Hard-Boiled Ideology and the Woman Detective – Challenging the Idealization of Masculinity, Whiteness and Heterosexuality in Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski Novels

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Tutkielmani tarkoituksena on tarkastella, kuinka kovaksikeitetyn dekkarin tyypillisimmät piirteet, maskuliinisuus, heteroseksuaalisuus ja valkoisuus, ilmenevät amerikkalaisen Sara Paretskyn V.I. Warshawski -romaaneissa. Kovaksikeitetty dekkari on perinteisesti ollut hyvin maskuliininen ja miesten hallitsema kirjallisuudenlaji, ja pyrkimykseni onkin selvittää, millä tavoin Paretskyn naiskirjailijana, ja toisaalta V.I. Warshawskin naisetsivänä, voidaan nähdä muokkaavan kyseisen kirjallisuudenlajin konventioita ja kyseenalaistavan sen arvoja. Tutkimukseni kohteena ovat pääasiassa 12-osaisen sarjan romaanit *Hard Time* (1999) ja *Blacklist* (2003).

Tutkielmani teoreettisena kehyksenä toimivat feministinen kirjallisuudentutkimus ja valkoisuuden tutkimus. Koska tutkielmassani keskeistä on se, kuinka Paretsky muokkaa kovaksikeitetyn dekkarin konventioita, käsittelen teorialuvussani myös kyseisen lajityypin historiaa ja tyypillisimpiä piirteitä. Feminististä kirjallisuudentutkimusta käsitellessäni tarkastelen jonkin verran myös maskuliinisuuden tutkimusta, erityisesti hegemonisen maskuliinisuuden käsitettä.

Analyysiosiossa tarkastelen ensin Paretskyn romaanien suhtautumista maskuliinisuuteen. Käsittelen esimerkiksi romaaneissa esiintyvää seksismiä ja väkivaltaa ja tutkin, voiko näitä piirteitä yhä pitää osoituksena lajityypin perinteisestä maskuliinisuuden ihannoinnista, vai onko niiden käsittelytavassa jotakin sellaista, jonka voitaisiin katsoa kritisoivan tuota ihannointia. Koska muista ihmisistä eristäytyminen ja yksin toimiminen ovat tärkeä osa perinteisen kovaksikeitetyn miesetsivän maskuliinisuutta, käsittelen tässä luvussa myös V.I. Warshawskin sosiaalista verkostoa, eli hänen ystäviään ja perhettään, sillä juuri tuon sosiaalisen verkoston merkitys tälle naisetsivälle erottaa hänet merkittävällä tavalla tämän kirjallisuudenlajin tyypillisestä sankarista.

Toinen analyysilukuni keskittyy tarkastelemaan valkoisuutta. Tässä luvussa käsittelen esimerkiksi sitä, kuinka tietoinen Warshawski itse on omasta valkoisuudestaan ja valkoisen ihonvärin tuomista eduista. Päähenkilön valkoisuudesta huolimatta romaaneissa kiinnitetään paljon huomiota rotujen väliseen epätasa-arvoon, ja tässä luvussa käsittelenkin myös romaaneissa usein toistuvaa teemaa, rasismia, ja sitä miten rasismi nähdään niissä suurena yhteiskunnallisena ongelmana. Tarkastelun alla ovat myös romaaneissa esiintyvät ei-valkoiset henkilöt ja Warshawskin oma etninen tausta, joiden voidaan nähdä omalta osaltaan haastavan kovaksikeitetylle dekkarille tyypillistä valkoisuuden ihannointia.

Viimeisessä analyysiluvussa tarkastelen Paretskyn romaanien suhtautumista hetero- ja homoseksuaalisuuteen. Tutkin muun muassa sitä, millä tavoin heteronormatiivisuus ja heteroseksismi romaaneissa ilmenevät ja millä tavoin ne mahdollisesti kyseenalaistetaan. Käsittelen Warshawskin omaa heteroseksuaalisuutta, romaaneissa esiintyviä homoseksuaalisia henkilöitä sekä Warshawskin ja muiden heteroseksuaalisten hahmojen suhtautumista homoseksuaalisuuteen.

Avainsanat: kovaksikeitetty dekkari, geneeriset konventiot, naisetsivä, maskuliinisuus, valkoisuus, heteroseksuaalisuus, Paretsky

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1. Introduction

The aim of my pro gradu thesis is to examine the hard-boiled detective novels *Hard Time* (1999) and *Blacklist* (2003) by the American author Sara Paretsky (b. 1947), whose novels feature a Chicagoan female private eye Victoria Iphigenia (V.I.) Warshawski. In *Traces, Codes, and Clues*, Maureen T. Reddy makes the claim that the most central and most characteristic features in hard-boiled detective fiction have traditionally been masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality.[1] The purpose of my thesis is to examine what happens to these features in Paretsky's novels. In what ways does Paretsky challenge this so called hard-boiled ideology, the idealization of masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality, and, on the other hand, in what ways are these features still present in her stories? The underlying theme in my thesis, therefore, is the relationship between gender and genre, which means that through the novels by Sara Paretsky, I will be exploring the effects a woman writer and a female detective have on hard-boiled detective fiction, the changes they make, the new themes which are introduced and whether or not these changes and themes can be seen to challenge the idealization of masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality found in traditional male-authored hard-boiled detective fiction.

There is much debate, especially among feminist literary critics, over whether women authors with their women detectives are genuinely able to rewrite the genre of hard-boiled detective fiction and challenge its hyper-masculine conventions. Kathleen Gregory Klein, for instance, argues that the conventional private eye formula is incompatible with feminist issues, because it is "based on a world whose sex/gender valuations reinforce male hegemony . . . [and] the genre defines its parameters to exclude female characters."[2] She goes on to say that having a professional female detective as the protagonist contradicts the formula, which means that either the formula itself or the

[1] Reddy, 2003, p. 7.
[2] Klein, 1988, p. 225.

feminist questions raised by the female protagonist are at risk.[3] In other words, they cannot exist together. Klein seems to think that it is impossible for a woman writer to alter the conventions of the genre and still remain within its boundaries.

In her essay "The Feminist Counter-Tradition in Crime" (1990), Maureen Reddy argues along similar lines that all feminist crime novels should be treated as forming a totally new genre, a distinct counter-tradition, as opposed to considering them to be rewritings of the male-dominated genre of hard-boiled detective fiction.[4] However, the positions taken by Klein and Reddy seem to ignore the idea of feminist women writers altering generic conventions to suit their own purposes, or at least condemn such attempts impossible. Priscilla Walton and Manina Jones criticise Reddy's views by saying that the idea of a counter-tradition "might be interpreted as a strategic evasion of the problematics of generic revision, one that defuses important questions of reversal and resistance."[5] Reddy avoids dealing with the possible problems these women writers face when trying to rewrite a very masculinist genre, such as the question of which conventions are the most persistent and the most difficult to change, and what kind of implications such difficulties have on the stories by women writers. In *Traces* as well, Reddy says that "by rewriting the hard-boiled to include those conventionally silenced by it," feminist writers (and writers of colour) "have created work so substantively different from the traditional hard-boiled form that the term *hard-boiled* no longer accurately applies."[6] By excluding feminist writers from the traditionally masculine genre of hard-boiled detective fiction, Reddy fails to address the issue of how these women writers apply a new, previously hidden female perspective to the genre and thus put into question the masculine values of the tradition. Generic revision is exactly what my research is about, and my aim is to examine the degree to which Paretsky's hard-boiled novels succeed in resisting and challenging the traditional conventions of the genre while at the same time forming a part of it.

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[3] Klein, 1988, p. 225.
[4] Reddy, 1990, p. 174.
[5] Walton and Jones, 1999, p. 91.
[6] Reddy, 2003, p. 15.

Although the female hard-boiled detectives did not emerge until the late 1970s and early 1980s, the 1930s and 1940s saw a significant increase in the number of female investigators in the genre of detective fiction in general, and since then women writers have introduced a number of new themes to the genre: sexism was already an issue in the 1930s, family became a central theme in the 1950s when women were "increasingly confined to the role of wife and mother,"[7] sexual violence became an important issue in the 1960s through the novels of Ruth Rendell, for instance, and racism and the importance of social networks became central in the 1980s, strongly influenced by the emergence of writers of colour. In the 1970s and the 1980s, feminism had a significant impact on the genre, as pointed out by Reddy.[8] These decades witnessed the emergence of woman-created female hard-boiled detectives, such as Marcia Muller's Sharon McCone (1977), Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone (1982) and Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski (1982). According to Walton and Jones, women-authored hard-boiled detective fiction can merit the label "feminist", because "it admits the possibility of altering the 'generic' – and *gendered* – conventions of both literary and social behavior."[9] In the case of Sara Paretsky, altering these generic and gendered conventions has been on the agenda from the very beginning, since after reading the works of Raymond Chandler, she "began to imagine a woman private eye who could overturn some of the stereotypes about women that pervade the work of Chandler and other noir novelists."[10] The aforementioned themes which have been introduced to the genre of detective fiction by women, such as sexism, family, sexual violence, racism and social networks are central in Paretsky's novels as well, and they, together with the character of Paretsky's female detective and the crimes she investigates, can be seen to challenge, at least to some extent, the traditional idealization of masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality found in male-authored hard-boiled detective fiction.

When it comes to the feminist aspects of Paretsky's novels, the majority of the critics who

[7] Munt, 1994, p. 17.
[8] Reddy, 1988, p. 2.
[9] Walton and Jones, 1999, p. 46.
[10] Dilley, 1998, p. 20.

have so far discussed the novels have mainly concentrated on issues such as the strong and independent female protagonist and the focus on women's issues, although there are many conflicting views as to whether the novels can actually be called feminist or whether they are only superficially challenging the masculine values of the genre. Where Walton and Jones clearly consider Paretsky's hard-boiled novels feminist, Klein, for instance, is of a different opinion, although she admits that Paretsky "comes closer than any other novelist to writing a feminist private eye novel."[11] Gill Plain also criticises Paretsky's attempts to write feminist fiction by saying that her novels succeed only superficially in creating a fantasy of feminist agency.[12]

The question of challenging the idealization of whiteness or heterosexuality, on the other hand, has not been widely discussed in connection with Paretsky's novels, which is quite understandable since the point of view in the novels is the one of V.I. Warshawski, who is both white and heterosexual. Reddy mentions the subject of whiteness briefly in her discussion of Paretsky,[13] but does not explore the matter further. I intend to include all these three aspects to my study and through them discuss the elements in Paretsky's novels which challenge the notion of hard-boiled ideology as a whole, instead of merely discussing whether V.I. Warshawski is a truly subversive feminist character or only "Philip Marlowe in drag,"[14] which has been done quite extensively in previous studies. I will be using feminist literary criticism as the frame for my discussion, because the key element in the research is the way the hard-boiled ideology is questioned as a result of a female writer and a female detective. The field of genre studies is naturally important as well, because I will discuss the ways in which Sara Paretsky rewrites a genre. I consider Paretsky's novels to be hard-boiled, which is a generally accepted view among scholars who have studied detective fiction, such as Vanacker, Walton and Jones, Dilley and Moore. As Vanacker puts it, "Typical for the genre, the Warshawski novels are detailed and devoted pictures

[11] Klein, 1988, p. 215.
[12] Plain, 2001, p. 142.
[13] Reddy, 2003, pp. 130-31.
[14] Geeson, 1993, p. 116.

of the city in which she works (Chicago), and they excel in the nail-biting description of life-threatening adventures. . . ."[15] In chapter two, therefore, I will discuss the development and conventions of hard-boiled detective fiction, since Paretsky's novels are a part of the genre and the main question in my research is the way she alters and challenges its conventions and characteristics. In addition to feminist literary criticism and genre studies, the theoretical discussion in chapter two will also include a section on the study of whiteness, since analysing whiteness in Paretsky's novels forms a significant part of my thesis.

Sara Paretsky's female private investigator V.I. Warshawski has so far appeared in twelve novels, ranging from *Indemnity Only* (1982) to *Fire Sale* (2005). In the analysis part of my thesis, I am going to concentrate on two of these novels, *Hard Time* (1999) and *Blacklist* (2003). I am going to examine the ways in which the three traditional features of hard-boiled detective fiction mentioned by Reddy, namely masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality, are present in these two novels, whether the features can still be considered ideal, and if not, what specific methods Paretsky uses to challenge their idealization. Although my main focus is going to be on *Hard Time* and *Blacklist*, I will occasionally draw examples from other novels in the series as well, mainly in order to give background information on the character of V.I. Warshawski or to demonstrate development, either in the character of the detective or in the novels' general themes. I have chosen *Hard Time* and *Blacklist* for my closer analysis because I believe their plotlines and characters provide good material for analysing all of the three aspects in my study. *Hard Time* centres round the death of a female Filipino immigrant, and the plot involves such issues as the power relations between men and women, for example in the form of male guards and women prisoners. The death of an African-American journalist and the disappearance of an Egyptian boy in *Blacklist*, on the other hand, bring forward the issue of racism, and the plotline and characters also provide material for analysing the heterosexuality aspect of hard-boiled ideology. Another reason for why I chose

[15] Vanacker, 1997, p. 64.

these two novels for my analysis is that they are relatively new and thus have not been studied as extensively as the earlier novels in the series.

I have divided my analysis of the novels into three chapters. In the first chapter I am going to consider Paretsky's novels' attitude to masculinity. I am going to do this by discussing such issues as sexism, violence and the importance of family and friends, which are all central and recurrent themes in Paretsky's stories. Sexism and violence are also typical in the traditional male-written hard-boiled detective fiction, and I am going to examine the possible ways in which Paretsky's treatment of these issues differs from the tradition. I am going to discuss, for example, whether the toughness and violence found in the novels can still be considered representatives of the genre's masculine values, or whether there is something different about the violence in Paretsky's novels that might even be seen as a criticism of those values. It is clear that Paretsky's female detective, V.I. Warshawski, has some similarities with the traditional tough and autonomous masculine hero, but she also differs from the typical hero in many ways, which include her strong commitment to her friends. My aim is to examine whether those differences are enough to seriously question the traditional idealization of masculinity and masculine values in the genre. In this chapter my main focus is going to be on *Hard Time*.

The second chapter of my analysis focuses on the question of whiteness. Reddy states that the dominant consciousness in hard-boiled fiction is "indisputably a white consciousness,"[16] which echoes Liam Kennedy's notion of the genre as being essentially a white genre which "adopt[s] a parasitic relationship to blackness."[17] The consciousness can still be called white in Paretsky's novels because the protagonist is white and the stories are told from her point of view, i.e. the world is seen from a white perspective. However, there is a difference between a white consciousness of this kind and idealization of whiteness or treating whiteness as a superior quality. Traditional hard-boiled detective fiction idealizes whiteness by treating all racial others as inferior and representing

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[16] Reddy, 2003, p. 9.
[17] Kennedy, 1999, p. 224.

them as a threat to the white society represented by the detective, and this truly makes the narratives' relationship to blacks (and other ethnic minorities) parasitic. Paretsky's novels, however, have non-white characters in a variety of roles, and they also address issues such as racism and ethnic discrimination as problems in the society, rather than treating them as ordinary and justified or, worse, ignoring their existence completely. In the second chapter of my analysis I am first going to examine the idea of white privilege and what the existence of white privilege in the novels means in connection to the idealization and superiority of whiteness. Then I will move on to discuss racism and the presence of non-white characters in the V.I. Warshawski novels, and see whether the novels' attitude towards racism and their treatment of non-white characters can be considered to challenge the traditional idealization of whiteness found in the genre. Ethnicity is also a constant theme in the novels because of Warshawski's own Polish-Italian origins, and therefore the ethnic background of the detective will also be under discussion in my study. In this chapter my main focus is going to be on the plotline and characters of *Blacklist*.

In the third and final chapter of the analysis, I am going to consider the third characteristic feature of hard-boiled detective fiction, namely the idealization of heterosexuality. At first glance it seems that this feature is the one least challenged by Paretsky, since her protagonist is heterosexual and homosexuality is not as common or central a theme in the novels as sexism and racism, for example. In this chapter, I am first going to discuss the sexuality of the detective herself, and see whether her sexuality can be seen as somehow different from the male detectives' sexuality, even though both Warshawski and her male predecessors are heterosexual. I am also going to examine how Warshawski's sexuality relates to the idea of heteronormativity, "the normative status of heterosexuality,"[18] and whether or not her sexuality does anything to question the heterosexual norm. An important issue to consider when discussing the sexuality of the detective is also the idea of a sexually active woman in the genre of hard-boiled detective fiction, which is greatly changed in

[18] Jackson, 1999, p. 163.

the work of Sara Paretsky. As the writer herself has said in an interview with Linda Richards (in 2001), she wanted to create a strong female character "who could be a whole person, which meant that she could be a sexual person without being evil."[19] V.I. Warshawski is, therefore, a sexually active good woman character, when traditionally the only sexually active women in the hard-boiled have been dangerous femme fatales, who use their sexuality in seducing and betraying the good male detective. The sexuality of the detective is, as a result, important when considering how Paretsky challenges the genre's conventions, even though the detective is heterosexual like her male predecessors.

In addition to the sexuality of the detective, I am also going to discuss the ways in which homosexuality is present in the novels. As noted above, homosexuality is not a very common or central a theme in the novels, but it is worth noting that when there are homosexual characters in the stories, they are treated very differently than in the traditional hard-boiled stories, especially by the detective. They are not considered to be evil, untrustworthy and perverse simply because of their sexuality. At the level of the plot, homosexual characters are not automatically the villains or a threat to the detective. This does not mean that homophobia does not exist in the novels, but that homophobia is addressed as a problem and as something to be condemned. When I discuss the homosexual characters in Paretsky's novels, I will also examine some attitudes different people in the novels, including the detective, have towards homosexuality. I will see whether or not these attitudes can be considered heterosexist or heteronormative, and if so, whether or not Paretsky does anything to question such attitudes. In this third chapter of my analysis of the V.I. Warshawski novels, therefore, I am going to examine whether or not V.I.'s sexuality and her sexual behaviour, the few homosexual characters and the stories' overall attitude towards homosexuality are enough to challenge the traditional idealization of heterosexuality found in the genre.

[19] http://www.januarymagazine.com/profiles/paretsky.html

2. Theoretical Background

In this chapter I am going to present the theoretical frame for my thesis. Since the underlying theme in my research is the relationship between gender and genre, I am going to discuss that relationship by using the terms and concepts provided by feminist literary criticism and genre studies. The first section in this chapter deals with feminist literary criticism which is the main theoretical frame in my thesis, because the purpose is to examine a female writer writing about a female protagonist in a very masculine genre. In particular, feminist literary criticism provides concepts for my forthcoming analysis on the attitude towards masculinity in Paretsky's novels. Since the concept of masculinity itself is central to this analysis, the first section will also deal with the terms and concepts of masculinity studies. The second section discusses both the concept of genre in general and the genre of hard-boiled detective fiction in particular. This discussion provides the general background for my research on whether or not Paretsky is able to challenge the conventions of the genre and still remain within its boundaries. The third and final section in this chapter deals with the study of whiteness, a theoretical field which will provide the terms and ideas useful to my analysis on what happens to the genre's traditional idealization of whiteness in the V.I. Warshawski novels.

2.1 Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism is a very diverse field and therefore applying a single feminist theory is impossible. Traditionally, the field has been divided into Anglo-American and French criticism. Whereas Anglo-American critics have focused on such issues as male writers' images of women (feminist critique) or female writers and female experience (gynocriticism), French critics concentrate on language, representation, psychology and philosophical issues. My intention is not to use only one of these two movements as the frame for my thesis, because they both provide tools, ideas and concepts which are useful to my study. I will, for example, discuss the ideas of the Anglo-

American critic Elaine Showalter, but also refer to French critics such as Mary Eagleton, Toril Moi, Catherine Clément and Hélène Cixous.

One term which has always been significant in feminist criticism is ‘gender’, as pointed out by Showalter.[20] The division between gender and sex, which was first discussed in the 1970s, is a central issue in feminist thought as Eagleton says in her definition of ‘gender’: “Feminists stress the distinction between ‘sex’, a matter of biology, and ‘gender’, the social construction of our concepts of masculinity and femininity.”[21] What this means, in Moi’s words, is that though “women undoubtedly are *female*, this in no way guarantees that they will be *feminine*.”[22] ‘Feminine’ and ‘masculine’ are cultural and social constructs which do not follow naturally from sex. This is significant in connection with my analysis of the role of masculinity in Paretsky’s novels. If the traditional idealization of masculinity in hard-boiled detective fiction is to be challenged, it is not enough to replace the traditional male detective with a female one. Changing the sex of the detective hero does not automatically mean that the overt masculinity of the traditional hero is questioned. As Cranny-Francis puts it, the female detective “should not operate as a male detective in drag, but should bring female characteristics to the role which transform it.”[23]

From the mid-1970s onwards, Anglo-American criticism was mostly concerned with the specificity of women’s writing, a tradition of women authors and an exploration of women’s culture. This approach was named ‘gynocriticism’ by Elaine Showalter.[24] The purpose of gynocriticism was “to construct a female framework for the analysis of women’s literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories.”[25] From this period comes the idea of sisterhood between women, which meant that all women – writers, readers and characters – could assert a collective identity as ‘we women’. It

[20] Showalter, 1989, p. 4.
[21] Eagleton, 1991, p. 227.
[22] Moi, 1985, p. 65.
[23] Cranny-Francis, 1990, p. 166.
[24] Showalter, 1986, pp. 128-9.
[25] *ibid*., p. 131.

implied that there is a certain female core which is shared by all women. In the late 1970s and early 1980s feminist critics also started to study relationships between women, “including mothers and daughters, sisters, friends, lesbians and female communities,”[26] which were rarely portrayed in fiction written by men. The relationships between women, the community of women, are essential in my research of Paretsky’s novels as well because of the importance of family and a social network for the female detective, and I will also explore the nature of the sisterhood between women found in the novels. Perhaps even more important, however, are the differences between women, which started to become an issue in feminist literary criticism also in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, when women of colour and lesbian women expressed their dissatisfaction with the white, heterosexual mainstream criticism. The issues to consider, therefore, include not only the unity and bond between women, but also the things that make them different from each other, such as race, class and ethnicity. This stress on differences is also an idea to be examined in the analysis part of my thesis.

Patriarchy and sexism are two concepts often referred to in feminist criticism because they signify men’s domination over women and the idealization of masculine values in society. Mary Eagleton’s definition of patriarchy is that it is a “social system which ensures the dominance of men and the subordination of women,”[27] which entails, for example, that women are denied the positions of power in society and their existence is limited to the roles of wife and mother. Instead of ‘patriarchy’, however, I will hereafter use the term ‘hegemonic masculinity’, which is a term used in contemporary masculinity studies and preferred in current critical discourse. According to R.W. Connell, hegemonic masculinity “can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of

[26] Kaplan, 1985, p. 52.
[27] Eagleton, 1991, p. 228.

women."[28] Hegemonic masculinity, in other words, entails the patriarchal values of treating women as inferior. Therefore sexism, behaviour which encourages stereotypes of sex-based social roles, can be seen as an integral part of hegemonic masculinity.

As stated by Connell, "With growing recognition of the interplay between gender, race and class it has become common to recognize multiple masculinities: black as well as white, working-class as well as middle-class."[29] It is important to note, therefore, that since hegemonic masculinity is "attributed chiefly to privileged white heterosexual men,"[30] it does not only subordinate women but also homosexual men and men of colour, i.e. other kinds of masculinities. Therefore the issues of heterosexism, heteronormativity and racism are also connected to hegemonic masculinity. Heteronormativity, as pointed out by Gust A. Yep, is "the invisible center and the presumed bedrock of society, [and thus] the quintessential force creating, sustaining, and perpetuating the erasure, marginalization, disempowerment, and oppression of sexual others."[31] Yep adds that "Heteronormativity makes heterosexuality hegemonic through the process of normalization,"[32] i.e. heterosexuality is treated as the good, moral and superior form of sexuality, a standard against which all other sexual varieties are measured. The struggle against patriarchy, sexism, heterosexism, heteronormativity and racism, and therefore the struggle against the idealization of the values of hegemonic masculinity, form a central part of feminist literary criticism and the feminist movement in general, as well as the object of my study, the novels by Sara Paretsky.

The French critic Toril Moi argues that the struggle against sexism, which, according to her, is what Elaine Showalter's criticism is limited to, is not enough: she believes in combating capitalism and fascism as well.[33] Catherine Clément is also of the opinion that the cultural oppression of women "coincides with economic evolution and is accentuated by the development of

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[28] Connell, 2005, p. 77.
[29] *ibid.*, p. 76.
[30] Kegan Gardiner, 2002, p. 13.
[31] Yep, 2003, p. 18.
[32] *ibid.*
[33] Moi, 1985, p. 6.

capitalism."[34] Indeed, when discussing the power relations between men and women, one must also consider the economic circumstances in which women and men live. This approach is called materialist-feminist criticism. As Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt point out, most feminist criticism shares the materialist assumption that gender is socially constructed, but materialist-feminist criticism is committed to material analysis out of its concern with the economic as well.[35] The connection that materialist feminism makes between oppression and the economic circumstances in society is central to my study for one important reason: there is a link in Paretsky's novels between masculine values and the power of money, the majority of the criminals being rich and influential (white) men, who abuse their high position in society. Since materialist feminism views men and women not only in terms of gender ideology and relations but also in terms of class and race ideologies and sexual identification,[36] its approach and ideas are useful in my analysis of masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality in Paretsky's novels.

A field closely related to feminist criticism which is also important to my research is gender studies. It is an interdisciplinary field which began to develop during the early 1980s, and in feminist criticism it marked "a shift from the women-centered investigations of the 1970s . . . to the study of gender relations involving both women and men."[37] Eagleton defines gender studies as "A study of the construction and meanings of masculinity and femininity in history and culture."[38] Gender studies examines gender through different kinds of institutions which are also essential in my study of the Paretsky novels. Institution in this case means "a set of relationships and/or practices which are expressions of mainstream social values and beliefs."[39] These include, for example, the family, patriarchy (or hegemonic masculinity) and heterosexuality. In the case of the family, "contemporary Western societies tend (in most cases) to favour the bourgeois nuclear

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[34] Clément in Eagleton (ed.), 1991, p. 116.
[35] Newton and Rosenfelt, 1985, p. xviii.
[36] *ibid.*, p. xxvi.
[37] Showalter, 1989, p. 2.
[38] Eagleton, 1991, p. 227.
[39] Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 13.

family,"[40] thus making it difficult for any alternative family formations to operate. Hegemonic masculinity, on the other hand, "consists of the current practices and ways of thinking which authorize, make valid and legitimize the dominant position of men and the subordination of women."[41] In the case of heterosexuality, what is interesting from the point of view of gender studies is the power of compulsory heterosexuality. As Cranny-Francis et al. put it, for those men and women who do not conform to its demands, "compulsory heterosexuality acts as a mechanism of exclusion and oppression, because it consistently constructs them as outsiders, aberrant and bad."[42]

As demonstrated by the concept of hegemonic masculinity, the socially constructed gender roles – masculine and feminine – are connected to the idea of power. As Showalter puts it, "gender is not only a question of *difference*, which assumes that the sexes are separate and equal; but of *power*, since in looking at the history of gender relations, we find sexual asymmetry, inequality, and male dominance in every known society."[43] These gender roles have been a way of oppressing women, because traditionally the masculine values and ways of thinking have been privileged over the feminine. This, in turn, has made it possible for men to take positions of power in society, while women have been pushed to the margins. The oppression of women is therefore based on this basic binary opposition of male/female, masculine/feminine, where female and feminine are considered the negative poles. Hélène Cixous has mapped out other binary oppositions where the first term, associated with male and masculine, is privileged over the second term. These include activity/passivity, culture/nature, father/mother, head/heart and intelligible/sensitive.[44] The traditional hard-boiled could easily be seen as emphasising such qualities as activity, reason and intelligence, and therefore highlighting the idealization of masculinity as well. In the forthcoming analysis I will explore these binary oppositions in connection to the female detective and examine

[40] *ibid*., p. 13.
[41] *ibid*., p. 16.
[42] *ibid*., p. 19.
[43] Showalter, 1989, p. 4.
[44] Greene and Kahn, 1985, p. 82.

whether the qualities of a female hero question the presumed superiority of masculinity.

The bond between women as well as the differences between them, traditional gender roles, gender-based oppression and power, hegemonic masculinity and also sexism are the key notions in my analysis of what happens to the idealization of masculinity in Sara Paretsky's novels. Heterosexism and heteronormativity will be the two central concepts in my analysis of whether or not heterosexuality is treated as the ideal form of sexuality in Paretsky's novels. This section of the theoretical discussion was devoted to the issue of gender, and in the following section I will turn my attention to the notion of genre. First I will discuss genre in more general terms, and then I will turn my focus on hard-boiled detective fiction.

2.2 Genre: The Tradition of Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction

According to John Frow, genre means an "organisation of texts with thematic, rhetorical and formal dimensions."[45] The thematic dimension includes, for example, recurrent topics of discourse or recurrent forms of argumentation, the rhetorical dimension has to do with speech situations, the relations between the senders and receivers of messages, and the formal dimension includes, for instance, the properties of grammar and syntax or such basic choices as whether texts in the particular genre are normally long or short.[46] All of these three dimensions form a part in constituting a genre, but Frow also points out that different genres give a different weight to each of the dimensions.[47] In addition to how genres are formed, another one of Frow's basic arguments is that texts "do not 'belong' to genres but are, rather, uses of them."[48] This means that particular texts do not merely have uses which are mapped out in advance by the genre, but they are, rather, performances of "the norms and conventions which form them and which they may, in turn,

[45] Frow, 2006, p. 67.
[46] *ibid.*, pp. 74-5.
[47] *ibid.*, p. 77.
[48] *ibid.*, p. 2.

transform."[49] What this suggests is that texts always modify a genre to a certain extent by using its conventions and characteristics. In contrast to what Maureen Reddy seems to argue in the case of hard-boiled detective fiction (cf. chapter 1), genre should not, therefore, be considered a closed space where no changes can be made. Helen Carr also points out that genres should not be thought of as a set of rules that should be followed, but rather as a framework.[50] Genres affect texts but texts also affect genres. The genre which is under revision and modification in Sara Paretsky's novels is hard-boiled detective fiction, and therefore I will continue my discussion of genre by describing the development and characteristics of the hard-boiled.

The hard-boiled detective story started to develop in the United States during the 1920s when the emerging urbanity and the spirit of individual achievement "rendered the British country-house murder inappropriate."[51] The hard-boiled detective story is characterized by action, violence, moral decay and corruption. The emphasis is on the investigation of the crime and adventure, the setting is often urban and the detective is a private investigator. One publication became essential in marketing the hard-boiled crime story in the USA, and that was *Black Mask* magazine, which was founded in 1920 by H.L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan. According to Kathleen Gregory Klein, the hard-boiled detective was created by Carroll John Daly for *Black Mask* in 1923,[52] but perhaps the greatest contributor to the magazine in the 1920s was Dashiell Hammett, whose male private eye Sam Spade is usually considered to be the prototype of the hard-boiled detective. As William F. Nolan puts it, "Hammett brought depth of character, realism, and literary values unmatched by any other writer to the pages of the *Mask*."[53] Daly's *The Snarl of the Beast* (1927) and Hammett's *Red Harvest* (1929) have been seen as the first two hard-boiled detective fiction novels, although it should be mentioned that instead of Spade, *Red Harvest* features Hammett's second well-known detective, the unnamed Continental Op. In addition to Hammett's Sam Spade, the most typical

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[49] *ibid*., p. 25.
[50] Carr, 1989, p. 6.
[51] Munt, 1994, p. 2.
[52] Klein, 1988, p. 122.
[53] Nolan, 1985, p. 75.

hard-boiled male private eyes include Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe and Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer (first appearances in 1939 and 1947, respectively). These detectives are tough loners who battle against urban chaos and are typically betrayed by a "femme fatale", the mysterious female. Linda Mizejewski's description of the hard-boiled detective draws together some of the genre's most typical elements: "Danger, deadly women, tests of wit, and macho personas – add guns, booze, and reckless bravado, and the testosterone-driven model of this hero is complete."[54]

The idealization of masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality is shown in many ways in the traditional hard-boiled stories. The detective is tough in both his talk and his actions, he uses violence excessively and suffers multiple beatings without confessing to pain or showing any signs of vulnerability. For Raymond Chandler, the masculinity of hard-boiled fiction was important, because he wanted to separate this new, realistic American tradition from the "feminized mysteries of the British tradition."[55] The white, heterosexual male detective represents the ideal, and the people who do not meet the criteria, i.e. women, racial others and homosexuals, are present in the stories only to make the superiority of the male detective clearer. As Bethany Ogdon puts it, hard-boiled narratives "essentially revolve around demeaning descriptions of these other people," and that these descriptions "serve to construct a mirror against which a hyper-masculine identity appears."[56] As far as the idealized protagonist himself is concerned, Jopi Nyman points out that he "shows his contempt for all characters who deviate from the admired form of behaviour," and does this by "locat[ing] women, ethnics, and homosexuals in the category of the Other where they can be despised and attacked."[57]

One important aspect of the hard-boiled male detective's character is his solitariness and emotional detachment from other people. Cranny-Francis describes Chandler's Marlowe as being "a tough guy who combines the hardy independence of the cowboy with the eccentric isolation of the

[54] Mizejewski, 2004, p. 17.
[55] Horsley, 2005, p. 67.
[56] Ogdon, 1992, p. 76.
[57] Nyman, 1998, p. 110.

nineteenth-century detective [such as Sherlock Holmes]."[58] The traditional hard-boiled detective does not need other people and, for example, has no friends or family. The heavily individualist nature of hard-boiled detective fiction is expressed by the fact that "the private eye operates alone, judges others by himself, [and] shares no one's values and mores," as pointed out by Stephen Knight.[59] In addition, the values and mores of the detective are made central in hard-boiled detective fiction through the use of first person narration, which means that the detective usually narrates his own story and is, therefore, the authoritative voice in the novels. As pointed out by Andrew Pepper, through the use of first person narratives, readers are drawn into the detectives' worlds and encouraged, if not compelled, to identify with them.[60] As a result, readers are also encouraged to accept the detective's values, attitudes and opinions as right and justified. Because of the centrality and authority of the detective's voice, the contempt he shows towards women, racial others and homosexuals contributes significantly to the entire novels' negative attitude towards these "others".

According to Maureen Reddy, the women in Chandler's work are either deadly and violent, seductive and dangerous or naive and romantic.[61] The lack of good women characters is evident. She also sums up the characteristics of the hard-boiled criminals by saying that the people who are a threat to the civilization in the stories by Chandler and other hard-boiled writers "tend to be white women and racial Others, as well as wealthy white men whose whiteness and masculinity are always compromised by their consorting with the uncivilizable in hopes of increasing their own wealth and/or power."[62] If the criminal is a white man, he is often depicted as a feminine man in the manner of Frank Dorr, the villain in one of Raymond Chandler's stories, who has "small and very delicate hands,"[63] or revealed to being a homosexual like Wilmer in Dashiell Hammett's *The*

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[58] Cranny-Francis, 1990, p. 152.
[59] Knight, 2004, p. 112.
[60] Pepper, 2000, p. 23.
[61] Reddy, 2003, p. 35.
[62] *ibid*., p. 29.
[63] Raymond Chandler, "Finger Man." p. 88. Quoted in Reddy, 2003, p. 29.

Maltese Falcon (1930). Therefore, all the other characters in traditional hard-boiled detective stories fail to meet the criteria of masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality, leaving the male detective, the hero of the story, as the only representative of the ideal.

The way women and racial others are depicted in the hard-boiled stories of the 1920s and 30s can, at least partly, be explained by the social and historical context of their time of writing. Many changes took place in the American society after the First World War. As mentioned by Jopi Nyman, "many American women had participated in war work in Europe and seen the European way of life without being under strict control all the time."[64] Women also gained the right to vote in 1920 which led to women entering the public sphere that was previously reserved for men. The Great Depression of the 1930s weakened the men's ability to provide for their families, which made them dependent on the salaries of the women, as Nyman points out.[65] It could be said that women were starting to pose a threat to the men and their masculine identity, and the dangerous femme fatale in hard-boiled detective fiction could be seen as a representative of that threat. However, women were not the only ones threatening the prevailing social order. Race was very much at issue during the 1920s when courtrooms placed race-based limitations on citizenship and immigration. The questions of who is counted as white and who is allowed to define racial categories were central. Hard-boiled detective fiction can be seen to reflect these racial concerns when it depicts racial others as the source of evil and a threat to the society. The stories seem to be attempting to strengthen white identity and superiority. As Maureen Reddy puts it, hard-boiled fiction's rise "coincides neatly with widespread anxiety about race and about the difficulties of maintaining the whiteness of the United States."[66] The idealization of masculinity and whiteness in the hard-boiled of the 1920s and 30s might, therefore, be seen as a result of or a reaction to the prevailing social conditions.

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[64] Nyman, 1997, p. 68.
[65] *ibid.*, p. 70.
[66] Reddy, 2003, p. 18.

Changes in society also played a major role in the emergence of women mystery writers' professional female investigators from the 1960s onwards. The expanding opportunities for women that came in the wake of the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s is what Marcia Muller, the creator of the Sharon McCone series, credits as the spark for women mystery writers.[67] More women became police officers, attorneys and business executives, and as Kimberly Dilley notes, "fiction slowly began to reflect women's new roles and struggles, as well as the consequences felt by society."[68] Although several female private investigators were introduced in the 1970s and right at the turn of the decade, such as P.D. James's Cordelia Gray (1972), Muller's McCone (1977) and Liza Cody's Anna Lee (1980), there is much debate among scholars over whether these detectives can be called hard-boiled. Kathleen Gregory Klein, for instance, is of the opinion that James' and Cody's novels are not hard-boiled: "There is a tonal difference in which the violence, although it exists, is more muted and less frequent. . . . Neither [Gray nor Lee] is modelled on Sam Spade; rather than hard-boiled, they are – in a phrase of the eighties – soft-boiled."[69]

The real explosion of hard-boiled female detectives coincided with a change in political climate in the early 1980s. This was the era of President Ronald Reagan, "another Republican president committed to American political conservatism. . . ."[70] This conservatism placed (and continues to place) strong emphasis on family values, which means, for example, the promotion of traditional marriage and the nuclear family and the opposition of same-sex marriage and abortion. In addition to this, Pepper states that "Reagan and his cohorts actively sought to re-inscribe the centrality of the straight, white, male."[71] Walton and Jones point out that one of the by-products of this era "was an escalating antifeminist backlash,"[72] manifested, for instance, by the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982. They add that the "law-and-order" agenda promoted by the

[67] Dilley, 1998, p. 18.
[68] *ibid*., p. 19.
[69] Klein, 1988, p. 160.
[70] Walton and Jones, 1999, p. 189.
[71] Pepper, 2000, p. 32.
[72] Walton and Jones, 1999, p. 189.

conservative government, which required increased funding both to domestic enforcement agencies and to the military, "posed a fundamental threat to freedom and security – especially from the point of view of women (as well as the poor, the aged, and racial and other minority groups), who were arguably victims of both its rhetorical and economic assaults."[73] In this antifeminist, antigay and even racist political environment of the early 1980s, women writers such as Sue Grafton and Sara Paretsky created their hard-boiled female detectives (Kinsey Millhone and V.I. Warshawski, respectively). Since Paretsky's novels, for instance, constantly address such social problems as women's subordination and racism and occasionally deal with homophobia as well, they can be seen as a reaction against this prevailing social and political climate. In addition to these white and heterosexual female detectives, some examples of non-white and lesbian hard-boiled female detectives can also be found, although they are not as common. Sandra Scoppetone's lesbian detective Lauren Laurano (first appearing in *Everything You Have Is Mine*, 1991) and Valerie Wilson Wesley's black detective Tamara Hayle (*When Death Comes Stealing*, 1994) are among these rarer hard-boiled female detectives.

According to Walton and Jones, the evolvement of the women's private eye genre in the 1980s was fuelled by "a nostalgia for the idealistic social action of the 1960s and early 1970s, when the women's movement . . . seemed to hold so much promise for changing both society as a whole and individual lives."[74] Walton and Jones also state that hard-boiled detective fiction generates a 'common space' "in which concerns and social issues can be addressed and negotiated by readers who would not necessarily read about them elsewhere."[75] This common space which they refer to is "the arena of genre."[76] Genre therefore gives women the opportunity to address issues which are important to them, such as sexism and racism, in a way that will reach readers otherwise unreachable to them. The feminist strategy with genre fiction, as pointed out by Cranny-Francis, is

[73] *ibid.*, p. 190.
[74] *ibid.*, p. 34.
[75] *ibid.*, p. 63.
[76] *ibid.*

that "the oppositional or marginal voice is shown to have value and significance."[77] Hard-boiled women crime writers, such as Paretsky, give voice to the traditional others of hard-boiled detective fiction, such as women, racial others and homosexuals. In addition, by having a female detective and using a first person narrative which is typical for the genre, they "situat[e] women inside looking out and in the central position from which to view the world and judge or evaluate events."[78] The women writers of the 1980s adopted the masculine genre of hard-boiled detective fiction and began both altering its conventions and using them to address issues important to women. How these issues and their treatment in Paretsky's case affect the traditional idealization of masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality found in the genre, is the question the forthcoming analysis attempts to answer. Before going into the analysis part of thesis, however, the third and final chapter on theory will deal with the study of whiteness.

2.3 The Study of Whiteness

The study of whiteness developed especially during the 1990s, when, in the United States, scholars started to ask "with increased frequency how the imaginative construction of 'whiteness' had shaped American literature and American history."[79] According to Shelley Fisher Fishkin, one of the most important early works in the study of whiteness was Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992), since it "put the construction of 'whiteness' on the table to be investigated, analyzed, punctured, and probed."[80] As Richard Dyer pointed out in 1997, "There has been an enormous amount of analysis of racial imagery in the past decades . . . [but] until recently a notable absence from such work has been the study of images of white people."[81]

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[77] Cranny-Francis, 1990, p. 20.
[78] Moore, 2006, p. 270.
[79] Fisher Fishkin, 1995, p. 430.
[80] *ibid*.
[81] Dyer, 1997, p. 1.

From the 1990s onwards, the study of whiteness has gathered momentum, for instance, in Britain, Japan, South Africa and Australia, although predominantly it has been a U.S. phenomenon.[82]

The study of whiteness focuses on what it means to be white, how white people perceive their whiteness and what implications whiteness has on their lives. According to David Roediger, "Its first and most critical contribution lies in 'marking' whiteness as a particular – even peculiar – identity, rather than as the presumed norm."[83] One of the key notions in the study of whiteness is white privilege. White privilege entails many things, but perhaps the most important one is that being white means that we do not have to think of ourselves in racial terms at all and often that is the case among white people. Further, as Dyer puts it, the "assumption that white people are just people, which is not far off saying that whites are people whereas other colours are something else, is endemic to white culture."[84] Identifying ourselves only as individuals, 'just people', means that we do not see ourselves as part of a racial group. Because of the fact that race is only applied to those who are non-white, white people have traditionally functioned as a human norm, as Dyer points out.[85] Whiteness being the norm shows in the fact that "whiteness is assumed unless a person is identified otherwise."[86] This is a part of how systemic white privilege works. In my analysis of how white privilege shows in Paretsky's novels, I am going to examine the ways in which white people and non-white people are described and whether whiteness is systematically left unmentioned, which would imply that it is treated as normal and not worth mentioning.

Dyer's notion of whites not considering themselves a part of a racial group is what Barbara Flagg calls the transparency phenomenon: "the tendency of whites not to think about whiteness, or about norms, behaviours, experiences, or perspectives that are white-specific."[87] Flagg is of the opinion that transparency might be a defining characteristic of whiteness: "to be white is not to

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[82] Roediger, 2002, p. 18.
[83] *ibid*., p. 21.
[84] Dyer, 1997, p. 2.
[85] *ibid*., p. 1.
[86] Kendall, 2006, p. 46.
[87] Flagg in Haney Lopéz, 1996, p. 22.

think about it."[88] The concept of transparency is connected to the idea of white privilege mentioned above. It is partly because of the positional privilege of white people that transparency is possible. As Ian Haney Lopéz puts it, "Existing at the center of racial relations, Whites very rarely find themselves burdened by race in a manner that draws this aspect of identity into view . . . the infrequency with which Whites have to think about race is a direct result of how infrequently Whites in fact are racially victimized."[89] White privilege allows us not to think about our whiteness and the advantages we receive because of our whiteness. Dyer points out that when we as white people do something, whether it is good or bad, or achieve something, it is to be explained in terms of our individuality and not our race: "It is intolerable to realise that we may get a job or a nice house, or a helpful response at school or in hospitals, because of our skin colour, not because of the unique, achieving individual we must believe ourselves to be."[90] Part of being white is not realizing what a significant role our race plays in our lives: "We are rarely conscious of how our race opens doors for us on a daily basis."[91] This seems to be at least partly true in the case of Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski as well, since she hardly ever stops to think about the easy access she has to different places, for example large corporations, during her investigations. The ways in which Warshawski does or does not acknowledge her own whiteness will be under close examination in the analysis part of my thesis.

Frances E. Kendall also points out how the supremacy of whiteness is intertwined with immigration law in the USA: "The laws were designed to keep power and control in the hands of white people, so who was white was the pivotal question on which the legal cases were determined."[92] From the 1890s until after the Second World War, immigrants were granted citizenship on the basis of whether they were able to establish their whiteness. Courts based their decisions about who was white and who was not on both common knowledge (anyone can see that

[88] *ibid.*, p. 158.
[89] Haney Lopéz, 1996, p. 158.
[90] Dyer, 1997, p. 9.
[91] Kendall, 2006, p. 92.
[92] *ibid.*, p. 54.

this person is not white) and scientific evidence (e.g. brain size, facial features). Haney Lopéz points out that these court cases established the hierarchical relationship between whites and non-whites: "The prerequisite courts in effect labeled those who were excluded from citizenship (those who were non-white) as inferior; by implication, those who were admitted (White persons) were superior."[93] He also says that white identity "implicitly existed as the positive mirror image to the explicit negative identities imposed on non-Whites."[94] This included seeing white people as civilized, virtuous and law-abiding, and non-white people, especially blacks, as savage, lascivious and criminal, an image which dates from the age of slavery. Haney Lopéz emphasises that these contrasting dualities have survived into our day: "Whites continue to be defined, and to define themselves, as the positive opposite to minorities, even with respect to citizenship and alienage."[95]

According to Kendall, nowadays in the United States there is the "attempt to move toward being 'color-blind'."[96] Haney Lopéz talks about the same phenomenon but uses the term 'race-blindness'. The idea of race-blindness might seem sensible at first glance: "If the words 'White' and 'Black' cannot be spoken without conjuring up destructive racial stereotypes, perhaps these terms should not be used at all."[97] However, as Haney Lopéz points out, race-blindness is perverse: "Although it purports to combat racial stereotypes, it actually leaves racist beliefs intact and attacks instead the efforts to challenge and remake those beliefs."[98] Race will not disappear by the simple act of no one talking about it. On the contrary, Haney Lopéz argues that race-blindness is in fact a racial act:

> In our race-conscious society, the act of enforcing racelessness is itself a racial act. . . . Further, race-blindness is a racial act to the extent that it maintains the status quo, thus serving certain racial group interests and not others. Finally, race-blindness is racialized insofar as its appeal turns on transparency. Race-blindness suits best those who are already accustomed to never thinking about themselves and their social position in racial terms.[99]

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[93] Haney Lopéz, 1996, p. 28.
[94] *ibid.*, p. 167.
[95] *ibid.*
[96] Kendall, 2006, p. 51.
[97] Haney Lopéz, 1996, p. 175.
[98] *ibid.*, p. 179.
[99] *ibid.*

Race-blindness, or colour-blindness, means closing one's eyes from the reality that race is a significant factor in our society: "If we aren't forced to deal with color – ours or others' – we can pretend that we don't live in a society totally stratified by race."[100] Ignoring race only benefits those who are used to not thinking about themselves as part of a racial group – whites.

Another aspect of whiteness and white privilege regards white people's attitude towards racism. According to Kendall, white people are able to choose not to believe that people of colour are treated differently from white people: ". . . we don't want to take the issues of racism seriously; many white people have difficulty accepting that our nation [the United States] has a racial problem."[101] It is easy for whites to ignore racism or diminish the problem of racism because we have not experienced it ourselves: "Never forced to experience or reflect upon the petty indignities and intentional slights of racism, most Whites are free to act in the world with energies undiminished by the anger and self-doubt engendered among racism's victims."[102] Being white often entails closing one's eyes to racism. This, however, is not the case in Paretsky's novels where racism is a recurrent theme and treated as a serious problem in society. White privilege could enable Warshawski to ignore racism but instead she is very much aware of it and constantly fights against it, and that can be seen to challenge the idea of white privilege to some extent.

The final thing I am going to pay attention to concerning the study of whiteness is ethnicity. This is relevant in connection with Paretsky's novels since Warshawski herself has Polish-Italian origins and her ethnic background is an important part of her identity. Haney Lopéz argues that white identity "is constructed not just as the antonym to the identity of non-Whites, but also as an Americanized amalgamation of European ethnic cultures."[103] By this he means that for many whites in the United States, their European heritage, the remnants of European cultures, remain central to their self-conception, as is the case with V.I. Warshawski. This would seem to be

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[100] Kendall, 2006, p. 51.
[101] *ibid*., p. 65.
[102] Haney Lopéz, 1996, p. 159.
[103] *ibid*., p. 169.

a different way of constructing white identity, "one apparently not dependent on the construction of Whiteness as the opposite to non-Whiteness."[104] Haney Lopéz, however, is of the opinion that "this pan-European heritage is significant only insofar as it contrasts with that of non-Europeans, that is, non-Whites."[105] Therefore the construction of a European ethnic identity "gives Whiteness a content still largely bound to notions of superiority."[106] In Warshawski's case, however, it would seem that her ethnic background does set her apart from other whites as well, as she frequently separates herself from the WASP elite.

[104] *ibid.*, p. 170.
[105] *ibid.*, p. 171.
[106] *ibid.*

3. Questioning the Masculine Values

Before I begin my analysis and go on to discuss the attitude towards masculinity in Paretsky's novels I feel the need to define what I mean with the term 'masculinity'. As already discussed in the theory section on feminist literary criticism (ch. 2.1), there is a tendency nowadays to recognize multiple masculinities, one of which is hegemonic masculinity. Since the traditional male hard-boiled detective is white and heterosexual and considers himself to be superior to both women and racial and sexual others, he can be seen, at least in this respect, to represent hegemonic masculinity, and the traditional male-written hard-boiled detective fiction can, therefore, be seen to idealize the values of hegemonic masculinity in particular. Thus, in the following analysis, I am going to examine Paretsky's novels' attitude towards hegemonic masculinity and focus on those qualities that have been associated with it. In addition to the values of hegemonic masculinity, I am also going to examine the novels' treatment of those characteristics which comprise the masculinity of the traditional male detective. In other words, masculinity here refers to such issues and characteristics as power, domination, activity, violence, toughness, solitariness, emotional detachment and autonomy. These are the characteristics which make up the traditional masculinity of the hard-boiled, and my focus is going to be on what happens to this type of masculinity in the novels by Sara Paretsky. The discussion on masculinity is divided into three sections: the first section will examine the power of men in society and the problems caused by the way that power is used especially in relation to women; the second section focuses on two of the qualities of the masculine detective hero, the excessive use of violence and drinking, and how those qualities apply to the female detective; the third chapter explores the social network of the detective, that is friends and family, and how the importance of that network affects the traditional masculine values of the genre.

3.1 Hegemonic Masculinity, Sexism and Power

Throughout the entire series of twelve novels, V.I. Warshawski has to deal with constant remarks about her profession not being suitable for a woman. As Ralph Willett puts it, “her activities as investigator and solver of crimes fail to receive the accolade of patriarchal approval. Her communications with relatives and men (with whom she has to struggle to retain her sense of self) are problematised by their stereotyped view of gender roles.”[107] The patriarchal and masculine ideology of women staying home and raising children is embodied in an old friend of V.I.’s father, Lieutenant Bobby Mallory from the Chicago police force. He repeatedly lets V.I. know how he feels about her profession and what he thinks V.I. should be doing with her life. This starts at the very beginning of the first novel in the series, *Indemnity Only*: “You know, if Tony [V.I.’s father] had turned you over his knee more often instead of spoiling you rotten, you’d be a happy housewife now, instead of playing at detective. . . . Being a detective is not a job for a girl like you, Vicki – it’s not fun and games” (p. 37).

This comment from Bobby entails many assumptions of the roles he believes men and women are supposed to play: Tony as V.I.’s father and the man of the family should have disciplined his daughter more often, even physically, which would have made V.I. aware of her place and accept the role of “a happy housewife”. By saying that V.I. is “playing at detective” Bobby suggests that she cannot be taken seriously, she is not a professional and she cannot be a successful detective because she is a woman. Bobby seems to think that being a detective can only be a hobby for V.I. His last remark about detective work not being “fun and games” implies that he thinks V.I. does not know how serious and dangerous her job is. Bobby’s patronizing attitude towards V.I. is also shown in his constant use of the name Vicki when he addresses her. This is a nickname V.I. hates, and does not let anybody else use it. Her friends call her Vic or V.I., and in the professional world she prefers to go by her initials, because she finds “it [is] harder for male

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[107] Willett, 1996, p. 113.

colleagues and opponents to patronize me if they [don't] know my first name" (*IO*, pp. 241-2). Bobby clearly does not care what V.I. herself wants to be called. Bobby also diminishes her by saying that she is a girl, not a woman, although V.I. is in her thirties. Men calling V.I. a 'girl' or a 'little lady' is very common throughout the series, which emphasises the demeaning attitude the men have towards her, and through this the novels address the problem of men degrading women through sexist language as well. V.I. fights against this type of subordination by correcting the men in instances of this kind, for example when a man asks her whether she is the girl from the state, and the response is: "'Woman', I said automatically" (*BM*, p. 163). In other words, she draws attention to the fact that calling women girls is not neutral but demeaning.

Although V.I. has been a professional detective for sixteen years by the time of the events in *Hard Time* (1999), the attitude of Bobby Mallory remains the same. V.I. finds a battered Filipino woman on the street one night and after she dies at the hospital, V.I. is harassed by a police officer who accuses her of running over the woman. After V.I.'s neighbour and friend Mr. Contreras asks her whether she is going to call Lieutenant Mallory and make a complaint, V.I. does not think so: "Bobby was much more likely to chew me out for interfering with a police investigation than he was to phone the Rogers Park station and complain about Lemour. He would probably say, If I wanted to play cops and robbers, I'd have to be ready to take the heat that comes with it" (p. 30). V.I. herself, at least, does not believe that Bobby would finally start treating her as a serious professional instead of someone who is only playing a detective.

The public sphere of society has traditionally been occupied by men while women's existence has been limited to the private sphere, the home. While the number of professional women in different areas of the public sphere increases all the time, the highest positions in society, such as the top executives in large corporations, are still mainly occupied by men. This is also the case in Paretsky's novels where the large corporations and their male executives play a significant role. A typical crime in a Paretsky novel involves corruption at the top of the community in the

form of male executives, politicians, police officers or other high profile community members who abuse their position in the community. Those who pose a threat to society in these novels are not, therefore, the Others of traditional hard-boiled detective fiction – women or racial others, for example – but the rich and influential white men who are supposed to be the pillars of the community. Although the corruption of influential members of society has always been part of the hard-boiled tradition, in the early male-written hard-boiled the whiteness and masculinity of these criminal men is always compromised by their consorting with the uncivilizable, as mentioned in chapter 2.2. In addition, they are often depicted as feminine men, and thus a clear connection between femininity and criminality is established, and the idealization of masculinity remains strong. What Paretsky does, on the other hand, is draw attention to the powerful position that these men have as masculine men, as members of male hegemony, and the way they abuse that powerful position in committing their crimes. As Vanacker puts it, Paretsky's detective V.I. Warshawski is involved in a "fight against patriarchy [or hegemonic masculinity] in the shape of large *masculine* organisations. . . ."[108]

In addition to the fact that these criminals constantly diminish V.I. for being a woman in a man's profession and treat her with very little respect because of that, they also use their position and their wealth in trying to put her down and to get away with the crimes they have committed. Therefore, it is not only sexism that Paretsky pays attention to and fights against in her stories. What Toril Moi says about feminists' need to combat capitalism as well as sexism is relevant when considering Paretsky's novels. V.I. often criticises the unequal treatment of people based on the amount of money they have. One such instance occurs in *Deadlock* (1984), when V.I. is trying to build a case against Niels Grafalk, a steamship line owner, and wonders how to get the police to search his yacht: "It's a big step, going to look at a rich man's yacht. They [the police] have to be real convinced before they do something like that" (p. 283). The rich people, usually men in

[108] Vanacker, 1997, p. 77; my emphasis.

Paretsky's novels, have powerful connections and the ability to escape punishment because of their wealth. By making the majority of her criminals rich white men, Paretsky criticises the effects of capitalism on society. Money and high position enable these men to oppress others and at least try to get away with their crimes unpunished. There is great variation in Paretsky's novels when it comes to punishing the criminals. In some novels, such as *Hard Time*, V.I. is able to gather enough evidence so that the main villain is convicted. In other cases the evidence is not enough but there is a sense of 'poetic justice' when the criminal dies at the end, for example in *Deadlock* and *Killing Orders*. But there are also novels where the wealthy and powerful main villain manages to escape conviction, such as in *Blacklist* and *Firesale*, and V.I. is left hoping that eventually she will be able to catch them, perhaps for some other crime.

The main villains in *Hard Time* are Robert Baladine, the head of a security company called Carnifice Security which also runs a women's prison, Edmund Trant, the head of the Midwest operations of a company called Global Entertainment, and Jean-Claude Poilevy, the Illinois House Speaker. These men can be said to be representatives of hegemonic masculinity because of the way they exercise their power over others, including the female detective. They represent masculine values as being the heads of their families while their wives stay home and take care of the children. My analysis will focus on Robert Baladine because he is the ultimate villain and V.I.'s main opponent, while the other two men stay mostly in the background. Baladine shows his obsession over masculinity in his treatment of his son. The twelve-year-old Robbie is an extremely sensitive boy who cared deeply for his ex-nanny Nicola Aguinaldo, the dead Filipino woman, and is therefore upset over her death. Robert Baladine, on the other hand, shows no concern over her fate: "My strongest feeling is annoyance, because my hyper-emotional son is having another tiresome episode over her death" (p. 114), to which V.I. ironically responds, "Poor Robbie. Not the son for a manly man" (*ibid.*). By calling his son hyper-emotional, Baladine criticises him for being too feminine. The father sees every show of emotion as a sign of weakness and therefore considers

feelings unsuitable for a man, which is what V.I. remarks upon when she tries to comfort Robbie who would like to attend Nicola's funeral and is told off because of that by his father: "I'm sorry, honey. I guess your dad worries about whether he's a tough enough man, and so he's always on guard against any strong feelings" (p. 192). V.I asks Robbie questions about his father because she wants to catch him for his crimes and feels slightly guilty about using the boy as an information source, but at the same time it makes her feel like she is paying Baladine back for criticising his son for not being masculine enough: "If he'd been proud of his sensitive child I might not have done it. But if he could be proud of a sensitive child, he wouldn't be doing other stuff" (p. 193). Here V.I. connects Baladine's obsession over masculinity and toughness with his criminal activities.

Baladine has passed on his insistence on toughness to his eight-year-old daughter Madison as well, who tells V.I. of an occasion when Robbie stayed up all night crying, and remarks: "That's something only weak girlie girls do" (p. 277). Madison, and through her Robert Baladine, connects crying to weakness and therefore to being feminine, a girlish girl. In *Hard Time*, therefore, overt masculinity and the idealization of toughness are connected to the ultimate villain, and not to the hero of the story as in traditional hard-boiled detective fiction, where the male detective represents the ideal masculinity. The idealization of masculinity is criticised through the criminality of the most masculine character of the story and through the way he is bringing up his daughter "to have the sensitivity of a warthog" (p. 277) and not letting his son be his sensitive self. Baladine represents the idea where the first halves of Hélène Cixous's binary oppositions, such as head/heart and intelligible/sensitive are treated as superior qualities and the latter halves as the negative sides of the first and therefore less desirable. Through the juxtaposition of the sensitive and good-natured boy Robbie and his tough and criminal-minded father, the story places value to the traditionally feminine qualities as well.

The location where the story's main criminal activity takes place, the women's prison at Coolis, is where the power relations between men and women become clearest and also most

criticised. One of the new themes that women writers brought to the genre of detective fiction was sexual violence, which is connected to power and oppression. Linda Mizejewski considers rape to represent the ultimate vulnerability of the female detective.[109] Rape is also a serious threat to V.I when Robert Baladine has her arrested for kidnapping his son and she is carried off to Coolis prison. She is constantly harassed by the male guards, starting from the very first days of her four-week stay in the prison: "I was searched, the guard spending more time than necessary on my bra . . ." (p. 364). When one of the inmates says that a corrections officer is looking at them queer, V.I. remarks: "CO Polsen was always looking at women 'queer', when he wasn't outright touching or threatening to touch us" (p. 379). V.I. also saves one of the inmates from being raped during the very first days of her confinement, when she follows the guard to the laundry room where he has taken the woman, thus making it impossible for him to do what he was planning to do.

Paretsky addresses the inequality between men and women in society not only through the ways in which the male guards subordinate the women prisoners and abuse the power they have over them, but also through the reasons why some of the women have been imprisoned in the first place. Nicola Aguinaldo, for instance, needed money so that she could take her child to the hospital, and since her employers, the Baladines, refused to lend her any, she stole a necklace from Mrs. Baladine. Nicola stole to help her child and was convicted to five years in prison, when "men who did far worse crimes were there for much less time" (p. 335), as pointed out by Nicola's mother. While in many cases the crimes these women have committed are not mentioned, at least one woman is serving time for killing her husband in self-defence, at least according to her. However, in most cases it seems that the crimes the women have committed are not considered to be important. Paretsky clearly does not try to deny that women commit crimes as well. What is important is what happens to these women in the Coolis prison, under the supervision of the male guards.

The biggest problem for V.I. in the prison is that she cannot openly defend herself against

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[109] Mizejewski, 2004, p. 153.

the guards because if she did fight back, she would be sent into solitary confinement and she would not be able to find out what is going on in the prison. However, she does fight back in a different way: she has a wrist-camera with which she documents the guards' actions, and that gives her at least some comfort: "At least the camera made me feel a modicum of control over the crazy world I was inhabiting" (p. 380). Although the pictures that V.I. takes do lead to the dismissal of a couple of guards at the end of the novel, V.I. does not make the mistake of believing that the bigger problem has been solved: "All these degradations will go on and on for any woman who lands there, the sex talk and the rape and whatever else. The law makes it almost impossible for a woman to lodge a complaint, and even if she does, the guards have so much power they can stop her voice" (p. 421). V.I. is able to make the situation a little better, but she cannot change the entire system. The critique is on the kind of society which lets these kinds of things happen, which treats the degradation of women as a normal occurrence and shuts the mouths of those women who try to complain about it. The events in the prison are the ultimate representation of male superiority, and the men do not hesitate to show their masculinity by abusing their power and showing the women their place. The female detective who experiences the constant harassment and degradation herself is able to give the women a voice and draw attention to the social ills which need to be cured.

3.2 Violence and Drinking

This section will focus on two traditional characteristics of the masculine detective hero: violent behaviour and excessive drinking, which are both essential components in forming the character of the tough male detective. The traditional hard-boiled detective is tough in both his talk and his actions. Violence in general is an integral part of the hard-boiled detective fiction genre because the stories are set in big cities and their rough streets, and the detective uses violence to gain information, for example. Violence is clearly present in Paretsky's novels as well, and V.I.

Warshawski's use of violence is at the beginning of the series very similar to her male counterparts. For example, in *Indemnity Only* she seems to glorify violence and even enjoy it: "I kind of hoped Annette would try to throw me out: I felt like breaking someone's arm. . . . Maybe I'd break all their arms, just for fun" (p. 247). Here her action is very offensive and aggressive, and she feels the need to prove her toughness by hurting someone. At the beginning of the series, therefore, V.I.'s attitude towards violence seems to be very similar to her male predecessors. As Vanacker points out, Warshawski's violence is something that many feminist commentators on Paretsky have referred to, since the violence expressed by the hero of the story is exactly what "the feminist context of the novels implicitly condemns and questions. . . ."[110] Therefore, according to Vanacker, in these instances when Warshawski behaves violently, the reader experiences ethical ambiguity and has difficulties identifying with the protagonist.[111]

However, V.I.'s attitude towards violence and her use of it changes remarkably from the first novel on. In *Killing Orders* (1985), the third novel in the series, her stomach churns when she threatens an already injured mobster with more violence and she thinks, "What kind of person kneels in the snow threatening to destroy the leg of an injured man? Not anyone I wanted to know" (p. 289). A little later she regrets behaving like a mobster herself and says that she does not believe the end justifies the means (p. 291). Although the man was about to kill her, she still regrets injuring him. As Maureen Reddy puts it, women writers of hard-boiled fiction revise the meaning of violence, because "A male detective who uses his wits and his fists to fight his way out of a dangerous situation is acting within gender role expectations, but a woman who performs the same feat is not."[112] Reddy adds that the traditional hard-boiled male detectives "glory in violence, and it comes naturally to them, but their female counterparts have more mixed emotions."[113] The key difference between female and male detectives concerning the use of violence is that female

[110] Vanacker, 1997, p. 67.
[111] *ibid*., pp. 67-8.
[112] Reddy, 1988, pp. 112-13.
[113] *ibid*., p. 113.

detectives "separate defense and protection from offensive action."[114] In other words, female detectives rarely initiate violence, they respond to it. They use violence against violence, to protect themselves or the people they care about, and even refuse violence altogether, as Warshawski occasionally does. As Klein points out, "violence itself cannot be avoided in novels centered around murder,"[115] but what Paretsky does is limit the violence initiated or inflicted by her detective, "making Warshawski react in these episodes."[116]

Even though Warshawski used violence extensively as a part of her investigations at the beginning of the series, the situation is very different in the ninth novel, *Hard Time* (1999), when she is more developed as a character. She does not even act violently to defend herself when Lemour, the corrupt police officer on Robert Baladine's payroll, hits her in the face: "I kept my arms at my side through an effort of will so intense that my shoulders ached" (p. 214). She realizes that responding to Lemour's violent behaviour will only lead to her being arrested and that she will accomplish much more by not reacting to it physically. She is defending herself by a much more efficient way, by recording Lemour's behaviour on film which she can later use as evidence against him. She uses her head instead of her fists and by not resorting to violence, distances herself from the brutality expressed by Lemour. V.I. shows that she can get out of situations without using violence, and even accomplish more in that way. The fact that it requires an extreme effort of will that she does not respond to Lemour's violence shows clearly that she would want to. However, I would argue that the reason why she wants to respond is not that she enjoys violence and believes that it is the solution to every situation, but that she feels a strong need to defend herself and not accept the conventionally feminine role of a victim. Reddy argues that women's hard-boiled novels "suggest that violence may sometimes be the only possible response to a violent milieu. . . ."[117] While this can be said to be true in connection with Paretsky's novels as well, since there are

[114] Dilley, 1998, p. 42.
[115] Klein, 1988, p. 216.
[116] *ibid.*
[117] Reddy, 1988, p. 113.

situations when Warshawski uses violence against violence, this particular scene in *Hard Time* shows that Warshawski also uses other means to respond to the violence that surrounds her.

There are many situations in *Hard Time* when V.I. makes a conscious decision not to resort to violence, for example when she is again beaten by Lemour during her arrest. During her time in the prison she has to defend herself on two occasions when some of the other inmates attack her. V.I.'s childhood in an ethnic neighbourhood on the South Side of Chicago, "where girls as well as boys had to be able to defend themselves" (*KO*, p. 11), taught her how to fight, but she does not willingly put her skills to use. She realizes that violent behaviour does more than just physical damage: "I might be able to terrorize my jailmates, but I didn't like what it would do to me in the process" (*HT*, p. 357). She consciously avoids situations where she could end up in a fight: "Any time I saw signs that anger was about to spill over into combat, I'd leave the area and return to my cell" (p. 373). She does not have the need to show her toughness by fighting, because she knows that fighting would seriously damage her chances of solving her case.

Violence still plays a significant role in Paretsky's novels but its nature is different from the traditional hard-boiled narratives. The effects that violence has on people, both physically and mentally, are consciously considered. This is also what Dilley points out as a significant difference between male and female hard-boiled detectives: "Physically – headaches, nausea – and psychologically – nightmares, self-doubt – the woman private eye investigates the meaning and impact of violence on the society she inhabits."[118] Warshawski is seriously injured at the end of *Hard Time* when one of the guards kicks her repeatedly after she has found out that the prison has been used for illegal manufacturing of clothes for Global Entertainment. Her ability to defend herself saves her life: "Hartigan stood over me, a smile of exultant sadism on his face, and lifted one large booted foot. I managed to wrench myself sideways just before he kicked me. His boot sank savagely into my ribs, and then into my skull" (p. 408). If Warshawski had not been able to turn her

[118] Dilley, 1998, p. 47.

body before the blow, it would have killed her in the same way it had killed Nicola Aguinaldo some weeks earlier. The only times when Warshawski herself uses violence in *Hard Time* is when she is ambushed in the prison by two other inmates and she has to defend herself, and at the end of the novel when Baladine holds a gun against her friend's head, and V.I. sneaks behind him and "savagely chop[s] the back of his head" (p. 467). The aggressive, offensive use of violence, then, which is the trademark of the masculine detective hero, does not apply to Warshawski in *Hard Time*.

In addition to violent behaviour, one of the central characteristics of the masculine detective hero is excessive drinking. Once again, at the beginning of the series Warshawski does drink rather heavily, but her attitude towards drinking changes as the series progresses. Paretsky acknowledges the type of detective her protagonist is and yet makes a clear distinction between V.I. and her male counterparts in *Blacklist*, when V.I.'s client, an elderly woman, offers her bourbon, saying "I know detectives are used to stronger beverages than tea" (p. 12), to which V.I. responds, laughing, "That's only Philip Marlowe. We modern detectives can't drink in the middle of the day: it puts us to sleep" (*ibid.*). This suggests V.I.'s similarity to Marlowe as far as their profession goes, but at the same time separates her from the male detectives whose drinking in the middle of the day is an essential part of their tough masculine character. V.I. also comments on how unrealistic it is for a detective to drink heavily and still be able to carry on with the investigations. Another reference to Marlowe which establishes V.I.'s difference from him can be found in *Hard Time*, where she remarks: "I certainly didn't feel like drinking. No Philip Marlowe I, downing a pint of rye every time I got injured" (pp. 249-50). V.I.'s attitude to drinking in *Blacklist* and *Hard Time* is notably different from the first novel of the series, where her drinking habits were very similar to those of Philip Marlowe.

Although V.I.'s attitude towards violence and drinking makes her different from the typical masculine detective hero, she does have some other traditionally masculine qualities. This seems to

be a conscious choice from Paretsky's part, since V.I. herself remarks at some point that she is "tired of being feminine and conciliatory" (*IO*, p. 24). She wants to be masculine in the sense that she wants to be active and independent, she does not want to be a passive housewife. Feminist critics' idea of the division between sex and gender is important here, because the fact that V.I. is a woman does not mean that she has no masculine qualities. As Judith Halberstam says in her discussion of masculinity, it "must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects."[119] Halberstam talks about female masculinity, the masculinity found in women, and states that it is often the sign of sexual alterity or occasionally of heterosexual variation.[120] She then adds that "every now and then it represents the healthful alternative to what are considered the histrionics of conventional femininities."[121] While Halberstam concentrates mostly on the masculinity in women that is associated with sexual variance, she does believe that the concept of female masculinity has its uses for heterosexual women as well: "After all, the excessive conventional femininity often associated with female heterosexuality can be bad for your health. Scholars have long pointed out that femininity tends to be associated with passivity and inactivity, with various forms of unhealthy body manipulations from anorexia to high-heeled shoes."[122] Thus, the women who show activity, such as Warshawski, can be seen to have "rejected femininity in favor of healthy bodies."[123] In Warshawski's case, then, her masculine qualities are not a sign of sexual alterity because she is heterosexual, but they can definitely be seen as challenging the conventional ideas of what women should be like and showing that not all women fit into the traditionally 'feminine' mould. While Warshawski still has some traditionally masculine qualities, such as activity and independence, the idealization of violence and excessive drinking is nevertheless questioned, and thus the character of the detective hero is altered.

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[119] Halberstam, 1998, p. 1.
[120] *ibid.*, p. 9.
[121] *ibid.*
[122] *ibid.*, p. 268.
[123] *ibid.*, p. 58.

3.3 Social Network

Other central elements which make up the overt masculinity of traditional hard-boiled detective fiction besides violence and drinking are the individualism, autonomy and solitariness of the male detective. In this section, I am going to discuss these features in connection with V.I. Warshawski. The traditional male hard-boiled detective is a loner, emotionally detached from other people, he has no family or friends, and does not even need them: ". . . the hard-boiled male does not need other people, since they are more obstacles than friends."[124] Gill Plain argues that Warshawski fits into this same mould: "Vic's dread of being contained within the prescriptive role of normative North American femininity drives her constantly to reject offers of friendship, support and assistance. . . ."[125] It is true that V.I. does not want to depend too much on other people, but she does need other people in her life and her social network is extremely important to her. Although she is independent and mainly works on her cases alone, thus resembling the traditional male detective, she is far from being solitary or emotionally detached. She has many friends, both women and men, who support her and help her when the need arises. She also considers her friends to be a part of her family: in *Hard Time* she goes on a picnic with her friend Mary Louise and her children and calls it a "family outing" (p. 130). Blurring the distinctions between family, lovers, friends and colleagues is what Kimberly Dilley considers typical for women crime writers: "The characters in the women's novels are not limited to traditional models or classifications."[126]

This is also true in the case of V.I.'s neighbour, Mr. Contreras, who is both a close friend and a father figure. In spite of him being a father figure, V.I. is able to work out the limits of their relationship in such a way that Mr. Contreras does not have the authority of a father over her life, but their relationship is based more on the "easy give-and-take characteristic of good

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[124] Nyman, 1997, p. 207.
[125] Plain, 2001, p. 144.
[126] Dilley, 1998, p. 22.

friendships,"[127] which means that sometimes V.I. asks him for help and sometimes aids him. In *Hard Time* Mr. Contreras' help is invaluable to V.I. on many occasions, for example when the neighbour visits the Coolis prison with V.I. at the beginning of the novel, playing Nicola Aguinaldo's grandfather, which helps V.I. to gain information on the dead woman. V.I. knows that asking Mr. Contreras to help her will make the old man feel important, so they will both benefit from going there together. V.I. also admits that sometimes the close watch Mr. Contreras keeps on her makes her feel better: "His concern was a comfort, giving back an illusion of childhood with a mother whose scolding conceals affection and the promise of protection" (*BL*, p. 58). Here it is clear that Mr. Contreras is playing the role of a parent, and his concern over V.I.'s well-being means very much to her.

The most important relationship V.I. has throughout the series is with Dr. Charlotte (Lotty) Herschel, who has been V.I.'s friend since her time at law school. V.I. can manage the men in her life being angry at her, but she cannot manage without Lotty, which becomes evident in *Killing Orders*, when they fall out temporarily: "I was used to Mallory's rage. When Roger [V.I.'s lover] learned I'd spent the night in a Skokie lockup, his worry turned to frustrated anger. I thought I could handle that. But Lotty. Lotty wouldn't speak to me. That hurt" (p. 206). Lotty is the one who V.I. turns to in her troubles, and the events in *Hard Time* make no exception to this. V.I. is scared and confused because she realizes from the very beginning that Lemour is trying to accuse her of running over Nicola Aguinaldo, and she calls Lotty for comfort: "Her warmth and concern flowed through the line, making me feel better at once" (p. 52). V.I. also spends time at Lotty's because she believes her own apartment is being watched, and during her time there she remarks: "Lotty's is an intense, sometimes stormy presence, but in her home, with its polished floors and vivid colors, I always find a reassuring haven" (p. 163). However, it is not only mental and emotional support that Lotty offers to V.I. She is a doctor and the one who patches V.I. up every time she is injured in her

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[127] Reddy, 1988, p. 111.

job. It is clear, then, that although V.I. is autonomous to a certain extent, she could not manage without her friends. She is not afraid to admit that she is scared and needs her friends' support. In *Killing Orders* she actually makes an ironic remark regarding this: "Of course, a hard-boiled detective is never scared. So what I was feeling couldn't be fear" (p. 262). Thus, V.I. brings emotions to her job instead of being tough and detached like her male predecessors. As Vanacker points out, the fact that V.I. often admits to feeling "afraid, bullied, and disaster-bound"[128] clearly shows that she is not the tough guy equivalent of her male counterparts. She uses her heart as well as her head, which shows in her commitment to her friends and in the way she always worries about their safety: ". . . I'd rather be killed than endanger [Lotty's] life one more time in one of my exploits" (*HT*, p. 423). Other people are not obstacles to V.I. – they are an important network of support.

In addition to V.I.'s network of friends, the masculine emotional toughness and isolation is also challenged by the impact that V.I.'s parents have on her even though they have been dead for many years. She draws comfort from her memories of them and in *Hard Time* takes a briefcase she rarely uses, a gift from her father, with her on her visit to the prison, because that day she "need[s] to feel his presence in [her] life" (p. 312). At the beginning of the story she pulls out her mother's old gown from the closet, and holding the gown makes her miss her mother: ". . . I longed to have her with me, guarding me against the great and little blows the world inflicts" (p. 35). The memories of her childhood and her parents are constantly present and they give depth to her character and stress the importance that her parents and her childhood have had in shaping her personality. This kind of background knowledge and personal history make the detective seem more human. Bertens and D'haen also take note of Warshawski's preoccupation with her parents: "That preoccupation [with her long dead Italian mother], coupled with her references to her also deceased Polish father, establishes the sort of family background that the classic PI novel avoids. . . ."[129] In

[128] Vanacker, 1997, p. 65.
[129] Bertens and D'haen, 2001, p. 31.

Blacklist V.I. mentions a recurring nightmare where her mother has disappeared: "I was looking for her, panic-stricken, because the only reason she would leave was that she didn't love me anymore" (p. 244). The death of her mother and the loss of her love and protection have been hard on V.I. as these nightmares suggest, and the fact that she misses both of her parents and often thinks about them brings forward her connectedness with other people. Warshawski is not a solitary loner: she is a part of a family, a part of a group of friends and also a part of a community of women, to which I shall next turn my attention.

One of the central concepts in gynocriticism was the idea of a sisterhood between women, which meant that all women could assert a collective identity as 'we women'. Although the women in Paretsky's novels cannot be said to have a collective identity or a shared inner core, since there are many different kinds of women in the novels, there is no question about the fact that female bonding and female unity play an important role in the stories. The strongest female bond in the novels exists between V.I. and Lotty, whose relationship is extremely important to both of them. Lotty calls V.I. "the daughter [she] never had" as well as "one of the best friends a woman could ever desire" (*KO*, p. 337). They are both independent women, which makes V.I. tease Lotty when she is off to watch a Western only because her man likes them: "Well, Lotty, it's taken you over sixty years, but you're finally learning to be graciously submissive to male authority" (*HT*, p. 54). Besides Lotty, other important women in V.I.'s life are Sal Barthele, the owner of her favourite bar which she regularly visits, and Tessa Reynolds, who has her art studio in the same building as V.I.'s office.

In addition to her close female friends, V.I. is often helped by other women she encounters, even if those women do not really know her. For example in *Guardian Angel* (1992), it is the female workers who offer information to V.I. at Diamond Head (pp. 138-40), and later on when she is being chased by two men who are trying to kill her, the waitresses in Belmont Diner help her escape by delaying the men (p. 207). These kinds of instances are clear examples of some kind of

sisterhood between women, although not in the sense of them being the same simply because they are all women. Ralph Willett also notes that these incidents show "the sisterly solidarity that is available."[130] A significant part of why the other women are keen to help V.I. is because she is a woman as well and they feel a sense of kinship with her. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine that these women would offer the same kind of help to a male detective. However, there are also instances when no sisterly solidarity can be seen, such as in the women's prison in *Hard Time*, when V.I. is attacked by the other inmates. V.I. actually makes an ironic remark regarding the apparent lack of any kind of sisterhood between her and some of the inmates when she comments that during her four weeks of imprisonment, she tried to learn "how to avoid being beaten up by [her] *sisters in chains*" (p. 365; my emphasis).

Thus, although the solidarity and unity between women is important in Paretsky's stories, the differences between women are also discussed. In *Hard Time*, Tessa makes a comment about Alex Fisher, a lawyer who works for Global Entertainment: "I never trust a woman who gets all her muscles at the health club and only uses them as an accessory to her wardrobe" (p. 144). Tessa herself is a sculptor and values physical labour and does not appreciate women whose only motive for exercise is to look good in their clothes. Although there exists a certain loyalty between women in Paretsky's novels, the women are still shown to be individuals: they have very different roles and personalities and they value different things. There is clearly more variation in the women characters than the three types which in Reddy's opinion appear in Raymond Chandler's work (deadly, seductive or naïve). In Paretsky's novels there are both professional women and housewives, single women and married women, childless women and mothers, straight and lesbian; there are women who are keen on their looks and women who are not that interested in their looks; there are women of different ages and social backgrounds, there is racial variety and different ethnic backgrounds. The women are not shown to have a collective identity but very distinct personal

[130] Willett, 1996, p. 112.

identities. There are very strong bonds between women as is shown by the relationships V.I. has with other women, but there are many occasions when the different personalities of these women clash.

The difference between V.I. and the Global executive Edmund Trant's wife Abigail is also made apparent: "Her honey-streaked hair was carefully combed into the right suggestion of windblown disorder, her makeup painted on with a subtle hand, her nails a gleaming pearl. To approach her in my sweaty sunburned state seemed almost sacrilegious, but I did it anyway" (p. 122). The suggestion is that Abigail Trant in her perfect hair and makeup is more feminine than V.I., who does not have the time, money or even will to go to beauty salons once a week, which is what Mrs. Trant does, thus performing to society's or men's expectations of what women should do or be like. Even though V.I. does not care that much about her looks, especially when she is working, the perfect looks of Abigail Trant make her feel like a "grubby hulk" (p. 128). The difference between V.I. and Abigail is also about material conditions: the wife of Edmund Trant has enough money to drive a Mercedes and have weekly appointments at the Parruca Salon, where V.I. cannot follow her unless she "pretend[s] to be the new shampooer" (p. 121). The variety of women characters and their different roles challenge the simplistic view of women presented in traditional hard-boiled detective fiction, where women are portrayed in a very negative light in order to emphasise the ideal masculine qualities of the detective. V.I. Warshawski is a part of a community of women and not an isolated and idealized figure. She compares herself to other women and sometimes feels inferior to them in some respects. The individualism and autonomy of the masculine hero is challenged by V.I.'s belonging to this community and also by the impact her friends and family have on her life, although it should be noted that not all of the individualism of the traditional hard-boiled detective is lost. V.I. still works on her cases alone for the most part and tries to avoid becoming too dependent on anyone else.

As seen in this first chapter of my analysis, the traditional idealization of masculinity found

in the early male-written hard-boiled is questioned in many ways in Paretsky's novels. Firstly, the power of men and especially the power of hegemonic masculinity over women is brought to light and criticised. The fact that the detective, the hero of the story, is a woman who experiences constant sexism draws attention to the way women are subordinated by men and treats this subordination as unjustified and as something that should not be accepted. In *Hard Time*, the idealization of masculinity is also challenged by making the most masculine character of the novel the ultimate villain. Secondly, two of the main characteristics which comprise the masculinity of the traditional hard-boiled detective, violent behaviour and drinking, are altered although not entirely removed. The violence of Paretsky's detective is more of a defensive than offensive nature, especially in the later novels, and the consequences of violence are consciously considered. As far as the drinking is concerned, it is much more subdued than in the case of the early male detectives. Thirdly, the masculine solitariness of the traditional detective is challenged through the importance of a social network for the female detective. Although Warshawski is still independent, she holds her friends in great value and is not afraid to lean on them when the need arises. The importance of family is also apparent, since Warshawski's parents continue to have a strong influence in her life even though they are gone. After discussing how the masculine values of traditional hard-boiled detective fiction are challenged in Paretsky's novels, I will now turn my attention to the issue of whiteness.

4. Questioning the Superiority of Whiteness

In this chapter I will examine Paretsky's novels' attitude towards different racial groups. I will do that by looking at how whiteness is portrayed and what happens to the traditional idealization of whiteness found in the early male-written hard-boiled detective fiction (it should be remembered, though, that today there are also non-white male writers of hard-boiled detective fiction, such as Walter Mosley, with non-white male detectives). I will examine whether whiteness is still considered superior to other racial varieties in the novels by Paretsky, or whether she does anything to question the still-existing hierarchical relationship between whiteness and non-whiteness. I have divided the discussion on whiteness into three sections: the first section will deal with the idea of white privilege, and will focus on the detective herself and whether or not she perceives herself in racial terms at all and what kind of role her whiteness plays in her daily life. The second section will discuss the ways in which racism is present in Paretsky's stories, how racism is perceived by the detective, the authoritative voice in the novels, and what kind of effects racism has in the stories. The third section will deal with ethnicity and the non-white characters found in the novels. I will discuss the ethnic background of the detective and how it shows in her life, and how the non-white, for example African-American, Mexican and Arabic, characters are represented in the stories.

4.1 White Privilege

As discussed in the theory chapter on the study of whiteness (ch. 2.3), an essential part of the superiority of whiteness in society is the idea of white privilege, which basically means that whites do not have to think about themselves in racial terms at all. Whiteness has traditionally been the norm and all the other races have been seen as deviations from that norm, and therefore a person is always assumed to be white unless mentioned otherwise. In addition, whites are very rarely aware of the advantages and privileges they receive because of their race, and think of all the good, as well

as the bad, things happening to them as a result of their individuality and personality, not their race. In this section, I am going to examine how white privilege shows in Paretsky's novels, mainly in *Blacklist*, and what the novels' attitude is towards it. I am going to do that by addressing three questions: does V.I. Warshawski think about herself in racial terms, in other words, is she conscious of her own whiteness? Is whiteness treated as the norm? Is V.I. aware of the fact that some advantages are offered to her because of her whiteness?

The first issue to be discussed is whether or not V.I. is conscious of her own whiteness. Instances of transparency, the tendency of whites not to think about their whiteness, can be found in Paretsky's novels and the ways in which V.I. Warshawski behaves in certain situations. An example of a situation where V.I. does not seem to be aware of the role her whiteness plays can be found in *Blacklist* (2003), the eleventh novel in the series, when the editor of an African-American magazine does not want to share information with her and she is very puzzled and cannot seem to understand the reception she received. At first, the thought about her being white, representing a different racial group than the editor, does not even cross her mind. She can therefore be said to be a little surprised when she at last realizes that the editor simply "didn't want a white woman poking around" (p. 90). This is what Frances E. Kendall points out when she talks about white people's privilege of not seeing themselves as part of a racial group: "The surprising thing for us is that, even though we don't see ourselves as part of a racial group, people of color generally do see us that way."[131] This is exactly what happens in this case with V.I.: she is surprised that at least part of the reason for why the editor denies her the information is because she is white. The important thing to note here, however, is that she eventually does realize that her whiteness played a significant role in the situation, and can therefore be said to become more aware of her own racial identity.

Another point which Kendall mentions in connection with white people not seeing race in themselves is that because of that, white people often become angry at those who do see race in

[131] Kendall, 2006, p. 22.

them.[132] V.I. starts to become angry, her "cheeks grow hot" when a black woman suggests that she might be able to get more information out of the people in a black neighbourhood than V.I. would (*BL*, p. 144). V.I.'s initial response seems to be denying the fact that her whiteness would play any role in her inquiries, because she identifies herself more as a good detective than as a white person. However, she has previously received a cautious response in the neighbourhood, and thus the facts speak for themselves and she has to accept that her white race would probably be a hindrance: "The kids might talk to me as readily as to a black woman, but the adults were more likely to open up with Amy" (*ibid.*). It is interesting to note, however, that in situations where she interviews a white person, she never stops to think about how her whiteness helps her in gaining the information. This is also an essential part of white privilege and transparency. As Ian Haney Lopéz argues, ". . . for many Whites their racial identity becomes uppermost in their mind only when they find themselves in the company of large numbers of non-Whites. . . ."[133] V.I. is aware of her whiteness and how it affects her possibilities in gaining information when she is among black people, but she is not aware of how her whiteness helps her with other white people.

The second question I wanted to address in this section is whether whiteness is considered to be the norm in Paretsky's novels. The way people are described when they are first introduced in the stories is a good way of examining this, because if only the skin colour of those who are not white is mentioned, then white can be considered to be the "normal" colour in the novels' world, one that does not need to be mentioned at all. For example, when V.I. runs into Catherine Bayard in *Blacklist*, the girl is described as having "a pale narrow face and dark hair pulled back into a long braid" (p. 25). Although mentioning her paleness can be seen as a reference to her being white, she is never racially identified. Only a few pages later, however, when V.I. finds the dead body of Marcus Whitby, he is soon identified as an African-American: "He was about six feet tall, lean, not particularly athletic looking. His skin was a nut-brown, his hair African . . ." (p. 30). The

[132] *ibid.*, p. 67.
[133] Haney Lopéz, 1996, p. 158.

assumption is that because Catherine Bayard's race is not mentioned, she is white. Only the deviation from the norm, the skin colour of Marcus Whitby, is mentioned. However, the significant difference between these two cases is that Whitby is dead, and that could be the reason why his identification is at first more specific than Catherine Bayard's. It is important to describe the victim in detail from the start, because the discovery of the body is the last time he is actually seen in the story. Therefore, a perhaps better example of a situation where whiteness could be seen as the norm is when V.I. sees Catherine with two of her friends and mentions that "one was blond and the other Indian" (p. 95). The blond girl is identified by the colour of her hair, whereas the other girl is specifically identified as Indian. There seems to be no need of saying "one was white and the other Indian", because not mentioning the blond girl's race produces the same result: if someone's race is not mentioned, he or she is a representative of the norm, which is white. On the basis of this particular example, then, whiteness could be considered the norm in Paretsky's novels.

It should be mentioned, however, that there are instances in the novels when white persons are indeed identified as white from the very beginning, and the race of non-white persons is not mentioned in the first few sentences of their introduction. For example when V.I. runs into a burglar in *Blacklist*, she describes him as being "a youngish white man with dark thick hair" (p. 180), instead of merely a youngish man. Here the man's race is brought into attention as an integral part of his identity. In *Bitter Medicine*, when V.I. first meets Dr. Burgoyne, she describes him as being "a white man in his mid-thirties" (p. 19). In *Blacklist*, again, when V.I.'s African-American friend Amy is introduced for the first time, she is not identified as black, although the fact that she has dreadlocks could be seen as a reference to that fact (p. 63). As these instances demonstrate, the way people are described varies greatly, and there is no pattern of always identifying non-white people through their race and white people without a mention of their whiteness. However, since Paretsky uses a first-person narrative, which means that the stories are told from the white perspective of V.I. Warshawski, there seems to be a certain kind of white consciousness in the novels. This shows in

the fact that those cases where a white person's whiteness is not mentioned are far more frequent than those cases where a non-white person is described without a reference to his/her race. The fact that whites do not pay that much attention to their own whiteness or the whiteness of others is partly what white privilege is about. The whiteness of other people's skin does not seem to be worthy of mentioning, because from the white perspective it is normal. I would argue, however, that this type of white consciousness is different from the white consciousness of traditional hard-boiled detective fiction, since it does not involve demeaning descriptions of the non-white people, which is what Maureen Reddy includes in the white consciousness of male-written hard-boiled fiction.[134]

The third issue to be discussed in this chapter is whether or not V.I. is aware of all the advantages she receives because of her whiteness, or whether Richard Dyer's point about white people believing that they achieve things because of their individuality applies to V.I. There are two occasions at the beginning of *Blacklist*, where it could be argued that V.I.'s whiteness plays in her favour. When she is investigating the grounds at Larchmont Hall she triggers an alarm and is soon accompanied by a police officer, who wants to know why she is on the premises (p. 9). V.I. gives him an explanation, a false one, and the police officer does not question it at all. He does not demand any identification or official papers of the work V.I. is supposedly doing at the mansion. It is interesting to think what the situation would have been if V.I. was not white. To the white male police officer, she seems completely credible and trustworthy, and she is let off very easily. A major factor in V.I.'s easy escape is that she takes advantage of the fact that they are both white Americans and starts to talk about terrorism and the strain it puts on the police. She clearly uses her whiteness to her advantage in order to divert the police officer's attention away from her and to establish some common ground with him. However, it is never mentioned whether or not this was a conscious choice from V.I.'s part and she does not reflect upon the situation afterwards. She does not think about the reasons why the police officer was so easy on her, because she probably

[134] Reddy, 2003, p. 9.

attributes it to her ability to invent credible stories. It seems, therefore, that she is not aware of the advantages of her whiteness, even though she seems to use it to her favour.

Another similar instance occurs when V.I. has found Whitby's body and is being questioned by the police. The police do ask her questions about why she was at the scene and whether or not she knew the victim, but they never treat her as a suspect or even try to pressure her that much. The situation would, again, most likely be different if she was not white. This has to do with the positive images attributed to whites, such as that they are law-abiding, which make it more difficult for the police officers to seriously suspect V.I. of murder. If she was black, for instance, the negative image of black people's criminality would certainly come into play, especially with these police officers who utter such racist remarks as "Black guy on the land, what else was he but a criminal?" (p. 35). Even though these police officers are clearly racist, V.I. does not stop to think why they are letting her go so easily and if the situation would be the same if she herself was black. Her race does not seem to be a factor at all.

V.I. clearly enjoys the benefits of white privilege but hardly ever reflects upon it which would be exactly what Kendall urges all white women to do:

> We need to understand that, as white women, we are given access to power and resources because of racial similarities to and our relationships with white men . . . While we certainly experience systemic discrimination as women, our skin color makes us less threatening to the group that holds institutional power.[135]

V.I. is very much aware of the privileges of rich people and her own exclusion from those privileges, as becomes apparent from the following remark: "I stomped west, away from the island of wealth and privilege, back toward my own world" (*BL*, p. 389). However, apart from the occasional reflections upon her own whiteness, she does not seem to be aware of the privileges she herself has as a white person. She does not think about the effects her whiteness has on her daily life, for instance the easy access she has to large corporations where she goes to make her inquiries. The fact that she is denied that access in the case of the African-American publishing house in

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[135] Kendall, 2006, p. 150.

Blacklist does make her think about her own whiteness, and she realizes that her race played a significant role in the situation. This does not, however, lead to any deeper reflections on whiteness or how her race is more often an advantage than a disadvantage for her. But, even though Warshawski does not seem to be aware of all of her own privileges as a white person, or at least does not actively think about them, that does not mean that Paretsky's novels portray white people as superior to non-white people. Warshawski does not consider whites to be somehow above non-whites and constantly fights against such attitudes in society, which shows in her own attitude towards racism, for example. The ways in which racism is present in the novels and how it is treated will be under discussion in the next section.

4.2 Racism

Being white entails the possibility of closing one's eyes to racism and choosing not to believe that people of colour are treated differently, as pointed out by Kendall.[136] Closing one's eyes to race in general, being colour-blind, allows us whites to "act as though there are no racial disparities in health care, ability to purchase a home or rent an apartment (given the same financial history), or get a job, have police protection, and on and on."[137] Ignoring the fact that racism exists in our society and that people of colour truly are treated differently from white people only enhances the superiority of whiteness. This is not the case in Paretsky's novels, where racism is constantly present and never treated as right. V.I. Warshawski repeatedly condemns racist attitudes and is infuriated by racist remarks. The fact that she mentions that back in the sixties, she thought that "love and energy would end racism and sexism" (*KO*, p. 96), shows that she has always been conscious of racism and tried to find means to fight against it, even if those means have later on proved ineffectual.

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[136] Kendall, 2006, p. 62.
[137] *ibid.*, p. 51.

The area where the unequal treatment of whites and non-whites is most criticised in Paretsky's novels is police investigations. Even in the earlier novels this issue is raised on many occasions, such as in *Bitter Medicine* (1987), where V.I. investigates the murder of a black doctor: "I don't want to go to my grave with the idea that they could have found the killer, but they didn't look, that Malcolm, after all, even though he was a great surgeon, was just another dead black man!" (p. 52). This is a real concern for V.I., that the official investigators will not do everything in their power to find the killer simply because the victim was not white. Therefore she is determined to find the killer herself. In *Blacklist* as well, the racist attitudes of the police officers investigating the death of Marcus Whitby become very apparent. The police seem to be keen on concluding that Whitby was extremely drunk and committed suicide. V.I. is quick to question this, because the police have arrived to their conclusion too fast: "Did they do a complete autopsy? Are they giving this a lick and a promise because he was a black man in white superpower country?" (p. 52). V.I. is very aware that this could be the case, she is conscious of the fact that a black victim could very easily be treated in a different way than a white victim. To make the racist attitudes of the police officers even clearer, Marcus Whitby is found dead in a very wealthy white area. The police seem to be more interested in protecting the wealthy white people than they are in finding Whitby's killer. It is easier for them to think that the black man had personal problems and wanted to kill himself than to face the fact that he might have been killed by a rich white person. Once again, V.I. has to investigate the case herself if she wants to find out the truth.

V.I. often brings out the issue of how unequally people are treated based on their differences from those who hold the power: wealthy white men. Race is definitely one of the factors which cause this unequal treatment. In *Tunnel Vision* (1994) V.I. tries to make a young white man realize his privileged position when he has committed a crime and only has to do community service as a punishment: ". . . you must know damned well that if you'd been poor or black you'd be in the pen right now" (p. 21). What V.I. implies here is that the young man knows that his

whiteness plays a significant role in his light punishment but chooses not to think about it. V.I. is trying to make him conscious of this kind of racism in society, something that she herself seems to be very conscious about. She is also aware of the fact that being a woman or a non-white person makes it practically impossible to become a director in a large corporation. There is an instance in *Bitter Medicine* when a black woman expresses her wish to be in charge of a whole program in the company in which she works and not just one piece of it which is her current assignment. V.I. remarks that "having a sex-change operation – and perhaps dying her skin – was the only way that would happen" (p. 217). While the focus of her remark seems to be on the woman's sex, V.I. is also of the opinion that even if she was a man, her wish would still not be granted because she is not white. Non-white people are obviously discriminated in the society because of their race, and V.I. does not close her eyes to these kinds of racial disparities and pretend that they do not exist.

Because of V.I.'s close connections to a couple of African-American detectives, Terry Finchley and Conrad Rawlings, she has to repeatedly deal with the racist attitudes many white people have towards them. Two white male attendants at a morgue, who treat V.I. with very little respect from the beginning, are not happy to see her being in friendly terms with a police officer (Finchley) "and a black one to boot" (*GA*, p. 124). They also talk to Detective Finchley in a very disrespectful manner, asking him to "butt out" (*ibid.*), for instance. They also call Detective Finchley a "jigaboo", which is an offensive term for a black person. That racist remark demonstrates their attitude towards black people, and it is clearly Detective Finchley's race which makes them behave so disrespectfully towards him. Although V.I. is very aware of racism, encounters it repeatedly and is infuriated by it, there are many occasions when she chooses not to do anything about it. Usually this happens in situations where she needs information from the person who is being racist, for instance in *Guardian Angel* when she is interviewing a woman who refers to Detective Finchley as "the nigger cop" (p. 279). Although V.I. does not like the woman's comment, she "trie[s] to push [her] anger back" because the woman "wouldn't share information more readily

for a lecture on the evils of racism" (*ibid.*). Although V.I. is clearly angry about racism and certainly is not racist herself, she often puts her investigations ahead of trying to fight against it. However, if one compares Warshawski's attitude towards non-whites to that of Marlowe, for instance, a significant difference can be observed: as pointed out by Reddy, in *Farewell My Lovely*, Marlowe consistently describes a murder victim as "the nigger,"[138] which clearly reveals his racist attitudes. Referring to a person only as "the nigger" is something Warshawski would never do.

Besides the racism expressed by the police in connection with the investigations on Marcus Whitby's murder, there is another plotline in *Blacklist* where racism becomes apparent and is also heavily criticised. The FBI hunts down a teenaged Egyptian boy, Benjamin Sadawi, because he is suspected of being a terrorist. V.I. expresses her own opinion of the matter when she is asked whether the FBI have a good reason to be looking for the boy: "Yeah, they don't like his race, creed or place of national origin" (p. 239). In other words, the FBI's hunt is only based on the fact that the boy is an Arab and therefore suspicious in the aftermath of September 11th, not on any real evidence. This expresses the focus that white people, especially in the United States, nowadays place on terrorism, and this is also pointed out by Kendall, who says that "'Foreigners,' particularly Arabs and other Middle Eastern people, are now presented as the dangerous people to watch out for. We are constantly fed a diet of fear: 'they' – the terrorists – will get us."[139] Paretsky clearly criticises this emphasis on the threat of terrorism through the character of Benjamin Sadawi, whose only "crime" is belonging to the "wrong" race. Paretsky also brings forward the negative effects this fear of terrorism causes locally, when she has V.I. reflect upon the situation: "Police forces were badly affected, because they had to gear up for incalculable terror attacks and couldn't keep up with their local crime loads. Drive-by shootings, which had dropped to their lowest level in decades, had jumped in the last six months" (p. 9). This is a very concrete example of how the fear of terrorism affects on the local level.

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[138] Reddy, 2003, p. 36.
[139] Kendall, 2006, p. 80.

During their hunt for Benjamin Sadawi, the FBI is also reported of being "ruthless" talking to a friend of Catherine Bayard's, "since she's from Pakistan" (p. 102) and therefore probably suspected of also having links to terrorists and especially Benjamin. The extreme racist attitude towards Benjamin could easily lead to his death because of the assumptions the police are making on the grounds of his race, as becomes apparent in the way Lieutenant Schorr instructs his men in their search for the boy: "Arab, likely a terrorist on the run, he could have any kind of weapon, so you see him, don't hesitate. Just shoot" (p. 225). Even the local police would not hesitate to kill Benjamin even though they have no concrete evidence of him being a terrorist. The fact that he is an Arab is all the evidence they need. V.I. does her best to protect Benjamin and helps him escape the police because she believes in his innocence, at least until someone can produce hard evidence stating the contrary, and is not blinded by the fear of terrorism. She does not diminish the seriousness of September 11th, but she thinks what has happened after that is very serious as well: "I think this is the most serious thing that has happened in my lifetime. Not just the Trade Center, but the fear we've unleashed on ourselves since, so we can say that the Bill of Rights doesn't matter anymore . . . if the Bill of Rights is dead my life, my faith in America, will break" (p. 275). The hunt for Benjamin Sadawi is based purely on his race, on the racist beliefs that every Arab is a likely terrorist and can therefore be treated as one. V.I. fights against this racism by helping Benjamin and refusing to let the police know his whereabouts. The flaws of the system become painfully apparent, however, when Benjamin is killed by the same wealthy white woman who killed Marcus Whitby, and who, in the end, is not punished by law. Since Benjamin was a hunted terrorist, the police are keen to believe the woman when she says that she shot the boy in self-defence, and although V.I. tries to convince them otherwise, she is "no match for the government's itch to shed Islamic blood" (p. 449). In the case of Marcus Whitby, there simply is not enough evidence: "I don't know if they ever will [arrest Renee Bayard]. The evidence is there, but it's all circumstantial, in a way. . . . The police tread warily when it comes to arresting people from places like New

Solway" (pp. 456-7). Once again, the power of the wealthy and white in society is made apparent and criticised.

Race and racism are clearly present in Paretsky's novels and therefore the idea of race-blindness or colour-blindness cannot be applied to them. The novels do not ignore the existence of racism in society or try to pretend that there are no racial disparities. Racism is condemned by V.I. Warshawski, which means that the entire novels' attitude towards racism is condemning, since the stories are told by V.I. and therefore she is the authoritative voice in them. Paretsky challenges and criticises the superior attitude of whites towards non-whites by showing how groundless that attitude is, especially in the case of the innocent and hunted Benjamin Sadawi, and pointing out the serious, in Sadawi's case deadly, consequences of that attitude. In the next section I will take a closer look at the novels' non-white characters and examine their role in challenging the traditional idealization and superiority of whiteness found in the early male-written hard-boiled detective fiction. I will also consider the ethnic background of V.I. Warshawski and how that is relevant in connection to the issue of whiteness.

4.3 Ethnicity and Non-White Characters

In the traditional early hard-boiled detective fiction starting in the 1920s, non-white characters play the role of the Other, and, together with women and homosexuals, are the ones who threaten the prevailing social order with their criminality and perversity. In these stories, non-white characters are portrayed in a very negative light: Bethany Ogdon provides a few examples when she talks about the smelly, unwashed Chinese in Hammett's "Dead Yellow Women", the terrible, overpowering smell of the Indian in Chandler's *Farewell My Lovely*, which is pointed out by Marlowe eight separate times during the course of the story, and the greasy, sadistic and sexually

perverse Hispanic hood in Andrew Vachss' *Blue Belle*.[140] Although Vachss' novel is from the 1980's, there seems to be no question that it follows the tradition of the early male-written hard-boiled when it comes to non-white characters. The traditional hard-boiled detective is, therefore, clearly racist, and even the novels themselves can be said to be racist and prejudiced with their demeaning descriptions of non-whites and the fact that the non-whites are often the villains in the stories or at the very least suspicious.

This is not, however, the case in Paretsky's novels where racism is condemned and treated as a problem in society, as discussed in the previous section. Paretsky's novels feature a number of non-white characters in various roles, such as doctors, police officers, journalists, artists and bar-owners. In the early male-written hard-boiled, the immoral and threatening non-whites serve as an inferior opposite to the detective, whose whiteness thus becomes idealized. Maureen Reddy argues that many contemporary white authors are trying to put an end to this kind of juxtaposition by "simply ignor[ing] the existence of people of color in the world,"[141] which is, as Reddy points out, "another way of defining and valorizing whiteness by what it is not."[142] Although Paretsky herself has admitted (in 1989) her reluctance to have non-white characters in major roles in her novels "out of fear [she] won't be writing about them realistically,"[143] she does not ignore their existence even at the beginning of her series, and later on has non-white characters in increasingly bigger roles despite her earlier fears. Whether or not white authors are able to create believable major non-white characters remains an open question, as pointed out by Reddy,[144] but the important thing to note concerning Paretsky, is that although she understands this problem, she nevertheless includes non-white characters in her stories and does not make the mistake of ignoring their existence and making her detective's world entirely white. Next I will take a closer look at some of the non-white

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[140] Ogdon, 1992, p. 78.
[141] Reddy, 2003, p. 116.
[142] *ibid*.
[143] *ibid*., p. 164.
[144] *ibid*., p. 155.

characters in Paretsky's novels and examine what their presence in the stories does to the traditional idealization of whiteness in the hard-boiled detective fiction genre.

There are many instances in the course of the series where the behaviour of white characters towards non-white characters is under heavy criticism and no idealization of whiteness can therefore be seen. The ones who are dangerous and threatening in these situations are the whites, in contrast to the threat posed by non-whites in the traditional hard-boiled. One such instance occurs in *Hard Time*, when Lucian Frenada, a respectable Mexican factory owner, is framed for using his factory for trafficking drugs. It is established in the story that Frenada is a law-abiding citizen and at the beginning of the story he mentions to V.I. that he believes something strange is happening in his plant and asks her if she could investigate the matter. The only way Frenada is a threat is that he is about to discover the criminal activities of the main white villains in the story, which means that these whites have to take him out of the picture. The reasoning behind the white criminals' actions is that when the police find the planted drugs in Frenada's factory, the fact that he is Mexican will be enough to convince them that he truly is dealing drugs, no matter what Frenada himself says. In addition, if this story would be released to the press, the majority of the public would automatically assume that he was guilty, and his reputation would be lost. Lucian Frenada, much like the Egyptian Benjamin Sadawi in *Blacklist* (discussed in ch. 4.2), is automatically assumed to be criminal because of his race, and neither of them is really given the chance to defend themselves. Through these characters, who are both good and innocent, Paretsky shows how groundless the suspicions towards these non-whites (traditionally the "others") are, and the criticism is on the whites who are so ready to judge without proper knowledge.

There are three African-American characters who have a significant role in V.I.'s life almost through the entire series: Sal Barthele, the owner of V.I.'s favourite bar, the Golden Glow, is introduced in the very first novel, *Indemnity Only* (1982), and reappears regularly in the following novels. The detectives Terry Finchley and Conrad Rawlings are also introduced fairly early on,

Finchley in the third novel of the series, *Killing Orders* (1985) and Rawlings in the fourth, *Bitter Medicine* (1987). Sal Barthele is V.I.'s friend and a woman she admires, which becomes apparent in the way she describes her: "Sal, the bartender, is a magnificent black woman, close to six feet tall. I've watched her break up a fight with just a word and a glance – no one messes with Sal. This afternoon she wore a silver pantsuit. Stunning" (*IO*, p. 29). It is Sal's authority and also her impressive outward appearance that makes V.I. admire her. It is difficult to imagine any of the traditional male hard-boiled detectives speak so highly of a non-white character, not to mention a non-white *woman* character, or describe that character in such a positive light. V.I. is also on friendly terms with Detective Finchley, and they often work on the same cases. Finchley is someone V.I. can really count on in the police force and sometimes he, instead of any of the white men, is the only one of the official police who takes her seriously and accepts her as part of the investigation. Ralph Willett describes Finchley as "one of the few men with whom Warshawski has a relationship of mutual understanding and respect. . . ."[145] The admiration and respect V.I. feels towards these non-white people, Sal Barthele and Terry Finchley, is noteworthy when considering the genre's history. V.I. is not depicted as being somehow superior to Sal and Terry because she is white and they are not. Whiteness is not, therefore, treated as the ideal.

The character of the other African-American detective of V.I.'s acquaintance, Conrad Rawlings, can be seen to challenge the traditional idealization of whiteness even more. The reason for this is that the relationship between V.I. and Conrad becomes intimate in *Tunnel Vision* (1994), i.e. they become lovers. Dyer makes a connection between race and sexuality by stating that race is not only about bodies, but also "about the reproduction of those bodies through heterosexuality."[146] What connects this to the relationship between V.I. and Conrad is Dyer's notion of the fact that "Inter-racial heterosexuality threatens the power of whiteness because it breaks the legitimation of

[145] Willett, 1996, p. 114.
[146] Dyer, 1997, p. 25.

whiteness with reference to the white body."[147] Inter-racial heterosexuality implies that white bodies can no longer guarantee their own reproduction as white, which leads to the fact that "the 'natural' basis of their dominion is no longer credible."[148] By having a heterosexual relationship with a non-white man, Warshawski's white body is no longer indubitably a white body. In addition, Warshawski's choice not to have children can also be linked to the idea of whiteness, since, as Marilyn Frye points out, "the pressures of compulsory motherhood on white women are not just pressures to keep women down, but pressure to keep the white population up."[149] Warshawski is obviously not concerned about the continuation of the white race.

Through this close relationship between V.I. and Conrad, Paretsky is able to address some of the problems that inter-racial couples have had to face, especially in the United States. Because of the concern of the continuation of the white race, inter-racial marriages and inter-racial sex, i.e. miscegenation, was previously prohibited by law, in some states up until 1967. Although these anti-miscegenation laws are in the past when V.I. and Conrad become involved, their effect is still shown in the negative attitude that some people have towards the relationship. The relationship between V.I. and Conrad is opposed to from both sides, Mr. Contreras from one side and Conrad's mother from the other. V.I. mentions that Conrad's mother would probably dislike any woman who went out with her son, but "my being white didn't help our relationship" (*TV*, p. 71). Mr. Contreras is also suspicious and jealous of any man V.I. becomes involved with, but V.I. says that in Conrad's case his attitude is "augmented by his revulsion at the idea of me in the arms of a black man . . ." (p. 110).

Although Mrs. Rawlings' and Mr. Contreras' attitudes towards this relationship are similar, I would argue that the basis for the objection is different in each case, and that basis gives light to the different experiences of blacks and whites in society. In Mr. Contreras' case, the objection is based on his prejudiced attitude towards blacks which he has adopted and internalized from the

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[147] *ibid.*
[148] *ibid.*
[149] Marilyn Frye in Dyer, 1997, p. 27.

white culture, and he clearly sees whites as superior to non-whites, which is still apparent in his comment later on in the novel, when he seems to have accepted the relationship: ". . . it's not like I'm a fan of you dating Conrad Rawlings, because I'm not. But he ain't a bad guy for a colored fellow" (p. 292). Mr. Contreras' comment implies that in his opinion, Conrad is not as good as a white man, but for a coloured man he is all right, because with coloured men his standards seem to be lower. The reason why Mr. Contreras objects the relationship, therefore, lies in his deep-rooted beliefs in the superiority of whites. In the case of Mrs. Rawlings, however, the objection is based on her experiences as a black woman in society, and especially on the way his son Conrad was treated in his youth, as Conrad explains to V.I.: "I was stopped and frisked on the street three different times, just walking back to the crib. Once when I was alone and twice with my buddies" (p. 171). To Conrad's mother "It was just one more insult, and not the first she'd ever faced . . ." (*ibid.*). Being stopped by the police for no other reason than one's race is something that a white person never has to experience. Through the characters of Conrad Rawlings and her mother, Paretsky is able to address these different experiences that non-whites have in society and also show what their effects are. In Mrs. Rawlings' case, they made her bitter and, as a result, clearly reluctant to accept his son being involved with a white woman.

Although Mr. Contreras' and Mrs. Rawlings' attitudes bring forward the possible difficulties in an inter-racial relationship, the fact that V.I. is white does not seem to bother Conrad at all and vice versa. Reddy criticises the character of Conrad Rawlings for "put[ting] his experiences with racism in the past."[150] She also criticises Paretsky for not considering the possibility that V.I. herself "has internalized racist attitudes from the culture and must work to divest herself of them."[151] However, even if Conrad does not have to deal with racist attitudes in his relationship with V.I., he does encounter racism in his profession, much like his colleague and friend Terry Finchley, and understands that it is not merely something that belongs in the past. As

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[150] Reddy, 2003, p. 130.
[151] *ibid.*

far as V.I. is concerned, the fact that she does not bring the racist attitudes of the white culture into her relationship with Conrad is not that surprising. V.I. is a person who has fought against all kind of discrimination her entire life and has clearly shown to be anti-racist throughout the series. The fact that the doubts and objections come to their relationship from outside and not within merely shows that V.I. herself has not adopted the racist beliefs of her culture. The existence of such beliefs and attitudes is acknowledged through the character of Mr. Contreras, but it seems clear that V.I. does not share those beliefs. I would suggest that her own ethnic background has played a major role in why she has not internalized the racist attitudes of many whites. V.I.'s ethnic background and its relevance to the discussion on whiteness will be the topic of the remainder of this section.

Because of the fact that V.I. Warshawski is white, "a whiteness readers have been conditioned to expect in their detectives,"[152] many critics who have so far studied Paretsky's novels (e.g. Klein, Plain and Mizejewski), have not included race in their discussion. As Walton notes, because of V.I.'s whiteness, "Paretsky's focus on race may go unnoticed."[153] However, because V.I. has Polish-Italian origins and grew up in an ethnic neighbourhood on Chicago's South Side, she has dealt with the issues of race and ethnicity her entire life. Walton points out that V.I.'s world "is not a whitewashed world, and she is not a member of the WASP elite. . . . She frequently draws attention to her background and the disposition it has created."[154] During her investigations in *Hard Time*, she first visits the wealthy white area Oak Brook and immediately after that the poorer Uptown which has previously been identified as an area of mixed faces: "black, Middle Eastern, Appalachian" (p. 18). V.I. comments that the neighbourhood where she herself grew up "was a lot more like Uptown than Oak Brook" (p. 87). In addition, when she visits the home of an immigrant family in Uptown, it reminds her of her childhood: "I used to sit in places like this when my mother took me with her on social calls in the neighbourhood" (p. 93). The differences between these neighbourhoods are not only about ethnicity but also about class. V.I. is different from the people in

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[152] Walton, 1999, p. 273.
[153] *ibid.*
[154] *ibid.*

Oak Brook not only because she is from an immigrant family but also because she is from a working-class family, and the differences between her and the rich white people are constantly brought to light in the novels. V.I.'s background and the neighbourhood where she grew up clearly set her apart from the white elite. She identifies herself more with the poor mixed faces of Uptown than the rich white faces of Oak Brook.

The fact that V.I. is different from the majority of the whites in the novels is constantly shown in the way she is treated, for instance in the way the others recurrently mispronounce her name. Her name is frequently under discussion in the novels because it is too difficult for many to pronounce, and this keeps the Polish side of her in the foreground at all times. On some occasions the mispronunciation can be seen as a deliberate attempt to make V.I. feel inferior, such as in *Hard Time*, when the corrupt police officer Lemour repeatedly calls her "Warshki" despite being corrected numerous times. This clearly shows a lack of respect and its purpose is to demean her, not only as a person with Polish origins but as a woman too. On other occasions the difficulty of her name is brought to light in order to emphasise her ethnic background and to separate her from the person who is having trouble pronouncing it. One such person is Warshawski's client in *Blacklist*, the wealthy and white Geraldine Graham, who comments on her name in the following way: "Oh, these Polish names. They're like eels sliding around the tongue" (p. 17). Warshawski's Polish origins also occasionally originate remarks which resemble the racist ways many whites refer to Terry Finchley or Conrad Rawlings as "the nigger cop": "Now you've caused enough disturbance, *you polack detective*, whatever your name is" (*IO*, p. 171; my emphasis). Because of her ethnic background, then, Warshawski is shown to be separate from the white elite, and her adversaries often use her origins as a means of making her feel inferior.

The fact that her name is so difficult for many people in the novels really plays in her favour in *Hard Time*, when she stays in the prison voluntarily in order to find out what happened to Nicola Aguinaldo. She does not want her opponents to know that she is still in the prison, but her

situation becomes more complicated when one of the CO's writes her up for instigating a fight with other inmates, and the information is bound to reach the prison warden who would then realize that Warshawski is still in the prison. However, as Warshawski glances the ticket the CO has handed to her concerning the issue, "I got my one gleam of hope: Rohde [the CO] had put my name down as *Washki*. Maybe the fact that none of the CO's could pronounce my last name, let alone spell it, would save my butt" (p. 372). There is another instance in *Hard Time* when not only her name but her ethnic background in general helps her with the investigation. The immigrant children in Uptown are wary of her at first, and V.I. realizes that this is because to them, she is an educated Anglo and, therefore, attached to authority (p. 91). However, she is able to show a connection between herself and one of the girls who is, reluctantly, taking her to see her mother so that V.I. could ask some questions. The girl points out that her mother does not speak much English, to which V.I. replies, "Neither did mine. We spoke Italian together" (p. 93). After this the interview goes very smoothly and the girl does not object to helping V.I.

From the 1890s until after the Second World War, the question of who is counted as white and who is not became crucial in the USA because of the immigration law. Citizenship was granted on the basis of whether the immigrants were able to establish their whiteness. From this point of view, it is very interesting that Paretsky chose to make her detective half Polish and half Italian, because as Kendall points out, "At various times, *Italians*, Greeks, Jews, and *Poles* weren't considered white."[155] In fact, when it comes to Poles, Reddy notes that they were "part of the Yellow Peril supposedly threatening U.S. whiteness in the early part of the twentieth century."[156] Thus, there was a time in U.S. history when V.I. Warshawski would not have been considered white at all, and would, perhaps, have been perceived as a threat to whiteness. Although nowadays a Polish-Italian person is considered white, the country's history does imply that Warshawski's

[155] Kendall, 2006, p. 44; my emphasis.
[156] Reddy, 2003, p. 33.

whiteness might not be as clear as the whiteness of the early hard-boiled detectives Marlowe or Spade, for instance.

The fact that Warshawski's whiteness might not be that clear is exemplified by the debate on Warshawski's race which takes place in the prison in *Hard Time*: "That started a hot argument, which raged as if I weren't there at all: was I white or Spanish or black? The one who'd nicknamed me Cream insisted I was black. With my olive skin and dark curly hair I could have been anything" (p. 355). V.I. finally stops the debate by identifying herself as Italian. Although identifying herself as Italian also means identifying herself as white, it is interesting that she does not say "white". It is clear that V.I.'s ethnic background is important to her and that is what she wants to emphasise instead of her whiteness. Haney Lopez's argument about the European heritage of whites being "significant only insofar as it contrasts with that of non-Europeans, that is, non-Whites"[157] is a point to be considered, but I would also argue that, in V.I.'s case, by identifying herself as Italian, she not only separates herself from non-whites but also from other whites whose origins are different from hers. Thus, she shows the positive side of belonging to a minority group: it gives her a sense of identity. Dyer points out that "whiteness as a coalition also incites the notion that some whites are whiter than others, with the Anglo-Saxons, Germans and Scandinavians usually providing the apex of whiteness. . . ."[158] V.I. is half Italian which explains her slightly darker skin colour. Her ethnic background does not make her not-white, she still enjoys certain advantages and privileges of a white person, as discussed in chapter 4.1, but her ethnicity is really important to her self-conception and it is emphasised throughout the novels as something that separates her from the WASP elite. Therefore, her identity is constructed in contrast to other whites as well, which makes her different from the early hard-boiled male detectives whose whiteness is constantly glorified through comparison with the inferior non-whites. V.I.'s own background "makes her more aware of cultural

[157] Haney Lopéz, 1996, p. 171.
[158] Dyer, 1997, p. 19.

marginalization,"[159] and because of this awareness, she is then able to fight against such marginalization.

In this second chapter of my analysis, I concentrated on the issue of whiteness and examined the possible ways in which Paretsky challenges the traditional idealization of whiteness in the hard-boiled genre. Because of the fact that racism is constantly condemned and treated as a serious problem in society, and the fact that non-white characters have various roles and are not treated as the 'Other', it seems clear that whiteness is not considered superior to non-whiteness in Paretsky's novels. The detective herself is not racist, and because of her own ethnic background and the discrimination she herself sometimes experiences, she seems to be very aware of cultural marginalization. What seems slightly contradictory in the character of V.I. Warshawski, however, is that while she seems to be aware of the privileges of white people, for example in the eyes of the law, she does not always seem to be aware of the ways her own whiteness plays in her favour and helps her in her investigations, or at least she does not actively reflect upon it. This might be because she is a member of an ethnic minority and does not belong to the group of the even more privileged whites, the WASP elite. The negative attitudes of many whites towards non-whites are also constantly criticised in the novels, and they cannot, therefore, be said to glorify whiteness in the manner of the traditional hard-boiled. In the following chapter, I will turn my attention to the third and final typical feature of the traditional hard-boiled, the idealization of heterosexuality, and examine what happens to this feature in Paretsky's novels.

[159] Walton, 1999, p. 273.

5. Questioning the Idealization of Heterosexuality

In this chapter I am going to examine how hetero- and homosexuality are portrayed in Paretsky's novels. The aim is to examine Paretsky's novels' overall attitude towards sexuality and to see whether or not heterosexuality can still be considered the ideal form of sexuality in the manner of early male-written hard-boiled detective fiction. I am going to address issues such as heteronormativity and heterosexism, examine the ways in which they are present in the stories, and see whether or not they are being challenged. The discussion is divided into two sections. In the first section I will discuss the sexuality of the detective herself, and whether or not her sexuality is somehow different from the male detectives' sexuality. I will also consider the possible ways in which her sexuality and her sexual behaviour might challenge the notion of heteronormativity, despite the fact that she is heterosexual herself. In the second section I will pay attention to the homosexual characters in the series as well as other people's attitudes towards these characters and homosexuality in general. Perhaps the most important attitude to consider here is the detective's, since she is the authoritative voice in the novels and can therefore be seen to represent the novels' overall attitude towards homosexuality.

5.1 Sexuality of the Female Detective

As mentioned in the introductory part to my thesis, Paretsky wanted her female detective to be sexually active, because in the traditional male-written hard-boiled detective fiction, the lack of sexually active good female characters was evident. The woman who is sexually active in the traditional hard-boiled is the evil and dangerous femme fatale who "use[s] her sexuality to get attention and manipulate both villains and the police."[160] The femme fatale uses her sexuality in her attempts to seduce the private detective whom she later on betrays. An early example of the femme

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[160] Mizejewski, 2004, p. 95.

fatale can be found in Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* (1930). As noted by Lewis Moore, "Hammett's Brigid O'Shaugnessy sets the type for the early female of the genre in her mixture of sexuality and violence."[161] Brigid O'Shaugnessy, the archetype of the femme fatale, does attract Hammett's detective Sam Spade and "intends through her sexual appeal to use him as she does others."[162] This very negative view of sexually active women in the early hard-boiled detective fiction is something that Paretsky strives to change by making such a woman the hero of her stories. Warshawski does not use her sexuality to manipulate others, nor is she murderous, dangerous or evil. However, the negative way in which sexually active women are depicted in the traditional hard-boiled should not be discussed without considering the historical context, as pointed out by Walton and Jones: "the femme fatale also marks a reaction against the changes in women's social roles that threatened their traditional domestic function as moral guardian."[163] In the 1920s, women were enjoying "the much announced new sexual freedom,"[164] which also stirred resentment. According to Cynthia Hamilton, the femme fatale "embodies resentment of the active, competitive woman who would take advantage of newly won freedoms."[165] This traditionally resented role of a sexually active woman is turned into an admired one when this woman becomes the hero of the story, which is exactly what happens in Paretsky's novels.

The femme fatales are not, however, the only ones using their sexuality to manipulate others in the traditional hard-boiled. Kimberly Dilley notes that a significant difference between female and male private investigators is that female private eyes do not use their sexuality to manipulate while the male ones do.[166] Cranny-Francis also points out that the traditional male hard-boiled detective is sexually active, but his sexual activity is a "display of power and dominance over

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[161] Moore, 2006, p. 85.
[162] *ibid*., p. 83.
[163] Walton and Jones, 1999, p. 193.
[164] Hamilton in Walton and Jones, 1999, p. 193.
[165] *ibid*.
[166] Dilley, 1998, p. 27.

women, while his emotional involvement is with the case."[167] Paretsky, therefore, challenges the genre's conventions by not only creating a sexually active good woman character, but also by making her detective's sexual behaviour and attitude towards sex different from her male predecessors. As Moore notes in connection with Chandler's *The Big Sleep* (1939), the author "suggests no sense of sexuality's potential to draw people together and through an intimate contract renew a sense of life."[168] Moore adds that it is "quite clear that few of the early detectives expect much from romance or sex."[169] For Hammett's Spade, for example, sex seems to be about danger, since, in *The Maltese Falcon*, he sleeps with his partner's wife and later on with the dangerous Brigid O'Shaugnessy. Chandler's Marlowe, on the other hand, resists the sexual advances of two women in *The Big Sleep*, thus exhibiting higher sexual morals than the women. Despite the fact that the femme fatale does not always succeed in seducing the detective, the entire idea of a femme fatale naturally relies on the fact that the male detective is heterosexual. This recurrent theme of a femme fatale constantly emphasises the heterosexual world of the detective. The presence of these amoral women also ensures that sex and sexuality are constantly seen as a part of a power struggle between these women and the detectives, rather than constituting a part of a more serious, not to mention romantic, relationship.

As far as V.I. Warshawski is concerned, her attitude towards sex seems to echo that of the male detectives at the beginning of the series, in the sense that she does not expect sex to be a part of a serious, romantic relationship. This shows in her relationship with Murray Ryerson in the second book of the series, *Deadlock*, where she comments that they have been "competitors on the crime scene, friends, and occasional lovers for several years" and that somehow "the relationship never seems to develop" (p. 212). In the first few novels, Warshawski has several sexual partners, and as Mizejewski puts it, "has sex like a guy – freely, without qualms."[170] However, it is important

[167] Cranny-Francis, 1990, p. 157.
[168] Moore, 2006, p. 88.
[169] *ibid*., p. 89.
[170] Mizejewski, 2004, p. 137.

to note that she is not indifferent towards these men and does not consider them all to be the same. As Klein points out, Warshawski "persistently treats men as individuals even when they display sexually stereotypical behaviour, not demeaning them as either romantic ideals or available sex objects."[171] The relationships she has with these men at the beginning of the series, even if they do not last for very long, are all different in nature because the men are all different individuals. It is clear that V.I.'s sexuality is a part of who she is as a person, it is a natural part of her life, and not something she uses to manipulate other people. Thus, even though she is heterosexual like the traditional male detectives, her sexual behaviour can be seen to be different from theirs.

Even though V.I.'s sexual relationships are short and perhaps not very meaningful at the beginning, later on in the series she has two relationships which are more significant. The first one is her relationship with Conrad Rawlings, which starts at the end of the seventh novel, *Guardian Angel* (1992). V.I. herself says that she started an affair with Conrad because "an erotic spark had always jumped between [them]" (p. 402), and now both she and Conrad want to find out whether their "attraction is just bad old jungle fever, or has something more substantial to it" (p. 401). As their relationship develops in the next novel, *Tunnel Vision* (1994), it becomes more serious, and when it ends later on, V.I. is deeply hurt. At the beginning of *Hard Time* (1999), she admits that "It's taken [her] a while to recover from the loss" (p. 22). Her relationship with Conrad clearly involved a much stronger commitment than her previous affairs.

The other more significant relationship V.I. has in later novels is with Morrell, a writer whom she meets in *Hard Time*. The seriousness of this relationship is obvious since they are still together in Paretsky's latest novel, *Fire Sale* (2005), which means that their relationship has lasted through three novels. When it comes to the sexuality and sexual behaviour of the detective, therefore, the way these later novels differ from the earlier ones is that now Warshawski expresses her sexuality in a serious relationship and she has the same partner for a longer period of time. Sex

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[171] Klein, 1988, p. 215.

is now a part of a romantic relationship, which differs greatly from the traditional male detectives, such as Spade or Marlowe, who "resist romantic commitment."[172] Although there is nothing subversive about a hard-boiled detective who is heterosexual, the way Paretsky does challenge and subvert the genre's conventions is by having a sexually active woman in a heroic role, and by changing the way the heterosexual detective expresses her sexuality and the way she behaves.

Before I move on to discuss the novels' treatment of homosexuality and the possible ways it challenges the genre's traditional idealization of heterosexuality, I want to consider whether V.I.'s heterosexuality does anything to challenge the idea of heteronormativity, the normative status of heterosexuality. As mentioned by Yep, one of the ways in which heteronormativity manifests itself is through compulsory heterosexuality, which "channels . . . women into marriage and motherhood in the service of men."[173] Since V.I. Warshawski was married for a short period of time when she was younger, it could be said that she previously led her life according to the heteronormative standards. However, the marriage was short-lived as it "ended in an acrimonious divorce after fourteen months" (*IO*, p. 37). Afterwards she is not really sure why she married in the first place and, since she "made a lousy housewife" (*ibid.*), does not intend to do it again. She has also made the decision not to have children, as stated above (cf. chapter 4.3). The fact that V.I. has refused the idea of marriage and motherhood could be seen as an effort to resist heteronormativity. It should not be forgotten, though, that her affairs with men are clearly present in the novels throughout the series, and this presence affirms heterosexuality in these novels in a similar way the presence of femme fatales does in the traditional hard-boiled. There is no question of the fact that Warshawski is heterosexual. It is worth noting, however, that she does resist the traditional role of a heterosexual woman which is an integral part of heteronormativity.

Since V.I., as a heterosexual woman, has renounced the traditional family life, the family being one of the number of institutions in which heteronormativity has a long tradition of being

[172] Moore, 2006, p. 148.
[173] Yep, 2003, p. 19.

rooted,[174] she has, to some extent, renounced heteronormativity. As pointed out by Elia, "The institution of traditional family has set the direction and tone for sexual life."[175] The fact that V.I. does not conform to the traditional role of a heterosexual woman is constantly brought to light by Lieutenant Bobby Mallory, who clearly represents the heteronormative standard in the novels. Comments such as "Why can't you stay home and raise a family . . ." (*DL*, p. 105), are very typical of him, and they can be seen to demonstrate his opinion on not only women's place in society but also their sexuality: the only acceptable kind of sexuality in Bobby's mind seems to be a specific kind of heterosexuality which involves marriage and having children. At the background of Bobby's insistence that V.I. should marry, there might also be a slight concern over her sexuality. The idea of V.I. possibly being a lesbian is intolerable to Bobby, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section. The fact that V.I. is surrounded by a community of women and values her relationship with Lotty more than any of her relationships with men (cf. chapter 3.3), might be seen as threatening to men like Bobby and the heteronormative order in general. Indeed, according to Mizejewski, "the overtones of female bonding and loyalty, even in supposedly 'straight' scenarios in women detective stories, can have lesbian overtones. . . ."[176] Therefore, by not submitting to the traditional role of a heterosexual woman, Warshawski can be seen to challenge the heteronormative order to some extent. The presence of homosexual characters and the attitudes towards homosexuality can do this challenging even more effectively, and this will be the topic of the following section.

5.2 Homosexuality and Homosexual Characters

In the traditional, early male-written hard-boiled detective fiction, the negative attitude towards homosexuality is expressed in many ways. As pointed out by Reddy, "The classic hard-boiled

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[174] Elia, 2003, p. 63.
[175] *ibid.*, p. 65.
[176] Mizejewski, 2004, p. 24.

novels position gays with people of color as the Others against whom the detective is defined and measured. . . ."[177] At the level of the plot, homosexual characters are often criminals or at least portrayed as suspicious and cunning. The criminality of a white man, for example, is occasionally explained through his homosexuality, as is the case with Wilmer in Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*. In the early hard-boiled novels, then, the plot itself can be described as homophobic. In addition to the plot, homophobia is strongly present in the character of the heterosexual detective, and since the detective is the hero of the story, the ideal figure and the authoritative voice, his treatment of homosexuals as inferior and abnormal is considered right. Heterosexuality is, therefore, treated as the superior and ideal form of sexuality.

The attitude towards homosexuals has changed from negative to positive gradually throughout the history of hard-boiled detective fiction, with the emergence of homosexual detectives such as Joseph Hansen's Dave Brandstetter (*Fadeout*, 1970) and Sandra Scoppetone's Lauren Laurano (*Everything You Have Is Mine*, 1991). However, homosexuality is not a very common theme in Paretsky's novels and homosexual characters seem to be relatively rare. One such novel in which homosexuality is discussed to some extent is *Blacklist*. When V.I. investigates the death of Marcus Whitby, she discovers many past secrets. The father of V.I.'s most important client, Darraugh Graham, is revealed to have been gay at the end of the novel, although Darraugh's mother does not seem to think that the word 'gay' could really be used to describe her late husband: "'Gay'? What a strange word for a man whose homosexuality weighed on him like a Druid's stone" (p. 408). MacKenzie Graham was forced into a heterosexual marriage, which demonstrates the power of heteronormativity in society. The fact that MacKenzie himself agreed to this attempt of "curing" him of his homosexuality might be a sign of internalized homophobia, which manifests itself in the form of self-hatred or self-destructive thoughts. The fact that his wife says that his homosexuality weighed on him could also be seen as evidence of internalized homophobia, which,

[177] Reddy, 2003, p. 98.

according to Yep, "becomes firmly implanted in the lives and psyches of individuals in heteronormative society."[178]

The power of heteronormativity is also demonstrated in MacKenzie's tragic death in the 1950s. When he is discovered of having an affair with Olin Taverner, a prominent political figure at the time, his and Olin's homosexuality is about to become public. The attitude of the heteronormative society towards homosexuals ultimately leads to MacKenzie's suicide. Since being a homosexual "would have ruined Olin in the fifties," (p. 411) he decides to try and save his public face by accusing MacKenzie of seducing him and "shock[ing] him with [his] homosexual declarations," (p. 446) as MacKenzie himself puts it in his suicide note. This is something that MacKenzie cannot face and he decides to end his life. MacKenzie himself is constantly said to have been a good person, and he is shown to be a victim of a prejudiced and homophobic society. It is never suggested that his homosexuality would have somehow made him deserve his fate. MacKenzie's tragic life and death could be seen as criticism of heteronormativity which oppresses sexual others and prevents them from living freely.

In spite of the fact that homosexual characters are rare, the novels' attitude towards homosexuality becomes clear. When determining this general attitude, an essential point to consider is V.I. Warshawski's personal attitude towards homosexuality, whether she expresses any signs of homophobia or heterosexism, for example, since the detective's attitudes and points of view play a central role in hard-boiled novels. Because V.I. Warshawski is heterosexual, one possible way in which she might display heterosexist attitudes would be assuming that everyone she meets is heterosexual as well and not even considering any other alternatives. However, when V.I. fantasizes about Morrell in *Hard Time*, she takes into consideration that he might already have "a lover of some sex" (p. 253). It is important to note that V.I. does not automatically assume that Morrell's possible lover is a woman. Another similar instance occurs in *Blacklist*, when V.I. is

[178] Yep, 2003, p. 21.

investigating Whitby's house: "An angry lover could have keys. She – he – could have driven Marcus Whitby out to a remote place to die" (p. 137). In this case as well, V.I. does not rule out the possibility that Whitby might have been homosexual. In addition to recognizing the fact that everyone is not heterosexual, V.I. does not make any negative comments about the possible homosexuality of these men. Therefore, she does not display heterosexist attitudes either in assuming the heterosexuality of all people or in considering heterosexuals to be somehow better than homosexuals.

Warshawski's attitude towards homosexuals is considerably different from her male predecessors. Where Marlowe shows his contempt towards homosexuals through such comments as "It was meant to be a hard [punch], but a pansy has no iron in his bones, whatever he looks like" (*The Big Sleep*, p. 17), Warshawski never talks about homosexuals in a demeaning manner. She also challenges the view according to which calling someone a homosexual is an insult. This is shown in *Hard Time*, when Baladine's sensitive son Robbie tells her that his father has been calling him names: "I supposed Baladine stood over him and called him a faggot or queer or other names that pass for insults with someone like him" (p. 325). Warshawski separates herself from the homophobic attitudes of Baladine by suggesting that she does not consider it an insult to call someone gay, which shows that she does not consider homosexuals to be inferior. The attitudes that men such as Marlowe and Baladine have towards homosexuality can be seen to be expressions of heteronormativity. Inside the heteronormative borders, it is heterosexuality which defines a "real" man.[179] As pointed out by Yep, "Homophobia and the fear of being perceived as gay become the central organizing principle and the cultural policing of manhood."[180] Therefore, for men like Marlowe and Baladine, their homophobic attitudes are a way of emphasising their own manhood, which also implies that they have adopted heteronormative values. They see homosexual men as a threat to their sexual status. Since Warshawski is a woman, homosexual men do not pose a similar

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[179] Yep, 2003, p. 20.
[180] *ibid.*

threat to her. Although her positive attitude towards homosexual men is important, her attitude towards lesbian women might reveal even more about whether she truly challenges heteronormative values and the idealization of heterosexuality.

V.I.'s attitude towards lesbianism is most clearly shown in *Killing Orders* (1985), where she investigates the murder of her old friend Agnes Paciorek. Although Agnes' murder has nothing to do with her sexual orientation, her lesbianism becomes a central theme in V.I.'s investigation, because V.I. is surrounded by people who have embraced heteronormative values and homophobic attitudes. One such person is Bobby Mallory, who is told by Agnes' mother that Agnes and V.I. used to be lovers, and afterwards loses his control when confronting V.I. about the matter: "You and Paciorek were lesbians, weren't you? . . . When Tony [V.I.'s father] was dying you were up at the University of Chicago screwing around like a pervert, weren't you? . . . Jesus Christ, Victoria. When I talked to Mrs. Paciorek this morning, I wanted to puke" (p. 104). There is no question about the fact that Bobby has internalized heteronormative values and therefore believes heterosexuality to be normal and homosexuality to be a perversion. In addition, he does not hesitate to voice his beliefs and talk about homosexuality in a very demeaning manner. The way in which V.I. defends herself against Bobby's attack is significant. At first she does not answer at all because Bobby has not charged her with anything, and is about to leave. However, when Bobby insists that they straighten things out, V.I. replies coldly: "There's nothing to straighten out. First of all, under the Illinois criminal code, lesbianism between consenting adults is not an indictable offense. Therefore it is none of your goddamned business whether or not Ms. Paciorek and I were lovers" (p. 105). It is noteworthy that even though they were not lovers at any point, as becomes clear later on, V.I. does not feel the need to declare that she is not a lesbian and has never had lesbian relations. This is a clear indication of the fact that she does not consider lesbianism to be something pervert or something she herself would never want to be associated with.

In addition to Bobby Mallory, another person in this novel with clear homophobic attitudes

is Agnes' mother. First of all, she blames V.I. for "corrupt[ing] and destroy[ing] the life of [her] oldest child" (p. 165) during their student years. Of all the things that Agnes did or believed in, there is no question as to what Mrs. Paciorek thought of as being the worst:

> It was enough for Agnes to know I believed in something for her to believe the opposite. Abortion. The war in Vietnam. Worst of all, the Church. I thought I had seen my family name degraded in every possible way. I didn't realize how much I could have forgiven *until she announced in public that she was a homosexual*. (p. 166; my emphasis)

As far as Mrs. Paciorek is concerned, being a lesbian was her daughter's biggest crime, something that she could not forgive her for. Mrs. Paciorek's extreme homophobia is also shown in the way she refers to Agnes' partner Phyllis Lording as "that creature" and "that vile thing" (*ibid.*). The way V.I. responds to this name-calling shows her willingness to challenge Mrs. Paciorek's homophobic views: ". . . [Agnes] loved Phyllis Lording, and Phyllis loved her, and they lived very happily together. If five percent of married couples brought each other that much satisfaction the divorce rate wouldn't be what it is. . . . Phyllis is an interesting woman. She's a substantial scholar" (p. 167). V.I. obviously does not think that heterosexuality is required in order for a person to be a good human being. Her positive views about Agnes and Phyllis and the fact that she also respected their life together and believes that many heterosexual couples should learn from them, are clear indications of the fact that she values homosexuality as much as heterosexuality. Therefore, it seems clear that she does not consider heterosexuality to be the ideal form of sexuality.

Heteronormative thinking is clearly present in *Killing Orders*, and it is something that V.I. is constantly trying to challenge. It does not, however, manifest itself only through homophobic characters. The fact that heteronormative thinking "is deeply ingrained . . . in our social institutions . . . [and] actively and methodically subordinates, disempowers, denies, and rejects individuals who do not conform to the heterosexual mandate . . ."[181] is also addressed in the novel. After Agnes' death, her lover and live-in partner Phyllis Lording has no rights when it comes to Agnes' funeral

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[181] Yep, 2003, p. 24.

arrangements, for example, and is totally excluded from the funeral by Agnes' mother. Phyllis remarks bitterly that "If you're not married, you don't have any rights when your lover dies" (p. 116). Although V.I. does not have the power to eliminate heteronormativity from society and thus give same-sex couples the right to marry, for example, she can at least do something to challenge heteronormative thinking. In this case, she promises to help Phyllis and defies Mrs. Paciorek by bringing Phyllis to the funeral. It is a small gesture, but it shows that she believes that Phyllis, as Agnes' partner, should have the same rights as a heterosexual companion would have.

The externalized homophobia expressed by Mallory and Mrs. Paciorek in *Killing Orders*, Baladine in *Hard Time*, and also Philip Marlowe in Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, is fuelled by heteronormativity. As Yep puts it, "Externalized homophobia, whether in the form of verbal or physical assault, is a potent, and at times deadly, mode of enforcement of the heteronormative order."[182] Homophobia, therefore, is not only a hatred of homosexual subjects, but also a "disciplinary strategy employed against *all* social subjects to ensure that they comply with society's preference for heterosexuality,"[183] as pointed out by Cranny-Francis et al. The early male hard-boiled detectives, such as Marlowe, are openly homophobic and through that homophobic behaviour, they enforce the higher, normative status of heterosexuality. Since these detectives are heterosexual themselves, this behaviour also enforces their own superior status in comparison to homosexuals. As pointed out above, Paretsky's novels also deal with homophobia to some extent and do not ignore its existence. The crucial difference between Paretsky's novels and the tradition, however, is that Paretsky's detective, the hero of the story, is not homophobic herself. In fact, she condemns externalized homophobia and fights against it. Therefore, the significant difference between Warshawski and Marlowe, for instance, is that Marlowe's behaviour enforces the prevailing heteronormative order while Warshawski's does not. On the contrary, Warshawski tries actively to challenge that order.

[182] Yep, 2003, p. 23.
[183] Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 25.

In this third and final chapter of my analysis of the V.I. Warshawski novels, I concentrated on the issue of sexuality, and especially on the possible ways in which Paretsky might be seen to question the hard-boiled genre's traditional idealization of heterosexuality. Although Warshawski is heterosexual herself, she does not conform to the traditional role of a heterosexual woman, i.e. a wife and a mother. In this way, she could be seen to challenge the idea of heteronormativity which strives to channel women into this role. Paretsky can also be seen to subvert the role of a sexually active woman in the genre of hard-boiled detective fiction, since in her novels the sexually active woman is not evil but good and heroic. V.I. expresses her sexuality freely, whether in shorter relationships or more serious, long-term relationships. In addition, despite the fact that V.I. is heterosexual, heterosexuality is not treated as superior to homosexuality. Although heterosexism and homophobia do exist in the novels, it is clear that V.I., the authoritative voice in the novels, condemns and fights against them. She is not heterosexist or homophobic herself, in contrast to her early male predecessors, does not automatically assume the heterosexuality of all people or consider homosexuals to be inferior or perverse. Heterosexuals are not idealized at the level of the plot, either. The alleged superior quality of heterosexuals is not emphasised by making homosexuals criminal or otherwise suspicious, as in the traditional hard-boiled.

6. Conclusion

The starting point for my study of Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski novels was Maureen T. Reddy's claim that the most central and most characteristic features of hard-boiled detective fiction have traditionally been masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality. These features are idealized in the novels of such prominent hard-boiled writers as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Mickey Spillane. Since Paretsky's novels are generally accepted to represent the genre of hard-boiled detective fiction, I set out to examine what happens to these three features in her novels, i.e. whether they can still be seen as ideal, or whether Paretsky does anything to challenge their idealization. The main focus of my analysis was on two novels, *Hard Time* (1999) and *Blacklist* (2003), although examples were also drawn from other novels in the series, which so far comprises of twelve novels. The analysis was divided into three chapters: the first one concentrated on masculinity, the second one on whiteness and the third one on heterosexuality.

In the traditional hard-boiled, the idealization of masculinity is explicitly shown in the character of the male detective, who often engages in violent behaviour, is a heavy drinker and a solitary loner who does not need or want friends. The idealization of masculinity is also shown in the way the male detective treats women, who are clearly represented as being inferior to the detective. There is an evident lack of good women characters in the traditional hard-boiled. There are many ways in which Paretsky can be seen to question this traditional idealization of masculinity. First of all, Paretsky draws attention to the constant sexism her detective has to experience and shows her fighting against it. One concrete way in which she does this is that she does not let men call her 'girl' or 'little lady' without correcting them at once and announcing that she is a woman and not a girl. Warshawski also fights against the values of hegemonic masculinity. These are expressed clearly by a friend of her father's, Lieutenant Bobby Mallory, who repeatedly tells Warshawski that the proper role for her would be that of a wife and a mother, and that she should stop playing a detective. Warshawski, however, does not intend to comply with this kind of

subordination merely because that is what is expected of her as a woman. The dominance of men and the subordination of women are shown to be a reality in Paretsky's novels, but they are clearly not accepted as justified. The values of hegemonic masculinity are, therefore, questioned.

Masculinity is also connected to power, and the power relations between men and women are heavily criticised in *Hard Time*, when the male guards in a women's prison abuse their position and take advantage of the female inmates. The women have no power and the threat of rape is constantly present for Warshawski as well, when she ends up in the prison. Sexual violence is a theme which was brought to the genre of detective fiction by women writers, and through the character of a woman detective, Paretsky is able to draw attention to this different kind of violence which is not a threat to the male detective. In *Hard Time* the idealization of masculinity is also criticised by making the most masculine character in the novel the ultimate villain. Robert Baladine is a 'manly man' and is trying to raise his son to be tough and masculine, and cannot stand the fact that the boy is very sensitive and shows his feelings openly, thus expressing qualities that have traditionally been associated with femininity. In the case of Baladine and his son, the traditionally feminine qualities are shown to be more desirable and positive, since masculinity is connected with criminality.

Violence is an important part of hard-boiled detective fiction and the masculinity of the male detective. It seems that violence is so deeply rooted to the genre that it has to be present in Paretsky's novels as well, but the way violence is presented and the ways in which Warshawski uses it can be seen to differ from the tradition. First of all, apart from the first novel, Warshawski takes no pleasure in violence and actively reflects upon its consequences, both mental and physical. Most often she uses violence to protect herself or the people she cares about, thus showing that she is able to defend herself. There are also many occasions when she makes a conscious decision not to fight violence with violence and uses her head instead, and is also able to achieve much more in that way. Although violence still exists in Paretsky's novels, it is not glorified. The nature of the

detective's violence is not the only thing which is different in this heroic character, though. Drinking is an integral part of the masculine male detective, but in the character of Warshawski, it is not that significant. The way Paretsky rewrites the character of the detective in this respect is made apparent by Warshawski's recurrent remarks about how she is not like Philip Marlowe who, for instance, downs a pint every time he is injured.

One last important way in which Paretsky questions the traditional idealization of masculinity is the importance of a social network for her detective. While the traditional male detective is a solitary loner without any friends or family, Warshawski has many meaningful relationships, for example with her best friend Dr. Lotty Herschel and her neighbour and friend Mr. Contreras, and is also deeply influenced by the memory of her parents. Although she mostly operates alone and is in this way similar to her male predecessors, at the same time she is not afraid to ask her friends for help and is, in fact, quite often in the need of it, especially the help provided by Lotty Herschel who often patches her up both physically and mentally. In addition, Warshawski often draws comfort from the memory of her parents, treasures the material things they left behind, often thinks of them and admits to missing them. The constant presence of her parents in her life in this way provides her with a family background which is missing from the traditional male detective. Her connectedness to other people is made evident, and in this way the idealization of the masculine solitariness of her male predecessors is challenged.

The idealization of whiteness can also been seen to be questioned in Paretsky's novels. It must be kept in mind that Warshawski herself is white and therefore a certain white consciousness is bound to exist, for example in the way most people's race is only mentioned if it is not white. In addition, it seems that Warshawski does not actively consider her own privileges as a white person, although constantly reminds other whites about how they would certainly be treated differently if they were not white. Warshawski's own immigrant background clearly helps her understand cultural marginalization and she is aware of the unequal ways whites and non-whites are treated, but

at the same time she rarely thinks about how her own whiteness opens doors for her on a daily basis. Therefore, there seems to be a contradiction of sorts in her awareness of race and racial inequality. However, this might partially be explained by the fact that although she is white, she is not part of the WASP elite because of her ethnic background, and therefore she does not identify herself with the even more privileged whites. The situation in *Blacklist* when she is denied access to an African-American publishing house partly because she is white, though, opens her eyes momentarily, and she becomes more aware of the role her whiteness plays in her investigations. However, situations of this kind are very rare. Although the fact that Warshawski does not reflect upon her own privileges does not mean that whiteness is treated as superior to non-whiteness, the power of whiteness would, perhaps, be more effectively challenged if Warshawski consciously considered her own whiteness and the advantages she receives because of it.

The ways in which the idealization of whiteness is challenged in the novels include the recurrent theme of racism and the way it is treated, and the various roles played by non-white characters. The existence of racism in society is definitely not denied in Paretsky's novels and it is not treated as normal or justified, but as something that should be fought. The unequal way the police treat whites and non-whites is heavily criticised in many of Paretsky's novels, including *Blacklist*, which was under closer scrutiny in my thesis. The racist attitudes of the police become apparent in the way they so readily conclude that Whitby's death was a suicide without proper investigations, and in the way they hunt for Benjamin Sadawi simply because he is an Arab. Warshawski questions the actions of the police, conducts a proper investigation into Whitby's death and helps the innocent Arab boy to hide from the police. The early hard-boiled male detectives are racist themselves, and their adversaries in the stories are often racial others, which means that the stories' general attitude towards non-whites is very negative. Warshawski, on the other hand, is not racist and actively fights against racism, and her adversaries are mostly white men (occasionally women). Because racism is condemned and the actions of racist whites are heavily criticised, the

novels can be said to challenge the genre's traditional idealization of whiteness.

The extremely negative picture of non-whites in the traditional hard-boiled naturally serves the purpose of emphasising the superiority of the white detective. In Paretsky's novels, however, non-whites are described in a much more positive light and they occupy a variety of roles, such as doctors, police officers and journalists. Two black police officers, Terry Finchley and Conrad Rawlings, play a significant role in Warshawski's life. Finchley and Warshawski have a relationship of mutual respect and he is often the only member of the official police who takes Warshawski's investigations seriously. Through the intimate relationship between Warshawski and Rawlings, on the other hand, Paretsky is able to address the difficulties of inter-racial relationships, since their involvement meets some resistance from the outside. In addition to these men, Warshawski's social network also include non-white women, such as Sal Barthele, the owner her favourite bar, who is clearly someone Warshawski admires. These non-white characters are not shown to be somehow inferior to Warshawski. On the contrary, they are people whom Warshawski respects, admires and cares deeply for. Whiteness, therefore, cannot be said to be idealized or considered superior in Paretsky's novels.

The third part of my analysis concentrated on the issue of heterosexuality and whether it is considered the ideal form of sexuality in the novels. The fact that Warshawski is heterosexual and also sexually active means that heterosexuality is constantly present and affirmed in the novels. A clear majority of the people in the novels are heterosexual, or at least are not identified otherwise, which means that homosexuality is not a very common theme. There is something about Warshawski's sexuality, however, which challenges the genre's conventions. As a heterosexual woman detective, she changes both the role of a sexually active woman in hard-boiled detective fiction and the way the detective figure behaves sexually. The sexually active woman is now the hero of the story and not the evil femme fatale of tradition. In addition, for the early male detectives, their sexuality was part of a constant power struggle with the femme fatales, and they

used their sexuality to manipulate the women and to show their power and dominance. In Warshawski's case, her sexuality is a natural part of her life and the person she is, and, especially in later novels, she expresses her sexuality in more serious relationships. She does not use her sexuality to manipulate.

The idea of heteronormativity, which means the normalization of heterosexuality and the oppression of sexual others, is essential when considering the ways in which Paretsky does challenge the genre's traditional idealization of heterosexuality despite her detective's sexual orientation. As a heterosexual woman, Warshawski's renouncement of the traditional role of wife and mother could be seen as an effort to resist heteronormativity, which channels women into these roles. More important, however, is the way homosexuality and homosexual characters are depicted when they do appear, because, although they are rare, there are some homosexual characters in the novels. Homosexuals are not shown to be suspicious or cunning as in the traditional hard-boiled, and the detective does not have homophobic attitudes towards them. Warshawski criticises the homophobic attitudes of other characters and, for instance, when Bobby Mallory accuses her of lesbianism in *Killing Orders*, she does not feel the need to declare her own heterosexuality but simply announces that lesbianism is not a crime. It does not bother her that Mallory thinks she has had lesbian relations, which indicates that she does not consider lesbians to be inferior. Since homophobia is an integral part of heteronormativity, the early male detective's homophobic behaviour can be seen to enforce the heteronormative order, the higher status of heterosexuality. As far as Warshawski is concerned, the fact that she is not homophobic herself and fights against homophobic attitudes means that she is actively trying to challenge that order.

All in all it can be said that Paretsky's novels do question the hard-boiled ideology of treating masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality as superior qualities. Even though these three features are still present in the novels to some extent, since Warshawski is both white and heterosexual and has some traditionally masculine qualities (such as activity), they are not idealized

through, for example, demeaning descriptions of those people who are not masculine, white or heterosexual. Paretsky is able to adapt the previously very masculine, male-dominated, genre and rewrite it to include those who have traditionally been silenced by it: women, non-whites and homosexuals. By drawing attention to and criticising such problems in society as sexism, racism and homophobia, Paretsky gives voice to the traditional others of hard-boiled detective fiction.

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