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EXPLORING SARA PARETSKY'S DETECTIVE FICTION
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ECOFEMINISM

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Maureen Frances McCarthy

June 2007


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ABSTRACT

The thesis uses ecofeminism as an analytical tool to explore how author Sara Paretsky revises hard-boiled detective fiction. In the early 1980s social changes, engendered by second-wave feminism, provided opportunities for female authors such as Paretsky to rework the hard-boiled genre in an effort to present a feminist perspective. Late in the 20th century, the development of ecofeminism became a new strategy in exposing patriarchy's connection to the subordination of both women and nature. Karen J. Warren is one of the pioneers of this sort of criticism and her work in Ecofeminist Philosophy serves as a basis for the research. Warren posits that a pattern of principles, a "conceptual framework," informs our perception of ourselves and the world. She argues that the system of patriarchy alters these concepts and results in "oppressive conceptual frameworks" that value the male over the female. Further, she asserts that the construction of a "domination/subordination" paradigm leads to the "logic of domination;" a hierarchical mode of thinking that places men in the primary position of power and privilege and women as secondary.

Using Warren's ecofeminist philosophy in the analysis of Blood Shot, Tunnel Vision, and Fire Sale shows how Paretsky links the system of patriarchy to the exploitation of the less powerful members of society and the natural world. The settings and the actions of her protagonist V.I. Warshawski reveals how the male characters use the "logic of domination" to justify their abusive actions toward women and children. The results of their actions in turn mirror the degradation that occurs in the environment.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: EXPLORING SARA PARETSKY'S
DETECTIVE FICTION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE
OF ECOFEMINISM

While many scholars have explored the ways feminists have revised the genre of hard-boiled detective fiction by examining representations of female detectives and exploring patriarchy as a central theme in novels like those of Sara Paretsky, they have yet to explore the interrelationship between patriarchy and the natural world. According to Gretchen T. Legler, author of "Ecofeminist Literary Criticism," environmental issues should be examined by the literary community because "literature influences human behavior." She posits that, "One of the primary projects of ecofeminist literary critics is the analysis of the cultural construction of nature, which also includes an analysis of language, desire, knowledge, and power" (227). Defining nature as a cultural construct permits societies to shape nature in ways they deem fit. In Western society, for example, nature has been defined in different ways. On the one hand, nature can be viewed as a place to enjoy and to relax. On the other hand, nature can

be seen as something useful, particularly to consumers, and, in contemporary society, the desire to explore nature in a search of its value to the consumer often makes nature a source of exploitation rather than preservation.

Therefore, Legler suggests that examining how literature represents nature can reveal alternatives to the patriarchal system of exploitation and domination that affects society and the natural world. My intention in this thesis is to analyze three of Paretsky's books in an effort to identify how she uses nature in ways that work toward a feminist revision of the hard-boiled genre, one that reveals and critiques the unequal distribution and use of power that impacts both women and nature in our society.

The misuse of power can be seen in a variety of different situations. Because of the historical intersections between marriage, family, gender, and the law for instance, family relationships figure strongly in Paretsky's narratives. According to Glenwood Irons in Feminism in Women's Detective Fiction, "the books set family and community relationships against power structures like the church, the state, and the corporate world" (xxi). Since the issue of who wields the power is important to women, or at least socially linked to them, Paretsky's

female protagonist V.I. Warshawski can present this issue in a manner that resonates with readers of detective fiction. In her novel Blood Shot, for instance, a family's cruel treatment of an unmarried mother offers insight into the damaging effects of patriarchal behavior.

Although other scholars have analyzed these themes, my project adds an additional element by exploring how Paretsky links the uses and abuses of power to the domination of people and the exploitation of nature. As Karen J. Warren declares in the "Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism," "any feminist theory and any environmental ethic which fails to take seriously the interconnected dominations of women and nature is simply inadequate" (125). When Paretsky uses her protagonist as a conduit to explore the difficulties women face in a patriarchal society, she links them with problems in the environment. In another example from Blood Shot, she describes how a multinational corporation exposes their employees to chemicals from improper industrial emissions and toxic waste which in turn sickens a female character, and contaminates the Chicago waterways. Therefore, because Paretsky intertwines environmental issues with the social concerns of women and other marginalized groups it seems

reasonable to investigate her narratives from the perspective of postmodern ecofeminism.

In the postmodern view, the "grand narrative," or what literary critic Raman Selden calls the "meta-narrative," has been replaced with many smaller ones based on "specific cultural-political needs" (117). The movement from the "grand narrative," which seeks to proclaim some broad set of "absolute truths," to more local or individual narratives offers feminist authors such as Paretsky a way to explore and comment on the dominant ideologies in our society within a broad social context. Thus, her novels are not a scientific study about the social construct that links women to nature; instead, her hard-boiled detective fiction exposes instances of patriarchal behavior that result in the abuse of women and children. In turn, she links these actions to the abuse of nature. Further, Paretsky's focus on the interrelationship between women and nature underscores the thrust of the postmodern ecofeminist movement.

The thesis consists of six chapters. This first chapter introduces its social and environmental concerns. Chapter Two is a discussion of the origin of the hard-boiled genre, and an overview of what others have said

about the possibility of revising the genre from the perspective of feminism. Chapter Three is a brief overview of ecofeminist criticism, and draws heavily on the works of two leaders in the ecofeminist movement; Karen J. Warren's Ecofeminist Philosophy and Carolyn Merchant's The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution. In the fourth chapter, I show how Paretsky develops the character of her protagonist V. I. Warshawski and how an ecofeminist analysis of literature that explores the issue of power relationships in society can revise a male dominated genre. Chapter Five is an analysis of three books by Sara Paretsky, Blood Shot, Tunnel Vision, and Fire Sale. This chapter focuses on how Paretsky uses the setting to critique the patriarchal abuses of power and integrates feminist issues with social, cultural and environmental concerns. More specifically, in Chapter Six, I argue that contemporary detective fiction written by women, a genre often denigrated for its "formulaic quality" (Yagoda 3), can serve as a valuable source for discovering and implementing a feminist ideology.

CHAPTER TWO

REVISING THE HARD-BOILED GENRE

Ecofeminist writing can appear in surprising places, and confirms Legler's premise that ecofeminist critics must examine many different kinds of literature to discover those that espouse "feminist and ecological theories" (229). One unusual source is mystery writing, particularly contemporary feminist revisions of hard-boiled detective fiction. Generally, detective fiction is considered an uncommon place to examine societal issues because this kind of popular fiction tends to be a commodity that appeals to a large audience, and is thus thought to have little literary value. Women writers, however, have found this genre a fertile field in which to present a feminist point of view. Consequently, these feminist revisionist genres and their female characters often yield interesting critiques of society and, in turn, society's impact on nature.

Traditionally, male writers and their male protagonists dominated hard-boiled detective fiction. The genre developed from the pulp fiction magazines popular in the United States during the 1920s in response to the

British puzzle mystery. American authors, particularly Raymond Chandler, believed that the British "cozy" appealed primarily to a female audience, and that the stories, characters, and settings were contrived and unrealistic. Chandler, in "The Simple Art of Murder," for instance, critiques British author Dorothy Sayers' writing as a kind of "arid formula which could not even satisfy its own implications" (232). In an effort to counteract the unrealistic nature of these narratives, he and other male writers developed characters that were tough talking "outsiders" who exist in the real world. This innovative, "masculine," or what might be termed "androcentric" style of writing became the province of male authors, and did for a time effectively exclude women from the genre.

Hard-boiled detective fiction thus developed in the 1940s when male authors such as Chandler created a protagonist that embodied the "outsider," modeled along the lines of the lone cowboy. Generally, the narratives present a misogynist view of women with the male detective as a hero when he resolves the chaos caused by murder and returns the world to order. Sex and violence are important aspects of the stories and the crimes are often committed by women or caused by some female folly. Rosalind Coward

and Linda Simple in "Tracking Down the Past" indict male writers like Mickey Spillane for displaying "extreme individualism, violence and outrageous social attitudes toward women and other minority groups" (46). Thus, as feminist critic Kathleen Gregory Kline points out, hard-boiled detective fiction became the domain of the male writer and "support(s) male hegemony" (202).

Female authors avoided writing hard-boiled detective fiction because of the patriarchal values embedded within the style. In the late 1970s, however, a push from feminists inspired women to revise the male authored versions of detective fiction. Some literary critics questioned the success of this venture. Kline in particular declared in "An Unsuitable Job for a Feminist?" that the conflicts between gender and the hard-boiled genre are so strong that either "feminism or the formula are at risk" (202) when any attempt is made to combine them. Others, however, eventually came to disagree. Maureen Reddy, for example, asserted in her book, Sisters in Crime, published in 1988, that "The increasing diversity of female protagonists of crime novels reflect recent social changes, with perhaps the most important influence of the genre being feminism" (2).

The social changes feminism engendered were many and varied. Most importantly, however, detective fiction provided an opportunity to dialogue about what it means to be a member of a marginalized group. Within this discourse, feminists sought to change the stereotypical thinking about women, and to provide more opportunities for choice. As authors Priscilla Walton and Manina Jones put it, "Hard-boiled detective fiction written by women can thus merit the label "'feminist'" because it admits the possibility of altering the "'generic'" - and gendered-conventions of both literary and social behavior" (46; emphasis in original). As a result, the social changes stemming from feminism empowered women authors to challenge the male dominated hard-boiled detective fiction genre.

The most obvious challenge to the genre was the entrance of women as protagonists. The entrance of women changes the genre considerably because as literary critic Margaret Kinsman states, "women's experiences constitute different views of reality and offer different ways of making sense of the world" (9). Feminists argue that these differing world views provide a variety of topics in which female authors can describe or comment upon the problems that impact the lives of women. Paretzky, in "Writing a

Series Character," remarks that her character V.I. Warshawski provides "the opportunity to look in depth, and over time, at issues of law, society and justice" (60). Using a feminist approach to examine these issues reveals how women and other marginalized groups function in a patriarchal system. Historically, because of their gender, women have been consigned to a subservient position. Hence, they lacked the power to make the changes that were vital to their well being. Married women, for example, were under the control of their husbands, and it wasn't until the late nineteenth century that they were able to make decisions in regard to their inherited property. Women as protagonists in hard-boiled fiction thus offer an opportunity to examine how the law and justice impact women and "others" who find themselves relegated, through no fault of their own, to a subordinate role in society.

Revising the genre from the point of view of a feminist protagonist has not been easy. In the past, amateur sleuths such as Agatha Christie's "Miss Marple," dominated the pages of murder mysteries. Sweet, and at times seemingly somewhat addled, Miss Marple solved crimes while sipping tea, and chatting with the neighbors. With the advent of feminism and the changes in women's roles,

however, the professional woman investigator became the popular new icon of the mystery genre. College educated, a lawyer, and street smart from her days of growing up in South Chicago, Paretsky's protagonist V.I. Warshawski fits the modern criteria of the tough, experienced "private eye." As such, V.I. and other women detectives brought an entirely new perspective to the hard-boiled genre.

Traditionally, the hard-boiled detective is a loner. Chandler's protagonist, for example, the world weary, cynical sleuth Phillip Marlowe, fits the prototype as he travels the gritty urban landscape of Los Angeles solving crime. Chandler's descriptions of the rich and powerful who take advantage of the downtrodden, the geography, the climate, and nature function primarily to enhance the mystery and provide a realistic feel to the narratives. Further, although Chandler views the wealthy as the cause of many of the social ills afflicting the community and displays antipathy toward their behavior, he views their actions as individual choices not as a systemic social problem. Evidence of this view appears in the following quote from his novel The Big Sleep:

. . . I could just barely see some of the old wooden derricks of the oil fields from which the

Sternwoods had made their money. Most of the field was public park now, cleaned up and donated to the city by General Sternwood. But a little of it was still producing in groups of wells pumping five or six barrels a day. The Sternwoods, having moved up the hill, could no longer smell the stale sump water or the oil, but they could still look out of their front windows and see what made them rich. If they wanted to. I didn't suppose they wanted to. (21)

From Chandler's perspective, it appears that the rich retreat from the dirty business of making money, once they have obtained the status that wealth provides. In addition, money offers the wealthy an aura of privacy in which to enjoy the present and forget the past.

Indeed, when Chandler was writing in the 1930s and 40s, the so-called "Golden Age" of the hard-boiled genre, crime was often committed by individuals preying on the miscues of the wealthy or was sometimes mob related. For example, in The Big Sleep, Marlowe investigates a case of blackmail involving corrupt oil baron General Guy Sternwood. However, in the feminist revision of the genre, V.I. Warshawski investigates not only corrupt individuals,

but also what critic Glenwood Irons terms "power structures." For instance, in Blood Shot, Warshawski investigates the business practices of "Xerxes," a large multinational chemical company. Thus, in the space of forty years as individual ownership of small companies has morphed into large conglomerates that cover the globe, what was once individual malfeasance has now become part of a system that often involves the corrupt actions of multiple members within these "power structures."

Because corrupt business practices impact what Walton and Jones term the "social order," (209) in her revisionist hard-boiled detective fiction novels, Paretsky links the uses and abuses of power to the systematic domination of certain members of society, and further, to the exploitation of nature. Like ecofeminists Karen J. Warren and Gretchen Legler, she takes the position that feminism must expose a system that supports injustice and the misuse of power. Each of her books explores these themes, but Blood Shot, Tunnel Vision, and Fire Sale focus specifically on the close connection between social problems and damage to the environment.

Social issues and their impact on women and the environment act as a common thread that binds the novels

together. Paretsky, however, introduces another way to discover what constitutes the female experience in contemporary society. The obligation of friendship provides impetus to the narratives, and demonstrates the value of close relationships. In Blood Shot and Fire Sale, Warshawski returns to her old home on the South Side of Chicago when she agrees to do a favor for a friend. In Tunnel Vision she discovers the body of a friend bludgeoned to death in her office. Each of these events involves her in a murder investigation. Not only do the relationships entangle the detective in numerous encounters with both women and men, but the diverse backgrounds and life experiences of the characters offer multiple views about how women interact with one another and the men in their lives. Through this interweaving of connections, the concept of friendship becomes a rich source for discovering how women function in a patriarchal society.

Friendship provides a rich source for exploring patriarchal systems in society, as does Paretsky's protagonist, V.I. Warshawski herself. Indeed, Paretsky develops this character throughout the course of her books in ways that integrate ecofeminist issues with social, cultural, and environmental concerns. She uses both the

characters and the setting in her novels to reveal society's impact on nature. She explores how the degradation of nature serves as a metaphor for the way in which the dominant members of society use their power to exploit the weaker members, and, through her protagonist V.I. Warshawski, critiques this exploitation and emphasizes the importance of recognizing the interconnection between humankind and the natural world.

CHAPTER THREE
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOFEMINIST
LITERARY CRITICISM

Other feminist literary critics have analyzed how Sara Paretsky has revised the hard-boiled detective fiction genre through character and themes; however, no one has examined her books from the perspective of ecofeminism. The intent of this chapter is to provide a brief overview of ecofeminist theory, and describe how the link between women and nature provides a strategy to reinvent the hard-boiled genre.

Women and nature have a historic connection. Because of this ancient association between women and nature, two social movements prominent in the 1960s, feminism and environmentalism, forged a link that united them in developing a new purpose; the public recognition of the bond between society and nature. Ecofeminism (ecological feminism) emerged as a result of the union between these two movements.

Ecofeminism posits that a patriarchal ideology, which privileges power and authority over women and minorities, tends to exert that same power and authority over the

natural world as well. In an effort to counteract these positions of privilege, many feminists have taken up the cause of highlighting the interdependence of society and nature. Carolyn Merchant, one of the leaders in the ecofeminist movement, writes that "Juxtaposing the goals of the two movements can suggest new values and social structures, based not on the domination of women and nature as resources but on the full expression of both male and female talent and on the maintenance of environmental integrity "(xv). Conflating feminism and ecology offers a way to reexamine the root cause of the domination of women and nature and open a new dialogue about the connection between feminism and ecology. Further, ecofeminists insist that unless changes are made to construct a different ethic that recognizes the connection between humans and the environment, serious consequences will occur. Thus, one of the goals of ecofeminism is to revisit the past with the intent of revising the future.

Merchant suggests that revisiting the past to examine how the relationship between women and nature developed is one of several methods for resolving the tension between the patriarchal system and the women/nature connection. In her view, the historical bond between the two began when

ancient cultures characterized the earth as a "nurturing mother" (xvi). As a result of that characterization, women and nature became inextricably connected with one another. In an agrarian culture this link operated in a reasonably peaceful manner. The association became out of balance beginning around the 1600s, however, with the rise of a more mechanized society. Science became an important source of knowledge, and societies that had lived in relative harmony with nature began to view the natural world as a source to utilize rather than preserve.

Another reason for the exploitation of the environment is the dual image of nature. In general, primitive cultures saw nature as a nurturing mother, but at other times "she" can become violent and uncontrollable. Consequently, exerting power and dominance over nature became the response to the images of a wayward natural world. Ecofeminists such as Merchant and Karen J. Warren believe that the concept of using and subduing nature permits, and even encourages, the domination of women as well.

These dual images of nature as benevolent, but sometimes uncontrollable, coupled with advances in science and technology, slowly changed the ancient society's

perception of nature. As Warren states in Ecofeminist Philosophy, nature moved from an "organic to a mechanistic model" (28). This new envisioning of nature "conceptually sanctioned and ethically justified the exploitation of the (female) earth" (28). In both of these models, nature continues to be personified as female. Historically, however, the movement from nature as alive (organic) to a machine (dead) changes the concept of nature. Unfortunately, instead of something to revere, nature becomes something to exploit and a means of profit.

Warren echoes Val Plumwood, another important ecofeminist, in critiquing "oppositional value dualisms," (46; emphasis in original) for instance "culture/nature," (46) which are part of a hierarchical system of thought that leads to the domination of certain members of society. Over time, these dualisms changed the concept of nature and thus impacted women and other marginalized groups in the process. Warren declares that the reliance on the value of dualist thinking shapes the way societies function and sets up a particular world view. She characterizes this as a "conceptual framework" of "beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions" that act as a "socially constructed lens through which one perceives reality" (46; emphasis in

original). Generally, "conceptual framework(s)" are a reasonable method for viewing the world. Some, however, operate in a manner that creates what Warren terms "value-hierarchical thinking" (46; emphasis in original). The concept is based on an "'Up-Down'" mode of thought. In this type of system, "greater value" resides in the higher position, and conversely lesser value lies in the lower position. Another way of viewing these value judgments situates power or dominance in the position of the duality. Because the status is higher in the first position and lower in the second position, power is situated in the primary position while the secondary position possesses little authority.

Historically, the dualities of male/female, culture/nature, and rational/emotional have been categorized in this oppressive manner, and lead to what Warren calls "domination-subordination relationships"(48). Reason, for instance, has always been identified with the male, while emotion, a seemingly less important concept, has been associated with the female. Or put another way, the mind equals male, while the body or the physical equals female. Obviously, the mind would reside in the "Up"

position and thus rules the body. In addition, culture represents the male, while nature relates to the female.

These relationships are predicated on what Warren describes as the "logic of domination" (48). This premise is based on the argument that the "Ups," because of their superior position, deserve to dominate those in the "Down" or "inferior" position. Over time these value judgments have been justified through "habit, custom and prejudice" (48). The belief in the truth of these value driven dualisms leads to the assumption of power by the rational male. Conversely, the "emotional" female resides much lower on the scale of power and importance. Therefore, power is always invested in the superior position and rapidly diminishes as it flows down to the lower position. Warren does offer a number of different examples such as "classifying data, comparing information, and organizing material" where "hierarchical thinking" (47) can be justified. More specifically, she addresses the relationship between parents and children as a situation where the "Up/Down" concept exists. As infants, children reside in the "Down" position because they need the protection of their parents. As they mature, the dynamic between the two usually changes, and the child, under the

tutelage of his or her parents, assumes parity. If the relationship becomes unhealthy or abusive then the "Up/Down" syndrome comes into play. She insists, however, that over time this "Up-Down" mode of thinking can lead to the idea that those in the lower position, women, people of color, and nature, to name just a few, are naturally "inferior" and deserve their "subordinate" position.

Warren argues that "historically, at least in Western societies, the oppressive conceptual frameworks that have justified the domination of women and nonhuman nature have been patriarchal" (50). She believes that the "oppressive conceptual frameworks" that privilege or impart status to those in the "Up" position are acquired, and can be modified or transformed over time. Although changing a "belief system" may be difficult, these changes present a challenge to the ecofeminist movement. The model that links women to nature must change. For instance, traditionally women have been connected to nature through what Warren terms "biological determinism" (53; emphasis in original). She asserts that the belief in a "'women's nature'" has mistakenly placed women "'closer to nature than men.'" (53). Consequently, a change in thinking about the environment as a renewable resource must also occur.

These changes will allow nature, women, and other less powerful members of society to function as entities with equal rights and privileges.

Fostering change is not easy. Although women have gained more rights, respect, and opportunities in the last forty years, they are quite often viewed in a somewhat dubious manner. Women who do achieve success and power, for instance, tend to be seen as having some of the dominant characteristics of the male. Many times they are described as overly aggressive, or having a less than "feminine" nature. Erasing the gendered terms that identify the feminine as gentle and weak, and locating power and dominance as residing exclusively in the masculine province can be modified, however.

Warren posits that there needs to be a rethinking of feminism and the environment. She believes that new concepts need to be articulated that will break down the "logic of domination" so ingrained in Western thinking. In her view "institutional power and privilege" (64) should become the focus of change. Warren argues that the power and privilege accorded to white males is accepted as fact. Men have a birthright, and as such, are accorded higher status because they are male. This belief, in turn, has

become "institutionalized" and impacts the way society behaves toward women and minorities. In an effort to counteract this kind of thinking, Warren's goal is to construct a broad-based "theory and practice," an "ecofeminist philosophy," that incorporates a "human [...] nature interconnection" (69), thus constructing a set of principles that link nature with all of society, not just women. Finally, reexamining the domination of both nature and women should deconstruct the hierarchical structures so prevalent in the past and lead to more equality in the future.

In constructing her "ecofeminist philosophy," Warren pieces together a number of different theories, and creates a mosaic, or as she terms it, a "quilt" composed of different, but "relevant" parts. Her first premise is that any "ism" that supports the domination of "others" must be discarded. Next, she insists that diversity, the celebration of difference, is an important concept in ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is inclusive not exclusive. An important way to foster inclusiveness could include listening to voices that in the past have been silenced, such as the stories of not only women but Native Americans, Blacks, and others who have been marginalized. Warren

finds first person narratives are an important source of the "voices" whose views about the domination of their culture and the environment should be heard. She also believes that in sharing these diverse points of view the social problems resulting from the domination of women and nature can be mitigated or resolved. The stories and poetry of writer and educator Audre Lord, for instance, fits Warren's criteria in this respect. As a lesbian, and a woman of color, Lord experienced discrimination and she explores these painful issues in her work. In sharing her experiences as a black woman struggling to find acceptance in a white society, Lord provides a different view of the "oppressive conceptual frameworks" that Warren finds so damaging. Finally, Warren envisions the ecofeminist philosophy as an ongoing "theory in process" (66; emphasis in original) which will change over time.

Ecofeminists suggest a variety of ways to accomplish the task of changing society's belief systems. One method that has been effective in fostering change is the analysis of literature written about women and literature written by women. Feminist critics have been successful in revealing how women have been portrayed, at times, in a stereotypical manner by male authors. They have also rediscovered many

female authors overlooked in a venue formerly dominated by men. In addition, critics have expanded into other arenas, and have begun to examine how authors use the environment in their narratives to explore the patriarchal system of domination that continues to impact society and the natural world. Examining literature from the perspective of feminist literary criticism, combined with an environmental or an ecological perspective, provides ecocritics with a unique lens through which they can analyze the cultural construction of nature and the relationship of women to nature and to power. Further, because the definition of nature as a cultural construct permits societies to shape nature as they deem fit, in today's contemporary society nature still serves as a source of exploitation rather than preservation. Thus, ecofeminist literary criticism, a new method of discovering how writers represent the nature, becomes a way to expose the uses and abuses of both women and the environment.

Forging a connection between literature and ecology has not been easy. Glen Love, in his essay "Revaluing Nature," cites numerous examples of the lack of interest and understanding the literary community has shown in what was labeled, and somewhat denigrated, as "nature writing."

He cites Joseph Meeker's book, The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology for instance, as a "provocative book" that provided "new readings of literature from an ecological viewpoint" (228). Published in 1974 at a time of high public interest in environmental issues, the text went virtually unnoticed in the field of academia. Fortunately, this disinterest in "nature-oriented literature" or "pastoralism" began to change as literary scholars gradually started to recognize the importance of preserving the natural world.

One of the basic premises of ecology articulated by author and ecologist Barry Commoner is that, "Everything is connected to everything else" (108). Educator William Rueckert, in his essay "Literature and Ecology: an Experiment in Ecocriticism" quotes Commoner in an effort to demonstrate that literature and ecology are linked and provides a venue for understanding how humans and nature can coexist and thrive. Rueckert's premise is that "the concept of relevance" becomes active as he attempts to apply "ecological concepts to the study of literature" (107). The primary thrust of Rueckert's essay is his belief that the connection between literature and ecology is "relevant" to the interests of contemporary society, and as

such is an important issue to be addressed by literary scholars.

Professor Gretchen T. Legler argues that the possibility of an "environmental global crisis" (227) makes it imperative that society becomes more attentive to environmental concerns. Because "literature influences human behavior," examining the relationship between nature and literature offers many avenues for exploration. This examination, in turn, can lead to changes in the way society thinks about environmental issues.

Along with other ecocritics, both Legler and Rueckert agree, while ecology and literature appear to be poles apart, exposing the connection between them can increase awareness of society's dependence on the continuing health and viability of the natural world. Breaking away from traditional values and instituting new ones, thus disturbing the status quo, can be an empowering experience. Therefore, examining how authors introduce ecological concerns and connect them to the themes in their narratives in a way that involves readers is central to ecofeminist literary criticism. Author Jane Smiley in A Thousand Acres for instance, writes about farming practices that fill the soil with chemicals to increase productivity, and at the

same time contaminate the environment. The abuses of the land reflect the abuses that the female protagonists endure in the novel. This unusual adaptation of Shakespeare's play King Lear into a contemporary tale provides readers with a very different view of the relationship between humans and nature.

Literary critics employ different strategies in their efforts to analyze literature from the perspective of ecocriticism. Some analyze the canonical writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau or John Muir, writers who are credited with instituting the tradition of nature writing in America. Others examine the narratives of contemporary nature writers such as Paul Theroux or Barry Lopez. Although all these writers explore the aesthetic and the spiritual aspects of communing with nature, and both Theroux and Lopez address how nature has become degraded through exploitation and over use, ecocritics such as Legler argue their narratives depict nature from a "narrow" individualistic, masculine perspective. In Literature, Nature and Other, Patrick Murphy agrees, and states that nature writing or "the 'pastoral'" tends to be based on an idealization of nature rather than a genuine encounter with it" (25). In many of these narratives for

instance, particularly in the writings of Emerson, Thoreau, and Muir, nature exists as a hallowed space in the wilderness, separate from society, a place of contemplation, where men retreat to renew themselves and then return to the civilized world.

In her critique, Legler suggests that the definition of "nature writing" needs to broaden from a literary "form" of non-fiction prose to include writings that have been excluded from the genre. She believes, like Warren, that the inclusion of "fiction, poetry and personal narratives" (229) about the natural world selected from a variety of different sources can revise the concept of nature writing and present a different world view. A novel like Smiley's A Thousand Acres offers an excellent example of this new, extended category of "nature writing."

In response to the changing attitudes about nature, the texts of contemporary women writers are becoming a particularly rich source of investigation by ecofeminist literary critics. The science fiction narratives of Ursula Le Guin, the Native American writings of Louise Erdrich and Leslie Silko, and the stories by Alice Walker that provide insight into life in African American communities are just a few of the feminist authors that are creating what Legler

terms a "'postmodern pastoral'" that encompass both "ecological and feminist theories" (229). These writings and many others blur the image of "land-as-woman/woman-as-land," (234) and present nature in many different ways. Legler agrees with Warren, when she states that analyzing literature from the perspective of ecofeminism will "dismantle all "'isms'" of domination: racism, sexism, classism, [and] heterosexism" (236). Thus, exposing and demolishing the "belief system" that imparts so much power to those in the "Up" position levels the playing field.

As ecofeminist criticism develops, the analysis of other genres not classified as "pastoral" or nature writing have become a source for discovering the diversity in the field of ecofeminist literature. As such, analyzing the work of writers from the perspective of ecofeminist literary criticism could provide valuable insight in many different ways. How the exploitation of the environment, for instance, connects with the exploitation of society, how the dominant members of society exploit the weaker members, and how the exploitation of the environment impacts society are important questions. Analyzing these issues should reveal how the system of patriarchy impacts both women and the natural world. The abuse and domination

of nature parallels the abuse and domination that occurs in society.

CHAPTER FOUR
PARETSKY'S WARSHAWSKI THROUGH THE LENS
OF ECOFEMINIST CRITICISM

Gretchen Legler argues that an ecofeminist analysis of literature can explore the issue of power relationships in society. Philosopher Karen J. Warren agrees with Legler. In a move that aids in ecofeminist literary analysis, Warren proposes an ecofeminist philosophy that will counteract male dominated power relationships and link literature, nature, and humanity. Warren envisions the philosophy of ecofeminism as a "quilt" in which the "design" evolves over time. The quilt should reflect the "particular social, historical, and material contexts" in which the quilter exists (67). Further, the quilt must contain a "variety of images or stories" that counteracts the "isms of domination" (67; emphasis in original). Feminist author Sara Paretsky has developed a protagonist, and written several books that fit Warren's criteria. Examining Paretsky's protagonist through the lens of ecofeminism enables us to see how the author has created a character that reflects Warren's ecofeminist philosophy.

In addition to the above model, another important component in constructing an ecofeminist philosophy is inclusiveness. Inclusiveness encourages diversity which in turn expands power to the many, rather than having power situated with just a few, the "Ups." Although, feminist literary critic Kathleen Gregory Kline questions whether female writers can stay true to their feminist precepts when they write hard-boiled fiction, she states, however, that "Paretsky's detective expands the collective base of power; her style is inclusive rather than exclusive" (216). Another important premise of Kline's, and Warren strongly agrees, is that "women's stories [...] must be spoken in women's voices" (228). Thus, the first-person woman narrator provides an authentic and diverse view of the community in which she lives.

The first person narration establishes V.I. Warshawski's credentials as a practicing feminist whose voice stands firm against the domination of herself and other members of society who are relegated to a subordinate position by the "Ups." She encourages diversity and inclusiveness, and talks back to those who believe they deserve the power they wield. In talking back, she subverts the "logic of domination" that Warren cites as one

of the major issues women need to address. In this way, V.I. provides readers with an example of an ecofeminist in action.

In creating this character, Paretsky cites her interest in what effect powerful institutions such as the government, big business, and even religious organizations have on individuals. How the court system treats "white-collar" crime is another issue that Paretsky explores in her novels. When V.I. grapples with these problems her intent is to break down the system of oppression inherent in large organizations and provide justice for those who suffer from "domination-subordination relationships." For example, in Tunnel Vision, V.I.'s efforts on behalf of Emily Messenger reveal what lengths she will go to provide justice for the more vulnerable members of society. She acts as a voice for the powerless.

This new voice resides in a singular character, a complex woman who displays both strengths and weaknesses. The first person point of view offers insight into the feminist's psyche as she struggles to carve out her place in a patriarchal society. She resists the traditional stereotype that seeks to place women in the role of gentle peace-makers. In fact, some might consider V.I.'s demeanor

aggressive or even abrasive at times. She does, however, attempt to control a deep sense of anger that on occasion rises up and threatens to overwhelm her better judgment. In Fire Sale, during a confrontation with the Bysens, for instance, she characterizes her anger like a "blood infection" that sweeps through her system. The anger results from the continual questioning of her abilities, opinions, decisions, and life style choices, and keeps her on the defensive. She exhibits self-awareness, and experiences feelings of guilt and uncertainty about some of her actions. These characteristics result in a realistic protagonist that expresses vulnerability, yet acts with competence in her chosen field. At times V.I. Warshawski is difficult to like, but her faults humanize the character and make her more believable.

In addition to vulnerability, intimacy is another important aspect of the character that Paretsky chooses to explore. The evolving nature of friendship is an important concern that comes up in each of the novels. V.I.'s friendships reflect the inclusiveness and diversity that Warren believes is so important because she has close and caring friendships with both women and men that stretch across a broad spectrum of class and culture. Unlike

Chandler's character Phillip Marlowe who treasures his status as a loner, V.I. Warshawski believes that friends and the solace they offer in times of trouble add an extra dimension to her life. For instance, her friendship with physician Lottie Herschel provides not only companionship but also good council when she encounters problems with an investigation. A misunderstanding that causes a painful estrangement between the two heals, and the women become closer than ever. Gradually over time, their friendship moves from a mother-daughter relationship to one that places them on an equal footing. The relationship with Mr. Contreras, her downstairs neighbor, also changes from book to book. Although V.I. realizes that the elderly man has her best interests at heart, his constant interference and curiosity about her personal business tests her patience, and at times she dismisses him curtly. They gradually become close friends as V.I. works to contain her impatience and allow Mr. Contreras more access into her busy life. With these two characters and several others, Paretsky traces out the importance of relationships, and how difficult they are at times to sustain.

The value of friendship becomes important for an additional reason. Paretsky uses friendship as a method to

revise the hard-boiled genre. In the early years of the genre, close relationships were an anathema to the male P.I., particularly any close relationship that involves women. In the work of Dashiell Hammet, Raymond Chandler, and later Mickey Spillane, women are considered dangerous because they distract the male hero from his appointed task of capturing the killer and returning the world to order. In many instances, the male reaction to the female temptress or "femme fatale" results in violence and death. Often, the killer turns out to be a woman who attempts to seduce the P.I. during the investigation. A good example occurs in The Big Sleep, when Carmen Sternwood turns up naked in Philip Marlowe's bed. His reaction seems excessive when he banishes her from his apartment, and then "tore the bed to pieces savagely" (159). This scene exposes the intense distaste Marlow experiences in the presence of a predatory female. Paretsky, however, treats the relationship between women and men as the meeting of two equals, rather than the male as dominant and the woman as submissive or even evil. This revisionist tactic of creating equality between the sexes subverts the patriarchal behavior manifested toward women so prevalent in the early masculine versions of hard-boiled fiction.

Plus, it also provides a measure of justice for women who, in the past, have been portrayed as deserving the violence practiced against them.

Further, V.I., in her role as a private investigator, seeks to provide an equal distribution of justice for those who need her services, sometimes at great expense to her well being. At times she engages in actions that provoke violence, however, the violence is never gratuitous, and she always insightfully questions her intentions and motivations. For example, in Fire Sale when she corners two men in the South Side marsh and attempts to question them: "They were almost whining; I felt sickened by my own bullying - give a woman a gun and a big dog and she can do any thing a man can do to humiliate other people"(218). This scene demonstrates that she understands her authority results from holding a gun, and realizes that exercising power and dominance can create a humbling experience for others.

Through her character, Paretsky explores and comments on the dominant ideologies in our society. The power vested in patriarchy is just one ideological precept that she focuses on in several of the stories. In both Blood Shot and Tunnel Vision for example, she examines the hidden

crime of incest. In doing so, she reveals how parents or close relatives can use their power to dominate young children and abuse them. Thus, when the power and authority that resides in the "head of the household" becomes abusive it destroys the lives of all that it touches.

V.I. Warshawski is a dynamic character that Paretsky uses to investigate many current cultural, social, and political problems. Although V.I.'s sleuthing does not solve every problem it does expose certain cultural constructs that hamper women and offers them for examination. Also, revealing how power relationships operate in society helps subvert and change male dominated hard-boiled fiction genre. And, finally, linking societal problems with relevant environmental issues, for instance when the "Xerxes" chemical company damages the environment and pollutes the neighborhood, provides readers with many different insights about how our society operates.

In the process of revising hard-boiled detective fiction Paretsky creates a series character that grows and changes over time. Through her protagonist, she contributes a piece to the "quilt" that Warren envisions as an evolving ecofeminist philosophy. V.I. fits the criteria

Warren believes are important. She exists in the present, and her experiences reflect the current cultural, social, and political beliefs about the role of women in society. She is inclusive in her relationships, and represents one woman's attempt to use her voice to draw attention to, and thus alter the balance of power between women and men.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXAMINING THE LINK BETWEEN WOMEN AND NATURE IN BLOOD SHOT, TUNNEL VISION, AND FIRE SALE

Ecofeminism provides a new method to examine characters and relationships in Paretsky's novels; the ecofeminist lens is most illuminating when we focus on Paretsky's settings and the manner in which she uses the environment to critique patriarchal behavior. Primarily, she uses the settings in the narratives to link the actions of humankind to the degradation that occurs in the environment.

In literary analysis, examining the locale or environment of the characters serves as a way to discover meaning in a story. In addition, the location, the geographic, and the architectural features set the stage for the reader. Chicago and the prairie land that surround it are as important to Paretsky's work as the events she describes. Like every large American city, Chicago has a particular history. Well known for the steel mills, the meat packing industry and notorious gangsters such as Al Capone, the city and the surrounding prairie are home to Paretsky's character V.I. Warshawski. Also, just as

Chandler did, Paretsky incorporates the city and the urban environment into her narratives to increase verisimilitude in the stories. She goes several steps further than Chandler however, in juxtaposing the deterioration of the landscape with the financial machinations of the upper-class elite.

Situated on the banks of Lake Michigan, the city exists at the pleasure of this vast inland sea. The views from the lakeshore are unparalleled and filled with expensive real estate. But the marshy ground, and high water table subjects the sewers beneath the city to occasional flooding. In fact, an engineering accident at a bridge reconstruction project in 1992 sent river water into the tunnels. The flood caused extensive damage to the downtown district. Paretsky takes advantage of these historic and geographical features and weaves them into her narratives. In Tunnel Vision for example, the tunnels provide sanctuary for a homeless woman and her children fleeing from an abusive husband and father, while in both Blood Shot and Fire Sale the murder victims are left in areas filled with either toxic chemicals or trash that pollutes the environment.

In the opening pages of her fifth novel, Blood Shot, published as Toxic Shock in the United Kingdom, the graphic descriptions of the "stench" that hangs in the air from the "pungent mix of chemicals" spewing from the industrial smoke stacks that surround the South Side of the city offer evidence of a degraded environment. Paretsky, through her protagonist V.I. Warshawski, connects the exploitation of the landscape to a system that allows corrupt politicians, greedy industrialists, and vicious gangsters to thrive amidst urban decay. At times, the interactions between these groups can result in dysfunctional families struggling to survive.

A city of ethnic and environmental diversity, Chicago and the surrounding environs assume an important role in the narrative of this book. The images of "decaying bungalows, rusty cars," and the polluted water of the Calumet River are juxtaposed with the "expensive high rises" (1) that front beautiful Lake Shore Drive, and emphasize the deep economic divide between the rich and the working-class inhabitants of the city.

Cut off by the river, the immigrants in the "all-white neighborhood" of Chicago's East Side live "parochial, inbred lives," in "stubborn isolation, trying to recreate

the Eastern European villages of their grandparents" (30). The racial, cultural, and sexual bigotry that inscribes many of these isolated blue collar neighborhoods is central to Paretsky's theme that the working class serves as a base from which the unscrupulous prey upon the prejudices of a reactionary group. These ultra conservative, immigrant neighborhoods treasure old traditions and resent change. The men go out to work, and make all the family decisions, while the women stay home and care for the children. We see this, for example, when V.I. visits an old friend, who, as in the neighborhood custom lives with her parents until she marries and then after marriage "quit(s) her job to become a mother" (38). While these traditional values offer a sense of control and safety, they can also be a site of abuse, a place where the weaker members are sometimes taken advantage of by those that should protect them. V.I. finds evidence that supports this theory when she discovers instances of sexual abuse that jeopardizes the lives of certain members of the East Side community.

The discovery of a woman, a corporate officer of a chemical recycling company, in "Dead Stick Pond" provides a link between the patriarchal behavior of the East Side inhabitants and the degradation of the environment. Fed by

the Calumet River and located in a section of the city populated by the working class, the pond seems like a dystopian vision. Formerly the nesting grounds for migratory waterfowl, the water "was now so full of PCB's that little could survive there" (95). Since the passage of the "Clean Water Act," fish are found in the Calumet River, however the ones in the pond manifest "massive tumors and rotted fins" (116). Paretsky's description of the area reveals that, so far, reviving the pond has not been a high priority for the Calumet Industrial District.

The Industrial District plays a significant part in the transformation of the marshland surrounding the pond. The Army Corps of Engineers, at the behest of Chicago's industrial leaders, dredged the soil contaminated with industrial waste from Lake Calumet and covered the land more than a century ago. Eventually, corporations built factories on top of the former swamp. Now when V.I. visits the area she experiences a sensation of disorientation. She feels as if she had returned "to earth after a nuclear decimation" (47). The land around the lake seems lifeless, no growth that one could "recognize outside a microscope" (47). "No trees or grass or birds. Only the occasional feral dog, ribs protruding, eyes red with madness and

hunger" (48). Later, when thugs attack V.I. and dump her into the muddy water, she awakes to the odor of chemicals mixed with the deadly smell of putrefaction.

The surreal images of a watery waste-land surrounded by decaying factories and dying neighborhoods serve as a reminder that while industry provides jobs and economic prosperity, it can also destroy the environment.

Paradoxically, the availability of jobs versus the high costs of preventing pollution suggests that there are serious flaws in the system that supports this situation. The polluted landscape of "Dead Stick Pond" acts a metaphor for the general disintegration of life on the city's South Side. The blighted surroundings, filled with the "rank stench of putrefying grasses," (198) reveals the close connection between the death of one woman and the attempted murder of another to the abuse of the environment. Both the women and the pond are treated like property that can be used and discarded at will.

In an effort to discover the identity of Caroline Djiak's father, V.I. visits her friend's paternal grandparents. Evidence that women are often treated like property is seen in Paretsky's description of V.I.'s first encounter with the Djiak family. The ensuing conversation

offers an insightful view of two different facets of patriarchal behavior and provides a way to examine traditional gender roles. Mrs. Djiak acts as the subservient female and Mr. Djiak the dominant male. Initially, Mrs. Djiak behaves in a condescending manner when she greets V.I.: "I hear you're a detective now. Doesn't really seem like a woman's job, does it? Kind of like Caroline, working on community development [...] I don't know why you two girls couldn't get married, settle down and raise a family" (32). These comments not only reveal the Eastsider's stubborn opposition to different lifestyles, but also imply that women who choose careers instead of marriage and family are not behaving like "normal" females. Mrs. Djiak's demeanor changes to defensiveness when V.I. questions her about her daughter's pregnancy at age fifteen, and she refuses to name the father. Instead, she excuses his behavior with the cliché that "Men-have difficulty controlling themselves" and insists that that the young girl was the one at fault; "Louisa must have led him on. But she would never admit it"(33). This remark indicates that Mrs. Djiak stills subscribes to the historic fallacy that women, like nature, are wayward and untrustworthy. Her beliefs appear to

parallel the beliefs that primitive cultures held about nature, and reinforce the women/nature connection.

Mr. Djiak is even less forthcoming than his wife in providing information about his granddaughter's parentage. In fact, he reacts with rudeness that escalates into violence when V.I. presses him for answers. At first, he accuses her of being "too good for the old neighborhood" (34), because she left the South Side to attend the University. When V.I. makes a comment about Louisa's illness he counters with a self-serving speech, "We suffered for her for twenty-five years. Now it's her turn to suffer a little, huh?" (34). He calls his daughter a whore, and complains that she sullied his name when she continued to live in the community, instead of going to a home for unwed mothers. During his tirade, Djiak berates his wife for her failure to monitor Louisa's behavior. He tells her, "You couldn't control her. For twenty-five years the neighbors whispered behind my back, and now I have to be insulted in my own house [. . .]" (35). Mr. Djiak's attitude exposes the paradox of patriarchal behavior. He rules the household with an iron fist, yet accuses his wife of laxness in the care of their child. In addition, he worries about his standing in the

neighborhood. However, his refusal to take action and assume responsibility for family problems conflicts with his desire for power and authority.

Mr. Djiak's violent behavior, gives credence to Warren's premise that the "logic of domination," the "Up/Down" manner of thinking, operates as the primary mode of behavior in the Djiak household. Men are dominant and women need to behave accordingly. Further, Mrs. Djiak's strict attention to her domestic duties, which results in a pristine environment, but provides no protection for her daughter, contrasts sharply with V.I.'s comments about her own rather haphazard housekeeping skills, and offers further proof that traditional gender roles are an integral part of the Djiak relationship. In the end, the confrontation between the detective and the grandparents reinforces the idea that outward appearances are more important to the Djiaks than integrity.

A second meeting with the Djiaks takes place when V.I. discovers that Art Jurshak, Lousia's uncle, began molesting her when she was a small child, and fathered Caroline. Both the Djiaks continue to blame their daughter for the molestation. They insist that Art had a "weakness," that the girl was "evil-minded" and "led him on against his own

strength" (275). The Djiak's attitude lends credence to Warren's premise about the danger of "oppressive parent-child relationships." In this instance the parents have placed the burden of seduction on their daughter, rather on the adult male who molested her. In addition, Mrs. Djiak acquiesces to the belief that her young daughter, as a female, possesses a carnal nature which makes her a temptress, rather than an innocent victim.

In a fit of rage V.I. attacks Ed Djiak, and smashes her fist against his mouth. Calling the pair a "couple of sanctimonious righteous bastards," (275) she reminds them that her mother, Gabriella, whom they denigrated for her Jewish heritage, was the only woman in their Christian community to befriend their daughter. In this vignette Paretsky juxtaposes the actions of members of an organized religion; the Djiaks are Roman Catholic, and V.I.'s mother, a non-Christian. The scene suggests that organizations, whether they be families, religious, or corporate entities, that act in a patriarchal manner often misuse their power which in turn causes the weaker members to suffer.

The consequences of the misuse of power are evident at the "Xerxes" plant and "Dead Stick Pond." In the plant, poisonous chemicals cook in kettles suspended overhead like

some sort of witches' brew: "The pipes let out their intermittent belches of steam and the cauldrons bubbled ominously under the dull green safety lights" (322). Meanwhile, in the pond, deadly chemicals seep from the depths of the oily water and pollute the surrounding neighborhood. Just as the chemicals from the plant and the pond contaminate the environment, the corrupt actions of Art Jurshak and the Djiaks poison family relationships.

Although feminist hard-boiled detective fiction does not tie up all the loose ends neatly as was done in the 1930s and 40s, during the "Golden Age" of murder mysteries, V.I. informs the authorities about the insurance swindle, and the connection of Art Jurshak to the death of Nancy Cleghorn. The one bit of information she hesitates to disclose involves Caroline's parentage. She wonders if she should expose such an ugly secret. To tell seems "unreasonably cruel," (310) yet to keep silent places V.I. in a position of power over her young friend. The act of exposing the secret brings a measure of justice to Louisa's situation, however, because it reveals her parents' hypocritical behavior. In addition, disclosing the secret moves V.I. and Caroline's relationship to a different level. Instead of V.I. acting as mother to Caroline's

recalcitrant child, the two form a friendship as equal adult women. More importantly, in sharing her knowledge of Caroline's birth V.I. rejects the patriarchal attitude that women are emotionally fragile, and thus unable to handle serious information that impacts their lives.

Paretsky's fast-paced "whodunit" links family relationships, social issues, and ecological concerns to patriarchy. She constructs then exposes what Warren terms "oppressive conceptual frameworks," which create a system of "domination and subordination" (46). According to Warren, this kind of "value-hierarchical thinking" yields beliefs that justify the use of power by those in the dominant or "Up" position. This in turn permits the "Ups" to take advantage of those in the subordinate or "Down" position (47). The consequences of these oppressive behaviors are evident in the Djiak's mistreatment of their daughter, Art Jurshak's sexual abuse of his niece, Gustav Humboldt's denial of insurance benefits to employees made ill from chemical emissions, and finally industry's damage to the land in a quest for profit. The actions on the part of the male characters in the narrative supports Warren's theory that the "logic of domination falsely justifies the power and privilege of Ups over Downs" (48). Thus, the

domination and exploitation of nature becomes duplicated in the events that impact society.

"Dead Stick Pond" represents the epicenter for the exploitation of the environment and serves as a link to the exploitation that occurs in the city. In the distant past the pond thrived, filled with birds that used the pond as a stopping place during their migration periods. Now, however, the toxic marshland sits dead and empty. The degradation of the pond mirrors the degradation that happens in the community. Louisa's sexual abuse, the murder of Nancy Cleghorn, and the deathly illnesses of some of the Xerxes employees result from the toxic behavior of the dominant class. Child abuse, cheating for profit, and murder; these poisonous actions injure the most vulnerable residents, just as the toxins injure the wildlife in the contaminated pond.

The novel subtly adopts Warren's philosophy that the exposure of "isms," for example the poisonous fruits of sexism, can begin to deconstruct the domination of patriarchy, and allow for a more diverse point of view. Further, the events that Paretsky describes illustrate that the human and natural world are intertwined. The actions that damage the humanity are often replicated in nature.

The eighth novel in the series, Tunnel Vision, deals with the similar themes of exploitation that occur in society and the natural world. A murder, a financial scam, and a case of child abuse entangle V.I. in an investigation involving powerful executives in both banking and agribusiness. Illegal business practices, environmental concerns, and the issues women face as they age combine to create a complex narrative that further explores the effects of patriarchy on nature and on the less powerful members of society.

One of Warren's major arguments in constructing an ecofeminist philosophy is that "oppressive conceptual frameworks," which she believes are shaped by patriarchal behavior, have "functioned historically to maintain, perpetuate, and "'justify'" the dominations of women, other subordinated humans, and nonhuman nature" (46). She insists that these practices function in a manner that serves to validate the ill treatment of women and nature. Warren also asserts that the primary purpose of these "frameworks" is to advance the "practice of privilege" (47; emphasis in original) accorded to the "Ups" over the "Downs." In the end, these practices allow, "or maintain"

a system that imparts a sense of superiority to the "Ups" over those categorized as "Downs."

Tunnel Vision is about the abuse of power and privilege. Several of the men in the narrative believe that their superior status as males justify their actions. A sense of entitlement permeates the activities of these male characters. Each of the acts committed by the men in the group demonstrates how "oppressive conceptual frameworks" operate.

For example, Alec Gantner and his co-conspirators participate in schemes to defraud the government that involve banking, and community outreach programs for the homeless. In the process of concealing these illegal activities one of the members of the group murders Deirdre Messenger, a close friend of V.I.'s. Paradoxically, young Gantner's father, a member of government, exerts strong pressure on the detective, in an effort to curtail her investigation. One would expect that Senator Gantner would respect the law; instead, he endeavors to help his son avoid exposure. In addition, the abusive behavior of the husbands and fathers of the Messengers and Hawkings endanger the lives of their families. The men believe that their superior status as males excuse their actions. As a

result, their behavior denies the opportunity of choice to the "others" they dominate.

As in Blood Shot, the environment plays an important role in the novel. The derelict "Pulteney Building," home to V.I.'s office, takes the place of "Dead Stick Pond" as a metaphor for an environment polluted with unsavory profit making schemes. Situated in a potential redevelopment area the decaying building waits for the wrecking ball. Formerly an impressive structure, now, "Decades of grime obscured the bas-reliefs on the brass doors and filled in missing chips in the lobby's marble floor; great chunks of plaster were missing from the cornices in the upper floors [. . .]" (1). Like the contaminated pond that industry ignores because it is too expensive to restore, the building deteriorates and eventually will be razed so the empty land can be rebuilt, and produce more money for the owners. Thus, in this case profit rather than preservation becomes the engine that drives economic decisions.

The aging building signifies a problem that V.I. deals with throughout the novel, her approaching middle-age. Facing her fortieth birthday the detective begins to notice the first signs of decline. "A circle of small broken veins" (166) appears around her left knee, a precursor of

more to come. A former lover points out a few grey hairs, and her neighbor, Mr. Contreras, chastises her for a chaotic life style that he believes will lead her to an isolated and lonely old age.

The regrets that sometimes come with the thoughts of advancing age are revealed when V.I. wakes one morning to see a dead spider caught in a tangled web above her bed. It reminds her of her youthful aspirations; "the twin yearnings for glory and altruism - seemed as ghostly and futile as the bit of dirty silk the spider had released in her death spasm" (69). Contemplating the tattered web, she wonders whether the struggles to achieve her youthful goals have been futile. She begins to believe that her efforts are much like her attempts to keep the Pulteney building alive as long as possible: "enormous energy sunk into mending lives or causes that could never be made whole" (70). These introspective musings about her approaching middle-age reveal her concern about loss. The loss of power thought to be inherent in youthfulness, the belief that aging means a weakening of abilities and the possibility of economic losses because of waning energy are serious concerns that women face.

Ageing is an important social issue that concerns us all. Because of the focus on the culture of youth and vitality, both sexes are negatively impacted by the stereotypical attitude that ageing means the disintegration of abilities. Women, however, suffer more from these beliefs because women, like nature, are closely connected with the quality of fruitfulness or fertility. Thus, as a woman ages she is apt to experience additional discrimination, and more likely to be relegated to a second-class status. Paretsky's description of V.I.'s approaching middle age provides a unique opportunity to explore how one woman views aging. Like many who review the past in an effort to make sense of the future, V.I. questions her philosophy, the belief that she might achieve honor through caring for the welfare of others. Instead, she finds that her personal life has suffered as a result of her pursuit of justice for the less fortunate members of society.

Generally, hard-boiled fiction does not address the topic of aging. Chandler's protagonist Philip Marlowe for example, appears as a vigorous male in his late thirties or early forties, and never seems to age. In her writings about a philosophy of ecofeminism, Warren includes "ageism"

as one of the "isms of domination" that women must confront. That Paretsky introduces the topic of aging into a genre that celebrates the tough guy or gal mentality offers an argument to the critique that series characters are one dimensional and that the stories are "formulaic." She skillfully combines the concerns of an aging sleuth within the confines of a fast-paced murder mystery. In doing so she allows her protagonist to be vulnerable, yet still able to function in her dangerous job as a private investigator. In addition, the meditation on aging presents a powerful opportunity for readers to connect with this particular theme, and makes the character more realistic and believable.

Along with aging, environmental concerns are another important issue addressed in the narrative. Unlike women whose value seems to diminish with age, the value of nature increases as long as it produces a bountiful harvest. V.I.'s visit to the "Gant-Ag headquarters," situated among the corn fields outside the city, reveal a bucolic farmland setting. "Gant-Ag," a "modern agribusiness" that grows corn on huge parcels of land "kept going with tons of pesticides, herbicides, and diesel fuel," (187) belongs to the Gantner family. Alec Gantner, son of an Illinois

senator, contributes to the family's agribusiness through the promotion of a corn based fuel, "gasohol" (187).

Paretsky's description of the family business, which fills the land with contaminants in an effort to produce more corn, reveals that for the Gantners, like the owners of the Pulteney building, the land functions solely as a means to obtain power and profit.

Another way Paresky uses the setting to illustrate the misuse of power occurs when the barrier that holds back the river breaks and water pours into the city sewers. As water from the river begins to flood the tunnels beneath the Loop, V.I. enlists her friend Mr. Contreras to help in rescuing a homeless woman and her children before they are swept away. Much to their surprise, when the rescue team locates the family they find the murder victim's three children with them.

Warren's metaphor of the "Ups" versus the "Downs" becomes painfully clear during the rescue. Caught in an oppressive system of abuse, and powerless to fight back, the two families hide from their abusers in the only place they feel safe, the dark tunnels beneath the city. Even when their rescuers insist they must leave because of the rising water they resist. The families serve as another

example of the pattern of behavior that Warren terms "domination-subordination." Victims of this pattern are subject to what she calls the "logic of domination." This occurs when those in the "Up" position exert so much pressure on the "Downs" that they become convinced that their subordinate position cannot be changed. Ironically, because the families feel so threatened by their male parent, they prefer to live in the vermin infested environment of the tunnels, rather than in their own homes.

The families have much in common, in that they are being oppressed by the male members of their household; they are dissimilar in another respect, however. The Hawkings are among the lower-class poor while the Messengers are upper-class, and comfortably well off. Yet some members in both groups experience incest and domestic abuse. Paretsky juxtaposes these differences in social class in an effort to show that this sort of abuse has no boundaries. It occurs, even in the "best" of families. When Paretsky introduces into her contemporary mysteries instances of child or spousal abuse, she makes them an integral part of the narratives, thus revealing that dysfunctional families exist in all strata of wealth, class, and culture, but at times are quietly ignored.

The behavior of these families bear out Warren's theory that the "logic of domination" functions as a process in which certain members of society, usually women, children, and people of color, are categorized as inferior. In essence the subordinate position is a social construction created by those in the "Up" position. Warren does not view the social construction of inferiority as "consciously, knowingly, or even intentionally maintained" (48). She does however, insist that the practice of judging those that are "different," or as lower in status creates a second class segment of society. Warren argues that "the logic of domination" creates a structure in which "differences" are perceived by those in power, the "Ups," not simply as a sign of diversity, but rather as a sign of "inferiority." For example, traditionally higher status resides in the "rational, white male." In contrast, the categories of "female, black, emotional" (46) are considered lower in status. Further, because historically women have been so closely linked to nature, Warren extends this premise to the environment as well. As a result, nature becomes part of the subordinate group.

V.I.'s intent is to provide protection and an opportunity for choice for the women and children that have

been held in a subordinate position. When the Gantners manipulate the environment through the use of "pesticides, herbicides, and diesel fuel" in the effort to produce more corn, make more money, and achieve more power they abuse the land. Consequently, nature is kept in the "Down" position, and relies on the good will of others for protection. Therefore, the "domination/subordination" paradigm, evident in the treatment of the women and children in the narrative mirrors the treatment of nature as well.

Paretsky's most current book Fire Sale, published in 2005, features V.I.'s return to her childhood home, on Chicago's South Side. Like the other texts, Paretsky uses the setting to illustrate the changes that have taken place in V.I.'s former neighborhood. Along with the environment, demographic and economic problems have changed what was once a blue-collar enclave into an area of poverty and decline.

The changing demographics of the South Side of Chicago are evidenced in the ethnicity of the new arrivals. The community, formerly populated by Eastern European immigrants and their families, has become an area populated predominately by Hispanic families caught in the throes of

a severe economic down turn. The factories and mills that covered the buildings with soot and grime, but gave blue collar workers opportunities for employment, have disappeared. Small businesses struggling to survive, and the "By-Smart" distribution center which offers minimum wage jobs and no benefits are just the few places left that offer work.

The "By-Smart" company, owned by the Bysen family, caters to the economy of the new millennium, consumerism. A visit to the company warehouse finds V.I. overwhelmed with size of the building and the vast amount of goods it contains:

Shelves stacked with every imaginable product stretched as far as I could see. Directly in front of me dangled brooms, hundreds of them, push brooms, straw brooms, brooms with plastic handles, with wood handles, brooms that swiveled. Next to them were thousands of shovels, ready for every Chicagoan who wanted to clear their walks in the winter ahead. (28)

The description of the building and its contents reveal the changes that have gripped the city and the country in general. The lure of purchasing low cost items, that are

soon replaced, and eventually discarded as trash to litter the landscape, supplants industry as the source of environmental pollution. In particular, Chicago's South Side, one of the poorest areas in the city, displays the results of the new economy as represented by the presence of the "By-Smart" company.

In the narrative, the "Ups" (the Bysens) are not directly responsible for the erosion of nature as in Blood Shot and Tunnel Vision. Instead, Paresky's description of the marshland and the trash dump filled with refuse implicates everyday consumers in complicity with the growth of areas filled with litter. To increase profits, companies cater to the obsessive desires of consumers to purchase low cost goods whose remains often end up in landfills, along the highways, and many other areas. These practices are, in a large part, responsible for environmental disorder.

V.I.'s trip to the "By-Smart" corporate offices in an effort to enlist support for the South Side high school reveals how some businesses relate to members of the community they serve. The Bysen family, and the elder Mr. Bysen in particular, believe extending "charity" to the South Side youth encourages laziness, and the expectation

of further "handouts." A second reason for the refusal of help concerns how the profits on the goods the company sells should be distributed. The Bysen family stock holders expect remuneration from their stock holdings, and the company believes that their first responsibility is to them. Further, the family thinks that there may be a movement afoot, led by a South Side Hispanic minister, to unionize the company's workers. The Bysen's are against unionizing their labor force because this would mean they would need to raise wages and provide benefits. The result could mean less profit for the company.

In this segment, Paretsky combines the economic conundrum of profits versus wages into a thought provoking argument pitting the economic problems that blue collar workers experience, against a corporate business philosophy that says the low wages are a necessary part of the business model. Also, the possibility of interference in the company's business practices, which might affect profits, makes Mr. Bysen uninterested in offering monetary support to the South Siders. Billy Bysen, however, the nineteen year old grandson active in an evangelical Christian community outreach program on the South Side,

argues for assistance from "By-Smart" because he believes supporting the school is a worthy endeavor.

The two camps, V.I. and Billy on one side, and the rest of the Bysen family on the other, reach an impasse in the argument about who deserves help. Mr. Bysen believes that the young women should stop "littering the South Side with a bunch of babies they can't feed," (96) while Billy and V.I. view the basketball program as an incentive for the girls to stay in school. Mr. Bysen also complains that South Siders have taken advantage of Billy's naiveté. He chastises his grandson and tells him, "These people aren't like us, they don't believe in hard work the way we do," and insists that if the company did not employ them "they'd be loafing around on welfare, or gambling" (98). Warren's theory about the patriarchal attitude of the "Ups" is amply demonstrated here in Mr. Bysen's biased attitude toward those he considers of lesser status. Ironically, his words belie the beliefs he espouses as a Christian. Rather than extend help to members of the community who barely survive on poverty wages, Bysen denigrates them as lazy opportunists.

V.I. becomes more involved in the economic problems of South Chicago's inhabitants when she reluctantly agrees to

investigate some instances of sabotage at a flag making business. During the investigation, the plant catches fire with the owner inside. This event, along with the disappearance of Billy Bysen and Josie Dorrado pulls V.I. more deeply into the Bysen's business dealings and their economic impact on the community.

Frank Zamar, the owner of the plant, signed a contract with "By-Smart" to produce a line of sheets and towels decorated with the American flag. In an aside V.I. muses, "Sleep at night on Old Glory and in the morning dry your bottom with the flag. In its way, it seemed as outrageous as burning, but what did I know?"(248). Paretsky uses these ironic observations to make a point about how symbols, in this case a symbol which stands for our nation, are often subverted for profit.

The fate of these low-cost profit making items is amply demonstrated when V.I. and Mr. Contreras search the South Side Marsh in an effort to find Josie Dorrado. Led by their dog Mitch, the trip reads like a trek through one of the poorest areas of a third world country. As they stumble across a half dead drug addict sleeping off his fix in the long grasses, a family of rats slipping into the nearby river, and the muddy ground covered with the filthy

detritus discarded from the Skyway above (rusty cans, bottles, paper goods) the hike resembles some sort of surreal obstacle course. Finally V.I. and Mitch end their search at the edge of the city dump where giant earth movers compress "cans, plastic bags, the white lips of six-pack holders, raggedy clothes, car seats" (226) and other discarded junk from the city's inhabitants into a giant landfill. But instead of Josie, they find the body of Bron Czernin a "By-Right" truck driver, and a badly injured Marcena Love, a British journalist. Like the ugly vision of "Dead Stick Pond" filled with toxic waste, the marsh and the dump site present an unsightly landscape covered with trash, and rotting garbage. On this occasion, however, instead of contamination from the factories polluting the land and water, the castoffs from a consumer society degrade the environment.

Paretsky's description of the marsh and the landfill touch on one of the many important issues ecofeminism addresses. Although environmental degradation can occur in pristine areas, it often happens in the poorest sections of cities, or in outlying regions. Warren, for instance, quotes an article published in the Minneapolis Star/Tribune stating that trash companies sometimes use Indian

reservations as garbage dumps: "'On self-governing Indian lands, where tribal councils are the authority, waste companies can avoid tough state laws and the prying eyes of county and local governments.'" (15). Because they are sovereign nations, the Indians may choose to contract with these businesses, however, they often receive very little remuneration for the misuse of the land. In cities, garbage dumps and toxic waste sites are often found situated in blighted areas where residents have little power or money to fight city authorities and protect the land. Further, according to Warren, a serious problem with the location of these sites is that the low income and minority families are adversely impacted by the toxins that seep from discarded waste products. Although, Paretsky does not directly address this particular problem in the narrative, the issues of the placement of a trash dump in an ethnic neighborhood where the poor reside, does fit Warren's premise that "Up-Down systems" privilege those who hold the most power. Thus, trash dumps are not found in affluent areas.

The "Up-Down systems" that privilege the powerful are evident in the actions of the Bysens. The discovery that his aunt and his father committed arson and murder in an

effort to increase company profits alienates Billy Bysen from his family. He tells V.I. that while he loves them he can not understand their attitudes and motivations:

It's funny, they have such a big vision for the company, how to make it an international giant, but the only people they recognize as-as human-are themselves. They can't see that Josie is a person, and her family, and all the people who work in South Chicago. If someone wasn't born a Bysen, they don't count. If they are Bysen's, it doesn't matter what they do, because they're part of the family. Like Grandma, she is truly against abortion in every way, she gives tons of money to antiabortion groups, but when Candy, when my sister got pregnant, Grandma whisked her off to a clinic-they were mad at Candy, but Grandma got her an abortion that they'd never let Josie have [. . .]. (390)

Billy's insightful comment about the hypocritical attitudes his family assumes is unusual. Ordinarily, one would expect that Billy would remain true to the concept of patriarchy, and continue acting and believing in the "institutional power and privilege" he receives as a white

male and a member of the Bysen family. Billy, however, represents a new trend in feminist fiction. Paretsky creates a male character that recognizes that women and "others" deserve equal rights and opportunities. That he does not consider himself a member of the "Ups," but has a more egalitarian approach to society, is demonstrated when he moves to Chicago's South Side to assist the neighborhood youth develop skills that will help them in the job market. The appearance of Billy, as a young male who questions his family's beliefs, signifies that Paretsky senses a change in the culture of patriarchy. This change offers the perception that the cultural mores that have placed men in the position of power and women, and nature, subservient to the male may be weakening.

In Blood Shot, Tunnel Vision, and Fire Sale, the author continues to critique social problems and their impact on the environment. She also touches upon the cultural and class differences that cause exploitation of those who live in low income areas. These issues, and the added "ism" of consumerism underscore Warren's argument that the unfair treatment of women, children and "others" is tightly linked to abuses that occur in the natural world.

In the analysis it seems clear that the three questions posed at the end of Chapter Two are answered. How the exploitation of the environment connects with the exploitation of society is revealed in all three narratives. Industry's dumping of hazardous waste in Blood Shot, pollutes "Dead Stick Pond" and the surrounding waterways. In the meantime, toxic emissions from factory smoke stacks pollute the air. In Tunnel Vision the formerly pristine prairie land, now covered with rows of corn, is filled with toxic materials that leach into the soil. As these contaminants make their way into the environment they impact the health of human life, and wildlife as well. Finally, in Fire Sale the location of the garbage dump in the South West section of the city, an area of high unemployment and poverty, sends the message to the residents that they somehow deserve their trash filled environment.

How the dominant members of society exploit the weaker members is demonstrated in the abusive treatment of Louisa Djiak by her parents and uncle. In addition, the children of the Hawking and Messenger families suffered similar mistreatment by their male parent. Instead of

protecting their children these family members prey on their weakness and innocence.

How the exploitation of the environment impacts society becomes evident in the actions of the dominant male characters in the stories. For instance, Gustav Humboldt, in Blood Shot is complicit in the death of his employees when he refuses to admit the chemicals the company manufactured were toxic. Not only do his workers become ill and die, but in the process their families lose their livelihood because Humboldt denies insurance benefits to the survivors. Consequently, not only is the environment polluted with deadly chemicals, but the families also suffered economically because of lost wages. Instead of benefiting from the economic stability they deserve, these families become part of an underclass that struggles to survive. This situation in turn impacts society as pockets of poverty become a nexus for crime. Thus, when corporations cheat their employees in an effort to reap more profits, the results are the disintegration of the moral fabric of society.

The analysis of the three books from the perspective of ecofeminism also reveals the "domination-subordination" paradigms that Warren believes are embedded in our

patriarchal society. Modifying or altering powerful belief systems takes time, however. As Paretsky says in a televised interview, her books do not "change or affect entrenched powerful institutions" (Walton and Jones 211), but they do expose the reader to different ways of thinking about the relationship between social and environmental issues.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

In Blood Shot, Tunnel Vision, and Fire Sale, Sara Paretsky demonstrates Barry Commoner's premise that "every thing is connected to everything else." Max Loewenthal, a character in Blood Shot, echoes this quote when he says to V.I., "Nothing is without connection in our lives" (215). Thus, Paretsky follows Warren's premise that "ecofeminism is about interconnections among all systems of unjustified human domination" (2; emphasis in original) when she skillfully links the behavior of characters that dominate the weaker members in society to the degradation of nature. The importance of these connections is further revealed as Carolyn Merchant and Karen J. Warren construct their theory of ecofeminism based on the link between humanity and nature.

Women and nature became connected in the minds of the ancients because they believed that the two shared a common nature. This misconception has caused both women and nature to be treated in a cruel and abusive manner. The thinking that links women to nature results from what Warren terms the construction of "conceptual frameworks"

based on patriarchy. These socially constructed frameworks strengthened over time, and this in turn led to what Warren terms the "logic of domination" (46). Thus, women became subordinate to men and nature has been ensnared in this process of "logical" thinking as well.

Transforming or changing the concept of nature as a "nurturing mother" has not been easy. The image of "Mother Nature" as kind and benevolent, however at times out of control and destructive, still appears when viewers tune into the television weather channel for weather reports. Carolyn Merchant posits that the imagery that identifies nature with the feminine did for a time protect the earth from exploitation and damage. Gradually, however, as society became more mechanized the concept of nature as something alive, a nurturing, and living organism, changed. Consequently, nature although still connected to the feminine, became something to use and exploit.

Science and mechanization changed society's perception of nature. But the philosophy of rationality or the power of rational thinking also contributed to nature's demise. Warren agrees with Val Plumwood, that the Greek tradition that "defines rationality as the hallmark of humanness and elevates humans over nonhuman animals and nature" (23) has

produced a method of thought that subordinates nature and in turn, women as well. The power of rational thinking created other dualities besides human versus nature. Mind/body, culture/nature, reason/emotion are just a few of the dualities that Warren cites as concepts that relegated nature and women to a second-class category. Both Warren and Plumwood argue that these dualities are not only "human-centered (or anthropocentric) but also male-centered (or androcentric)" as well (23). Although, identifying the precepts that connect women and nature under an "androcentric" system that fosters a patriarchal attitude toward women and nature is necessary, discovering how to change or subvert the system is more important. One way to change the connection between women and nature and extend that connection to include all of humanity is to analyze literature from the postmodern perspective of ecofeminism.

Analyzing literature to discover how ecofeminism can forge connections between humanity and nature is a complex task. In particular, analyzing feminist hard-boiled detective fiction in an effort to reveal an ecofeminist philosophy seems difficult, because an author such as Sara Paretsky and her books are not nature centered or in the pastoral genre, but instead fast paced murder mysteries.

She does, however, focus on what literary critic Raman Selden terms "specific cultural-political needs," and additionally the connections she forges between the personal and political allows the author to explore and comment on many different topics in her narratives. It is through that exploration that she exposes the reader to the connection between humanity and the natural world and thus moves the genre in a new direction.

Beginning in the early 1980s, Sara Paretsky became one of the first feminist authors to successfully subvert, and revise the male versions of hard-boiled detective fiction. Initially, feminist critics were adamant that the hard-boiled genre was male biased and sexist. But Paretsky and other female authors revised the genre. Now the hard-boiled genre reflects the feminist perspective without compromising feminist principles. Feminist authors created families, friends, and a life style that observes and comments on the world from a woman's point of view. No courageous loners in their narratives. Paretsky, however, went a step further and recognized the connection between feminism and nature, and drew attention to this connection in several of her novels.

As Paretsky explores the connections between social and political issues and nature, she also exposes the "oppressive conceptual frameworks" that hinder women from achieving their full potential. In general, the men in the narratives assume the privilege of power through "the logic of domination," while women, children and nature bear the brunt of their actions. Paretsky's protagonist challenges the belief that men deserve to dominate. In disturbing this "logic," V.I. Warshawski creates opportunities for those oppressed by the patriarchal system to gain strength against those who seek to oppress them.

The analysis of Blood Shot, Tunnel Vision, and Fire Sale demonstrates how the dominant members of society use their power to exploit the weaker members, and how that exploitation impacts society. Warren cites the "isms of domination," sexism, ageism, racism, and Paretsky presents a postmodern addition, consumerism that keeps women and "others" from achieving their full potential. These "isms" are evident in one respect or another in the narratives. Their exploration reveals how Sara Paretsky connects the abuse that stems from the power of patriarchy to the abuse of nature. There is one "ism" however, that Warren believes counteracts all the others, and that is feminism.

Warren views this most important "ism," as one of "liberation" (43). Linked with ecology, feminism becomes ecofeminism, and Paretsky uses this "ism" to great advantage in describing how humans and nature are interconnected. In revealing this connection, Paretsky exposes her readers to new ways of thinking about the relationship between humankind and the natural world. If indeed Gretchen Legler is correct in her belief that "literature influences human behavior," then the exposure to new ways of viewing society and its connection to nature should result in actions that protect and preserve our environment and ourselves.

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