bullshit just to see the expression on his face when his key didn’t fit.” (170)

By locking Steve out and not letting him in even when he pounds the door, Jill shows him that she is not afraid anymore and will not let Steve back into her life. Thus she survives from the violence she has suffered for several years and shows him that she is strong enough to stand on her own. Steve’s actions go unpunished, because Jill does not want to press charges against him. However, she does throw him out of their house, which ends the years of abuse.

Another example of women as victims of male violence in Patterson’s series is Yuki Castellano, who is introduced to the series in *4th of July*, where she represents Boxer in court. She later becomes the district attorney and also a member of “Women’s Murder Club”. In *7th Heaven*, Castellano goes on a date with Jason Twilly, a reporter who is writing a book about a boy, whose murder Castellano is handling in court. After the date she invites Twilly to her apartment for coffee. While they are

sitting on a couch, Twilly kisses Castellano. At first she lets him kiss her, but when Twilly starts groping her, she pulls away. Twilly tries to kiss her again:

Jason pulled Yuki to him and kissed her again, and when she resisted, when she said, "No, I can't," he held her tighter, until Yuki jumped up and pushed him away, putting the coffee table between them again. Twilly's face darkened. He was angry, and she understood: he'd read her libido, but not how much he was scaring her.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I'm just not-"

"Don't be a sorry mouse, be a happy Jappy," Twilly said interrupting her. His lopsided smile was forced, and he stood, followed her into the middle of the room, reached for her again as she backed away. *Happy Jappy? What was wrong with him?* Yuki walked across the pale green carpet to the door, opened it and said, "Good night, Jason." But Jason Twilly didn't move.

"What the *hell* is wrong with you?" he shouted. "You *flirt* with me, invite me back to your *place*, now-hey! Listen to me," he said advancing on Yuki, gripping her chin hard with his thumb and forefinger, wrenching her face toward him. "I said *no*," Yuki said, pulling out of his grip. "Now get *out* or I'm calling the *police*." (170-171)

Twilly wants to have sex with Castellano, but when she is not willing, he comes close to attacking and assaulting her sexually. Twilly thinks that she has led him on and is teasing him, so he becomes angry and physically hurts her by grabbing her chin and wrenching it towards him. He also calls her "happy Jappy" referring to her ethnic background. Thus not only is he abusing her physically, he is also abusing her verbally by racist remarks. This scene could also be seen as representing a conflict between a white, Western man and an "Oriental" woman: Twilly as a Western man wants Castellano as a submissive Oriental woman to satisfy his needs.

With this scene Patterson also discusses the difficult topic of date rape and a woman's right to say no. Twilly insists that by flirting with him and inviting him to her apartment Castellano indicated that she wants to have sex and he becomes violent when Castellano refuses. By making Twilly leave Patterson underlines that a woman has the right to refuse and say no to having sex at any point and sexual assault is always a violent crime.

Later on Twilly is stalking Castellano and she decides to tell Boxer about it. Boxer goes to Twilly's house to confront him about his behaviour:

I showed Twilly my badge, and he fastened his eyes on the V of my tank top, skimmed the cut of my jeans, then took a slow return trip back to my face ... “Working undercover, Sergeant?” Twilly leered. He’d scared Yuki with his act, but it enraged *me*. (255)

Twilly clearly gazes at Boxer from head to toe so that she sees it. Later on Twilly drugs Castellano in order to kill her and make it look like suicide, but Boxer saves her and arrests him. Hence Twilly’s behaviour is punished as he is imprisoned.

Sometimes also the main character Lindsay Boxer herself becomes the victim of violence. Being a homicide detective she faces violence in her job. The violence against her is often related to arrests or the chase of the criminals, but in *4th of July*, someone tries to kill her. Boxer is on restricted duty because she shot two teenagers and their father sued her for police misconduct and excessive use of force. Boxer goes to stay at her sister’s house in Half Moon Bay, in order to escape the publicity around her case. While she is in Half Moon Bay, she starts investigating some murders, which have taken place there and by doing that is attacked herself. First Dennis Agnew, whose dinner invitation Boxer had turned down earlier, tries to drive her off the road. This resembles Twilly’s behaviour towards Castellano: like Twilly, Agnew is rejected and ends up trying to hurt Boxer for the rejection.

Later on someone tries to shoot her through her bedroom window, but luckily Boxer was in another room searching information about the murders from her laptop. She hears the shots fired and reaches for her gun:

Gun! Gun! Where the hell was my gun?...Then I knew. It was in my handbag in the living room, and the closest phone was there too. How could I be so vulnerable? Was I going to die in this room? My heart pounded so hard it hurt...With a length of chair leg in my hand, I crouched with my back to the wall. It was just pathetic. Forget the dog under my bed, my only line of defence was a chair leg. If anyone came through the door aiming to kill me, I was dead. (306-308)

Boxer feels helpless and scared. Thus she is not a super cop, but admits to feeling vulnerable. The murderer did not come into the house and Boxer sneaked out of the room into the living room, found her gun and phoned for help. In this incident Boxer is attacked because she is investigating the murders, not because she is a woman. Her phoning for help represents the feminist detective hero in that although she is brave and tough, she recognises the dangers, feels afraid and is not ashamed to ask for help. As Cranny-Francis asserts, when the female detective cannot outmatch her opponent by physical strength, she must sometimes defend herself by other means, like running away (1990, 168).

In *Ist to Die*, the murderer comes into Boxer's home with the intention of killing her. Nicholas Jenks was a suspect in a case, where brides and grooms were murdered. However, the evidence pointed towards Jenks' wife, Chessy, and thus Jenks' charges were dropped. A month after the case was closed Nicholas Jenks comes to Boxer's house and announces that she has failed. Jenks tells her that he and Chessy had planned the murders together and that Chessy had carried out the plan as a part of a twisted game. After his revelation, Jenks puts on plastic gloves and says he is going to kill Boxer as well, and that it would be another perfect murder:

As I turned to run, Jenks took out a knife. "I want to feel this going inside you, Lindsay. Deep. The coup de grâce."

"Help!" I screamed, but then he hit me hard. I was shocked at how fast he moved and how powerful he was. I slammed into a living room wall and almost went out...Jenks picked me up and threw me into my bedroom...I crawled hand over hand toward my bed, the side facing a window on the bay. It was hard to breathe. Jenks came after me.

"Stop, Jenks!" I yelled at the top of my voice. "Stop right there, Jenks!" But he didn't stop. Why should he? He slashed back and forth with the knife. Christ, he was enjoying this. He was laughing. (461-462)

Jenks refers to his action as the *coup de grâce*, which means a death blow meant to end the suffering of a wounded creature. This mercy killing does not, however, go as Jenks planned, because Boxer fights back. She reaches a gun from under her bed and shoots Jenks: "I fired three

times. Jenks screamed, his gray eyes bulged in disbelief, the he collapsed dead on top of me. ‘Burn in hell,’ I whispered” (462). Thus Boxer has to kill Jenks in order to live.

Paula Arvas argues that the hard-boiled feminist detective heroes like V.I. Warshawski and Kinsey Millhone are threatened with violence, crashed into with cars and their home is invaded in almost every novel (1997, 276). She continues by saying that although these detectives face violence everyday, they do not use violence themselves, unless they are threatened (Arvas, 276-277). Hence Boxer resembles the hard-boiled feminist detectives because also she is threatened with violence, nearly driven off the road and her home is attacked as well. In addition to being shot through her bedroom window, in 7th *Heaven* the murderers set fire to her apartment. Boxer also resorts to violence only when she has no other choice, which brings me to my next subchapter, where I examine women who use violence.

4.2 Women using violence

In detective fiction the hero is sometimes in physical danger. The male hero, who fights his way out of the dangerous situation is often seen as acting according the expectations set by his gender role, but if a woman uses her fists or a few kicks to get out of a dangerous situation, she is seen as acting against her gender role. As Reddy argues: “whereas the male detective proves his masculinity through bloodying his opponents and emerging triumphant from the contest, a woman doing the same thing calls her femininity into question” (1988, 113). Feminist authors of detective fiction have created female detectives who break out of their gender role expectations by using physical violence. Examples of these detectives are Sara Paretsky’s V.I. Warshawski and Sue Grafton’s Kinsey Millhone, who both are hard-boiled private investigators. The detailed description of violence was originally introduced to detective fiction in the United States with the hard-boiled detective authors. The first hard-boiled writers were Hammet, Chandler and Spillane, and in their

texts the tough male detectives lived and worked in a hard and violent world. In police procedurals the detectives are supposed to maintain law and order and cannot, then, be as violent as, for example, in hard-boiled detective fiction.

In her job as a homicide detective, Boxer deals with violence everyday. She carries a gun because it comes with the job. Boxer is affected and sometimes even sickened by the violent crimes she encounters:

There are crimes that are brutal and inexcusable. Sometimes they make me sick, but their motives are open. Now and then, I even understand. Then there are the hidden crimes. The ones you are never meant to see. The kind of cruelty that barely breaks the skin but crushes what's inside, the little voice that is human in all of us. These are the ones that really make me wonder about what I do for a living. (*3rd Degree*, 96)

Although she sometimes wonders about her job and the endless violence, she still gets up every morning and goes to work, because she wants to catch the murderers. She often feels like she owes it to the victims. Many times in feminist detective fiction, the main function of the women detectives is not just to solve the crimes and punish criminals, but to heal the ones who have been innocently involved in crimes. This derives from the recognition that both the system of justice and the concept of justice administered through the patriarchal institutions are deeply flawed and rarely recuperative for those caught up in criminal matters without their own account (Bird and Walker, 1993, 7).

Boxer herself does not use violence often. She only resorts to it when she does not have any other choice and that usually means that her life is in danger. This does not, however, mean that she does not want to use violence. When questioning the suspects, Boxer often becomes angry and irritated when they act innocent, even though she knows they have to be guilty. Hence she often feels the urge to punch them, but always remains calm and acts professionally. An example of this is in *Ist to Die*, where Boxer goes to Nicholas Jenks's house to question him about the bride and groom murders. Jenks is a famous author of crime fiction and many of his books have been turned

into films; his novels include very brutal descriptions of murders, which reflects his murderous character. Boxer is sure he is guilty, but Jenks acts cool and clever, like a true high profile celebrity: “I wanted to lunge across the table and rip Nicholas Jenks’s impressionable face off. I was certain he was responsible of six vicious murders. Now he was mocking us, and the victims. Goddamn him” (291). Although Boxer restrains herself from hitting Jenks and acts like a professional police detective, the violence is there and the reader sees it. Another example of Boxer’s violence is seen in *3rd Degree*, where she goes to question another suspect, Professor Roger Lemouz. Boxer suspects that he might be involved in the terrorist attacks taking place in San Francisco. Lemouz tells Boxer that he understands the terrorists’ motives and Boxer points out that they are murdering people: “there was a part of me that would like to have grabbed Lemouz by the labels and shaken him...I stood up, feeling tired and soiled. I walked out on the Lance Hart Professor of Romance Languages before I blew him up” (102-103).

Boxer’s violence becomes visible through verbal aggression. When Bernhardt tells her that Steve has been mistreating her, Boxer feels outraged. She goes to Steve’s office to confront him:

“Lindsay,” he said, eyeing me, as though he wasn’t sure what was going on.

“Cut the crap, Steve, you know why I’m here.”

“No, I don’t.” He shook his head, then sort of shifted his expression. “Is everything alright with Jill?”

“You know, I’m doing me best not to lunge across this desk and cram that phone right down your throat. Jill told us, Steve. *We know.*”

He shrugged innocently, crossing a pair of Bass Weejuns in front of my face. “Know what?”

“I saw the bruises. Jill told us what’s been going on.” (*3rd degree*, 112)

Patterson uses the expression “lunge” several times when describing Boxer, which reflects her name “Boxer” and emphasizes her as a “fighter”. When Steve acts like he has no idea of what Boxer is talking about, she becomes even more enraged and makes a threat to him:

“I leaned my face across the desk. “Listen to me. Listen closely. I’m here to tell you it stops. *Today*. You lay another hand on her...she breaks a nail that she doesn’t want to discuss...she even comes into the office with a frown on her face, I’ll get your name on an assault charge. You understand me, Steve?” His expression never changed. He twirled the end of his short curly hair and chuckled.

“Gee, Lindsay, everyone always said you were a ballbuster, I just had no idea...but we’re in a marriage. Whatever goes on, it’s between us.”

“No longer.” I glared at him. “Battery is a felony, Steve. I bust people like you.” (113)

Boxer uses verbal aggression as she warns Steve about his behaviour. She uses her authority to threaten Steve by saying she will arrest him, if she sees any marks on Bernhardt that Steve has hurt her. Steve calls her *ballbuster*, with the intention to insult her, referring that she is a woman who destroys men. Steve’s indifferent attitude makes Boxer angry, because it seems that Steve is not taking her or the situation seriously. Instead, he is trying to belittle her:

I got up. I don’t know how he could act this way. We were talking about Jill.

“I want to put this in a way you’ll understand,” I said. “You put one more mark on her, and the last thing you’ll have to worry about will be Jill testifying. You go out for a run, you’re in the garage late after work, you hear a noise that makes you jump...You’d *better* jump, Steve.” (113)

Boxer makes a clear threat to Steve: if he ever hits Jill again, Boxer will make sure he will be the one who hurts. This way Boxer is crossing the boundaries of her authority and profession. She should be the guardian of the law, not the one who breaks it. Steve’s violent behaviour is not punished, for Boxer cannot arrest him or charge him, because Jill does not want to. Thus law cannot do anything to Steve and by threatening to hurt Steve Boxer takes the law into her own hands.

Sometimes Boxer has to use physical violence in her job. It is usually connected to situations where she is trying to catch the murderer or when she is being attacked, like when she kills Jenks at the end of *1st to Die*. Another example of this is the part when Boxer goes to arrest Nicholas Jenks in *1st to Die*. Jenks resists the arrest and tries to hit her:

Suddenly, he spun back toward me with a vicious fire in his eyes. He lunged forward with his fist. He swung at me. I cut his feet out from under him. Jenks fell across an end table to the floor, photos falling everywhere, glass shattering. The writer moaned loudly in pain. (*1st to Die*, 324)

In this example, Boxer simply brings him down, like a professional police officer. She is trained and prepared for these kinds of situations and knows how to handle them. She also has the strength to take down a grown man in order to defend herself.

In *3rd Degree* Boxer tries to catch Charles Danko, who is responsible for several terrorist attacks, including the murder of her friend Jill Bernhardt. Danko is about to strike again in a G-8 meeting with a canister of poison. When Boxer identifies Danko in the crowd, she tries to stop him:

Seconds later I crashed into Charles Danko, grabbing at his arm, hoping the canister would break free. I latched on to his hand, desperately trying to pry the canister free. I couldn't budge it. I heard him grunt in pain, saw him twisting the canister toward me. Right at my face. Molinari was on the other side of Danko, trying to wrestle him down too. "Get away from him!" I heard him yell at me. The canister turned again – toward Molinari. Everything was happening fast, in just few seconds. I held on to Danko's arm. I had some leverage. I was trying to break his arm. He turned toward me, and our eyes met. I'd never felt such hatred, such coldness. "Bastard!" I yelled in his face. "Remember Jill!" In that second I squeezed the canister. Spray shot into his face. Very close in. Danko coughed, gasped. His face twisted into a horrified mask... "It's over," I gasped. "You're over. You're done. You *lost*, asshole." (*3rd Degree*, 318-319)

Boxer attacks Danko in order to stop him from killing more people and she has to wrestle him down. This time she does not remain calm and professional, but feels hatred towards Danko. Boxer hates him for killing her best friend and by saying "Remember Jill", she wants Danko to know that this is personal: she wants to avenge her friend's death. We could say that Boxer literally gives Danko a taste of his own medicine by spraying the poison into his face, which causes Danko's death.

In *4th of July*, Boxer and her partner Warren Jacobi chase a suspect's car and the driver finally loses control of the car after the chase and crashes into a mailbox. As Boxer and Jacobi approach the car in order to arrest the driver, they notice that there are two teenagers driving the car. They

turn out to be the suspect's children and they ask Boxer not to tell their father that they had taken his car and plead that Boxer would let them go. Boxer and Jacobi tell the teenagers to get out of the car slowly, but the boy says he is stuck and throws up. Boxer and Jacobi holster their guns and help them out of the car. Jacobi goes to call an ambulance, while Boxer sees that the girl pulls out a gun from her jacket pocket. She screams "Gun!" to Jacobi and feels the bullet's hard punch to her shoulder. As she falls down she sees the boy shoot Jacobi and then kick him in the head:

I felt no pain, just rage. I was thinking as clearly as I had at any time in my life. They'd forgotten about me. I felt for my 9mm Glock, still at my waist, wrapped my hand around the grip and sat up.

"Drop your gun!" I shouted, pointing my weapon at Sara.

"Fuck you, bitch," she yelled back. Her face was etched with fear as she leveled her .22 and squeezed off three rounds. I heard shell cases ping against the sidewalk all around me. It's notoriously hard to hit your target with a pistol, but I did what I was trained to do. I aimed for central mass, the center of her chest, and double tapped: *boom-boom*. Sara's face crumpled as she collapsed. I tried to get to my feet but only managed to rise to one knee. The bloody faced boy was still holding a pistol in his hand. He pointed it at me.

"Drop it!" I screamed.

"You shot my sister!"

I aimed, double tapped again: *boom-boom*. The boy dropped his gun, his whole body going limp. (*4th of July*, 21-22)

Boxer tells the teenagers to drop their weapons, but they fire at her, so she has no choice but to shoot. She does what she has been trained to do in a situation like this. But still, even though the teenagers had shot both her and Jacobi, Boxer feels guilty for shooting at them. As soon as she fired her weapon at the children, she is shocked at what she had done:

The sounds were fading in and out. I dropped the telephone and put my head down on the soft, soft pavement. I'd shot children. Children! I had seen their shocked faces as they went down. Oh my God, what had I done? I felt hot blood pooling under my neck and around my leg. I played the whole thing over in my mind, this time throwing the kids against the car. Cuffing them. Frisking them. Being smart. Being competent! We'd been stupid and now we were all going to die. (23-24)

Although killing children would be wrong whether done by a man or a woman, by shooting two children Boxer violates the notion of a woman as a mother and a nurturer. She blames herself for not being professional and not handling the situation as she should have. Children as murderers is not very common in detective fiction, however, in this novel the teenage girl is even a serial killer.

Serial killing is a typical feature in Patterson's novels, as it is present both in the "Women's Murder Club" series and the Alex Cross series. According to Jenkins, feminists commonly assert that serial murder is a subset of male sexual aggression toward women (1994, 139). He continues by saying that feminist literature "employs serial murder as an ideological weapon not so much against men as a category, but against the patriarchal society they are believed to dominate" (1994, 143). Homicide is, then, viewed as a predominantly male crime and female offenders tend to be relegated to an "exceptional case" status that rests upon some exceptional compelling circumstance, like a battered woman who kills her abusive husband or a psychotic mother who kills her child (Skrapec, 1994, 242-243). However, the theme of the female serial killer is quite well-known in literature and fiction and real-life cases have influenced the creation of some the characters (Jenkins, 1994, 151). In Patterson's series there are three female serial killers: Chessy Jenks in *1st to Die*, Sara Cabot and Carolee Brown, both in *4th of July*. None of the killers work alone as they all have accomplices: Cabot had murdered several young runaways with her brother, Jenks murders several brides and grooms with her husband, and Brown murders several people, who had been somehow involved with child abuse or molestation, with the help of two men. Cabot dies already at the beginning of the novel from Boxer's bullet and her crimes are revealed after her death. Her fate is resolved by her death, thus she receives her punishment by poetic justice.

As I noted earlier in subchapter 3.2, Chessy Jenks carries out the murders which her husband has carefully planned. Jenks' husband abuses her both physically and mentally and this way manipulates her to murder the brides and grooms for him. As Chessy is, at least partly, coerced into executing her husband's sadistic fantasies, is she then only partly responsible for them? Feminists

have faced some difficulties while defending the connection between men and serial murder and often explained that female multiple killers were either dominated or manipulated by their male partners or that their actions had self-defence or loosely economic motives (Jenkins, 1994, 152). Hence Chessy represents a female serial killer, whose husband manipulated her to commit the murders. She finally kills her husband and frees herself from his control. Boxer tries to prevent her from shooting her husband:

“*He* has to be punished!”

“It’s over,” I said, carefully advancing toward her. “Please, Chessy, no more killing.”

As if she had suddenly realized what she had become, the sickening things she had done, she looked at me. “I’m sorry...I’m sorry for everything that happened – except this!” She fired, *at Jenks*. I fired, too, at her. (*1st to Die*, 449)

Chessy feels remorse for what she has done, but still wants to punish her husband for what he has done to her. Boxer feels sorry for Chessy: “I held her head and thought that she was so beautiful – like Melanie, Rebecca, Kathy – and now she was dead, too” (*1st to Die*, 449). Although Boxer condemns the murders Chessy had committed, she also feels empathy for her and did not wish her to die. Chessy’s problematic situation is resolved by her death and thus she receives her punishment.

Carolee Brown, on the other hand, murders ten people with the help of two men. They see themselves as serving justice by punishing people who have abused children. When Brown is caught Boxer listens to her explanation about why she murdered all those people and thinks: “Carolee and her cohorts had taken on the mission of cleaning up child abuse in Half Moon Bay – acting as the whole judicial package: judge, jury and executioners. And the way she described it, it almost made sense” (*4th of July*, 392). Brown herself says that she “did it for the children...I’m a good mother” (396). Hence Brown’s case, like Chessy Jenks’, is problematic, because her actions were motivated by the sufferings of innocent children. By emphasising that she is a good mother, Brown becomes a representation of a woman killer, who kills to protect her children. However, she

is still a killer and as Boxer asserts: “I can understand hating people who have done terrible things to innocent children...but murder, no. I’ll never understand that” (*4th of July*, 396).

The theme of women and violence is, then, very clearly present in Patterson’s “Women’s Murder Club” series and the way it discusses women and violence follows the lines of feminist detective fiction. Male violence against women can take different forms as it can be emotional, physical and sexual. The theme of domestic violence is presented through the character of Jill Bernhardt, who has suffered from it for several years. Also Castellano becomes a victim of male violence, as Jason Twilly comes close to abusing her sexually, scares her by following her and eventually tries to kill her. Boxer faces violence in and because of her job, as both she and her home are attacked. Boxer also uses both verbal and physical violence herself, but does not usually resort to physical violence unless her life is at risk. The series also includes a few female serial killers, who represent extreme examples of violent women. However, as Tenkanen pointed out, the mere presentation of women and violence does not make a novel feminist, but the way the women survive from the violence they face (1997, 101). In Patterson’s series, the women who face male violence have the courage to fight back and free themselves from the violence and thus they survive. Bernhardt has the courage to end the years of abuse with the support of her friends and in my next chapter I will examine further the supportive network of female friends as well as other relationships of the main characters.

5. Women, men and relationships

In the past the male detective has traditionally been a loner, while in feminist detective fiction, female detectives usually operate between independence and dependence (Vanacker, 1997, 71). This means that women detectives are often single and they usually do not have close family or children either. However, this does not mean they are wholly without social relationships, because they often have some kind of supportive network of friends, which might include women from different backgrounds and generations.

Many authors of feminist detective fiction underline the importance of binding female networks and it is a typical theme in feminist detective fiction. Hence it is also important in my study as I am examining the feminist characteristics in Patterson's series. In this chapter I intend to study the different relationships presented in the "Women's Murder Club" series and I will focus on the main characters. I will first look at romantic and family relationships of the main characters and then move on to study the friendship between the four main characters. The different relationships are present throughout the series and thus I will not concentrate on any particular novel, but include *1st to Die*, *3rd Degree*, *4th of July* and *7th Heaven* to this chapter.

5.1 Women detectives, family and romance

Traces of the separateness of the male detective, which is very common especially in the classic detective fiction as well as in the older hard-boiled genre, can be found in feminist detective fiction as well. As Reddy asserts, women detectives are often "cut off from their families of origin" (1988, 104). This manifests often through the fact that women detectives rarely have parents, who are both honourable and alive. It is often the case that the parents (or at least the mother) have died or the detective has lost touch with them. Janet Todd points out that the mothers of fictional female

heroines are normally either good-for-nothing and alive or virtuous and dead (1980, 2). Although Todd's book was published almost thirty years ago, her claim seems to be true also in recent feminist detective fiction: V.I. Warshawski's dead mother Gabriella seems to be thoroughly good, almost a saint, while Lauren Laurano's mother is an alcoholic (Hapuli & Matero, 1997, 181). Munt argues that she has "yet come across a female investigator who actually has a mother," because most of them die in the woman detective's childhood (1994, 167). Fathers on the other hand are often absent; they are either dead or otherwise unavailable. Vanacker argues that "since patriarchy and the law of the father are instilled in the family atmosphere, the absence of biological parents frees these detectives from such forms of censure and control" (1997, 73).

Although the real parents of the woman detective might be dead or otherwise absent, they sometimes have so called "chosen families" or "surrogate" parents. The chosen families often include older male or female friends, who can represent father and mother figures. An example of this is V.I. Warshawski's relationship with Mr. Contreras, a harmless elderly man with whom she can "have a caring relationship without the dangerously dependent family strings" (Vanacker, 1997, 72). Hence Mr. Contreras functions as a surrogate father to her. Warshawski's closest friend is an older woman called Lotty Herschel and in addition to being best friends, their relationship also resembles a bond between a mother and a daughter.

The lack of parents seems to add up also in Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series. Boxer's mother has died from breast cancer when Boxer was just out of college. When Boxer's mother was diagnosed with cancer, Boxer transferred to a city school from Berkeley to take care of her mother and her little sister. Boxer's father left his family when Boxer was thirteen and even before he left, he enjoyed both alcohol and gambling.⁸ In the beginning of the series Boxer has not talked to her father in many years. The father was a police officer for twenty years, until he one day disappeared.

⁸ Boxer describes the memories of her father in *2nd Chance* and her thoughts also reflect the loneliness she feels: "My father had never been there to rock me to sleep. Even before he left us, he worked the third shift and would always head to McGoey's for a beer afterwards. Sometimes I felt that the heartbeat that was closest to me was the pulse of the bastards I had to track down" (141).

He briefly comes back in 2nd *Chance* only to leave again. However, he stays long enough to explain to Boxer why he left his family. Even though the father made mistakes in his past, he does save Boxer's life at the end of 2nd *Chance* and redeems himself. Boxer's mother is depicted as good and caring and Boxer still misses her. Hence, Boxer is basically an orphan without any close family, because her younger sister lives in another city and their relationship is not very close.

There are no references to Washburn, Thomas or Bernhardt's parents in the series. Actually the only one who has a visible mother is Yuki Castellano, who joins their club in 4th *of July*. Her mother Keiko is Japanese and her father Italian-American, thus Yuki represents several different ethnicities. Keiko is a very dominant person in Castellano's life, as she is trying to make her daughter settle down and start a family. Keiko does not approve Castellano's profession, because she thinks that no man wants a woman who is too independent. She even tells Boxer that no man wants to marry a woman who carries a gun. However, in spite of Keiko's efforts to marry her daughter off to a good husband, Castellano's relationship with her mother is very close and warm. Hence, when Keiko dies in 5th *Target*, it seems to prove once again that good mothers of fictional female heroes are more often dead than alive.

By urging Castellano to marry, Keiko tries to make her conform to the traditional gender role of women, but Castellano resists, choosing her career over family life. Reddy argues that

Women have generally been assigned to the domestic sphere and defined by their relationships to others, particularly to family members, with the female loner seldom seen as the hero in literature or in life. The family is, of course, often the locus of women's oppression, with traditional family arrangements mirroring social arrangements under patriarchy and making the continuation of those social arrangements possible. (1988, 103)

She continues by saying that all legal efforts to improve the status of women fall short without a fundamental reordering of women's position within the family and other relationships; therefore, the heterosexual relationship becomes an important battleground in this fight for women's role in those relationships (Reddy, 106). This refers back to my theory part where I introduced the aims of

the feminist movement and how women fought for sexual equality and eradication of sexist domination. This feminist goal is present also in feminist detective fiction, where many authors have drawn attention to the importance of egalitarianism in the relationships of their female heroes and have wanted to free their women detectives from “pre-feminist manipulative marriages” (Vanacker, 1997, 71). Hence women detectives are often divorced or single, even though there are, of course, exceptions to the rule. An example of this is Maria Kallio, who is the main character of a Finnish police procedural series by Leena Lehtolainen. In the first novel of the series Kallio meets Antti Sarkela, who she then later marries and they have a baby. Motherhood does not, however, come naturally to Kallio, as she did not plan to have a baby and her pregnancy is an accident. She also tries to rebel against the expectations associated with the idea of motherhood by going to the shooting range, thinking it is the total opposite behaviour of what is expected from pregnant women. An interesting example of a detective family is Mankell’s Kurt and Linda Wallander, a father and a daughter who work together as police officers, which is rare in detective fiction.

Boxer follows the pattern of a feminist detective’s marital status by being divorced. Her ex-husband is mentioned in *1st to Die* and it turns out that he left Boxer. After her divorce, Boxer has been afraid to be with someone again and she says that “I turn down, or shoot down, just about every man who comes anywhere near me” (*1st to Die*, 49). However, at the beginning of *1st to Die*, Boxer admits that she hates living alone and clearly longs to feel connected to another person. Boxer has a couple of romantic relationships during the series and all of the men she is involved with are police detectives. In *1st to die*, she falls in love with her partner Chris Raleigh, but the relationship does not have enough time to evolve, when Chris dies in the shootout at the end of *1st to Die*. In *3rd Degree* Boxer becomes romantically involved with another colleague, Joe Molinari, who is assigned to investigate the same case Boxer is working on. However, Molinari works in the department of Homeland Security and his job is in Washington D.C., and he and Boxer are apart most of the time. In addition to Raleigh and Molinari, Boxer has a crush on one more colleague,

Rich Conklin, who becomes Jacobi's new partner when Boxer becomes the lieutenant. Boxer is instantly attracted to Conklin's good looks, but at the same time she is in a relationship with Molinari and thus wants to keep the relationship with Conklin strictly professional.⁹

Boxer often feels that an intimate relationship would be a threat to her independence and the fact that Molinari lives on the other side of the continent makes it possible for their relationship to work, because this way Boxer can maintain her independence. When she first becomes interested in Raleigh, she tries to resist her attraction: "He did have nice eyes. *Stop it, Lindsay*" (*1st to Die*, 95). She tries to stay tough and indifferent to all romantic attachments and Raleigh notices that by saying "Wise-guy answer for everything. Keep those defences up" (*1st to Die*, 96). Later on Raleigh comes to Boxer's house for dinner and Boxer realises that she really likes him. However, she is not sure if she is ready to let a man into her life: "It had been a long, hard time since I had put my trust in anybody whose gender started with an *M*... I wanted to hold back, but a soft, surrendering voice inside me said, *Just go with it, Lindsay. He's okay*" (192-193).

Even though Boxer is a very independent woman, she still longs to feel connected to someone and she finds a connection with both Raleigh and Molinari. When she first spends the night with Raleigh she realises that she had "forgotten how good it was to be held" (*1st to Die*, 329). Later on when she meets Molinari, she finds a similar kind of intimacy between them:

It wasn't just about the sex with Joe. He was too real and too good a person for me to think of him simply as a hunk and a real good time. But I paid a terrible price for feeling more. At times like this, when our jobs permitted, we had an indescribable intimacy. Then morning came and Joe jetted back to Washington, and I didn't know when I'd see him – or if it would ever feel this good – again. (*4th of July*, 92)

In her relationship with Raleigh and Molinari, Boxer finds a haven from the violence she faces in her work every day. When she makes love to Raleigh for the first time, Boxer feels that "his grasp

⁹ The mutual attraction between Boxer and Conklin almost leads to them sleeping together in *6th Target*, when Boxer and Molinari are taking a break. Conklin and Boxer are working on a case in Los Angeles and end up in the same hotel room. They kiss, but then Boxer tells Conklin that their relationship has to stay purely professional.

was all that held me together, kept me from breaking apart” (*1st to Die*, 329). The intimacy between Boxer and Raleigh, as well as Boxer and Molinari, is depicted with warmth in the novels. To Boxer her own sexuality is a source of strength and it often seems to help her deal with the hardships of police work. When making love to Raleigh she thinks that it was “the freest ... I had ever felt” (*1st to Die*, 361). Boxer’s relationships to men affirm her heterosexuality, because even though she is in a masculine profession as a detective, she is not a lesbian or a masculine woman.

Even though Boxer enjoys her freedom and independence her long-distance relationship with Molinari offers, she eventually feels that she cannot find the kind of security and normal life with him and wants to end their relationship. However, Molinari surprises her by proposing and telling her that he has requested a transfer and moved to San Francisco. Although Molinari has moved to the same city in order to be with Boxer, she hesitates and is not sure if she is ready to marry him, or anyone else: “It’s been said that love finds you when you’re ready. *Was I ready?*” (*4th of July*, 92).¹⁰ Boxer refuses Molinari’s proposal but asks if they could still be together and see if their relationship would work, doing normal things like washing the dishes and taking out the garbage. After Molinari’s move Boxer feels that their relationship has become closer:

Although Joe had rented a fantastic apartment on Lake Street, a month after his move he’d brought over his copper-bottomed cookware and started sleeping in my bed five nights a week ... Our relationship had gotten richer and more loving, exactly what I’d hoped for. So I had to ask myself – why was the engagement ring Joe had given me still in its black velvet box, diamonds blazing in the dark? *Why couldn’t I just say yes?* (*7th Heaven*, 31-32)

Although Molinari has given Boxer what she wanted by moving to San Francisco, she still does not want to make a commitment to him. This way Boxer is resisting the traditional institution of marriage, which has been and still is seen as the ideal and proper choice for women, and thus refuses to give up her independence. According to Reddy, the female detective hero both relishes her independence and seeks intimate connections with others, but in order for that cherished

¹⁰ In *6th Target* Boxer thinks about their relationship and wonders “if the problem had really been Joe’s job or if we had conspired together to keep a safe distance from a relationship that had all the potential to be lasting and real” (366).

independence to be preserved, the relationships “must fall outside the boundaries of those socially sanctioned relationships that have defined and oppressed women” (1988, 105). This is true with Boxer as well, as she refuses to marry Molinari, because the marriage would pose a threat to her independence.

Boxer does think about marriage and children and how different her life would be if she had family. In *4th of July* when Boxer is staying at Half Moon Bay, she is asked to look after her neighbour’s daughter Allison and she reluctantly agrees. To her own surprise she notices that she liked being around Allison: “I was shocked at how much I liked her and how fast. I’d come to Half Moon bay to rethink my whole life. Now I was being visited by a vivid fantasy of me, Joe, a home, a little girl” (143). Even though Boxer toys with the idea of children, she feels that she does not have enough time for family:

I thought about the Job, about working with Rich seventeen hours a day and loving that. How little time I had for anything but work: hadn’t done Tai-Chi in ages, stopped playing the guitar, even turned the nightly run with Martha over to Joe. I put my mind on how different it would all be if I were married and had a baby, if there were people who worried about me every time I left the house. (*7th Heaven*, 278-279)¹¹

Boxer chooses her job over family life and thus she resembles other feminist detectives: Paretzky’s Warshawski, Grafton’s Millhone or Mankell’s Linda Wallander are not married and do not have children, but they do have romantic relationships.

Many feminist detectives find it hard to have a romantic relationship because of their job. Reddy argues that a sexual involvement with a man always poses a threat to the woman detective’s independence, because the man eventually “either perceives the detective’s commitment to her job as an obstacle to be overcome or asserts his need to protect her in some fashion” (1988, 105). In Boxer’s case Raleigh is a detective himself and Molinari works as a deputy director of Homeland

¹¹ In *2nd Chance* Boxer thinks about herself as a mother when she hears that her friend Jill Bernhardt is pregnant. She admits that she really wanted to have a baby with Raleigh, but perhaps it was for the best because parenting “just didn’t seem like the natural occupation in my family” (63).

Security, hence they both understand how demanding police work is. However, Molinari becomes very protective of Boxer and worries that she puts herself in too much danger in her job. When Boxer tells Molinari about her visit to Dennis Agnew's porn shop, he becomes angry:

His jaw clenched as I laid it out to him.

"Pretend I didn't tell you," I said, kissing his brow as I filled his glass with wine.

"Pretend I'm not mad at you for putting yourself in that kind of danger."

Jeez, had everyone forgotten that I was a cop? And a smart one by the way. First female lieutenant in San Francisco and so on and so forth. (*4th of July*, 204)

Later on when Molinari has moved to San Francisco and he and Boxer practically live together, he is offended by the fact that Boxer spends so much time at work. When Boxer comes home late one night, Molinari is displeased:

By the time I got home that evening I had too much to tell Joe and hoped I would stay awake long enough to tell him. He was in the kitchen, wearing running shorts and a T-shirt what he wore when he went for a run with Martha ... But the look on Joe's face stopped me before I could reach him.

"Joe, I was at the hospital all night - "

"Jacobi told me. If I hadn't found wet footsteps on the bathmat this morning, I wouldn't have even known you'd been home."

"You were sleeping, Joe, and I only had a few minutes. And is this a house rule? That I have to check in?" I said.

"You call it checking in. I call it being thoughtful. Thinking of *me* and that I might worry about *you*." (*7th Heaven*, 332)

Molinari's over-protectiveness almost begins to resemble a patronising attitude. Reddy has studied several feminist detective series and argues that almost every man the detectives meet either tries to change them, or reveals some unexamined sexist assumptions once the relationship is under way. Usually these assumptions surface "when the detective sees her work as more important than a social engagement and the man objects, believing their relationship should take precedence over work in the woman's life, but not necessarily in his own" (1988, 106). This is true also in Boxer's relationship with Molinari: although he is a detective himself and knows that police works does not

have regular working hours, he is still angry at Boxer for doing her job. He tells Boxer that “I saw more of you when I lived in D.C.” (*7th Heaven*, 333). Thus Molinari assumes that because he moved to San Francisco to be with Boxer, she will automatically cut back her hours and dedicate more of her time to their relationship. However, Boxer is not willing to give up her job, because she loves being a detective. She thinks to herself that “this was the very thing that broke up cop marriages. The Job. The obsession and commitment to the job” (*7th Heaven*, 334). In Boxer’s case Molinari is both protective and sees Boxer’s commitment to her job as a problem.

Cindy Thomas and Yuki Castellano are both single. Thomas has a couple of relationships during the novels, but the relationships are mostly left in the dark. The only one that is given some attention is Thomas’ relationship to an African-American man in *2nd Chance*. They have a couple of dates, but the relationship ends with the novel. Not much light is shed on Castellano’s relationships either and she is often depicted as a workaholic with no time for personal life. She has one date with Jason Twilly in *7th Heaven*, who turns out to be a stalker, hence her relationships cannot be described as fortunate or functional.

As I explained earlier, Bernhardt is unhappily married to a man who beats her. Bernhardt’s marriage is described as a race between Bernhardt and her husband. They are both successful in their professions and it seems that Bernhardt is trying to prove herself even in her marriage and ending up pushing herself to the limit. Boxer thinks that Bernhardt “wants to prove she can be the wife, and mother, he [her husband] wants her to be” (*3rd degree*, 98). Even though Bernhardt tells Boxer that family “doesn’t fit right now” (*1st to Die*, 278), she becomes pregnant. Bernhardt has two miscarriages, because she works too hard, spending long days in her office working on stressful cases. When she becomes pregnant for the second time, Bernhardt thinks to herself that she cannot afford to lose the baby this time and when she has a miscarriage, she ends up blaming herself, for not wanting the baby badly enough. It could be argued that Bernhardt’s failed attempts to have a

baby suggest that a successful woman cannot have both her career and a family, because she is bound to neglect either the one or the other.

However, one of the main characters does have both a career and a family and that is Claire Washburn. Washburn is the only one with a functional relationship in the series. She is married to Edmund, who is a kettle drum-player in the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Washburn is also the only one of the main characters who has children. She and Edmund have two almost grown sons and in 7th *Heaven* Washburn is pregnant at forty-three. At the end of the novel Claire gives birth to a little girl, Ruby Rose. Claire and Edmund are seen as a team and their marriage is depicted as blissful. Edmund is a kind and compassionate man, who also cooks. Traditionally it has been the wife who has prepared dinner for her husband, and thus the traditional gender roles have turned upside down in Washburn's marriage. In the series, Edmund's career is left to the background, while it is usually the woman's career that is overlooked in real life.

The other three women admire Washburn's ability to combine both her job and family life, which is seen in Boxer's thoughts about Washburn: "How she balanced the demands of her job, and placating her credit-seeking boss, with raising two teenage kids, was a marvel" (*1st to Die*, 57).¹² Boxer also admires the relationship between Washburn and her husband and feels that their marriage "gave me hope that there still was some hope for the institution" (*1st to Die*, 57).

Patterson, then, seems to portray the relationships between men and women either as blissful, filled with warmth and intimacy, or dysfunctional with destruction and violence. Washburn is the only one of the group who lives in a happy marriage, while Bernhardt is married to an abusive husband, Boxer resists the commitment of marriage and both Thomas and Castellano only have vague relationships. However, Boxer and the other three women admire Washburn's loving intimacy with her husband and the support their relationship gives her. I would argue that through

¹² Also Bernhardt admires Washburn's way of combining both work and family. When Bernhardt finds out in *2nd Chance* that she is pregnant, she tells Washburn that "The first time I met you, when Lindsay asked me into your group and you talked about your kids...it just sort of set off a spark in me. I remember thinking: 'She runs the M.E.'s office. She's one of the most capable women I know, at the top of her profession, yet this is what she talks about'" (59).

Washburn's character Patterson underlines that women can have both a successful career and a family and still have the right to choose not to marry, like Boxer. There are both nice and unpleasant male characters in the series. Although some of the men are abusive, including Bernhardt's husband, they are however, a minority. Still, the fact that there are unpleasant and violent men in the series, who abuse women, suggests that masculinity is a problem in the novels. The characters of Jenks, Twilly, Agnew and Steve Bernhardt imply that there is something wrong in the way the society raises men, who become violent and sexually abusive towards women.

5.2 The importance of female friendship

Although feminist detective heroes often resemble their male counterparts in their solitariness, they are not entirely without close relationships. As I pointed out in my theory, it is typical in feminist detective fiction that even though the woman detective is often single and has no family, she usually has some kind of a supportive network of friends. This supportive group of friends is a network of women where "different generations, family members and friends are linked in relationships of mutual aid" (Vanacker, 1997, 73). According to Vanacker, many authors of feminist detective fiction underline the importance of binding feminist solidarity and it prevents the woman detective from being a complete separate unit, and thus helps to critique such a traditional generic notion (73).

The importance of female friendship is also present in Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series, since the four main characters become very close friends while working together. Ritva Hapuli and Johanna Matero have studied the relationships between women in detective fiction and they argue that the friendships between women in detective fiction can be divided into three different categories: lesbian relationships, mother-daughter relationships and relationships that resemble them, and friendships between heterosexual women (1997, 175). They point out, however,

that these categories are deficient in a way, because most of the friendships have characteristics from more than one category. I will analyse the relationships between the four main characters in more detail later on in this subchapter and I will first look at how the group of four friends came about.

When the series begins Boxer and Washburn have been best friends for several years and in the first novel they meet Thomas and Bernhardt. At first the four women work together to solve the gruesome Honeymoon murders Boxer is working on, but during the novel they also become friends. The idea of them working together outside the official investigation comes from Boxer, who thinks that they could work together more efficiently because they represent different fields of crime investigation and they have access to different sources of information. The original group consists of Boxer, Washburn and Thomas, and Bernhardt joins them later on in the novel. Washburn is of course a natural member to the group, because of her role in the police department and the interaction she and Boxer would inevitably have as a result of that. Thomas as a journalist knows how to ask questions and get answers and she has wide access to people without the legal restrictions that constrain Boxer as a police official. Thus her capabilities are very useful in the investigation. The Honeymoon case is assigned to the assistant district attorney Jill Bernhardt and Boxer is impressed by her enthusiasm and devotion to her work. Boxer decides to ask Bernhardt to join their group and she accepts.

In addition to wanting to solve the murder case Boxer is investigating, the four women also want to help each other in the pressures of their male dominated fields by helping and supporting each other to forge ahead in their careers. All of the four women are in a fight against patriarchy in male dominated work places and are supported in that fight by one another. They support each other as women and when Boxer comes up with a name for their group calling it the “Women’s Murder Club”, she encapsulates their idea of women working together: “no men allowed” (*1st to Die*, 174).

The four women working together and helping each other represents the notion of feminist solidarity, which I introduced in my theory part.

Traditionally men have had clubs in real life, where they could spend their afternoon smoking cigars and talking about politics with other men. These gentlemen's clubs were popular in the late 19th century and were originally formed by English upper-class men. These clubs were of course, closed to women. In Patterson's series it is, however, women who meet at their favourite restaurant to work out the clues and solve the murders. In my theory chapter I presented Reddy's thoughts about the masculinity of police departments. According to her, police departments are often called the Fraternal Order of Police, which marks them as brotherhood of men, closed to women (1988, 70). In this sense it is significant that Patterson creates a club for women, a sisterhood, which in turn excludes men. The "Women's Murder Club" can thus be seen as a counterblast to all masculine hierarchical systems, including the police force.

By working together the main characters in Patterson's series become friends. When Boxer invites Bernhardt to their group, she explains how they started to work together, but actually became friends in the process: "over margaritas I explained how we had gotten together. How we had come upon this case, trying to solve it, sharing what we knew, freelance. How it had become a sort of bond. How things had gotten a bit deeper" (*1st to Die*, 279). The bond between the three women can already be seen in their first meeting, when Boxer, Washburn and Thomas notice how similar situations they all have when it comes to their professions: they all work in male dominated professions and have pompous male bosses. Soon Boxer realises how comfortable she feels with Washburn and Thomas:

A warm silence fell over us. For a moment the faces of David and Melanie Brandt, even Negli's, seemed a million miles away. We were just having fun.

I felt something happening, something that hadn't happened in a long time, that I desperately needed. I felt connected. (*1st to Die*, 138)

It is hard to imagine this kind of scene taking place in male police procedurals because, as I stated before, male heroes, including male detectives, often work alone. However, in her *Murder Club* Boxer finds the feeling of belonging she has been looking and longing for. This way the group meets both the professional and the emotional needs of its members. It seems that the friendship the women share with each other substitutes the uneasy heterosexual relationships they have. This means that although women detectives are single by choice, because they cherish their independence, they can still feel a part of a group and find comfort in their friends. As Vanacker asserts: “the feminist detective, then, has the best of both worlds: she is a free agent, in charge of her own actions, yet motivated by female solidarity” (1997, 74). When Raleigh dies at the end of *1st to Die*, Boxer finds comfort in Washburn, Thomas and Bernhardt:

I put my arms around all of them and melted into their embrace as deeply as I could. All four of us were crying. “Don’t ever leave me, guys.”
 “Leave?” Jill said with wide eyes.
 “None of us,” promised Cindy. “We’re a team, remember? We will *always* be together.”
 Claire took hold of my arm.
 “We love you, sweetie,” she whispered. (*1st to Die*, 455)

The love and support of her friends help Boxer to deal with her loss.

Later on when Yuki Castellano is introduced by being Boxer’s lawyer in *4th of July*, she also becomes a member of the group: “As the conversation swirled around the table, I felt lucky to be with this gang again. We all felt so comfortable together and had shared so much – even with our newest friend, Yuki, who’d been unanimously admitted to the group for saving my butt and my life as I knew it” (*4th of July*, 399-400). Castellano’s background is very similar to that of Boxer, Thomas, Bernhardt and Washburn, as she, too, works in a very male dominated field and is very motivated in her job. In *5th Horseman* Castellano changes her job from being a lawyer into a prosecutor and therefore her character resembles the character of Bernhardt. However, there are differences between the two characters as well: they come from very different backgrounds as

Bernhardt comes from southern USA and she is the daughter of a powerful corporate attorney, while Castellano's origins are more mixed, as her father is Italian-American and her mother Japanese. Furthermore, unlike Bernhardt Castellano is not married, but lives alone. She, then, seems to fit the group very easily and during Boxer's trial, they become friends. The relationship between all of the women is depicted with warmth in the novels and they become as close as family to each other and it could be argued that they also function as a chosen family to one another.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hapuli and Matero divide the relationships of women in detective fiction into three different groups: lesbian relationships, mother-daughter relationships and nurturing relationships that resemble those relationships, and friendships between heterosexual women (1997, 175). However, these categories can only be considered as suggestive, because usually the relationships have elements from more than one category and thus the categories do not exclude one another. In Patterson's series the relationships between the main female characters fall under the latter two categories, because none of the main characters is a lesbian and there are no signs of any kind of sexual tension between the women. This way the series might be considered contemplating the world from an exclusive heterosexual point of view.

Washburn is notably the most motherly of the group. This is partly because she is the only one of the four women who has children and her motherliness is reflected in her friendship with Boxer, Thomas, Bernhardt and Castellano as well, and she is very caring towards them. This kind of caring and empathy are qualities that are associated with the relationship of a mother and a child and hence the relationships between Washburn and the other women can be considered to resemble mother-daughter relationships. Washburn is aware of her role in the group as a mother figure and even refers to herself as the "old mom" (*1st to Die*, 134). In the nurturing relationships between heterosexual women in detective fiction the other person works often in a profession where she helps people, for example V. I. Warshawski's best friend Lotty Herschel is a doctor and Kay Scapetta's friend Anna Zenner is a psychologist (Hapuli & Matero, 1997, 181). However, although

Washburn is also a doctor, she works as a coroner; hence her nurturing nature is not due to her profession. There is one incident where Washburn questions her profession and that is when Boxer tells her that she has Negli's aplastic anemia: "She was a doctor, a doctor who dealt only in death. Never once had she saved a life. She was doctor who did not heal" (*1st to die*, 163). Washburn feels inadequate, because she cannot help Boxer in any way: neither as a doctor nor as a woman.

Boxer, Thomas and Bernhardt, on the other hand, are more like sisters to each other. Boxer is older than Thomas and hence she is like an older sister to her: "I'm several years older than Cindy, and we've had a big sister, little sister thing since she crashed my crime scene a few years back and then helped me close the case" (*7th Heaven*, 51). Boxer is very protective of both Thomas and Bernhardt, and she seems to be the one the other women share their problems with and call when they need help. Bernhardt confides in Boxer about her abusive husband in *3rd Degree* and Boxer feels both anger and sadness for her close friend:

After Jill told me what had been going on between her and Steve, after I wiped her tears and cried with her like a little sister, I drove home in a daze. A pall had clung to her face, a whitewash of shame I will never forget.
Jill, my Jill. (3rd degree, 96)

After this Boxer barges into Steve's office to confront him and threatens to kill him if he ever hurts Bernhardt again. Also Castellano becomes a very close friend to Boxer and she, too, resorts to Boxer when she is in trouble or needs help. In *7th Heaven* Castellano is being stalked by Jason Twilly and she is scared that he might do something to hurt her. Castellano calls Boxer and tells her that she is afraid of Twilly and later on when Twilly breaks into her car, she escapes and runs to Boxer. Boxer calms her down and says: "Don't worry ... I've got your back" (*7th Heaven*, 289).

Hapuli and Matero argue that the representations of friendships between heterosexual women are relatively rare in feminist detective fiction (1997, 186). However, as the number of feminist detective authors rises, the depictions of friendships between heterosexual women increase as well.

Hapuli and Matero explain the small number in the tradition of detective fiction: even though the early character of Sherlock Holmes already had a loyal partner, Dr. Watson, and created a model for future friendship between the protagonists, the protagonists have traditionally been men (187). Patterson has created a group of mutually supportive, heterosexual female friends and in doing this he continues to renew the tradition of detective fiction, like the female and feminist writers before him. It is because of the earlier female and feminist writers of detective fiction that Patterson is able to write feminist detective fiction and although he does not really bring anything new to the genre, he still represents a male author of feminist fiction, which is still to this day quite rare.

Patterson represents his female heroes as quite traditional feminist detective characters in relation to their family and heterosexual relationships. The women are without close family, as all of their parents are either dead or otherwise absent. Most of the women are not married and do not have children, but are still able to have relationships in spite of their masculine professions. There is also the example of Washburn's character, who has successfully combined both a demanding career and family life. This way Patterson points out that being a detective (or having an otherwise demanding job) does not exclude romance or relationship.

Because the theme of binding female networking is one of the key elements in Patterson's novels, they can, then, be seen as feminist as female networking and solidarity is one of the typical themes in feminist detective fiction. The relationships between the main characters form a binding network of women, who support each other both in professional and private lives. The friendships between the characters also represent a kind of ideal relationships, because the women come from different backgrounds and this way the friendships cross both racial and class boundaries.

6. Conclusion

The aim of my study has been to find out whether or not James Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series can be considered feminist. One reason why this series is exceptional is the fact that it has been written by a male author and it has a female main character, which is not very common in detective fiction. In order to establish the feminist characteristics of the novels I outlined the history of the feminist movement as well as the creation of feminist detective heroes, both of which were essential to my study.

The fact that feminist heroes have emerged in fiction (including detective fiction), is due to the feminist movement and especially the second-wave feminism, which developed in Europe and USA in the late 1960s. Feminism fought for equality between the sexes and demanded an egalitarian access for women to professions, which had traditionally been almost exclusively male. Hence women became fire-fighters, police officers and soldiers and this way also proved that they could handle the demands of the job as well as men could. This change in the society and the roles of women was also seen in literature: more women started to write fiction and strong female heroes appeared. Feminist authors of detective fiction faced the challenge to create a convincing female detective in a genre that had traditionally been very masculine and since then they have been rewriting the genre. The feminist detective hero differs from her male counterpart in that she is not as indifferent and objective in her investigation as the traditional male detective, but is often affected by the crimes and feels empathy for the victims. While the male detective is often a lonesome man, without social attachments, the women detective usually has a network of female friends that prevent her from being wholly separate from social relationships. Feminist authors of detective fiction have also introduced several themes to the genre, including sexism, homophobia and the question of women and violence, which have become typical themes in feminist detective fiction.

I examined the feminist characteristics of the novels by looking at certain themes that are typical in feminist detective fiction: sexism, women and violence and the relationships between men and women. I concentrated on four novels of the series where these themes were most clearly presented, although I used the other novels as well. The theme of sexism is present throughout the series as all the main characters work in professions that have traditionally been very male dominated. This reflects the changes in women's roles caused by the second-wave feminism. Boxer, Washburn, Thomas and Bernhardt face sexism in their work as they are often undermined and patronised because of their sex. They are also quite lonely in their professions because they do not have many female colleagues: Boxer is the only woman in the homicide department, Washburn works alone and also Bernhardt seems to lack female colleagues. It is because of the sexist attitudes and the feeling of loneliness that the four women decide to work together outside the patriarchal institutions and support each other in making a career in masculine organisations.

Patterson also discusses the more aggressive form of sexism; the theme of misogyny, which is shown through the crimes and criminals of the novels. The misogynist attitude is seen in the behaviour of the male criminals, who degrade women by abusing them emotionally and physically. Hence misogyny touches the theme of women and violence, as women are victims of male violence.

The theme of women and violence is also clearly present in "Women's Murder Club" series. In my thesis I examined both women as victims of violence and women using violence. Feminist detective fiction has drawn attention to male violence against women and in Patterson's series male violence against women takes several forms; it can be emotional, physical or sexual. Bernhardt is married to an abusive husband, whose abuse is both emotional and physical, while Castellano almost becomes a victim of a date rape and Boxer herself is face to face with violence everyday in her job. The male violence is also seen in several crimes in the series. Therefore, the series can be considered feminist because it discusses the theme of violence against women on different levels.

Furthermore, Patterson's heroines often survive from the violence they face by having the courage to fight back and defend themselves. However, sexual abuse against women by men is a recurring theme in Patterson's novels and it raises the question of the politics of representation. In Patterson's novels and in detective fiction in general sexual sadism and the abuse of women is popular entertainment. Why is it that people enjoy reading about it and when does it cross the line of 'good taste'? The detailed description of violence against women also makes one wonder, if a female writer writing a feminist novel would include such descriptions.

The question of women using violence is a problematic one because in the Western culture women have traditionally been seen as non-aggressive and violent women have been considered unnatural. The male detective hero, especially in the hard-boiled genre, has traditionally been self-sufficient and aggressive and in creating a feminist detective hero the authors have had to ponder how violent the woman detective can be. Often the female detective does not resort to violence unless she has to and only uses violence as self-defence. This is also the case in "Women's Murder Club" series: although Boxer uses verbal aggression, she does not use physical violence unless there is not any other choice. The series depicts also violent women killers, but their actions are slightly problematic as they are either manipulated to do the crimes, like Chessy Jenks and Michelle Fontineul, or act in order to save innocent children, like Carolee Brown. However, they are still murderers and all receive a punishment either by death or imprisonment.

The male detective has traditionally been a lone hero and feminist detectives have followed this convention in that they are also often single and without close family. However, although the female detectives enjoy their independence, they still usually have romantic relationships and sometimes even a family. Boxer resembles the traditional feminist detective hero in that she is divorced, her mother is dead and she has lost touch with her father. Boxer has three relationships during the novels, two of which are serious. She longs to feel connected to another person and at the same time cherishes her independence. Also the other members of the Murder Club are single apart

from Bernhardt, who is unhappily married and Washburn who is happily married and has children. I would argue that by choosing not to marry Boxer's character epitomizes a woman's right to stay independent, while Washburn's example underlines the fact that women can have both a successful career and a family, if they so choose. The heterosexual relationships of the main characters, however, validate heterosexuality as the norm and there are no lesbian or gay relationships presented in the novels.

As the four women work together, they become very close friends and that friendship serves both professional and emotional needs, as they find comfort in each other and Boxer feels the connection with her friends that she so longed for. This way the friendships also seem partly to substitute the romantic relationships. The supportive and warm friendship between the main characters actually becomes the central theme in the novels, as it helps the characters through their demanding jobs, as well as violence and loss. Authors of feminist detective fiction often underline the importance of this kind of binding feminist solidarity and thus Patterson's series falls clearly under the feminist framework.

All in all, I would argue that Patterson's "Women's Murder Club" series can be considered feminist, because it includes several themes that are typical in feminist detective fiction. The central theme in the novels is the friendship between the female main characters and this kind of binding friendships is one of the essential themes in feminist detective fiction.

References

Primary references

- Patterson, James. *1st to Die*. New York: Warner Books, 2001
 ---. *2nd Chance*. New York: Warner Books, 2002.
 ---. *3rd Degree*. New York: Warner Books, 2004.
 ---. *4th of July*. New York: Warner Books, 2005.
 ---. *5th Horseman*. London: Headline Publishing, 2006
 ---. *6th Target*. New York: Warner Books, 2007.
 ---. *7th Heaven*. London: Century, 2008.

Secondary references

A Conversation with James Patterson. [Accessed 13.2.2008 from http://www.jamespatterson.com/about_interviewsEverything.html]

Arvas, Paula. "Kerjäätkö turpaasi? Dekkarien naispuolisten päähenkilöiden suhde aggressioon ja väkivaltaan." *Murha pukee naista: Naisdekkareita ja dekkarinaisia*. Ed. Ritva Hapuli and Johanna Matero. Helsinki: KSL-kirjat, 1997.

Binyon, T. J. *'Murder Will Out': The Detective in Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Bird, Delys & Walker, Brenda. "Introduction" *Killing Women: Rewriting Detective Fiction*. Ed. Delys Bird. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1993.

Butler, Judith. "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire." *Feminisms*. Ed. Sandra Kemp and Judith Squires. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Carr, Helen (ed.) *From My Guy to Sci-fi. Genre and Women's Writing in the Post-Modern World*. London: Pandora Press, 1989.

Cranny-Francis, Anne. *Feminist Fiction. Feminist Uses of Generic Fiction*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 2000. [Accessed 6.1.2008 from http://books.google.com/books?id=lbraqrCpA2wC&pg=PR3&dq=black+feminist+thought&hl=fi&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=0_1&sig=T4wt_dB-HpObqkmuzvv0u6shQog#PPP1,M1].

Dove, George, N. *The Police Procedural*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Press, 1982.

Frow, John. *Genre*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Grossman, Lev. *From the Man Who Can't Miss*. *Time Magazine*, March 16, 2006. [Accessed 10.3.2008 from <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1172251-3,00.html>]

- Hapuli, Ritva and Matero, Johanna. "Läheisyyttä, turvaa ja kipua: Naisten välisiä ystävyys-suhteita naisdekkarissa." *Murha pukee naista: Naisdekkareita ja dekkarinaisia*. Ed. Ritva Hapuli and Johanna Matero. Helsinki: KSL-kirjat, 1997.
- Heinecken, Dawn. *The Warrior Women of Television: A Feminist Cultural Analysis of the New Female Body in Popular Media*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003.
- Holmlund, Christine. "A Decade of Deadly Dolls. Hollywood and the Woman Killer." *Moving Targets: Women, Murder and Representation*. Ed. Helen Birch. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1994.
- Horsley, Lee. *Twentieth Century Crime Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Humm, Maggie (ed.) *Feminisms: A Reader*. Harlow: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.
- Innes, Sherrie, A. (ed.). *Action Chicks: New Images of Tough Women in Popular Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Jenkins, Philip. *Using Murder: The Social Construction of Serial Homicide*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1994.
- Kelly, Liz & Radford, Jill. "'Nothing Really Happened': The Invalidation of Women's Experiences of Sexual Violence." *Women, Violence and Male Power: Feminist Activism, Research and Practice*. Ed. Marianne Hester, Liz Kelly and Jill Radford. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997.
- Knight, Steven. *Crime Fiction 1800-2000; Detection, Death, Diversity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Kotker, Joan, G. *James Patterson – A Critical Companion*. Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2004.
- Lagerspetz, Kirsti. "Naisen Aggressio." *Tieteessä Tapahtuu*. Vol.7, 1998. [Accessed 15.5.2008 from <http://www.tsv.fi/ttapaht/987/lagers.htm>].
- Loomba, Ania. "Tangled Histories: Indian Feminism and Anglo-American Feminist Criticism." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Autumn, 1993. [Accessed 4.3.2008 from JSTOR].
- Madsen, Deborah, L. *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*. London: Pluto Press, 2000. [Accessed 16.3.2008 from Ebrary]
- Moi, Toril. "Feminist Literary Criticism." *Modern Literary Theory. A Comparative Introduction*. Ed. Ann Jefferson and David Robey. London: B.T. Batsford, 1986.
- Morris, Pam. *Kirjallisuus ja feminismit*. Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1993.
- Munt, Sally R. *Murder by the Book? Feminism and the Crime Novel*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

- Nelson, Cary. "Men, Feminism: The Materiality of Discourse." *Men and Feminism*. Ed Alice Jardine and Paul Smith. New York and London: Methuen, 1987.
- Ovaska, Tuulevi. "'Sinustahan on tulossa kauhea feministi!'" Feminismit ja feministit Amanda Crossin dekkarissa Ainokaisen kuolema." *Murha pukee naista: Naisdekkareita ja dekkarinaisia*. Ed. Ritva Hapuli and Johanna Matero. Helsinki: KSL-kirjat, 1997.
- Palmer, Jerry. *Potboilers: Methods, Concepts and Case Studies in Popular Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Radford, Jill and Stanko, Elizabeth, A. "Violence against Women and Children: The Contradictions of Crime Control under Patriarchy." *Women, Violence and Male Power: Feminist Activism, Research and Practice*. Ed. Marianne Hester, Liz Kelly and Jill Radford. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997.
- Reddy, Maureen. *Sisters in Crime: Feminism and the Crime Novel*. New York: Continuum, 1988.
- Robbins, Ruth. *Literary Feminisms*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000.
- Scaggs, John. *Crime Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Critical Cross-Dressing; Male Feminists and the Woman of the Year." *Men and Feminism*. Ed Alice Jardine and Paul Smith. New York and London: Methuen, 1987.
- Showalter, Elaine, ed. *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*. London: Virago, 1986.
- Skrapec, Candice. "The Female Serial Killer. An Evolving Criminality." *Moving Targets: Women, Murder and Representation*. Ed. Helen Birch. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1994.
- Smith, Paul. "Men in Feminism: Men and Feminist Theory." *Men and Feminism*. Ed. Alice Jardine and Paul Smith. New York and London: Methuen, 1987.
- Stanko, Elizabeth, A. "Reading Danger: Sexual Harassment, Anticipation and Self-Protection." *Women, Violence and Male Power: Feminist Activism, Research and Practice*. Ed. Marianne Hester, Liz Kelly and Jill Radford. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997.
- Stone, Alison. "Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Philosophy." *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 2004, Vol.1, Iss.2, 135-153. [Accessed 16.3.2008 from EBSCOhost]
- Tenkanen, Henna. "Uusi Uljas Naisetsivä Leena Lehtolaisen Dekkareissa *Ensimmäinen Murhani ja Luminainen*." *Murha pukee naista: Naisdekkareita ja dekkarinaisia*. Ed. Ritva Hapuli and Johanna Matero. Helsinki: KSL-kirjat, 1997.
- Todd, Janet. *Women's Friendship in Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.
- Vanacker, Sabine. "V.I. Warshawski, Kinsey Millhone and Kay Scarpetta: Creating a Feminist Detective Hero." *Criminal Proceedings: The Contemporary American Crime Novel*. Ed. Peter Messent. London: Pluto Press, 1997.

Walton, Pricilla L. & Jones, Manina. *Detective Agency: Women Rewriting the Hard-Boiled Tradition*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1999.

Widdowson, Peter. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary theory*. Harvester Wheatsheaf: New York, 1993.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics." *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2006. [Accessed 6.3.2008 from EBSCOhost].