DE GRUYTER
OPEN

DOI: 10.1515/aa-2017-0008

"Philip Marlowe in drag?" – The construct of the hard-boiled detective in feminist appropriation and translation

Karen Seago

Karen Seago is Programme Director of Translation at City, University London. She teaches genre and translation theory on the MA course Audiovisual Translation and Popular Culture and supervises PhD students in crime fiction translation. Her research interest is in the translation of popular culture, in particular fairy tales and their feminist revisions, the specifics of crime fiction translation and (pre-)feminist translation.

Abstract

Hard-nosed female investigators Sara Lund and Saga Norén from the extraordinarily successful Scandinavian TV crime series The Killing *and* The Bridge *are the latest examples of female hard-boiled detectives – dysfunctional loners who solve crimes where no one else succeeds. This article looks at the character construct of the hard-boiled male detective, maps these tropes against social expectations of gender norms and then considers how Sara Paretsky constructs an explicitly feminist "tough guy" private eye in V.I. Warshawski. It then analyses how Paretsky's negotiation and partial subversion of the tropes of the hard-boiled genre are handled in translation, drawing on the German translation of* Indemnity Only.

The phenomenal success of Scandinavian TV crime series *The Killing* and *The Bridge* was due to intelligent scripts, complex investigations, sustained suspense, social critique – and last but by no means least – the hard-nosed female investigators Sara Lund and Saga Norén. They are the latest examples of female appropriation of the construct of the hard-boiled detective, the more or less eccentric dysfunctional loner who solves crimes where no one else succeeds. In this article, I will first look at the character construct of the hard-boiled male detective, map the main tropes against social expectations of gender norms and then consider how Sara Paretsky constructs an explicitly feminist "tough guy" private eye in V.I. Warshawski. I will then discuss how Paretsky's negotiation and partial subversion of the tropes of the hard-boiled genre are handled in translation, drawing primarily on the German translation of *Indemnity Only*.

The hard-boiled sub-genre emerged as a "realistic mystery novel" in response to Golden Age clue puzzles which were perceived to be formulaic, lifeless and not representing "reality"

with their genteel settings, upper class social milieu and amateur detectives of independent means, high education and high social standing. As Chandler said in 1950: "Hammett took murder out of the Venetian vase and dropped it into the alley … [he] … gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse" (Chandler, 1950, online). In contrast to the privileged amateur detective of the Golden Age, the hard-boiled private eye is a professional who needs to work for a living; he is "a common man", who understands the language of the streets and speaks it himself. The setting is urban and threatening: the P.I. is both at the giving and the receiving end of physical violence, solving crime with "a pistol and his fists rather than through deductive reasoning or logic" (Scaggs, 2010, p. 29). The disruption of the social fabric is typically due to organized crime and corruption, so any solution in the denouement is partial; there is no closure and no expectation of the return to order which the Golden Age puzzle promised.

The P.I. "is a man of honour" (Chandler, 1950, online), an underdog himself, challenging the class system and fighting for justice by taking action, often on his own, and within his own moral universe which is not always in tune with what is legal (Scaggs, 2010, pp. 62-3). He is an outsider, "a rueful loner" (Porter, 2009, p. 109), socially marginalized and presented without family context or history (Scaggs, 2010, p. 59). His isolation and solitary pursuits are evoked in this famous description of Marlowe from *The Long Goodbye:*

> When I got home I mixed a stiff one and stood by the open window in the living room and sipped it and listened to the groundswell of traffic on Laurel Canyon Boulevard and looked at the glare of the big angry city hanging over the shoulder of the hills through which the boulevard had been cut. Far off the banshee wail of police or fire sirens rose and fell, never for very long completely silent. […] I didn't care. I finished the drink and went to bed. (Chandler, 1953, chapter 3 online)

The first person narrative with its laconic, terse style evokes and represents the tough guy: extensive use of the American vernacular, hardball talking, wisecracking, cynicism, irony and wit are established tropes, as central to the genre as the flawed loner, distrustful of attachment, and a largely misogynistic conception of women as either victims or femme fatales.

The private eye is an extreme personification of masculinity, if we take the BSRI (Bem Sex Role Inventory) as an indication of widely held gender role perceptions. The BSRI is a list of 20 attributes that are considered socially desirable in men and in women.[1] The attributes for masculinity include leadership, aggression, ambition, assertion, athleticism, competition,

dominance, independence, individualism, risk taking, self-reliance and self-sufficiency (BSRI online). If we compare these with the characteristics of the hard-boiled P.I., we have an almost perfect match: an excessive individualist, who is socially not well adjusted, asserts his independence to a disproportionate degree of autonomy and authority, and who prioritizes the rational over the emotional, isolation over cooperation or community and work over private or social commitments.

However, this extreme masculinity raises the question – and it is a question that has received considerable attention from feminist scholars (Klein 1988, Reddy 1988, Munt 1994, Wilson 1995, Walton and Jones, 1999, Vanacker 2015) – as to what extent it is possible to create a feminist appropriation of a genre that is so imbricated with masculinist values and attributes. And it also raises the question as to how to construct a female investigator who is acceptable within genre conventions but is also not a caricature, "a Philip Marlowe in drag … but a woman who was like me and my friends" (Paretsky, 1994, quoted in Kinsman, 2010, pp. 148-9). In *Indemnity Only* (1982), Sarah Paretsky set out to create an explicitly feminist crime novel, consciously using the hard-boiled mode to create a female P.I. who could hold her own on the mean streets of (often night-time) Chicago. But as the Philip Marlowe in drag quotation shows, she was quite aware of the challenge the contrasting demands of genre and gender expectations posed. In a 1994 *Miami Herald* interview she continues that "What [she] really wanted was a woman who ... didn't pull her punches... [who] didn't feel she had to make nice" (quoted in Kinsman, 2010, p. 149). In the following, I will analyse Paretsky's feminist hard-boiled character construct V.I. Warshawski in relation to established tropes – how she differs, how she asserts her femininity, and how she occupies and enacts feminist politics within genre and gender conventions.

V.I. is an effective and sufficiently successful professional private investigator to make a living in Chicago. In *Indemnity Only*, she deals with typical hard-boiled forms of organized crime: gang violence, insurance fraud and trade union corruption, and although she solves the immediate case, in line with hard-boiled convention, there is no closure. She confidently negotiates the urban environment, is streetwise, can hold her own in a violent, almost exclusively male environment, facing down doubts about her ability as a professional investigator. She lives alone and works alone from a shabby office. The opening paragraph of the novel evokes Chandler's Marlowe looking at New York City at night – it sets a typical scene of isolation and urban deprivation, hinting at organized crime with its references to alcohol, tobacco and prostitution.

> The night air was thick and damp. As I drove south along Lake Michigan, I could smell rotting alewives […]. On shore traffic was heavy, the city moving restlessly, trying to breathe. It was July in Chicago. I got off Lake Shore Drive at Randolph Street and swung down Wabash under the iron arches of the elevated tracks. At Monroe I stopped the car and got out. Away from the lake the city was quieter. The South Loop, with no entertainment beyond a few peep shows and the city lockup, was deserted – a drunk weaving uncertainly down the street was my only companion. I crossed Wabash and went into the Pulteney Building next to the Monroe Street Tobacco Store. At night it looked like a terrible place to have an office. (p. 1)

It is an environment that a woman would be wary of negotiating on her own – a scene which sets up expectations of the woman as victim. V.I. driving away from the leisure environment of the lakeside park with its crowds of people, entering a down-town slum, getting out of her car to walk the night-time street marks this out as a no-go environment and a dangerous activity for a woman. As it turns out, V.I. inhabits these spaces, has made them her own: this is her street, her office, her professional (and personal) locus.

It is the position of the private eye as alienated outsider (Scaggs, 2010, p. 59), the underdog challenging the norm, which provides the ideological springboard from which a constructive appropriation of an otherwise male-inscribed genre is possible. A central hard-boiled trope is the extreme individualism of the hero P.I.; in feminist hard-boiled, it is marginality instead: the woman P.I.'s marginality is socially and institutionally entrenched and provides the moral driver for action. The fight for justice has become a form of political resistance; the female P.I. does not only challenge corruption and organized crime but patriarchal orthodoxy, "institutional and organised authority" (Tomc in Paradis, 2001, p. 91) in the public and the private sphere.

From this perspective, Paretsky's appropriation of the majority of genre characteristics is a contestation of genre and gender norms which shifts them into a much wider social arena. Homicide lieutenant Bobby Mallory, a colleague of V.I.'s father who has known her since she was a little girl, provides a concise summary of social expectations and condemnation of V.I.'s choice of career over fulfilling a more traditional gender role:

> You know if Tony had turned you over his knee more often instead of spoiling you rotten, you'd be a happy housewife now, instead of playing at detective and making it harder for us to get our job done. (p. 33)

V.I.'s response – "But I'm a happy detective, Bobby, and I made a lousy housewife" (ibid.) – demonstrates her confidence in herself by ignoring the value judgment that she is not a professional but "playing at detective" and encapsulating the interrogation and subversion of gender clichés throughout the novel. V.I.'s willingness to take risks, her choice of adventure and action over passivity and dependence, living an unconventional life with economic, social and sexual autonomy, and her success as a capable, independent professional demonstrates the possibility of destinies outside marriage. But this is not just a successful engagement with conflicts of general gender expectations. In seizing "detective agency", V.I. transgresses some of the most entrenched boundaries of conventional femininity – violence and curiosity – and rejects the generically inscribed positions of passive victim or destructive femme fatale in crime fiction.

On the one hand, V.I.'s character construct maps quite neatly onto the majority of male attributes and male detective conventions. But Paretsky also consciously undermines these expectations. In contrast with the flawed loner character construct, V.I. is not isolated, overly self-sufficient, excessively individualistic, or self-destructive, but she is integrated into a community with carefully established intergenerational links. Her family history, indebtedness to her (dead) mother and father, her close relationship with the much older Lottie and a network of friends and colleagues establishes a web of connections across age, gender, ethnicity, the living and the dead, and the past and present, within which she is securely anchored and on which she relies for support when necessary.

Paretsky is also at pains to make V.I. a real woman, insistent that her "detective should be a woman like me and my friends" (2015). V.I. is very interested in her appearance – clothes and make-up are described in detail; she is conscious of her visual impact and relentlessly agonises over food, going on a diet, the need to exercise. These stereotypically feminine concerns have generated critical responses, accusing Paretsky of producing a "fantasy of femininity" (Munt in Plain, 2013, online) unlike Grafton's Lindsey Millhone who confidently maintains her distance from expectations of appropriate femininity (Plain, 2013, online). But while there is perhaps an over-insistence on the obsessions of a "normal" woman in terms of appearance, when it comes to sexual confidence Paretsky manages to negotiate the move from flirtatiousness to assertive sexuality and independence more believably. V.I.'s affair with a rather condescending lawyer turns into an assured recognition that this is not a desirable relationship for her and the traditional scenario of the male rescuing the female victim is overturned when V.I. saves the lawyer: "Ralph, I'm coming over. Tell Yardley *that* when he

walks in the door, as soon as he walks in, and maybe it will save your goddamn ass for a few minutes" (Paretsky, 1982, p. 256). Although there are protestations of her disregard for domesticity (her office is untidy, she doesn't make her bed) and home-making, she values domestic culture (e.g. the rather irritating foregrounding of the Venetian goblets she has inherited from her mother and her condescending assessment of vulgar furnishings). She is highly educated, well-spoken and deploys her command of language and register to establish her superiority in situations where she is at a physical disadvantage. Although she is not averse to energetic fighting, often holding her own, she is also shown to be vulnerable and shows empathy to victims, especially disadvantaged women and children.

If we map V.I.'s character attributes onto the BSRI, we see that with the exception of individualism, masculinity and self-sufficiency, she demonstrates the socially desirable male attributes, which – as we have seen earlier – have also been established as core character markers for the male detective / P.I.

Male attributes	VI	Female Attributes	VI
Acts as a Leader	√	Affectionate	√
Aggressive	√	Cheerful	×
Ambitious	√	Childlike	×××
Analytical	√	Compassionate	√
Assertive	√	Does Not Use Harsh Language	×××
Athletic	√	Eager to Soothe Hurt Feelings	××
Competitive	√	Feminine	√
Defends own Beliefs	√	Flatterable	√×
Dominant	√	Gentle	×
Forceful	√	Gullible	×××
Has Leadership Abilities	√	Loves Children	√
Independent	√	Loyal	√
Individualistic	×	Sensitive to the Needs of Others	√
Makes Decisions Easily	√	Shy	×××
Masculine	××	Soft Spoken	√×
Self-Reliant	√	Sympathetic	√
Self-Sufficient	×	Tender	√×
Strong Personality	√	Understanding	√
Willing to Take a Stand	√	Warm	√
Willing to Take Risks	√	Yielding	×××

Figure 1: V.I. Warshawski's attributes mapped onto the BSRI

How her character construct relates to the socially desirable attributes for femininity is more interesting. Out of twenty, she demonstrates nine feminine traits – "positive" features such as loyalty or sympathy, but does not display almost as many: eight feminine characteristics she either does not show (one cross) or explicitly rejects them (three crosses): these are extreme or stereotypical feminine features such as shyness, childlikeness or gullibility. The remaining three aspects sometimes apply and sometimes do not, depending on context. The table shows how V.I.'s character construct very carefully conforms to the majority of hard-boiled tropes

but also consciously challenges character markers that are stereotypically overdrawn both on the male and, in particular, the female side.

V.I. is a hard-boiled female P.I: she displays the majority of hard boiled characteristics but often they are inflected, inverted or criticised. For example, while there are many fight scenes in *Indemnity Only* where V.I. gives as good as she gets, conforming to the trope of the hard-boiled private investigator who can inflict physical trauma but is also able to endure it, graphic violence is given a female slant with gendered fears and threats: "Joe was hovering in the background, a lascivious look on his face. My stomach turned slightly." In this scene where V.I. is about to be overcome by three of the gangsters she has been fighting quite successfully, losing the fight acquires an additional dimension by the implicit rape threat which introduces a vulnerability unknown to the traditional P.I. and raises the issue of male-on-female violence as an ever-present risk. Later in this scene, V.I. uses disgust as a protective – and belittling – strategy when she vomits copiously over the potential rapist's shirt and makes fun of him. But she is also concerned over her own appearance when she considers what effect the beating she is taking will have on her face – while she is being hit: "He hit me again. I was going to look like absolute hell tomorrow, I thought" (Paretsky, 1982, pp. 71-73).

Let us now see how the feminist appropriation of the hard-boiled P.I. translates into the German cultural, social and linguistic environment and if there is any translatorial or editorial intervention in relation to sensitive topics such as swearing, violence or sexuality impacting on and enacting differential gender and genre expectations. For my case study I used the 1982 edition of *Indemnity Only* and the 1986 German *Schadenersatz* translated by Uta Münch analysing the source and target text for character construct markers linked to gender and to hard-boiled genre conventions. The data selection criteria were text segments dealing with the following features:

- Isolation vs connectedness
- Independence / agency
- Professionalism
- Gender labelling / Sexism and sexist language
- Gender roles / Family vs. job
- Explicit feminist politics
- Sexuality
- Private vs public sphere of "action"
- Violence against women – vulnerability

- (appropriation of) hard-boiled tropes: violence by women; fighting; swearing; tough talk; irony, wit and cynicism.

I noted any instances of explicit assertions of non-female character markers, i.e. where Paretsky spells out broadly feminist politics or where Warshawski becomes a mouthpiece for feminist principles. These include explicit assertions of a professional identity and the need for a profession (rather than relying on beauty); descriptions which aim to establish that V.I. is not a homemaker; long fight scenes; and tough talk. I compared these character construct markers and tropes to how they were rendered in the German target text in order to identify any shifts in translation. Overall, the translation was very accurate and the divergences between source and target did not indicate any ideologically motivated reframing of the feminist detective figure. Because of the differences in languages, there are a number of changes across the novel where V.I. is presented to be more assertive in the German, less ironical or where the target text shows less concern with physicality. However, there were also noticeable patterns in swearing, register, sexist labelling, V.I.'s sexuality and her professional identity.

Swear words pose a perennial problem in translation, and there are various approaches on how to handle non-standard language, including omission, neutralization or standardization. In the novel, swearing by men and unsympathetic female characters is translated without any shifts. Warshawski explicitly comments on her dislike of cheap swearing although she also, on occasion, uses expletives. Nevertheless, this very limited swearing is toned down in translation: her fairly inoffensive "Goddamn" becomes a rather immature 'dämlich' (silly) which jars with her otherwise tough-guy character construct and the careful assertion of her non-compliance with notions of femininity. This is also an instance where the target text clearly differs from the source text: all instances of "goddamn" are literally translated ('gottverdammt') when they are used by male characters and indicate a conscious, gender-based translation decision. The toning down brings V.I.'s character construct more in line with the BSRI index which notes "gentle speech" as one of the socially desirable attributes for women. Such gender-specific treatment of swearing in translation is supported by Epstein, who analysed English translations of the Swedish detective series *Martin Beck* (1965 -1975) by Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö and Stieg Larsson's 2005 *Män som hatar kvinnor* (*The Girl with the Dragoon Tattoo*, 2010). She found that the mid-century novels conformed to contemporary linguistic norms and gender expectations: in the translation, there was no slang usage or swearing by women unless they were prostitutes or villains; and roughly 50 years later, the translation of *Girl with the dragon*

tattoo also toned down slang usage and use of swear words by Lisbet Salander (Epstein, 2011, n.d.)

In *Indemnity Only,* swearing by men is often targeted at V.I., calling her a "broad", "bitch", "dame", "lady" or "wise ass". Where this derogatory labelling is clearly offensively meant, the translation provides equivalents, although the translation of "bitch" into the dictionary equivalent 'Hure' (whore) is a far more offensive insult since the word is used very rarely in this context in German. Where the labelling is sexist language use, the translation choices are context-sensitive, using different German renderings depending on whether "lady", for example, is used with a derogatory or supposedly complimentary intention. On the whole, the German renders these items with functional equivalents conveying a similar level of unthinking gender-labelling. But when the sexist attitude is further expressed through a belittling modifier such as "little", "young", or "gorgeous" – i.e. foregrounding immaturity or appearance as essential female descriptors, these subtle denigrations are shifted in the German translation. "Little lady" (p. 25) is rendered as an ironical 'werte Dame' (p. 29, 'my lady' or 'valued/honoured madame'), expressing V.I.'s difference not through belittling but through a shift to a different social class (i.e. non-working, non-professional). "Young lady" (p. 47) is rendered as 'junge Frau' (p. 49 'young woman') which loses some of its expressive meaning in the German and is less derogatory, and the translation of "gorgeous lady" (p. 26) as 'so eine grossartige Frau' (p.29, 'such an amazing woman') shifts from an "appreciation" of her appearance to an appreciation of her abilities. As a result, there is a trend in the German translation to remove sexist flirting and replace it with less derogatory appreciation of V.I.

This very slight trend of increasing the feminist orientation in translation is also evident in the handling of sexuality. All instances in the source text where V.I. is sexualized by others through objectifying her to a greater or lesser degree are reduced in the German. Here are three examples: 1) We have already seen the example of sexist flirting which becomes an appreciation of abilities rather than appearance in the German, shifting "gorgeous" to "amazing". 2) In arranging a date, the lawyer in the German acknowledges V.I.'s reasoning "Sie haben mich überzeugt" (p. 29, 'you have convinced me') rather than the stereotype of the woman depending on the man to ask her out when he reassures her, in the English: "you've got a date" (p. 25). 3) The final example loses the sexual meaning of the English question "do you do this kind of thing often?" which V.I.'s date asks her after they have spent the night together. She is standing in front of a mirror, inspecting the damage she has suffered from a violent fight with three gangsters the previous evening. The German literal translation only renders the directly situational meaning of V.I. looking at herself in the mirror and the broader contextual

interpretation of “fighting” – i.e. “do you often look at yourself in the mirror?” and “do you often fight?”. There is no suggestion of the implied meaning of “having sex on a first date” which the English conventional phrase suggests as a possible meaning. Given that it is her date – with whom she has just had sex on their first night out – who asks this, his “playful” comment raises questions about women’s sexuality and gendered norms of behaviour. V.I., in this scene, confidently transgresses two norms of femininity: non-violence and non-sexuality, and this disregard for gender-normative behaviour is reinforced in the German translation by introducing lexical chains with sexual connotations in situations where V.I. reflects on her (non-sexual) needs:

> “All **I** really **wanted** to do was sleep, but I knew if I **did that** now …” (p. 75)
>
> … alle meine **Sinne verlangten** nach Schlaf ... falls ich diesem **Verlangen** jetzt **nachgab** ... (pp. 76-7)
>
> ... All my **senses desired** sleep ... Should I **give in** to this **desire**

And:

> I **wanted** ribs and fries … (p. 56)
>
> Mich **gelüstete** nach Spareribs ... (p. 58)
>
> I **lusted** after spareribs...

The following example is probably a mis-translation where “slip” is rendered with a German false friend:

> The long sleeves covered my puffy arms and I didn’t have to wear pantyhose or a **slip**. (pp. 75-6)
>
> Die langen Ärmel verhüllten meine geschwollenen Arme und ich brauchte darunter weder **Strümpfe** noch **Slip** anzuziehen. (pp. 77-8)
>
> The long sleeves veiled my swollen arms and I didn’t need to wear **stockings** or **underpants** under it.

“Slip” is a naturalized loanword in German but it means ‘underpants’ – so the translator has shifted the aspect of not needing to comply with social decorum (no bare legs or sheer dress) to a very sexually assertive decision to go commando. However, even if this is the result of a false friend, the translator had to accept this rendering as congruent with the character construct of V.I. or otherwise would have made the decision to change the phrase (or research it). The choice of translating “pantyhose” with the (erotically more provocative) ‘Strümpfe’ (‘stockings’) further reinforces the sexual shift in the German.

As far as V.I.'s professional identity is concerned, the German translation calls this into question far more explicitly than the English. Challenges to her ability to do her job are often articulated implicitly or in masked form in English whereas the German foregrounds them more clearly. So for example, the decision of a client to hire her for an inquiry is expressed by him assuring her that he isn't querying her "honesty" but rather articulating his doubts whether she is up to the job:

> [VI] Are you trying to find out whether I'm **honest**, rich, tough or what? You want some references, ask for them. ….
>
> [Client] I'm **not questioning your honesty** … (p. 6)

The German articulates and explicitly names the underlying but unnamed challenge in the exchange between the client and V.I:

> [VI] Was wollen Sie eigentlich herausbekommen? Ob ich **ehrlich** bin, or reich oder hart Nehmen oder was sonst? Wenn Sie Referenzen brauchen, dann sagen Sie es. ....
>
> [Client] Ich zweifele nicht an Ihren **Fähigkeiten**. (p. 10)
>
> [VI] What exactly do you want find out? Whether I am honest, or rich or tough or what else? If you need references, then say so …
>
> [Client] I do not doubt your abilities.

Similarly, the client is trying to slot V.I. into the belittling social dynamic of addressing her by her first name, rather than acknowledging her professionalism by using her title and last name. In the English, this is implied but never fully spelled out: the client does not actually ask what her first name is when he receives her card but leaves a pause for her to supply it. In the German, this request is spelled out. And although V.I. fends off the frequent challenges of her professional capability with assurance, at times in the German she is presented as more uncertain about her abilities than in the English. When she assures a prospective client that she is up to a job, she does so in quite combative language, while in German this is a much more prevaricating and uncertain assurance

> If things get heavy, I'll figure out a way to handle them – **or go down trying**. (p. 6)
>
> Wenn es Schwierigkeiten gibt, finde ich schon einen Weg, **um damit fertigzuwerden – oder ich versuche es zumindest**. (p. 10)
>
> If there are difficulties, I'll find a way **to cope with them – or I'll at least try**.

But this uncertainty is balanced by the rather more formal register in German. Warshawski's language use marks her out as a professional expert and this linguistic

professionalism is further enhanced in the German. The disadvantage of this register shift is that it affects quite a number of passages which are informal and use street language in the English. This results in a loss of stylistic tropes – less tough talk, less street language, less informality. The higher register is also – at times – inappropriate for the situation described.

> I **came around** the desk again and sat on it **facing him**, and grabbed his shirt collar and jerked his face up so that I could see his eyes. (p. 58)
>
> Wieder **begab ich mich** auf die andere Seite des Schreibtisches und setzte mich auf die Tischplatte**, das Gesicht ihm zugewandt**; ich packte ihn mit einem Ruck am Kragen, und riß seinen Kopf hoch, so daß ich ihm in die Augen sehen konnte. (p. 60)
>
> I again ***betook myself** to the other side of the desk and seated myself on the surface, **the face facing him;** I grabbed him with a jerk by his collar und yanked his head up so that I could look him in the eyes.

V.I. is acting out the tough guy investigator, physically manhandling a reluctant informant but the German scene is less believable because of the incompatibility between the formal, literary language and the highly informal, and to some extent inappropriate, situation and action.

Conclusion

With V.I. Warshawski, Sara Paretsky has created a female P.I. who negotiates the demands of hard-boiled, highly masculinized, character tropes while articulating a feminine and feminist vision and ideological stance. The novel and the character satisfy generic expectations and successfully re-vision them through interrogating, subverting and challenging gender clichés and genre tropes. Examples for such an inflection, inversion or critique of hard-boiled characteristics is the female slant given to formulaic hard-boiled violence with gendered fears (how the beating will affect how V.I. looks) and threats (implicit rape) or when a woman is the saviour of the man in a dangerous situation. On the whole, the translation renders these carefully, although there are some slight but noticeable shifts. These concern the gender-specific toning down of swearing, the higher formality in the language used for narrative description or by the characters, the shift from implicit questioning of V.I.'s investigative and professional suitability on the grounds of gender to explicit articulation of these challenges linked to less assertive reassurance by V.I., and the downgrading of "friendly" sexist language use and restrictive conceptions of female sexuality by widening and foregrounding V.I. as a sexualized being through sexualized language in various contexts of everyday life. These shifts

do not form a coherent pattern in how they impact on the contestation of gender and genre conventions or the "constructive appropriation" of the hard-boiled genre (Paradis 2001:98). While a lack of hard swearing by V.I. and her less combative assertion of her investigative competence shift her towards a more conventional image of femininity and matches the BSRI female socially desirable traits of soft-spokenness and avoidance of harsh language, this is balanced by her increased professional persona through a raised register and the positive affirmation of V.I. as a sexual being. Thus, while V.I.'s character construct overall remains a convincing appropriation, the higher register in narrative description impacts on hard-boiled tropes in its loss of street language, informality and wise-cracking, and generates at times incongruities between the narrative situation and narrative language of description, breaking through "the fourth wall" of the text world and losing reader belief.

Endnotes

[1] The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) is a list of gender attributes which were identified by Sandra Bem in 1975, and reassessed in 1998 by Holt and Ellis. The three lists consist of twenty socially desirable traits each for men, women and non-gender specific traits. It is a contested self-reporting diagnostic tool which has been challenged by Pedhazur and Tetenbaum (1979) but supported by Monto (1993) and Holt & Ellis (1998) amongst others. I am using it here simply as one indicator of fairly wide-spread notions of what is considered socially desirable in men and in women.

References

Nemesio, A., M. Chiara Levorato and Lucia Ronconi. 2008. "The Time of Reading: The First Perception of Characters in Narrative Texts." In: *Online Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Poetics and Linguistics Association (PALA)* [cit. 2017-11-12], n.p. Available at: file:///C:/Users/admin/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/1JU00EZB/nemesio2008.pdf

Bem, S. L. 1974. "The measurement of psychological androgyny." In: *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 155-162.

BSRI (Bem Sex Role Inventory). Available at: http://www.psytoolkit.org/survey-library/sex-role-bem.html [cit. 2017-11-12], n.p.

Chandler, R., 1950. *The Simple Art of Murder*. London: Hamish Hamilton. Also available at: http://www.en.utexas.edu/amlit/amlitprivate/scans/chandlerart.html [cit. 2017-11-12].

Chandler, R., 1953. *The long good-bye.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Also available at: http://pdbooks.ca/pdbooks/english/C/Chandler-Raymond--The-Long-Goodbye/zl3awr_files/OEBPS/Section_c38_r1.htm [cit. 2017-11-12].

Emmott, C. and M. Alexander. 2010. "Detective fiction, plot construction and reader manipulation: rhetorical control and cognitive misdirection in Agatha Christie's *Sparkling Cyanide*." In McIntyre D. and B. Busse (eds.) *Language and style: In honour of Mick Short*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 328-346

Epstein, B. 2011. "Girl with the Dragon Translation: Translating Thrillers and Thrilling Translations*." FIT XIX Congress Proceedings*. [n.p.]

Holt, C. and J. B. Ellis. 1998. “Assessing the Current Validity of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory.”, In: *Sex Roles*, Vol. 39, no. 11-12, pp. 929-941. Also available at: http://www.ekgp.ugent.be/pages/nl/vragenlijsten/Validity_BEM.pdf [cit. 2017-11-12].
Kinsman, M. 2010. “Feminist crime fiction.” In: Ross Nickerson, C. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to American crime fiction*. Cambridge: CUP. Pp. 148-162.
Klein, K. 1988. *The woman detective: Gender and genre*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
Monto, M. 1993. “An Exercise in Gender: The BEM Sex Role Inventory in the Classroom.” In: *Clinical Sociology Review*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 159-174 Also available at: http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/csr/vol11/iss1/13 [cit. 2017-11-12].
Munt, S. 1994. *Murder by the book? Feminism and the crime novel.* London: Routledge.
Paradis, K. 2001. “Warshawski’s situation: Beauvoirean feminism and the hard-boiled detective.” In: *South Central Review*, vol. 18, no. 3-4, pp. 86-101.
Paretsky, S. 1982/1990. *Indemnity only*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Paretsky, S. 1986. *Schadenersatz*. Uta Münch (trsl.). München: Piper Verlag.
Paretsky, S. 2015. “The Detective as Speech.” In: *You’re booked, Harrogate International Festivals.* Available at: http://harrogateinternationalfestivals.com/yourebooked/2015/07/the-detective-as-speech-by-sara-paretsky/ [cit. 2017-11-12].
Plain, G. 2013. “Locating Sue Grafton. In: *Crime Time.* Available at: http://www.crimetime.co.uk/features/suegrafton.html [cit. 2017-11-12].
Pedhazur, E. and T. Tetenbaum. 1979. "Bem Sex Role Inventory: A Theoretical and Methodological Critique." In: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. pp. 996-1016. Available at: http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=b9753d59-c9f1-46c8-9a43-65e3b23332b6%40sessionmgr102&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=1980-29271-001&db=pdh [cit. 2017-11-12].
Porter, D. 2009. ‘The private eye.” In: Priestman, M. (ed.) *The Cambridge companion to crime fiction*. Cambridge: CUP. Pp. 95-114.
Reddy, M. 1988. *Sisters in crime: Feminism and the crime novel*.London: Continuum.
Scaggs, J. 2010. *Crime fiction*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Vanacker, S. 2015. “Series fiction and the challenge of ideology: The feminism of Sara Paretsky.” In: Anderson, J. et. Al. (eds.) *Serial crime fiction.* London: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 99-110.
Walton, P. and M. Jones. 1999. *Detective agency: Women rewriting the hard-boiled tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Wilson, A. (1995). The Female Dick and the Crisis of Heterosexuality. In Irons, G. (ed.) *Feminism in Women's Detective Fiction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. pp. 148-156.

Karen Seago
City, University of London
Northampton Square
London EC1V 0HB
Karen.Seago.1@city.ac.uk