

# “Embedding Rights Within Relationships”— Gender, Law, and Sara Paretsky<sup>1</sup>

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In *Making All the Difference*, law professor Martha Minow rejects prevailing conceptions of the self that she believes underlie American legal doctrine—conceptions of the self as either separate and autonomous, or else disabled and incompetent in some way. Liberal frameworks of thought that focus on individual rights and distinctions between people tend to ignore that the self is shaped only through relationships with other people, she claims. Advocating “a shift in the paradigm we use to conceive of difference, a shift from a focus on the distinctions between people to a focus on the relationships within which we notice and draw distinctions,” she does not wish completely to abandon as illusory or insufficient existing conceptions of rights as protections for individual autonomy, however. Rather, she offers a “dialectical approach” which connects a renewed interest in caretaking and mutual obligation to existing frameworks that emphasize individual rights and boundaries. “Embedding rights within relationships,” she says, “offers another and more promising alternative.”<sup>2</sup>

Holding on to the rhetoric of rights, but making sure that it is firmly fixed within an ethic of care and relationships, however, is easier said than done. Often the tension between individual rights and a morality of care and responsibility builds up to such an extent that no compromise is possible. During the last ten to fifteen years, one of the most interesting arenas in which this tension has been discussed has been feminist detective fiction. For writers such as Sara Paretsky, Sue Grafton, Amanda Cross, and Antonia Fraser, just to mention some of the more well-known, the re-invention or reworking of the “Hard-Boiled” school of detective fiction has made it possible to raise and explore, in innovative, sensitive,

and surprising ways, issues affecting women—violence, sexual violence, victimization, conflict between individuals and authority, and conflict between men and women.

The politically satisfying plots of many of the female detective novels notwithstanding, various aspects of these novels are both problematic and embarrassing to many aspects of feminist thought. Thus, private eye V.I. Warshawski, the heroine of Sara Paretsky's novels and the focus of this article, invokes many of the concerns of contemporary feminism, while simultaneously adopting and uncritically accepting the aggressive, gun-slinging attitudes of her male predecessors. Having her heroine oscillate between manifestations of extreme independence and autonomy and yearnings for connection and relationships, Paretsky successfully lays bare the difficulties inherent in embedding rights within relationships. V.I. or Vic's personal contradictions are made part of the novels' tensions, and taken together, Paretsky's to date eight 'V.I. Warshawski Mysteries'<sup>3</sup> may be seen as a kind of female *Bildungsroman*, tracing the progress of a woman from fear of being abandoned over feelings of annihilation, loss, and despair to active involvement and reconciliation with other people. Throughout, the personal is discussed against the background of the law and the conventions of the detective novel, and thereby made political or public.

More than perhaps any other genre, the detective novel deals directly with the legal system and its practitioners. The choice on the part of Paretsky and other female American writers of the detective novel in which to discuss matters of interest to a female audience is an excellent one. Developing out of and along with the Civil Rights Movement, the second women's movement was from the very beginning committed to the use of law to bring about social change. Several of the women in the movement had gone to law school, and in the early days in the 1960s and 1970s they had begun to develop feminist legal theories confronting theoretical legal frameworks created by men. Even when, much later, legal feminists along with other feminists joined in the discussion carried out by minority and critical legal scholars as to whether rights talk promotes wide political change or leads to an empowerment of largely symbolic and therefore dubious value, they never fundamentally questioned the usefulness for the women's cause of the legal vernacular and the legal arena.

In the first part of this article, I will focus on theoretical aspects of gender and feminism. Unlike French feminists, such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Helene Cixous, who are engaged in attempts to deconstruct the duality or binary opposition of masculinity and femininity altogether, American feminists have by and large remained committed to a discussion along sameness versus difference lines or, in legal terms, equal treatment versus special treatment lines. The change that most American feminists have advocated typically involves, not a de-, but a reconstruction or synthesis of the old, familiar liberal and radical notions of sameness and difference.

In Part Two, then, I will apply these theoretical perspectives to an analysis of Sara Paretsky's novels in an attempt to illuminate main character V.I.

Warshawski’s development from autonomous selfhood to a selfhood embedded within relationships.

### **American versus French Feminism; American Feminism and the Law**

In recent years, a complicated debate has taken place between Anglo-American and French feminisms.<sup>4</sup> At the center of this debate have been issues concerning subjectivity, identity, theory and practice. The question that participants in the debate have attempted to answer concerns the political meaning of feminism: what is and ought to be the point of feminist studies if they do not succeed in bringing about political change? What follows is a comparison between Anglo-American and French feminisms as these have come to be expressed in the writings of Elaine Showalter and Toril Moi, respectively. Such a comparison brings to light the key problematics of current feminism, just as it helps to isolate concerns of specific importance to Anglo-American feminist critics.

More than perhaps anywhere else, it is in their discussion of Virginia Woolf’s masterpiece, *A Room of One’s Own*, that Showalter’s (Anglo-American) and Moi’s (French) approaches to feminism are revealed. In her chapter on Woolf in *A Literature of Their Own*, Showalter wants to “demystify the legend of Virginia Woolf.” The emphasis in recent feminist criticism on Woolf as “the apotheosis of a new literary sensibility—not feminine but androgynous” is mistaken. Androgyny and the retreat into ‘a room of one’s own’ may look attractive as abstract ideals, but they do not go very far toward solving the concrete problems of everyday life.<sup>5</sup>

Its claim to be spontaneous and intimate notwithstanding, *A Room of One’s Own* is “an extremely impersonal and defensive book,” according to Showalter.<sup>6</sup> Woolf comes across as depersonalized, even de-sexed. Her distance and lack of involvement is especially noticeable in her multiple points-of-view. These playful shifts and changes of perspective are treacherous in that they make it virtually impossible to pin down Woolf’s individual self and gender identity. In the midst of these multiple perspectives, it is not clear to the reader what sort of message—if indeed any at all—Woolf intends to convey.

Within the literary criticism of Elaine Showalter, claims Toril Moi, there is detectable “a strong, unquestioned belief in the values . . . of traditional bourgeois humanism of a liberal-individualist kind.” What Showalter sees as evasion and fear of confronting real-life issues on Woolf’s part, is in fact, says Moi, a recognition of and attempt to subvert rigid gender identities. Throughout her life, Woolf steadfastly refused to conform to definitions of sexual identity officially condoned by society and did her best in her writing—by means, for instance, of multiple points-of-view—“to deconstruct the death-dealing binary oppositions of masculinity and femininity.” In her rejection of traditional humanist desires for unity of thought and vision, Woolf may be seen as a precursor for modern French

Feminism. She grasped what Anglo-American feminists such as Elaine Showalter have failed to grasp, namely that the traditional humanism represented by Anglo-American feminism

is in effect part of patriarchal ideology. At its center is the seamlessly unified self—either individual or collective—which is commonly called ‘Man’. As Luce Irigaray or Helene Cixous would argue, this integrated self is in fact a phallic self, constructed on the model of the self-contained, powerful, phallus. Gloriously autonomous, it banishes from itself all conflict, contradiction and ambiguity.<sup>7</sup>

In Moi’s opinion, Showalter, as indeed most Anglo-American feminists, lacks an adequate *theoretical* apparatus to understand fully what Woolf was all about. Searching for a unified individual self and valuing the experiential over the theoretical, Showalter *et.al.* run the risk of not only reducing, but also of entirely missing the point of works of a non-realist kind. Rather than looking toward the past and the writings, in Moi’s opinion by now obsolete, of the Marxist critic Georg Lukacs, to whose theories about the realist novel representing the totality of human life in a social framework we shall return later, Showalter would be better off letting herself be inspired by contemporary French feminist writing.

It is, asserts Moi, in the work of Julia Kristeva, for example, that we may reach a new and radically transformed awareness of the nature of the feminist struggle. According to Kristeva, the feminist struggle may be divided into three historical-political stages. Moi summarizes these stages:

- (1) Women demand equal access to the symbolic order. Liberal feminism. Equality.
- (2) Women reject the male symbolic order in the name of differences. Radical feminism. Femininity extolled.
- (3) Women reject the dichotomy between masculine and feminine as metaphysical (This is Kristeva’s own position).<sup>8</sup>

From the challenge of the very notion of a unified identity that is implied by the deconstruction of the opposition between masculinity and femininity at Kristeva’s third stage, Showalter and her fellow Anglo-American feminists recoil. Persisting in defending women *as* women, these feminists fail, says Moi, to grasp the underlying metaphysical nature of constructed gender identities.

A quick survey of American—and in the following I shall concentrate on the American part of Anglo-American feminism—bears out Moi’s contention. The American debate has remained loyal to the issue of sameness vs. difference. There

have been but few attempts to leave behind the male-female dichotomy.<sup>9</sup> Here, I will briefly look at a couple of these attempts before moving on to the bulk of American feminist writing, which has largely preoccupied itself with questions relating to liberal or radical feminisms—searching for answers, that is, within a binary oppositional framework.<sup>10</sup>

One American feminist who has recently been involved in promoting what she calls a “postmodern legal feminism” is the late professor of law, Mary Joe Frug,<sup>11</sup> who draws on postmodern insights from a variety of disciplines. In her version, postmodern feminism focuses on particular doctrinal issues, claims that sexual differences are complex, ever-shifting practices, and contests conventional and stalemated understandings of gender in deliberately invoking *differences*. By privileging differences *within* the sexes—differences within maleness or femaleness relating to race, class, sexual orientation, and other realities of experience—rather than privileging differences *between* the sexes, “postmodern feminists are thus able to treat women as historically situated individuals with commonalities *at the same time* that they are challenging the link between femininity and biological femaleness.”<sup>12</sup>

For Catherine A. MacKinnon too, the future of gender studies lies in a repudiation of the male-female dichotomy. As long as issues of gender turn on whether women can be the same as or different from men, the perspective taken will inevitably be a masculine one in that men are set up as the standard. We should forget about the question of difference and focus directly on dominance and political hierarchy: “gender is an inequality of power, a social status based on who is permitted to do what to whom. Only derivatively is it a difference.”<sup>13</sup> Women are a subordinate group, the victims on a day-to-day basis of patterns of abuse—rape, battery, incest, etc. This abuse often remains unacknowledged, tacitly accepted from a male point of view as the eroticization of dominance and submission. Indeed, “to be *rapable*, a position which is social, not biological, defines what a woman is.”<sup>14</sup> The fight against male dominance is consequently a very concrete and a very sexual-political one. It is no coincidence that MacKinnon has concentrated her political efforts over the past decade on issues such as pornography, sexual harassment, and abortion.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond questioning the binary oppositional framework of male and female, Frug and MacKinnon do not appear to have much in common. Yet, they both present in their writings ‘domesticated’ or Americanized versions of postmodern theories of discourse, deconstruction, and hierarchical patterns. Frug’s emphasis on differences within the sexes no less than MacKinnon’s focus on sexual dominance and submission takes as its point of departure the concrete, real, and experiential dimension of women’s lives. For both, it is in the realm of practice, of the historical and political world, that the fight must be fought. Theory and ideology count, but textuality and discourse analysis are never favored over the specificity of history and culture. This no doubt reflects the fact that Frug and MacKinnon, like many other feminist legal theorists, are also activists who

believe they can influence the existing legal and political framework.<sup>16</sup> What we see here is a shift of perspective within, rather than a radical subversion of, existing modes of thought.<sup>17</sup>

The rootedness of Frug and MacKinnon in practice makes the difference between their work and that of other American feminists one of degree rather than kind. The latter may—very roughly speaking—be divided into two categories: feminist work that critically analyzes and then proceeds to affirm sameness or equality between the sexes; and feminist work which rejects sameness altogether and extols femininity. The key question for both sameness and difference feminists is whether “feminists’ traditional focus on gender-neutrality is a bankrupt ideal,” as Joan C. Williams puts it.<sup>18</sup> As feminists have increasingly become aware, deep-seated social differences continue to encourage men and women to make very different choices in relation both to work and to family. Do these choices merely reflect the oppressive realities of the current gender system or are they the expression of basic and very real gender differences? And, on a more theoretical level, are feminist notions of the self, knowledge, and truth still compatible with the categories of Enlightenment thinking, or should postmodernism be adopted by feminism as a theoretical ally?

Joan Williams and Sabina Lovibond belong to the group of feminists who still believe that the Enlightenment way of thinking contains a promise of social reconstruction and emancipation from traditional ways of life—a promise that “sooner or later, arbitrary authority will cease to exist.” Postmodernism, by contrast, offers no such promise, they claim, but “would have us plunge, romantically, into the maelstrom without making it our goal to emerge on *terra firma*.”<sup>19</sup> The claim made for women of the central critiques of postmodernism and the identification of those critiques with the female, different voice, are far from constructive. Not only do they effectively kill any aspiration feminists may have had about ending the battle between the sexes and replacing it with communication and truth; they also expose women to a power game of unprecedented viciousness. If there is no rational basis for distinguishing between true and false beliefs, then it seems that power alone will be the determining factor in the competition between different truth claims. This is a frightening prospect to those who are oppressed by or in general lack the power of others. The postmodern epistemology’s view of truths as necessarily partial and contextual is consequently “not in any meaningful way ‘women’s voice’,” says Joan Williams.<sup>20</sup>

The most widely influential description of gender from the difference side of the spectrum is Carol Gilligan’s *In A Different Voice*, whose core claim that women are focused on relationships, responsibility, and caring rather than on separation, autonomy, and hierarchy has inspired a large number of feminists.<sup>21</sup> Among these is Christine Littleton, who sums up difference attacks on sameness theories in this way: “equality analysis defines as beyond its scope precisely those issues that women find crucial to their concrete experience as women.” First of

all, such analysis is not very useful when it encounters real differences. Secondly, it locates difference in women rather than in relationships between the sexes. Last, but not least, it uncritically takes for granted that social institutions are gender-neutral. Consequently, “equality models, with their insistence that difference be ignored, eradicated or dissolved are not responsive to the feminist critique of equality.”<sup>22</sup>

Feminists of difference often identify with women postmodern ways of thinking, noting that women traditionally have been thought to prefer sensitivity to context and a faith in emotions and intuition as modes of thought to abstract and logical thinking. Feminism and postmodernism do share a faith in contextual thinking and a wish to understand and reconstitute the self, gender, knowledge, social relations, and culture without resorting to linear, teleological, hierarchical, and holistic ways of thinking and being. Yet, a reluctance on the part of American feminists to go all the way, as it were, to welcome the conflicts and ambiguities that result from a deconstruction of the duality of gender and unitary self along French feminist lines, is noticeable in many of the solutions proposed to the dilemmas of gender.<sup>23</sup>

For Martha Minow, as we saw, the proper response is one of reconciliation and integration of masculinity and femininity, one of “embedding rights within relationships.” Carol Gilligan too asserts that “it’s no longer simply about justice or simply about caring; rather, it is about bringing them together to transform the domain.”<sup>24</sup> Indeed, in Gilligan’s conception of female moral development, progress toward a moral maturity of responsibility and care in social relationships is depicted as leading through and incorporating a discovery of the worth of self and individual rights. “Development for both sexes,” she writes, “would therefore seem to entail an integration of rights and responsibilities through the discovery of the complementarity of these disparate views.”<sup>25</sup>

The truly feminine and feminist response for many American feminists, it would thus seem, is one of integration and synthesis rather than one of deconstruction. Believing that it is possible, even desirable, to work from within a binary oppositional framework, these feminists are still, to a significant extent, within what Lovibond calls “the Enlightenment habit of thought.”<sup>26</sup> And within such a habit of thought, the law provides a useful arena and a handy vernacular in which to fight. The law is in its very nature both material and ideological, its foremost principle a reliance on prevailing community standards, or law as custom transformed. Emphasizing continuity and peaceful incorporation of change rather than sudden and violent reform, it has always attempted to reconcile and to create a usable synthesis out of new principles and ideas added by historical events and transformations into the older tradition in a comprehensive and meaningful way. For the partiality to the experiential rather than the theoretical and the attempt to reconcile masculinity and femininity on the part of many American feminists, legal thinking therefore provides a framework which is flexible enough to make ventures into deconstruction unnecessary. Like the rest

of American culture of which they form an important part, American feminists, to make a political, cultural, or philosophical point, therefore rely on—feminists of the French postmodern school would probably say: are trapped by—”rights talk.”

## Realism, Detective Fiction, and Sara Paretsky

### Vic as a Female Lukacsian Type

One of the literary theoreticians Elaine Showalter mentions in her discussion of Virginia Woolf is the Marxist critic Georg Lukacs. What Showalter and other Anglo-American feminists find attractive about Lukacs' aesthetics is Lukacs' reading of great art as that which sustains an ideal of the total human being, the human being both as a private individual and a public citizen.<sup>27</sup> The realist novel is for Lukacs the supreme narrative form in that it attempts, as objectively as possible, to portray “types.” A type is “a peculiar synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and situations.” “True great realism,” he contends, “depicts man and society as complete entities, instead of showing merely one or the other of their aspects.”<sup>28</sup> Transferred to the realm of feminist writing, a Lukacsian type would be a truthful or true-to-life portrayal of a (strong) woman with whom the reader may identify, a portrayal that would include equal emphasis on the private and the public.

In a certain sense, Sara Paretsky's main character, V.I. Warshawski, may be seen as such a female Lukacsian type; Paretsky's medium, the detective novel, may be viewed as a realistic piece of art along Lukacsian lines. Ever since 1982 when the first ‘V.I. Warshawski mystery,’ *Indemnity Only*, was published, Sara Paretsky has been one of the most popular American detective writers. All her to date eight mysteries have been bestsellers.<sup>29</sup> Sara Paretsky was born and raised in Lawrence, Kansas. She moved to Chicago when she was nineteen, and this is where all her novels are set. In 1987, Paretsky was elected Woman of the Year by *Ms. Magazine* and the following year *Blood Shot* won her the Crime Writers' Association Silver Dagger Award. *V.I. Warshawski*, a film based on V.I. and starring Kathleen Turner, was released in 1991.

Medium and contents, form and substance go hand in hand in Paretsky's writing. As for the former, the choice of the detective novel as the forum in which to pursue issues of relevance to women is itself significant. Though exploiting for her own (feminist) uses the hard-boiled detective story by expanding and changing certain possibilities within it, Sara Paretsky, in her eight V.I. Warshawski mysteries, by and large stays within its parameters. Bringing distinctly female characteristics to the role of detective, V.I., or Vic, never compromises the conventions of the genre. The urban setting, the antagonism between Vic and the police, the nature of the investigation, the presence of organized crime, the violent action throughout, Vic's intake of alcohol and sexual encounters, the first-person narration, the pattern of action (from a presentation of the crime, through the investigation, to a solution and apprehension of the criminal)<sup>30</sup>—it is all still there.

What Paretsky does, that is, is to work or transform *from within* a traditional genre. Her choice of the arguably most masculine of genres—a genre, moreover, which is notorious for its problematic representation of women<sup>31</sup>—in which to convey her feminist message, is a perfect one. It signals a wish to rework that which already exists, so as to peacefully incorporate new elements, new concerns. “Provisionally radical”<sup>32</sup> rather than subversive, the choice of form underscores Paretsky’s message which, as we shall see, is one of reconciling the ethics of rights and care or “embedding rights within relationships.”

In *Burn Marks*, police officer Bob Mallory calls into question Vic’s reasoning powers. “You don’t know how to reason, how to follow a chain of evidence to a conclusion, so you start making up paranoid fantasies.”<sup>33</sup> Considering Mallory’s opinion that Vic ought to marry and settle down rather than play the detective and obstruct the work of “Chicago’s Finest,” and that Vic’s “paranoid fantasies” turn out more often than Mallory cares to admit to be anything but paranoid, this comment of Mallory’s is intended less as a statement of fact than as yet another reminder to Vic that she happens to be in the wrong line of work. Vic is, in fact, pretty good at putting two and two together. When asked about how she proceeds with an investigation, she explains: “Oh, I talk to people. If they get angry, then I think they know something. So I poke around and talk to more people. And after a while I’ve learned a whole lot of stuff and some of it starts fitting into a pattern.”<sup>34</sup> Why she should apologetically add, “not very scientific, I’m afraid,” is not at all obvious; Sherlock Holmes himself could not have come up with a better answer had anyone inquired about his investigative method.

As Vic goes about her investigations, her life is described in painstaking detail. We are given detailed accounts of the way she dresses, when and how she cleans her apartment, what she eats, and what she thinks about as she is eating. One day for lunch, we read, Vic

ate a salad made of iceberg lettuce and an old tomato and a frittata that was surprisingly light and carefully seasoned. In the little ladies’ room at the back I got the most noticeable chunks of dirt off my shirt. I didn’t look fabulous, but maybe that suited the neighborhood better. . . . All during lunch I’d turned over various approaches to Pankowski and Ferraro in my mind. . . .<sup>35</sup>

Personal is mixed with professional, each serving to underscore and illuminate the other. Her professional specialty being financial crime, especially insurance fraud, Vic is at her best and most sincere when fighting for the defenseless and victimized, those who are unable to fight back. Yet, her involvement often begins as a favor to a friend or a member of her family. *Bitter Medicine*, for example, opens with the Alvarado family asking her to chauffeur a member of their family and her husband to a job interview. The Alvarados have on numerous occasions

given of themselves freely. So, "I had no choice," Vic explains, "I agreed to pick them up at Lotty's clinic at noon."<sup>36</sup> In Lukacsian realistic fashion, that is, Paretsky "depicts man [in this case woman] and society as complete entities, instead of showing merely one or the other of their aspects."<sup>37</sup>

### Vic's Moral Development

When we first encounter V.I. Warshawski, private investigator in *Indemnity Only* (1982), she has been in business for herself for about four years. Within the first pages of the novel, the essentials are laid out. The setting is Chicago; Vic is poor but coping, messy but no slob, brainy, pretty, formerly married but now on her own, exercises in order to keep herself fit for the fights she invariably gets into with her adversaries. Most of all, she is fiercely independent. She finds it unbearable to be vulnerable, has "a strong sense of turf," and overreacts to people, especially men, who act protectively toward her: "I have some close women friends, because I don't feel they're trying to take over my turf. But with men, it always seems, or often seems, as though I'm having to fight who I am." In her professional life, too, she asserts her independence, taking pride in the fact that "I'm the only person I take orders from, not a hierarchy of officers, aldermen and commissioners."<sup>38</sup> This professional independence, in fact, is one of the main reasons why four years earlier she had quit her job as an attorney for the Public Defender in Cook County.<sup>39</sup> Another major reason for her starting out on her own was her feeling that as a detective she would stand a better chance of getting at the truth of a problem. In the Chicago public defender's office, she explains,

either we had to defend maniacs who ought to have been behind bars for the good of the world at large, or we had poor chumps who were caught in the system and couldn't buy their way out. You'd leave the court every day feeling as though you'd just helped worsen the situation. As a detective, if I can get at the truth of a problem, I feel as though I've made some contribution.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, the very setup of the Public Defender's

is pretty corrupt—you're never arguing for justice, always on points of law. I wanted to get out of it, but I still wanted to do something that would make me feel that I was still working on my concept of justice, not legal point-scoring.<sup>41</sup>

A distinction is made here between legal technicality and legal (higher) justice. By working as a private detective rather than as an attorney Vic hopes to escape

the former and pursue the latter. It is this “concept of justice” which guides her throughout. She may at times be disappointed at how little her particular efforts count toward creating a better and more just world. But she never forgets what it was that initially made her interested in pursuing a career within the legal system. “I don’t want innocent bystanders screwed out of their rights,” is how she sums it all up in *Guardian Angel*.<sup>42</sup>

Vic’s independence goes hand in hand with her toughness. A karate expert, she knows how to fend for herself and does not mind getting into a fight now and again. After a long day, her favorite way of relaxing is to take a warm bath while enjoying a whiskey or two: “I headed straight for the Black Label bottle, kicking off my pumps and pulling off my panty hose while I unscrewed the cap. I drank from the bottle, a long swallow that sent a glow of warmth to my weary shoulders. Filling a glass, I took it into the bathroom with me.”<sup>43</sup> If it were not for the pumps and the panty hose, we might think we were reading about Sam Spade!

To Vic’s clients as well as to her foes, her toughness signals professional competence and courage. What they do not realize is that there is another, contradictory side to Vic’s personality: a vulnerable and highly sensitive one. Her bravado notwithstanding, she neither professionally nor personally ever feels secure and completely at ease. “The questioning of my professional judgment wounded me,” she tells us in *Burn Marks*, “as few other criticisms could.”<sup>44</sup> And her relationship with Bobby Mallory, long-time friend and colleague of her father’s, is marred throughout by her somewhat infantile need to show how good she is, working out there on her own. When finally, in *Blood Shot*, she gives in to her friend Lotty’s insistence that she involve the police, all Vic can think of is that “I had run scared from my problems, had turned to the police, and now I was waiting like some good old-fashioned damsel in distress for rescue. It was too much—”<sup>45</sup>

In the personal domain, in matters of the heart, Vic’s insecurity is even more apparent. From the very beginning, in *Indemnity Only*, and increasingly throughout the rest of the novels, she is visited by intense self-doubt and self-criticism. It all has to do with “Protection. The middle-class dream.”<sup>46</sup> Did she, she wonders in *Indemnity Only*, make the wrong choice in preferring a life on her own in one of the most male of professions to a married life with children?<sup>47</sup> And does her intense dislike of protection and fear of dependence jeopardize herself and her friends?—“Agnes died,” Vic blurts to Lotty in *Killing Orders*, “because I involved her in my machinations. Her mother had a stroke. My aunt has gone mad. And all because I chose to be narrow-minded, pig-headed, bullying my way down a road the FBI and the SEC couldn’t travel.”<sup>48</sup> Where will it lead, this insistence on independence? “What was I going to live on when I got too old to hustle clients any longer? The thought of being sixty-six, alone, living in a little room with three plastic drawers to hold my clothes - a shudder swept through me, almost knocking me off balance.”<sup>49</sup>

Alongside the (male) story of detection a different set of (female) concerns is coming to the fore. What is emerging here as a kind of subtext is a discussion

about autonomy and the relationship of self to others, and the underlying question—is autonomous selfhood an ideal worth striving for?—is immediately familiar to us from the works of the feminist writers whose work was discussed in Part One. Like that offered by these feminists, Paretsky's ultimate answer to this crucial question is a negative one; toward the end, she has Vic go through a series of remarkable reconciliations with people from her past and in general come to terms with her need to relate to and care for others.

Vic's development is not unlike the one undergone by the women participating in Carol Gilligan's abortion study. On the basis of this study, which was "designed to clarify the ways in which women construct and resolve abortion decisions," Gilligan identifies and defines three stages in female moral development toward an ethic of care. The first stage is one of selfishness. Here, the self is seen as an independent, autonomous being who is unwilling to bear any responsibility toward others. At the second stage, a shift or transition has occurred from selfishness to responsibility. This move is one toward social participation; "here the conventional feminine voice emerges with great clarity, defining the self and proclaiming its worth on the basis of the ability to care for and protect others." The third and final stage is reached when a woman realizes that she has an obligation not only toward others, but also toward herself. Though the conflict between self and others remains, "once obligation extends to include the self as well as others, the disparity between selfishness and responsibility dissolves."<sup>50</sup> It is only when a woman learns to claim the power to choose and to accept responsibility for that choice that she may give of herself freely without entirely losing herself in the process. Once that second transition has occurred, selfishness has become securely embedded within relationships. Evolving around the central insight that self and other are interdependent, the female ethic of care thus does not seek to leave behind but rather to incorporate male elements of autonomy and independence.

In the continued female *Bildungsroman* of Sara Paretsky's 'V.I. Warshawski mysteries,' it is hard to say exactly when and how the two transitions in Vic's moral development toward an ethic of care take place. By the time *Killing Orders* (1985) came along, however, something seems to have happened. Here, for the first time, Vic admits to herself that her close friend Lotty's critical comments on her behavior and way of thinking may have something to them: "her accusations were close to my nerve centers. Egotistical. So single-minded I would sacrifice Uncle Stefan trying to solve a problem that had the FBI and the SEC baffled."<sup>51</sup> Lotty has criticized Vic before, but her critical comments have mostly elicited a response of self-pity rather than serious concern. It is in *Killing Orders*, furthermore, that Vic seriously starts reflecting on matters of friendship and family. "The older I get," she says, "the less politics means to me. The only thing that seems to matter is friendship." After a quarrel, Vic and Lotty go through a period of estrangement and Vic experiences a feeling of abandonment and loneliness which brings back memories of how lost she felt after the death of, first, her mother and then her father. She had helped nurse them both until the very end and

often has nightmares about their leaving her behind. When she finally makes up with Lotty after having admitted to being narrow-minded and pig-headed, Lotty calls her “the daughter I never had,”<sup>52</sup> thereby confirming Vic’s assessment of their friendship: “I’ve known Lotty for close to twenty years. First she filled in for my mother, and then we became—friends is a weak word for it. Close, anyway.”<sup>53</sup>

If Vic finds in Lotty a substitute for her mother, she finds in Mr. Contreras, her downstairs neighbor, a substitute father figure. We first hear of “old Mr. Contreras from the first floor” in *Bitter Medicine*.<sup>54</sup> From the very beginning, he insists on playing a role in Vic’s life, and though she must admit that it *is* nice once in a while to have somebody—and a good meal—to come home to, it takes quite a while for her to accept his protective attitude and behavior. “You aren’t going to start breathing down my neck, are you?,” she says to him at some point, “repeat twenty times a day—she’s a big girl, she can fall on her butt if she wants to.”<sup>55</sup> Quietly insisting that “you are the daughter of my heart, Victoria,”<sup>56</sup> Mr. Contreras is not put off by Vic’s protestations of independence. In *Guardian Angel*, his patience is finally rewarded when she pleads with him not to “cut me out of your life, or take yourself out of mine . . . It would bring me great pain to lose you.”<sup>57</sup>

When, in *Blood Shot*, Vic reunites with her old childhood friend Caroline, promising her that “you will always be my sister, Caroline,”<sup>58</sup> her new “family” is complete. As for her real family, the only one she has ever cared about is her cousin Boom Boom, who gets killed in *Deadlock*. Like Vic herself, her mother had been an only child. On her father’s side there is Uncle Peter, who has moved away from Chicago and could not care less about the rest of the family, and Aunt Elena who, when she resurfaces in *Burn Marks* to ask for her niece’s help, causes quite an upheaval in Vic’s life.

With *Burn Marks* and *Guardian Angel*, numbers six and seven of the V.I. Warshawski mysteries, issues relating to friendship, care, and family come to occupy center stage, to the point where they threaten to become more interesting than the stories of detection themselves. We are now at Gilligan’s third and last stage; though still preoccupied and wrestling with problems of self and other, Vic seems well on her way toward reconciling the contradictory needs of independence and interdependence. The appearance of Aunt Elena on Vic’s doorstep at the beginning of *Burn Marks*, is most unwelcome. With a long history of drinking, Elena has always been “the family problem,” and her presence in Vic’s life most surely spells trouble. As the story unfolds, Vic finds herself reacting very strongly to her aunt. The pitiable sight of Elena’s helplessness makes her wonder what her own life will be like when she reaches her aunt’s age: “it was helplessness I feared. A life like Elena’s, bobbing along without any channel markers to guide it.” And whereas her immediate reaction is to leave Elena to her own devices, she cannot quite bring herself to do so and eventually accepts the role of helper and protector that Elena wants to impose on her.

Did I have a duty toward Elena that overrode all considerations of myself, my work, my own longing for wholeness?

I'd held glasses of water for Gabriella when her arms were too weak to lift them herself, emptied wheelchair pots for Tony when he could no longer move from chair to toilet, I've done enough, I kept repeating, I've done enough. But I couldn't quite convince myself.<sup>59</sup>

Toward the end of *Burn Marks*, Bobby Mallory offered Vic an apology. Having for years taken any and every opportunity to criticize Vic, Bobby does not find it easy to admit that he has been wrong. He has thought it all over, he explains, and the conclusion he has reached is that, "you're the daughter of the two people I loved best, next to Eileen, and you can't do things different than you do, shouldn't do them different, not with Gabriella and Tony bringing you up."<sup>60</sup> The remarkable thing about Bobby's apology—other than that it is made at all—is that it is offered as a means of reconciliation by way of a concession to Vic's independent way of life, professional as well as personal. This mixture of acceptance and reconciliation is repeated toward the end of *Guardian Angel* during what is probably the most spectacular of Vic's reconciliations with her past: her making up with her former husband, Dick. A high-powered partner in one of Chicago's most well-known law firms, Dick moves in different legal and social circles. Yet, his and Vic's paths have often crossed in the preceding novels with disastrous results. Unable to agree on anything, they invariably quarrel and part ways loathing each other even more than before. When, therefore, Dick arrives at Vic's office ready to admit he has lent his support to the wrong party, the reader is taken somewhat by surprise. "I do have only myself to thank. You've always known how weak I am," he acknowledges. Upon leaving, he takes Vic's hand and exclaims, "we had some good times together, didn't we, Vic? It wasn't all fighting and contempt, was it?"<sup>61</sup>

### Tunnel Vision and Beyond

"When my muscles slowed down, would I find other strengths to get me across these chasms?" Vic wonders at the very end of *Guardian Angel*. In more than one interview since the publication of *Guardian Angel*, Paretsky had made it clear that she intended her eighth novel in the V.I. Warshawski series, to be entitled *Tunnel Vision*, to terminate the series. "Since I started writing eleven years ago," she explained, "things—or perhaps rather my perception of things—have changed so much that I feel it would be wrong of me to continue. Society has become vulgarized, the violence is astonishing, solidarity has disappeared, the legal system has broken down, and people are taking the law into their own hands. I feel I can neither understand nor write about it any longer."<sup>62</sup> This was sad news

to V.I. Warshawski fans. Yet, there was a certain logic to Paretsky’s decision. A continuation of the V.I. Warshawski series would be difficult as the promise of detection—and especially female detection—of reaching some sort of happy end was no longer there because of the increasing violence and vulgarization of American society and the persistent hostility toward equality between the sexes, and as Vic’s moral development, outlined in the subtext of the novels, had reached at least a tentatively successful conclusion. Marrying Vic off would be unacceptable, and the thought of an aging Vic unable to fight and climb into people’s offices at night was not too appealing either. All in all, therefore, it seemed, Sara Paretsky could do worse than take her leave—at least for now—of her protagonist.<sup>63</sup>

When *Tunnel Vision* appeared in 1993, it therefore came as something of a surprise—at least to this reader—that Paretsky leaves it completely open as to whether or not this is the last we shall see of her heroine. With her office building falling down and unpaid bills mounting up, Vic is as close to financial ruin in *Tunnel Vision* as she was fifteen years earlier when she first started out as a private investigator. Her lover, Conrad, leaves her, unable to “go through another episode like this.” It is not, he says, “that I resent you for being right. It’s not even the bullet in my shoulder. It’s watching you plunge ahead without regard for anything or anyone except your own private version of justice.” She is depressed, “wrung dry” by a case, which looked like a straightforward investigation but turned out to be both complex and dangerous, and cannot help wondering as that fortieth birthday is approaching whether it was all worth it: “I’m tired. I spent a month risking my life for some abstract concept of justice, and all that happened in the end was that my lover left me.”<sup>64</sup>

There are some tough decisions to be made concerning both the professional and the private side of Vic’s life. As the novel nears its conclusion, Vic seems on the verge of quitting as a private investigator. But then, out of the blue, she is approached by Police Officer Mary Louise Neely, who has a proposition for her: “I’d like to work for you.” Between the two of them, Neely explains, “we could take on more work, and a wider range of it. I’m very organized. You wouldn’t have to worry about the details that bore you—I’m twenty-nine, I’m very fit, and you know I’m experienced.” On the very last pages of the novel, we are told that “Neely was doing freelance work for now—we were trying that for six months before considering a more formal arrangement.”<sup>65</sup> Whether Paretsky has changed her mind about ending the V.I. Warshawski series, we cannot know. The fact remains, however, that with the introduction of Mary Louise Neely, she very cleverly solves the problem of Vic’s age, thereby opening up the possibility of continuing her popular series.

*Tunnel Vision* opens with Vic’s encounter, in the rat-infested basement of her office building, with a runaway woman and her three children, all victims of abuse by the woman’s husband. What follows next is a board meeting for a battered women’s shelter, on whose board Vic sits together with various women with

whom she has “worked together for years, through different incarnations of women’s activism.” Here, as in earlier novels, the story of detection has a feminist foundation and interweaves public and private corruption and deceit. In the end, the hardest questions Vic faces are questions about herself. Conrad’s criticism, familiar to us from the earlier novels, is echoed by other friends: “they didn’t put compromise in your head. Look it up in the dictionary. Study it. It’s a useful concept,” as Conrad’s sister says at some point, for example.<sup>66</sup>

Vic may not be able to reach a workable compromise with Conrad—indeed, if she were, as argued above, it would make a radical departure from Paretsky’s portrayal of her in the previous seven novels—but she ends the novel in the company of all her best friends. “What else can I say,” Paretsky has her think as she is celebrating her fortieth birthday party, “except that good friends are a balm to a bruised spirit?” The party is a surprise party arranged by Mr. Contreras, whom Vic had called a couple of days earlier while he was recuperating at his daughter’s house after having helped Vic rescue the runaway woman and her children, and arranged to pick up because she found her apartment building too lonely without him. “When I thought of all the times I had cursed his intrusiveness in my life,” she reflected on that occasion, “I was ashamed.”<sup>67</sup>

Able, at long last, to express and respond to love and open toward reconciliation with her past, Vic has come a long way. The V.I. Warshawski saga has no happy end, indeed cannot have a happy end. The rest of the world has not changed along with Vic. In the later no less than in the earlier novels, Vic is met with hostility and skepticism when she introduces herself as a detective. Her authority is constantly questioned, and as she grows older she finds the struggle to be taken seriously increasingly arduous and depressing. She is taken quite by surprise, for example, when in *Burn Marks* a man wants to hire her, pleased that “someone thought I was a competent human being, not a pain in the butt who should mind her own business.” It feels good for a change to have someone—especially some man—“call up and think... that I should be working, not that I should stay home and play with dolls.”<sup>68</sup> There are moments—as when two of her most ardent critics, Bobby and Dick, admit to have been unjust in their treatment of her—when it seems to Vic that her struggle to establish herself as an authority is worth it. But these moments are few and far between. For the most part, she has to waste a tremendous amount of time and energy just to make men listen to her. “They could have listened to me,” she exclaims in *Tunnel Vision*, bitterly summing up her complaints about the male establishment, “it’s what they get for not believing women’s stories.”<sup>69</sup> The world, it seems, is not yet ready for V.I. Warshawski, private investigator.

Much like the battle for racial equality, the fight for equality between the sexes has been a legal one. The resulting focus on a morality of rights has been much debated by feminists, especially since Carol Gilligan began in the early eighties to talk about a female “different voice” and a female morality not of rights

but of care and responsibility. Gilligan’s work forced feminists to look more closely at the relationship between equality and difference. Is equality a type of discourse that undermines diversity and difference, or is it somehow possible to claim that the two notions are compatible? Inspired by French postmodernist feminist attempts to deconstruct the concept of gender altogether, some American feminists have argued that the very inclusiveness so central to the pursuit of equal rights has had the unfortunate effect of undermining differences between as well as within the sexes.

The criticism against law and equal rights reasoning for relying on and catering to male norms notwithstanding, the majority of American feminists have never entirely abandoned the rhetoric of rights, however. Whether belonging to the sameness or difference camp of feminism, they have attempted, instead, to find a workable synthesis or reconciliation of female and male values, connecting female interests in relationships to prior male frameworks emphasizing equal rights. And in so doing, they have relied on a legal vocabulary which, in its combination of theory and practice, equity and equality, holds out a promise of incorporation and synthesis.

One arena in which the tension between the promise of individual rights and a morality of care and a possible reconciliation of the two has recently been in focus is feminist detective fiction. Here, we have looked at the work of Sara Paretsky, who has found in the combination of realistic detective novel and female moral *Bildungsroman* a formula for dramatizing this reconciliation. The choice of the hard-boiled detective novel as the medium in which to express and pursue feminist concerns has earned for her not only bestseller status, but also intellectual acclaim. Fighting to reconcile her fierce independence with an equally strong need for interdependence and conducting that fight in a legal arena, protagonist V.I. Warshawski embodies the modern American feminist struggle for autonomy embedded within relationships.

When we first meet V.I. or Vic in *Indemnity Only* from 1982, the first of Paretsky’s to date eight V.I. Warshawski mysteries, she has only been a detective for about four years. After law school she had worked in the Chicago Public Defender’s office, but after a while she had found the sort of technical legal work with which she was involved as a public defender tedious and depressing. She had gone to law school in the first place out of a belief in the law’s possibility to do good. For her to be able to make a real contribution, she had increasingly felt, she would have to be out there with the needy and the downtrodden rather than inside a courtroom, and she had decided to try to make it on her own as a detective. Being a detective, moreover, she would not have her work defined for her by others—or, to put it another way, she would not have to take orders from anybody else.

In her dedication to her own “concept of justice,” Vic never falters.<sup>70</sup> She cannot help being frustrated and depressed at times at the lack of respect for her as a female detective with which she is constantly confronted in her dealings with men. At the end of V.I. Warshawski mystery number eight, *Tunnel Vision*,

however, she is as seriously and genuinely concerned about protecting the rights of the Have-Nots as she was when we first encountered her.

Vic's will to justice serves her well as a detective. To a certain extent this is true of her urge for independence as well. Free to work at odd hours and to pursue leads that may at first look unpromising, she is able to establish herself as a tough and headstrong detective. Her unwillingness to cooperate with others, and especially with the powers that be, results in problems from time to time that might have been avoided, though. It is especially in her private life that her stubborn refusal to be dependent upon anyone else really turns out to be counter-productive. The older she gets, the more important her failure to develop genuine and loving relationships with others seems.

Toward the end of the Warshawski mysteries, it is Vic's (female) concerns relating to friendship, care, and family, that seem to occupy center stage. The (male) story of detection is still important, but Paretsky seems increasingly preoccupied with her heroine's effort to reconcile the contradictory needs of independence and interdependence. The eight detective novels, it would thus seem, are Paretsky's contribution to the discussion about autonomy and the relationship of self to others carried out by American feminists over the past many years. Like her feminist colleagues, Paretsky is intrigued by the question of whether autonomous selfhood is an ideal worth striving for. And by having Vic come to terms with her need to relate to and care for others, Paretsky joins the majority of American feminists, who argue that any possible solution to the feminist dilemma involves an attempt to reconcile and create a usable synthesis out of the (male) ethic of rights and the (female) ethic of care.

Her fans, intellectual or not, may not be able to identify with Vic when she throws herself into a fight and ends up in the hospital, but most of them—perhaps especially women—find the dilemmas she faces very familiar. As we leave her well on her way at the end of the eight Paretsky novels toward establishing caring relationships yet still fighting a hostile male environment, we feel Paretsky has managed to make her protagonist a successful reflection of the feminist struggle of the past ten to fifteen years, a successful reflection, so to speak, of the (female) *Zeitgeist!*

## Notes

1. Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference. Inclusion, Exclusion, and American Law* (Ithaca, New York, 1990), 15.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Sara Paretsky's collection of short stories *Windy City Blues* (New York, 1995) will not be discussed in this article. While these stories concern V.I. Warshawski (cf. the subtitle, "V.I. Warshawski Stories"), they add nothing new to Paretsky's portrayal of V.I. in her eight novels.

4. In the following, I will be relying on Mary Eagleton's Introduction to *Feminist Literary Criticism* (London, 1991) Like Eagleton and Moi, I wish to emphasize that "not all Anglo-American writers expound Anglo-American criticism, nor all French feminists French criticism; the generalized terms disguise the multiplicity of critical practices coexisting within

each tradition. . . . The terms 'Anglo-American' and 'French' must not be taken to represent purely national demarcations: they do not signal the critics' birthplace but the intellectual tradition within which they work." (4)—See also Drucilla Cornell, "The Double-Prized World: Myth, Allegory, and the Feminine," *Cornell Law Review* 75, 1990 for an interesting discussion about the difference between Robin West and Kristeva—a difference which is not unlike that between Showalter and Moi.

5. Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1977), 265, 263.

6. *Ibid.*, 282.

7. Toril Moi, as quoted in Eagleton, *Feminist Literary Criticism*, 42, 47, 43.

8. *Ibid.*, 46.

9. Of other critics who identify with aspects of postmodern activity may be mentioned Drucilla Cornell (see e.g. "The Double-Prized World: Myth, Allegory, and the Feminine", mentioned above) and Tracy E. Higgins (see e.g. "By Reason of Their Sex: Feminist Theory, Postmodernism, and Justice," *Cornell Law Review* 80, 1995).

10. In what follows, I am offering a necessarily abbreviated and greatly simplified survey of American feminism. My intention is merely to suggest a certain tendency. I am aware that I risk grouping together as either sameness or difference proponents feminists whose approach, upon a closer inspection than I can offer here, is influenced by the arguments of both camps. I do not mean to suggest that U.S. feminists simply or uncritically embrace sameness or difference, but merely that upon considering the various arguments advanced in the debate, most of these feminists end up rejecting post-modern ways of looking at the world as not offering a viable alternative to either sameness or difference.

11. Mary Joe Frug, *Postmodern Legal Feminism* (New York, 1992).

12. *Ibid.*, 123.

13. Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism Modified. Discourses on Life and Law* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 8.

14. Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward a Feminist Jurisprudence." *Signs*, 8, (Summer, 1983), 651.

15. See e.g. MacKinnon, *Only Words* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993).

16. I thank Martha Minow for drawing my attention to this fact.

17. MacKinnon herself talks about a "shift in perspective from gender as difference to gender as dominance," in "Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination." *Feminist Legal Theory*, ed. by Katharine T. Bartlett and Rosanne Kennedy (Boulder, Colorado, 1991),

90. See also Drucilla Cornell, "The Double-Prized World," and Tracy Higgins, "By Reason of Their Sex," both of whom criticize MacKinnon for advocating a "masculine" ideal of autonomy and selfhood. For Cynthia Ward, too, MacKinnon is a closet liberalist: "Neither MacKinnon's critique of male domination nor her advocacy of consciousness-raising as the best feminist methodology are at all incompatible with liberal visions of autonomy and selfhood" (Cynthia Ward, "The Radical Feminist Defense of Individualism," *Northwestern University Law Review*, 89 (1995), 893. Ward, furthermore, takes MacKinnon to task for—wishing to speak for all women—a wish that "necessarily involves the suppression of diversity among women." (888)

18. Joan C. Williams, "Deconstructing Gender," in Bartlett and Kennedy, *Feminist Legal Theory*, 95.

19. Sabina Lovibond, "Feminism and Postmodernism." *New Left Review*, 178, (1989), 11, 15.—The difference between Enlightenment and postmodern views, writes Lovibond, is that, "the Enlightenment pictured the human race as engaged in an effort towards universal, moral and intellectual self-realization, and so as the subject of a universal historical experience, it also postulated a universal human reason in terms of which social and political tendencies could be assessed as 'progressive' or otherwise (the goal of politics being defined as the realization of reason in practice.) Postmodernism rejects this picture: that is to say, it rejects the unity of reason. It refuses to conceive of humanity as a unitary subject striving towards the goal of perfect coherence (in its common stock of beliefs) or of perfect cohesion and stability (in its political practice.)" (6)

20. Williams, "Deconstructing Gender," 98.

21. Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982)

22. Christine Littleton, "Reconstructing Sexual Equality," in Bartlett and Kennedy, *Feminist Legal Theory*, 43, 44.

23. Cf. Tracy E. Higgins: "Postmodernism is at once promising and threatening for feminism. Divisions within feminism over descriptions of women's experience, coupled with the risk of reinforcing traditional gender roles, have continued to draw feminists away from broad theories of gender difference and towards a recognition of the contingency and partiality of any particular account of gender. By questioning the possibility of true accounts and emphasizing the constitutive role of language, postmodernism resonates with feminist critiques of legal accounts of womanhood. At the

same time, if postmodernism disables truth claims, feminists themselves cannot claim to tell true stories of women's experience—Feminists, along with other groups on the margin of power, are reluctant to relinquish the hope that resort to some standard independent of politics and culture will strengthen their claim." ("By Reason of Their Sex," 1570-71)

24. Carol Gilligan, "Feminist Discourse, Moral Values, and the Law - A Conversation." *Buffalo Law Review*, 34 (1985), 45.

25. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 100.

26. Lovibond, "Feminism and Postmodernism," 11.

27. This is Moi's interpretation of Showalter. See Toril Moi's introduction to *Feminist Literary Criticism*, 40-41.

28. Lukacs, as quoted by Moi. *Ibid.*, 41.

29. The eight detective novels are: *Indemnity Only* (1982), *Deadlock* (1984), *Killing Orders* (1985), *Bitter Medicine* (1987), *Blood Shot* (1988), *Burn Marks* (1990), *Guardian Angel* (1992), and *Tunnel Vision* (1993).

30. See T.J. Binyon's schematic illustration of the main differences between private detective and private eye, *Murder Will Out. The Detective in Fiction* (Oxford, 1989), 32.

31. See John C. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories As Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago, 1976), 147.

32. The phrase is Anne Cranny-Francis'. It is used derogatorily in her *Feminist Fiction. Feminist Uses of Generic Fiction* (Cambridge, 1990), 176.

33. Sara Paretsky, *Burn Marks* (New York, 1990), 297.

34. Sara Paretsky, *Bitter Medicine* (New York, 1988), 119.

35. Sara Paretsky, *Blood Shot* (New York, 1988), 61.

36. *Bitter Medicine*, 13.

37. Lukacs, as quoted by Moi, *Feminist Literary Criticism*, 40-41.

39. Sara Paretsky, *Indemnity Only* (New York, 1982), 160, 186.

39. Cf. also *Burn Marks*, 95: "I'd spent five years in the PD's office—I didn't want to have to start again at the beginning in a private practice. Anyway, I'd solved a case for a friend and realized it was work I could do well and get genuine satisfaction from. Plus, I can be my own boss. I should have given that as my first reason—it continues to be the most important with me. Maybe from being an only child . . ."

40. *Killing Orders*, 77.

41. *Indemnity Only*, 160.

42. *Guardian Angel*, 383.

43. *Blood Shot*, 164.

44. *Burn Marks*, 212.

45. *Blood Shot*, 243.

46. Sarah Paretsky, *Killing Orders* (New York, 1985), 177.

47. *Indemnity Only*, 161. "There really are times when I wish I did have a couple of children and was doing the middle-class family thing. But that's a myth . . . It's just—I get scared I've made the wrong choice."

48. *Killing Orders*, 276.

49. *Burn Marks*, 33.

50. Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, 71, 79, 94.

51. *Killing Orders*, 265.

52. *Ibid.*, 88, 276.

53. *Bitter Medicine*, 183.

54. *Ibid.*, 64.

55. *Blood Shot*, 187.

56. *Ibid.*, 356.

57. *Guardian Angel*, 401.

58. *Blood Shot*, 356.

59. *Burn Marks*, 264, 197.

60. *Ibid.*, 339

61. *Guardian Angel*, 412-13.

62. Interview with Paretsky in the Danish newspaper, *Politiken*, January 1994. My translation.

63. Warshawski is absent from Paretsky's most recent novel, *Ghost Country* (New York, 1998), although in her preface she hints—to paraphrase Mark Twain—that rumors of Vic's demise may have been premature: "For those worried about V. I. Warshawski, the detective has been on strike, but we are currently in mediation and should resume work together soon."

64. Sara Paretsky, *Tunnel Vision* (London, 1993), 463, 478.

65. *Ibid.*, 480-81, 482-83.

66. *Ibid.*, 8, 367.

67. *Ibid.*, 483, 435.
68. *Burn Marks*, 117.
69. *Tunnel Vision*, 404.
70. See note 51.