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Zásady pro vypracování

Závěrečná diplomová práce se bude věnovat populárnímu žánru detektivní prózy, v němž se soustředí především na genderové inovace žánru, konkrétně na postavy žen policistek a vyšetřovatelek. V úvodu práce diplomantka definuje žánr detektivní prózy, jeho poddruh tzv. police procedural, a stručně nastíní jeho historii. Představí zvolené autorky a zařadí je do tohoto literárního kontextu. Dále osvětlí zvolený teoretický rámec práce – tj. feministickou teorii a kritiku. Jádrem práce pak bude analýza vybraných detektivních románů z hlediska toho, jak zachycují velmi specifická prostředí (komunita Amišů, rezervace Navajů), jak pracují s tradičními postupy detektivního žánru a hlavně jak do něj zasazují ženské postavy vyšetřovatelek. K analýzám studentka využije přístup feministické kritiky a své závěry bude vhodně dokládat ukázkami z primárních textů. Své analýzy shrme a vysloví obecnější závěr o způsobu, jakým zvolené autorky modernizují detektivní žánr.

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ANNOTATION

This diploma thesis concentrates on female cops as main characters in mystery fiction by American authors Linda Castillo and Anne Hillerman. Through the lens of feminist literary criticism, the analysis of four chosen novels explores the forms of female empowerment in the stereotypically male-dominated environment of the police force. Since both authors use distinctive environments of the Amish society and the Navajo nation, respectively, the analysis focuses on the role the environment plays in either support or subversion of stereotypical gender roles. The gender dynamics within the private and professional domains between the main male and female characters is explored together with the role of sexuality and violence.

KEY WORDS

Crime fiction, police procedural, feminist criticism, gender roles, female cops, Linda Castillo, Anne Hillerman

NÁZEV PRÁCE

Policistky ve fikci Lindy Castillo a Anne Hillerman

ANOTACE

Tato diplomová práce se soustředí na hlavní postavy žen policistek v mysteriózní fikci amerických autorek Lindy Castillo a Anne Hillerman. Analýza čtyř vybraných románů zkoumá optikou feministické literární kritiky způsoby posilování postavení žen v prostředí policejních složek, které je stereotypně dominované muži. Vzhledem k tomu, že obě autorky využívají charakteristická prostředí Amišské společnosti, respektive národa Navajo, zaměřuje se analýza na roli, kterou prostředí hraje v posílení, či v rozvracení stereotypních genderových rolí. Genderová dynamika v soukromé a profesní oblasti mezi hlavními mužskými a ženskými postavami je zkoumána spolu s rolí sexuality a násilí.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Detektivní román, policejní procedurál, feministická kritika, genderové role, ženy policistky, Linda Castillo, Anne Hillerman

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Introduction

The police force together with the army and the navy is one of the typically male-dominated spheres. Although women started entering law enforcement in minor positions as early as 1870s, it was not until 1910 that the first sworn policewoman was appointed by the Los Angeles Police Department¹. Although the number of policewomen continued to rise ever since 1910, their duties were by no means equal with their male counterparts, and their roles within the police force could be equated with those of a social worker or a secretary. Hand in hand with the second wave of feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s, women continued the effort to assert themselves both in real life and fiction. Moreover, since the mid-1970s, we can see a remarkable increase in all the mentioned domains, the female officers, female crime fiction writers, and female investigative protagonists.² This paper focuses on both the fictional female characters and the equally important creators of them, the female authors. Bearing the overall feminist background in mind, the relation between real-life female struggles and their literary representation in fiction in contemporary US will be central to this thesis.

This thesis examines novels by two contemporary American female crime fiction authors, Anne Hilleman and Linda Castillo. Both of these crime fiction writers use the police force as their main topic and center their narratives around female detectives. Therefore, this paper focuses on female investigators as the main characters within law enforcement. The chosen novels are analyzed from the point of view of feminist literary criticism, focusing on the main characters, the female investigators. Both Castillo and Hillerman bring something new to the crime-fiction genre. That is why they were both chosen intentionally for this analysis, as they both set their novels in very distinctive environments. Compared to the authors of hard-boiled crime novels, which typically take place in urban areas, both Hillerman and Castillo used rather unique settings for their novels, the Navajo reservation, and the Amish society. The relations of those environments to the authors and the main characters are discussed in more detail. Furthermore, the chosen novels are analyzed with those atypical settings in mind.

¹ Venessa Garcia, "'Difference' in the Police Department," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 19, no. 3 (August 1, 2003): 330–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986203254530>.

² Lee Horsley, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 243.

The thesis sets as the main objective of the research the analysis of female police officers in chosen novels by Linda Castillo and Anne Hillerman from the perspective of feminist literary criticism. The thesis is divided into two main parts, the theoretical part and the practical part. The first part offers discussion and definition of crucial theoretical terms such as crime fiction, detective fiction, police procedural, and feminist literary criticism. In addition, brief descriptions of the authors, their literary background, and the distinctive environments used in their novels are included. The practical part of the thesis is a result of close reading of the chosen novels and presents their thorough analysis, focusing on the aforementioned issues. As there are a great number of points of view while performing the analysis, a demonstrative set of research questions follows:

- 1) How do the authors address the gender role issue?
- 2) Do the authors resort to gender stereotypes? To what extent?
- 3) How are the main characters defined by the distinctive environment?
- 4) How do authors modernize the genre or crime fiction?
- 5) Does the approach of Hillerman and Castillo differ? How?

1. Crime fiction as a genre

1.1. History and Definition

As is no case with many genres, the consensus about the definition of crime fiction. The crime fiction genre has been given many different names throughout history and many attempts have been made to describe and classify it.³ If we tried to define the genre of crime fiction as simply fiction about crime, we would get an incomplete and insufficient definition because, as Rzepka says, this tautological description “raises a host of problems.”⁴ Were we to follow this simplistic claim, stories of Oedipus, Medea or novels such as *The Tess of the Urbervilles* or *The Monk* would have to be classified as crime fiction simply because they contain a crime being committed.⁵

³ John Scaggs, *Crime Fiction* (London, New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

⁴ Charles Rzepka, “Introduction: What Is Crime Fiction?,” in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles Rzepka, and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 1.

⁵ Charles Rzepka, “Introduction”, 1.

Although the concept of crime “has always been central to the genre,”⁶ only the occurrence of the crime itself is not sufficient for the literary work to be assigned the category of crime fiction. Rzepka notes that the act of crime itself, however illegal it is, does not make up for crime fiction, but the degree to which its illegality features in the plot does.⁷ Scaggs adds to this and refers to Tzevan Todorov, a French-Bulgarian philosopher and structuralist, who claims that there are two essential parts of the crime fiction story: the story of the crime and the story of its investigation.⁸ Milda Danyté agrees and claims that crime fiction is “any story that has a crime and its solution as a central feature of its plot.”⁹ Additionally, Scaggs also states that unlike crime, the investigative process has not always been the central focus of the genre, and that is why the majority of authors of critical studies opt to use the term ‘crime fiction’.¹⁰ This view is also supported by Knight, who claims the centrality of crime to the genre, thus giving it the name.¹¹

The first origins of crime fiction are surrounded by ambiguity. Bertens and D’haen claim that it is possible to trace the first works of crime fiction all the way back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in period pamphlets and broadsheets.¹² However, this view is valid only as long as we view crime fiction as simply a fiction about crime. Danyté proposes a more specific identification of the beginnings of the genre and says that “literary specialists reserve the term crime fiction for a more recent genre that developed in the late 19th century, in which there is more mystery about the crime that has taken place”¹³ In this sense, we are talking about our modern understanding of the genre. However, the beginnings reach more into the past, and it is necessary to discuss various predecessors that contributed to the formation of crime fiction as we know it today. Even though the seventeenth century pamphlets do not meet the modern requirements to be considered crime fiction today, they are one of the early predecessors of crime fiction. And according to Moudrov, who refers to American crime fiction specifically,

⁶ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 1.

⁷ Charles Rzepka, “Introduction”, 1.

⁸ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 2.

⁹ Milda Danyté, *Introduction to the Analysis of Crime Fiction: A User-friendly Guide* (Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2011), 5, <https://portalcris.vdu.lt/server/api/core/bitstreams/fb0b8842-0c04-4837-a63d-eed4e1b94aaa/content>.

¹⁰ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 1.

¹¹ Stephen Knight, *Crime fiction Since 1800: Detection, Death, Diversity*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 13.

¹² Hans Bertens and T. D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001), 1.

¹³ Danyté, “Introduction to the Analysis”, 5.

seventeenth-century Puritan ministers publishing monitory execution pamphlets prepared the ground for crime literature.¹⁴

The Newgate Calendar, an array of literary texts, is considered one of the building blocks of crime writing. The name was derived from Newgate Prison in London and *The Newgate Calendars* themselves were extensive anthologies comprised of individual *Accounts* of “[...] the lives, crimes, confessions, and executions of the criminals [...]”,¹⁵ written by Ordinaries of the prison. On the example of *The Newgate Calendar*, we can see that even though these accounts were highly factual and moralistic, they were already a profound source of entertainment to both the lower and higher social classes.¹⁶ Their popularity supports a claim about the fascination factor of crime writing. According to Worthington, it was “a combination of the often-exciting life of the criminal and the voyeuristic pleasures of reading about sensational crime and punishment, that sold the criminal biographies to the public.”¹⁷ The popularity of crime fiction also brings us to its paradoxicality. As P.D. James points out that we read those narratives mainly for relaxation and as a matter of escape and rest from our everyday lives even though these narratives at their core feature heinous crimes, usually a murder.¹⁸

Daniel Defoe’s *The True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild* (1725) is considered one of the prototypes of crime fiction.¹⁹ As one of the “most significant precursors of the detective novel,” Scaggs then identifies William Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* (1794). Worthington elaborates on that by claiming that it is, in fact, the first time that “a narrative retrospectively recognizable as crime fiction, and even featuring a detective figure, [...] appears.”²⁰ Even though Worthington considers *Caleb Williams* as featuring a detective figure for the first time, Dorothy L. Sayers disagrees. According to her, “the detective story had to wait for its full development for the establishment of an effective police organization in the Anglo-Saxon countries.”²¹ Indeed, together with the establishment of the first official police

¹⁴ Alexander Moudrov, “Early American Crime Fiction: Origins to Urban Gothic,” in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles Rzepka, and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 129.

¹⁵ Heather Worthington, “From *The Newgate Calendar* to Sherlock Holmes,” in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles Rzepka, and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 14.

¹⁶ Worthington, “From *The Newgate Calendar*,” 14-15.

¹⁷ Worthington, “From *The Newgate Calendar*,” 14-15.

¹⁸ P.D. James, *Murder and Mystery: The Craft of the Detective Story* (Stockholm: Svenska förläggarefören, 1997), 4.

¹⁹ Worthington, “From *The Newgate Calendar*,” 16.

²⁰ Worthington, “From *The Newgate Calendar*,” 16.

²¹ Dorothy L. Sayers, “Introduction to the Omnibus of Crime,” in *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Howard Haycraft (New York: Carroll&Graf, 1992), 75.

forces, we can see the first detective stories being published. Edgar Allan Poe, widely recognized as ‘the father of detective fiction,’ is given credit for writing the very first detective story in which a single individual is responsible for solving seemingly unsolvable crime. More importantly, according to Scaggs, Poe “set the template for the crime fiction of the next century.”²² (See more in chapter 2.2. Detective Fiction)

To sum up the definition of crime fiction, in the words of Lucy Sussex, the literary work that fits the classic definition of crime writing is “marked by the subject matter of crime and its solution; structured around the gradual revelation of criminous information (the mystery) of which a detective fiction is a refinement; focussed on the detective as ratiocinator of the narrative.”²³ In other words, there is the central element of crime and its investigation, the whole story revolves around a central mystery and focuses mainly on the detective, who uses logic to solve the crime. In this way, Worthington offers a somewhat more concise definition and states that “crime fiction as a genre requires a crime, a criminal, and a victim, plus (usually) a detective and (often) the police.”²⁴ Milda Danyté in her *Introduction to the Analysis of Crime Fiction: A User-friendly Guide* then proposes a summarizing list of features characteristic of crime fiction for the past one hundred years.

- A crime, most often murder, is committed early in the narrative.
- There are a variety of suspects with different motives.
- A central character formally or informally acts as the detective.
- The detective collects evidence about the crime and its victim.
- Usually the detective interviews the suspects, as well as witnesses.
- The detective solves the mystery and indicates the real criminal.
- Usually, this criminal is now arrested or otherwise punished.²⁵

The list of typical features shows the importance of detection and investigation. Although the early ancestors of crime narratives always featured a crime, it cannot be said about detection and investigation, as those concepts were not rooted in society just yet. With modern crime writings, the switch of focus from the criminal to the investigator and the investigative process can be noticed.

²² Scaggs, *crime Fiction*, 19.

²³ Sussex, “*Women Writers and Detectives*,” 6.

²⁴ Worthington, “From *The Newgate Calendar*,” 17.

²⁵ Danyté, *Introduction to the Analysis*, 5.

1.2. Detective Fiction

“If the term ‘crime fiction’ is a bit vague, ‘detective fiction’ is downright slippery,”²⁶ so Rzepka introduces the genre in question. As the terms crime fiction and detective fiction are closely related, their distinction is often unclear, and some authors do not even distinguish between the two. Crime fiction is, however, often considered to be the umbrella term for the genre with detective fiction as one of its numerous subgenres. Rzepka still identifies significant gaps in this distinction and refers to John Cawelti, who distinguished three main categories of ‘archetypes’ in popular literature, classifying any literary genre as one of the three following archetypes, Adventure, Romance and Mystery. He continues saying that “while literary detection clearly belongs to the Mystery archetype, it is difficult to place most crime stories there because so few of them involve any real mystery,” and according to him, most crime fiction actually belongs to the Adventure archetype.²⁷

Nonetheless, detective fiction clearly belongs to the Cawelti’s Mystery archetype. Therefore, it is inseparable from the central element of mystery, and the names ‘Mystery fiction’ and ‘Detective fiction’ are used interchangeably to denote the genre. The classic detective story dates to the turn of the nineteenth century, with Edgar Allan Poe being referred to as the ‘father of the detective story’. Different critics generally do not agree on which of Poe’s stories should be acknowledged as marking the birth of the detective story, and the numbers vary between three and five. Only three of those stories feature “his famous detective Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin.”²⁸ Those stories are ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ (1841), ‘The Mystery of Marie Rogêt’ (1842-3) and ‘The Purloined Letter’ (1845). Poe originally named this collection of stories ‘tales of ratiocination’, therefore, stressing the intellectual processes used by the detective.²⁹ Both the process of logical reasoning and the detective character are central to the genre today. The actual words denoting them, however, appeared later than in the first detective stories. As Stephen Rachman states, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word ‘detective’ was coined as an adjective no sooner than 1843 as a reference to ‘detective police’, two years after the first publication of ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’.³⁰

²⁶ Rzepka, “Introduction,” 2.

²⁷ Rzepka, “Introduction,” 2–3.

²⁸ Knight, *Crime fiction Since 1800*, 26.

²⁹ Knight, *Crime fiction Since 1800*, 26.

³⁰ Stephen Rachman, “Poe and the origins of detective fiction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Crime Fiction*, ed. Catherine Ross Nickerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 21.

The fact that the word detective was first documented by the *Oxford English Dictionary* does not mean that no police or detective forces existed prior to that. It was, in fact, as early as 1812 that “Vidocq, a former convicted bandit, became the first chief of the Sûreté, the detective bureau of the Parisian police force,” and later even established the first modern detective agency.³¹ The first municipal constabulary in England was established in 1828, and Pinkerton’s detective agency in the United States in 1850.³²

What, according to Scaggs, sets Poe’s stories apart from earlier crime narratives is his focus on the interconnectedness of events, the connections of cause and effect that he calls “the chain of causation.”³³ This chain of causation allows the reader to be actively involved in solving the central mystery. Referring to the participation of the readers in the detective narrative, Horsley claims that as readers “[we] are engaged in an interpretative quest.”³⁴ In this sense, an attentive reader should, at least in retrospect, be able to analyze the clues and unravel the solution of the mystery on his own. This is what Scaggs describes as a ‘fair play’ notion, typical of detective fiction in the 1930s.³⁵

Poe’s stories then served as the main source of inspiration for Arthur Conan Doyle’s legendary Sherlock Holmes. Holmes is, according to Worthington, “the archetypal detective,”³⁶ and we can undisputedly find the influence of his character in modern crime fiction. According to Scaggs, Doyle borrowed the character of the “Genius Detective”³⁷ from Poe, therefore we can find many similarities between the two detectives. Their genius deductive skills, their friend-companion-narrator, their reclusiveness. Both detectives can also be described as ‘amateur detectives’ in terms of having a private income from elsewhere and not relying on their detective skills to support their livelihood.³⁸ The ‘amateur detective’ status applies further for the following ‘Golden age’ era.

The ‘Golden age’ was the time of the ‘whodunnit?’ detective fiction which many (though not all) date in the interwar years. ‘Whodunnit?’ is a term coined in the 1930s for the type of detective fiction revolving around the central puzzle, in which the main question is who

³¹ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 17.

³² Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 17–18.

³³ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 34.

³⁴ Horsley, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, 13.

³⁵ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 36.

³⁶ Worthington, “From *The Newgate Calendar*,” 26.

³⁷ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 35.

³⁸ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 40.

committed the crime.³⁹ The Golden age era was prominent on the British islands and was dominated by female authors mainly, as the major writers include Agatha Christie, Margery Allingham, Ngaio Marsh, and Dorothy L. Sayers.⁴⁰ The ‘Golden age’ stories are marked by the central puzzle element, which is emphasized above everything. Characters are typically flat, giving way to the emphasis on the plot. Also, participation of the reader on solving the clue-puzzle is characteristic for this time as well. Additionally, the crimes themselves must be mentioned. Whether we consider stories of Poe, Doyle, or Christie, their detectives only deal with very complicated and brilliant crimes, true fabricated puzzles.⁴¹ Crimes like that, however, do not exist in real life.

While the ‘Golden age’ of detective fiction was prominent in Britain, the American tradition of writing at that time has become known as ‘hard-boiled’ detective fiction. Unlike the ‘Golden age’, the hard-boiled tradition is dominated by men both as authors and characters. It is after all the typical tough, masculine, quick-fisted, fierce detective figure, which gave a name to the subgenre. Two major contributors to the establishment of the genre are considered to be Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. The most significant shift from the ‘Golden age’ literature would be in terms of representation of crime. As Pepper puts it, crime in hard-boiled fiction was seen as “the bastard offspring of an urban-fuelled modernity.”⁴² Hard-boiled fiction, as opposed to the ‘Golden age’ fiction, is becoming brutally realistic in terms of crime and portrays the harsh realities of street crimes in the corrupted industrial American metropolis. This tradition of realistic crime also applies to the following type of crime fiction, the police procedural.

1.3. Police Procedural

As this subgenre of crime fiction is one of the main foci of this thesis, it needs to be explained, defined, and put in the context of other crime narratives. To provide a concise discussion of the genre, only the police procedurals in the American context are discussed, as the thesis deals with American authors. It must be noted that position of women within the genre of crime fiction and police procedural specifically, will be discussed in the following chapter.

³⁹ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 35.

⁴⁰ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 35.

⁴¹ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 42.

⁴² Andrew Pepper, *The Contemporary American Crime Novel: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Class* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2000), 10.

Although we could be looking for traces of the police procedural in older detective stories of Poe or Simenon, it was the later period of scientific advancements within professional police forces that truly sparked the origin of the subgenre. As the first example of police procedural is generally acknowledged *Last Seen Wearing...* written by an American author Hillary Waugh in 1952. It is mainly for its dialogue, detailed information of the police procedures, and “the uncertain success of the final resolution of the crime.”⁴³ These are the most prominent features that characterize the subsequent police fiction. If we want to look at those features more closely, Scaggs offers a very straightforward definition of the police procedural, valid in both British and American environments and says that the police procedural “is a type of fiction, in which the actual methods and procedures of police work are central to the structure, themes, and action.”⁴⁴ It is apparent from the name of the genre that the police force with its procedures is the focal point of the fiction; the list of its prominent features would be, nevertheless, more comprehensive.

Although the term ‘police procedural’ is widely used by many authors, Peter Messent opts to use the name ‘police novel’ rather than ‘police procedural’ to not limit the extensions of the subgenre and to better encompass “the *variety* of fictions focusing on crime and police work: novels of detection, thrillers, psychological and/or sociological novels, narratives reliant on Gothic effects, and so on.”⁴⁵ Although the term might be arguable, in his eyes, however, the name ‘police novel’ “downplays expectations of a close focus on the routines and investigative cooperations of police work implicit in the ‘procedural’ label.”⁴⁶ In his view then, the police novel can have many different subtypes which can more or less diminish the sole focus on the procedures of law enforcement.

What characterizes the whole subgenre of police procedural is realism. As opposed to the previous tradition of the private detective fiction, when improbable crimes were solved by individual genius detectives, the police procedural, on the other hand, turns to real-life procedures of police force, and solving of a crime becomes a team effort. However, even hard-boiled fiction was previously described by this turn to realism. Nevertheless, that was mainly due to the apparent contrast with the classical detective story which was, according to Mandel,

⁴³ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 87.

⁴⁴ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 91.

⁴⁵ Peter Messent, “The Police Novel,” in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles Rzepka, and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 177.

⁴⁶ Messent, “The Police Novel,” 177.

characterized by artificial gentility.⁴⁷ The seeming realism of the hard-boiled tradition was mainly contained by its portrayal “of crimes that were increasingly becoming part of the everyday world of the early twentieth-century America.”⁴⁸ The formerly accepted view of the hard-boiled fiction dealing with ‘real’ crimes has become widely disputed, especially with emerging police procedurals. Many authors point out that private investigators never deal with real homicides, and therefore the police procedural seems to be taking the place of private eye novels as the ‘realistic’ crime fiction.⁴⁹

There are many theories as to why the police procedural originated in the first place. According to Mandel, it is related to the rise of organized crime in society.⁵⁰ Knight, however, disagrees and points out that even earlier authors were aware of such forces and did not turn to the procedural.⁵¹ Therefore, a more relevant point of view would be that of Priestman, who does not see big-scale brutal crimes such as murder being solved by single individuals.⁵² Therefore, with the police procedural, we can see what Scaggs calls the change from the *private* eye to the *public* eye.⁵³ However, while the police procedural still features detectives, small-scale private detectives were replaced by “large-scale policing that serves society as a whole.”⁵⁴ Therefore, we find that police procedurals are more realistic than the previous tradition of private investigators. It is simply more believable that a team of professionally organized forces will solve a crime successfully, as opposed to a single private detective. Police forces, in fact, even featured as an inconvenience to private detectives, who often saw the need to bend or break the law to make ends meet. Messent further supports the realism of police procedurals by stating that “while the [private-eye novel] relies on a model of rule-bending individualism, the [police procedural] puts its emphasis precisely on procedure and *collective* agency.”⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Ernest Mandel, *Delightful Murder* (London: Pluto, 1984), 35.

⁴⁸ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 57.

⁴⁹ Peter Messent, “Introduction: From Private Eye to Police Procedural – The Logic of Contemporary Crime Fiction,” in *Criminal Proceedings: The Contemporary American Crime Novel*, ed. Peter Messent (London: Pluto Press, 1997), 12.

⁵⁰ Mandel, *Delightful Murder*, 54.

⁵¹ Knight, *Crime fiction Since 1800*, 156.

⁵² Martin Priestman, *Crime Fiction: From Poe to Present* (Plymouth:Northcote House in association with the British Council, 1998), 32.

⁵³ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 89.

⁵⁴ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 89.

⁵⁵ Messent, “Introduction: From Private Eye,” 12.

However, the realism of police procedurals does not lie in the actual investigative procedures alone, but also in the “themes, characters, action, and setting.”⁵⁶ As far as setting is concerned, urban areas are typical for police procedurals. However, in later procedurals, the authors commit even to the rural setting, even though they have been “absent throughout much of the development of the sub-genre.”⁵⁷ In the same way, the rural setting plays rather marginal role within the procedural, some of the police officers also stand in rather marginal positions. In this way Scaggs appropriates those officers to the “marginality [of private investigators] within the broader social process of containing and controlling crime,”⁵⁸ and thus questions the criticism of “improbability of the lone PI of hard-boiled fiction.”⁵⁹ The characteristic third-person narrative is another feature contributing to the realism of the procedural, as it constitutes objectivity. Bertens and D’haen then claim that police procedurals in general “accurately reflect the increasingly complex and organized nature of present day society.”⁶⁰

One of the ground-breaking functions of the inherent realism of the procedural is that it allowed authors to “challenge the socially normative structures of gender, race and ethnicity and sometimes class.”⁶¹ By abandoning the isolated individualistic view of the private eye, authors were able to question the established social orders. Knight further elaborates and explains that many authors seeking to question social values use “procedurally developed police story as the basis of their critical investigations.”⁶² This paper further focuses on gender appropriations, in particular.

1.4. Female Crime Fiction

Although the British ‘Golden age’ era was dominated by women, it took a long time for women in the United States to earn the same critical acclaim. While women did write crime fiction, and often even earlier than men, their success in the white male-dominated field of crime fiction though, was not guaranteed. This chapter discusses how women entered and modified crime fiction genre in the United States, mainly women featuring female detectives or cops as main characters.

⁵⁶ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 91.

⁵⁷ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 88.

⁵⁸ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 90.

⁵⁹ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 90.

⁶⁰ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 3.

⁶¹ Knight, *Crime fiction Since 1800*, 161.

⁶² Knight, *Crime fiction Since 1800*, 161.

Importantly, this chapter refrains from the frequent title of ‘feminist crime fiction,’ in favor of the perhaps more inclusive title of ‘female crime fiction.’ Although the tight connection to feminist movements in this field is undisputable, using the title itself may sometimes seem ‘too aggressive’, and it is important to bear in mind that while female authors often strive to bring attention to various feminist issues, it often happens without themselves identifying as feminists. Some critical opinions declare that the idea of women’s crime writing does not have to include a feminist ideology in order to discuss the women’s perspective. Furthermore, the readers are often reluctant to classify female genre appropriations as ‘feminist’ and according to Walton and Jones the women’s crime fiction is “able to dramatize feminist politics for readers, who may not consider themselves ‘feminists.’”⁶³ Moreover, “the feminism of crime writing by women is almost invariably liberal rather than radical.”⁶⁴

In the United States, it was extremely challenging for women to earn the same recognition as was appointed to men as according to Bertens and D’haen the “critical success was almost exclusively reserved for men.”⁶⁵ In other words, while women were often prominent and successful in terms of sales, they were not critically acclaimed and by the interwar period still “virtually invisible.”⁶⁶

Many male writers who started their careers between the late 1920s and early 1930s were, perhaps unknowingly, involved in the masculinization of the genre, which “in the USA maintained up until that point strong links with the ‘women’s novel’ of the second half of the nineteenth century,”⁶⁷ The masculinization of the genre took many different forms within the United States, pretty much reaching its peak with Dashiell Hammet’s private eye fiction filled with “tough-guy masculinity,” which almost seemed to be designed “to keep out female writers, let alone female protagonists.”⁶⁸ The hard-boiled tradition did not, indeed, give any room to female writers or powerful female characters, since the position within those novels was either the victim, the seductive *femme fatale*, or the insignificant ‘helper’. If the literary works featured a female as a detective, they would play marginal roles and would be ranked rather as

⁶³ Priscilla L. Walton and Manina Jones, *Detective Agency: Women rewriting the Hard-Boiled Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 20.

⁶⁴ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 15.

⁶⁵ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 10.

⁶⁶ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 9.

⁶⁷ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 10.

⁶⁸ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 10.

amateurs.⁶⁹ The hard-boiled writings which are, according to Scaggs, “the most misogynistic of the various sub-genres of crime fiction,” were not exactly open to female appropriations and even marginalized its female practitioners. Therefore, it was not until thirty years later, compared to their British counterparts, that American women in the 1950s “began to be a real force on the American scene.”⁷⁰ By that time, the first women began to be critically recognized and first literary prizes were awarded to them.

The American literary world registered a full bloom of female crime fiction during the 1980s, which Sally Rowe Munt calls “the heyday for feminist crime novels.”⁷¹ Authors generally agree and mark Marcia Muller’s *Edwin of the Iron Shoes* (1977) as the founding work of (American) feminist crime fiction which, according to Walton and Jones, started an “immensely influential series.”⁷² Reddy, on the other hand, offers P.D. James’ *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (1972) as a possible founding work of modern female detective fiction.⁷³ The story features a young female protagonist Cordelia Grey’s development into an adult professional in the form of combining mystery plot with the structure of a bildungsroman.⁷⁴ However, it took James full ten years to publish another part of the Cordelia Grey series, featuring a main character with traits that differ significantly from those of the ‘original’ Cordelia Gray. Therefore, Marcia Muller’s Sharone McCone is generally considered the first professional female detective, as Muller did not fail to develop her story in a regularly published series.⁷⁵ Scaggs, however, also mentions James’s *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* as one of the foremost ideological appropriations of the hard-boiled tradition.⁷⁶

As the ‘founding mother’ of American female detective fiction, Muller laid out what have become the major features of the professional female private eye today. Her main character Sharon McCone is described as:

Mature and experienced as well as inquisitive and skilful; she is wary of but not fully opposed to the police; she has sexual identity and also an extended connection with family and, especially, friends, both women and men; she has

⁶⁹ Maureen T. Reddy, “Women detectives,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 193.

⁷⁰ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 10–11.

⁷¹ Sally R. Munt, *Murder by the Book? Feminism and the Crime Novel* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 196.

⁷² Walton and Jones, *Detective Agency*, 58.

⁷³ Reddy, “Women detectives,” 195.

⁷⁴ Reddy, “Women detectives,” 196.

⁷⁵ Reddy, “Women detectives,” 195–197.

⁷⁶ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 78.

substantial empathy with victims of crime; she pursues her inquiries with courage, often being alarmed or physically hurt in the process; the crimes she confronts can be violent and distressing, and unlike those in the male private-eye tradition they derive mostly from the combination of urban corruption and personal betrayals.⁷⁷

This extensive list of features of the modern female detective includes everything that the previous rather stereotypical tradition of way too young or, on the other hand, old spinster detectives did not, and Muller, therefore, created an “authoritative new model of the detective”⁷⁸

The main question related to the gender appropriations of the genre is “what happens when we add something previously excluded?”⁷⁹ Some authors might choose the approach of simply inserting a female character in a place of a male character of the previously established inherently masculine tradition. However, this approach would inevitably result in an unnatural hybrid. The questions Deborah Shaller and authors like Sally Munt or Kathleen Gregory Klein ask are those of the relation between gender and genre. Shaller questions the changes inflicted upon a genre by substituting a man for a woman. According to Klein, “the genre must be completely remade, stripped of some of its most characteristic elements and reinforced by a new ideology and awareness.”⁸⁰ However, to what extent will the resulting literature be either detective or feminist remains a question. It was Marcia Muller together with Sue Grafton and Sara Paretsky who published their first widely commercially successful series featuring “mold-breaking female private eye[s].”⁸¹ According to Kinsman, the genre of crime fiction has never been the same since “the birth of these three gumshoes”⁸² and their numerous followers.

According to Bertens and D’haen, women today are not only prominent in all the crime fiction sub-genres but have even added new ones such as forensic novels or ecological mysteries.⁸³

One of the most popular subgenres within the female crime fiction remains the police procedural. The arrival of the female adaptations of the subgenre was, however, quite late because, in reality, the world of professional detection was practically off-limits to women until

⁷⁷ Knight, *Crime fiction Since 1800*, 167.

⁷⁸ Knight, *Crime fiction Since 1800*, 168.

⁷⁹ Deborah Shaller, “Women Detectives in Contemporary American Popular Culture,” in *Murder 101: Essays on the eaching of Detective Fiction*, ed. Edward Rielly (Jefferson: McFarland&Company, Inc., Publishers, 2009), 195.

⁸⁰ Kathleen Gregory Klein, *The Woman Detective: Gender&Genre* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 221.

⁸¹ Margaret Kinsman, “Feminist Crime Fiction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Crime Fiction*, ed. Catherine Ross Nickerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 148.

⁸² Kinsman, “Feminist Crime Fiction,” 148.

⁸³ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 12–13.

well into the 1960s.⁸⁴ That is why women started by portraying the amateur sleuths first, for the sake of realistically built characters. When female police procedurals were brought to light in the 1970s and 1980s, they bore significance because of their emancipatory qualities. These emancipatory qualities consisted of showing women as serious enforcers of the law. Moreover, these works showed the resistance towards women and the true masculinist nature of the professional law enforcement environment.⁸⁵

2. Feminist Literary Criticism

Tightly connected to the discussion above is the chosen methodological framework for this thesis, feminist literary criticism. Feminist literary analysis, however strongly connected to feminism itself, has its own characteristic features, and this part of the thesis strives to define the way in which the chosen novels are viewed and analyzed. As the word *feminism* itself often has a negative connotation to it, the discussion below aims at objective explanations.

As is the case with other literary critical theories, we can use the feminist approach to examine any literary work. However, one needs to be aware of what to look for during the close reading and what questions to ask oneself to provide a proper feminist analysis. Feminist literary criticism directly originates from thoughts and ideas of the feminist movement, which is generally characterized by coming in waves. According to *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, “feminist literary criticism developed mostly since the beginning of the late twentieth-century women’s movement,”⁸⁶ which is correlated with the third wave of feminism that began in the 1960s. And, as Peter Barry notes, “feminist criticism should not be seen as an off-shoot or a spin-off from feminism [...], but as one of its most practical ways of influencing everyday conduct and attitudes.”⁸⁷ One of the influential feminist authors, Elaine Showalter, divided the development of women’s writing into three phases, the *feminine phase* lasting from 1840 to 1880, the *feminist phase* lasting from 1880 to 1920, and the *female phase* lasting from 1920 until present.⁸⁸ During those three phases, women went from imitation of male literary

⁸⁴ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 13.

⁸⁵ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 14.

⁸⁶ Wilfred L. Guerin, Earle Labor, Lee Morgan, and John R. Willingham, *A Handbook of critical Approaches to Literature*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 223.

⁸⁷ Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 3rd ed. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), 116–117.

⁸⁸ Guerin et al., *A Handbook*, 224–225.

tradition, through promotion of women's rights, to rediscovering women's writing that went unnoticed or was forgotten, and to rediscovery of women themselves.

Although Showalter's work remains controversial in some respects, the fact that women had to rediscover themselves, their traditions, and their writing shows how rooted misogyny and patriarchy are in our social construct. As Lois Tyson documents, our society is based on patriarchy, and so is our thinking. The reason women had to rediscover past female writing was that before the 1960s "the literary works of (white) male authors describing experience from a (white) male point of view was considered the standard of universality."⁸⁹ This results in distorted portrayal of women in the literature, as the actual experience from the female point of view does not get represented. And as has already been said about female crime fiction writers in particular, even after women began to appear more within the literary canon after the 1970s, their representation and acknowledgment could in no way live up to the one of male writers.

The definition of feminist literary criticism proposed by Tyson says that it "examines the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women."⁹⁰ In other words, it is not only literature but also film or musical productions that can be a subject to feminist criticism. These can be works produced by both men and women that either undermine, or reinforce women's oppression. The fact is that a lot of *social programming* happens through these productions. Therefore, when women have been programmed for centuries to be fragile and submissive, they consider such roles as something 'natural' and 'automatic.'

Although not the case all over the world, in our *western* society, the male experience has become a default experience, a foundation stone, a universal. Using the male experience as the default resulted in the so-called 'habit of seeing,' which seeped into all aspects of our society.⁹¹ The experience of both sexes is then evaluated through the dominant male one only and is regarded universal. That resulted in underrepresentation of not only white women, but also all authors of color, as the universal experience was considered to be that of white males only. Even more striking is the fact that even within the field of feminism, the struggle for equality of both sexes was really, for a long time, a struggle for equality of white, middle-class,

⁸⁹ Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 84.

⁹⁰ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 83.

⁹¹ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 85.

heterosexual women to heterosexual white men. Women of color then were fighting two consecutive battles, the one against racism and the one against misogyny and sexism. The questions of sexual orientation and race were omitted for a long time and both men and women concerned by those issues had to find their own voice. “To deconstruct this ideological cover-up of sexual and social repressions is the main objective of many feminist critics.”⁹²

These repressions of women in society have been formed and practiced by patriarchal ideology. Patriarchy is, in short, any culture that privileges men before women and even renders men as superior.⁹³ The main means for patriarchy to spread its ideas of men’s superiority is the promotion of traditional gender roles.⁹⁴ These roles then cast men as strong, self-sufficient, stoic leaders, and women as fragile, emotional, weak, and submissive. The belief of men being superior to women has been used, according to Tyson, to create, justify, and maintain the male monopoly in the spheres of social power, economics, and politics, while denying women of such powers.⁹⁵ By that, Tyson proves cultural formation in favor of biological determination of the inferior position of women in society.⁹⁶ Guerin then even marks feminism as a *political* approach with overtly male politics.⁹⁷ In connection with the politics of patriarchy and feminism, it is important to realize that patriarchal ideas have been part of every aspect of our lives and therefore ‘programming’ people every day. Tyson then refers to “movies, television shows, books, magazines, and advertisements” and even attitudes of service workers, who have already internalized those ideas.⁹⁸ Since gender roles are based on human *gender*, it must first be defined.

Traditionally, authors agree on the differentiation of sex and gender based on the natural/cultural distinction. Sex is then considered our natural category, something biological which we are born with. Gender, on the other hand, is viewed as something constructed culturally. According to Tyson, “*sex* [...] refers to our biological constitution as female or male, and [...] *gender* [...] refers to our cultural programming as feminine or masculine.”⁹⁹ Guerin et al. then concur and claim that even though our society often presents these binary oppositions

⁹² Martin Procházka, *Literary Theory: An Historical introduction* (Praha: Nakladatelství Karolinum, 2015), 118.

⁹³ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 85–86.

⁹⁴ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 85.

⁹⁵ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 86.

⁹⁶ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 86.

⁹⁷ Guerin et al., *A Handbook*, 223.

⁹⁸ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 86.

⁹⁹ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 86.

like feminine and masculine or heterosexual and homosexual as something natural, it in fact has little to do with nature.¹⁰⁰ Judith Butler, interestingly, questions to what extent and whether at all the categories of *sex* and *gender* differ from one another. She claims that “sex, by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along.”¹⁰¹ Her main point of discussion is the *construction* of gender itself. She refers to Simone de Beauvoir, who said that “one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one.”¹⁰² According to Butler then, Simone de Beauvoir does not in any way indicate that the one becoming a woman must necessarily also be female. On that basis Butler concludes that our body, which Simone de Beauvoir appropriated to a situation, could never have been in a state where it “has not always already been interpreted by cultural meanings; hence, sex could not qualify as a prediscursive anatomical facticity.”¹⁰³ By that, Butler concludes that sex and gender are, in fact, identical categories.

One of Butler’s points is the predetermination of gender by sex. The way we traditionally view those two in relation to one another is that gender, though culturally formed, is still based on biological sex. Tyson, however, claims that “women are not born feminine, and men are not born masculine,”¹⁰⁴ by which she supports the differentiation between sex and gender. In the United States specifically, the gender system is binary and thus based on two sexes, which are considered to be polar opposites.¹⁰⁵ Butler would then be right in questioning of sex-based gender. If there are only two sexes and two genders which are directly conditioned by those sexes, why should we even bother to distinguish the two (meaning gender and sex)? This point goes hand in hand with current gender-related discussions related to one’s self-identification. In the current world, we would not be completely wrong to say that the binary gender system is coming to an end even in western society. The non-binary system is, after all, nothing new. Tyson even refers to Native North American societies with multi-gender systems with three or four distinct genders.¹⁰⁶ In addition, those societies did not determine gender based on sex or sexual orientation, but rather on occupational interests.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ Guerin et al., *A Handbook*, 237.

¹⁰¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 11.

¹⁰² Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage, 2015), 301.

¹⁰³ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 11.

¹⁰⁴ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 86.

¹⁰⁵ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 110.

¹⁰⁶ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 111-112.

¹⁰⁷ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 112.

The topic of gender roles is directly related to the idea of self-identification. If we internalize the premise that our sex does not determine our gender and the roles associated with it, then we should be able to internalize and ‘play’ these roles pretty much freely. However, it is not that easy to break free from the stereotypical patriarchal ideas rooted so deeply in our society. According to Guerin et al., we should free ourselves from viewing femininity and masculinity as two separate forms of identity, and rather perceive them as “a range of overlapping behaviors”¹⁰⁸ because they are, in the end, constantly changing. Tyson then points out that “the whole idea that there are only two genders is based on the idea that there are only two sexes.”¹⁰⁹ She then elaborates on that and discusses the not so rare occurrence of what she calls ‘intersexed’ people, who according to their reproductive organs are neither clearly a man nor a woman.¹¹⁰ These people are then considered to be to be ‘abnormal’. According to Pam Morris, the “attributes of what is ‘normal’ feminine and masculine sexuality are by no means natural or inherent but constructed painfully from the child’s interaction with its social world,”¹¹¹ thus proving the point about cultural construction of gender and its stereotyped roles.

Women in the literature then start a search for their own sexual and cultural identity by deconstructing false assumptions of gender.¹¹² And in the words of Culler, “feminism undertakes to deconstruct the opposition man/woman and the oppositions associated with it in the history of Western culture.”¹¹³ Some of the typical roles assigned to men in patriarchal society, according to Tyson, are that men must be strong in every aspect, be it emotional or physical strength, they should not cry as that is a sign of weakness and emotionality, therefore, in order not to be overcome by their feelings or emotions, they should not show any signs of fear, pain, or sympathy with other men, and most importantly “men are not permitted to fail at anything they try because failure in any domain implies failure in one’s manhood.”¹¹⁴ The patriarchal concept of femininity, on the other hand, depicts women as modest, fragile and timid, by doing so it disempowers them in the real world because “it is not feminine to succeed

¹⁰⁸ Guerin et al., *A Handbook*, 237.

¹⁰⁹ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 112.

¹¹⁰ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 113.

¹¹¹ Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 96.

¹¹² Procházka, *Literary Theory*, 118.

¹¹³ Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 126.

¹¹⁴ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 87.

in business, to be extremely intelligent, to earn big bucks, to have strong opinions, to have a healthy appetite (for anything), or to assert one's rights.”¹¹⁵

In the following analysis, gender roles will be one of the main foci. The traditional, or rather stereotypical, roles will be examined in the environment of professional law enforcement which is traditionally male dominated. However, in modern appropriations of the typically male-driven genre of police procedural by Castillo and Hillerman, women play the main role. The analysis of roles of female investigators in positions of power will then be the main objective.

3. Linda Castillo and Anne Hillerman in the Literary Context

Both Linda Castillo and Anne Hillerman are American authors of mystery detective fiction. Linda Castillo is a Texas-based American novelist. An author of the New York Times and USA Today Kate Burkholder Amish mystery series, which she has been publishing regularly since 2009 when her debut novel *Sworn to Silence* was published. The series now consists of twenty-four books, the most recently published one in July of 2022. Castillo is an accomplished author and a recipient of numerous industry awards. Although she does not have experience with the Amish community from her personal life, she graduated from two citizen police academies, from which she sources her knowledge for the law enforcement procedures.¹¹⁶

By juxtaposing the idyllic environment of the Amish community with the brutal murders, Castillo certainly gains the coveted shock effect, which appeals to the readers. The Amish are a pacifist community living a chaste farm life without the conveniences of modern technology. By their simple way of life and by speaking Pennsylvanian Dutch, they distance themselves from the ‘English’ world.

This paper uses as a base for the analysis the first two books published as part of Kate Burkholder series, *Sworn to Silence* and *Pray for Silence*. Both novels follow Kate Burkholder as the chief of police in the fictional town of Painters Mill, Ohio. Kate, balancing her life as a professional female investigator and an ex-Amish, solves crimes terrifying the community and battles the ghosts from the past.

¹¹⁵ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 88.

¹¹⁶ “New York Times best selling author Linda Castillo,” *Linda Castillo*, accessed February 25th, 2024, https://www.lindacastillo.com/about_linda.html.

Anne Hillerman lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and is an accomplished novelist and journalist. She decided to follow the path of her father, famous mystery writer Tony Hillerman, and in 2013 published the first book of the Chee and Manuelito series. By centralizing a previously minor character of Bernadette Manuelito, she created a Navaho police ‘power couple’ (Manuelito and Chee) and started renowned series. Her series which she has been publishing regularly since 2013 now consists of seven books with the last addition published in April of 2022.¹¹⁷

Hillerman, similarly to Castillo, uses for her novels a very distinctive setting. The main characters are members of the Navajo tribal police forces in New Mexico. In her stories, by combining the modern world with the old Navajo traditions and superstitions, she creates true gripping mysteries. The Navajos being one of the most populous Native American tribes today have a rich history. Similarly to Castillo’s Amish, the Navajos also speak their own language, and the traditionally matriarchal society even today honors the traditional values and way of life.

For the purpose of the analysis, the first two books in the Chee and Manuelito series were chosen, *The Spider Woman’s Daughter* and *The Rock with Wing*. In the series, Chee and Manuelito work as a team in both professional and personal spheres. They use their position within the Navajo tribe and solve mysteries based on their knowledge of both worlds, the modern, white one and the old, traditional one.

4. Analysis

4.1. The Power of the Environment

As opposed to the traditional setting of many examples of hard-boiled fiction or the more traditional police procedurals, which are usually set in the urban environment of the bustling metropolis, Castillo and Hillerman chose quite unique and uncommon environments as settings for their mystery series. Starting from the 1970s, we can see the rising interest of authors of American crime fiction in exploring variety of untraditional settings moving away from the

¹¹⁷ “Anne Hillerman best selling mystery author,” *Anne Hillerman*, accessed February 25th, 2024, <https://www.annehillerman.com/bio>

urban setting towards the countryside and even wilderness.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the unique environments as used by Linda Castillo and Anne Hillerman do not serve as mere settings, but significantly affect and determine the main characters and their development and almost act as characters on their own. In other words, these settings are inseparable from the main story.¹¹⁹

Although Linda Castillo was herself never Amish, she managed to portray the ‘Plain people’ with great precision and insight. She paints a vivid picture of a traditional Amish community and sheds light on their, to many unknown, way of life. The Amish are, to many, a certain mystery, mainly because in the modern society of artificial intelligence, electro cars, and smartphones, the Amish do not as much as use electricity. Although Castillo manages to educate the general reader about the Amish way of life to a certain extent, her motivations for setting the books in the context of such mysterious and closed-off society seem to be more commercial than educational. With more than twenty Amish mystery books published, Castillo meets with great success, and as she herself said in an interview, she was aiming to write a breakout novel when putting the Kate Burkholder series to life, and she knew that if she “didn’t put the book over the top, It wasn’t going to fly.”¹²⁰ Since writing is Castillo’s main source of income, we can assume that her motivations for choosing such a distinctive setting were mainly commercial.¹²¹ Nevertheless, she portrays the Amish country and the Amish way of life conscientiously and to great detail, as she claims to be fascinated by it as she herself grew up in a small town in Ohio. Although the town of Painters Mill, where she based her main character, is fictional, Castillo painted its picture based on her own childhood memories of growing up in a small town in Ohio, which gives it degree of authenticity. As a prerequisite for her writing, Castillo proceeded to study the Amish through publications and also keeps paying visits to the Amish land during her summers. She herself admits that she has:

learned a lot about the Amish since that first book—about the history, the religion, the people, and the traditions. [She’s] had the pleasure of meeting some Amish people, and it’s become increasingly important to [her] to depict the culture correctly and without stereotype. The Amish may refer to themselves as the Plain

¹¹⁸ Šárka Bubíková, “The Destruction of the Idyll: Linda Castillo’s and Jodi Picoult’s Amish Crime Fiction,” *Ars Aeterna* 13, no. 1 (June 1st, 2021): 2.

¹¹⁹ Šárka Bubíková, “Ethnicity and Social Critique in Tony Hilleman’s Crime Fiction,” *Prague Journal of English Studies* 5, no. 1 (July 1, 2016): 147.

¹²⁰ StoryTellers Studies, “First Person One on One With Mystery Writer Linda Castillo” (First Person One on One With Mystery Writer Linda Castillo (youtube.com), 2:29-2:31).

¹²¹ Bubíková, “The Destruction,” 3.

People, but the culture is as rich as the land upon which they've lived for nearly 300 years.¹²²

Not only did Linda Castillo opt for a setting within an unusual community, but she also decided to contrast the peaceful Amish life with an exceptional level of violence. This principle is characterized by Bubíková and Roebuck as “a crime intruding into a secure society and disrupting it.”¹²³ This opposition results in shocking contrast, which seems to be the main selling point, rather than the insights into the life of the Amish society. Castillo herself admits that “as a writer [she loves] the juxtaposition of such a bucolic setting and the introduction of evil into it.”¹²⁴

As the next section of the analysis will center around gender roles, it seems of essence to look at what grounds the characters built on. Castillo's main character is Kate Burkholder, a young chief of police in small town of Painters Mill, Ohio. As formerly Amish, Kate manages to negotiate between two worlds, the Amish and the ‘English’.¹²⁵ Kate was born and raised among the Amish, which to a large extent formed her present personality, even though she decided not to join the church at the age of eighteen and was expelled from the community.

The Amish are traditionally a patriarchal society, which tells us a lot about the roles Kate should have grown up to had she not been banned from the community. As Kate states herself in the first novel *Sworn to Silence*: “The Amish are a patriarchal society. The sexes are not necessarily unequal, but their roles are separate and well defined.”¹²⁶ Although the gender roles and ideals of femininity and masculinity have evolved tremendously in the contrasting American, or more generally western, society, the Amish strive for preservation of the traditional values and roles. Therefore, a typical Amish woman should become a wife and, consequently, a mother, should maintain the household and always follow her husband's lead. However, as a chief of police, Kate possesses many qualities that would not be typically considered as feminine. She demonstrates this herself in the second book *Pray for Silence* when she describes the division of labor in a typical Amish household during autumn harvest:

¹²² Linda Castillo, “Exploring a Hidden World,” *Publisher's Weekly*, May 19th, 2017.

¹²³ Bubíková and Roebuck, *The Place It Was Done*, 91.

¹²⁴ As cited in Gregory Cowles, “A Crime Writer Finds the ‘Perfect Setting’ in Amish Country,” *New York Times*, July 21st, 2017.

¹²⁵ The novels are set in the United States; however, the Amish call the Americans ‘English’ and also refer to them as ‘Englishers.’

¹²⁶ Linda Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, (New York: Minotaur Books, 2017), 19.

[...] we watch the men work. Autumn harvest is a busy time for an Amish farmer. The days are long and the work is backbreaking. Though female chores most often take place inside the house—canning, cleaning, sewing and baking—I always managed to end up outside with my *datt*. I never told anyone, but I secretly enjoyed the sweat and dirt and physical labor. It was one of many ways I didn't fit in.¹²⁷

This excerpt shows that the norm within Amish society is for men to be strong providers and laborers, while women take on traditionally feminine chores and household maintenance, proving that the Amish household conforms to the “traditional attitudes [which] stress the dichotomy between the husband-breadwinner and wife-homemaker mother, and the differential power relations implied in these specialized roles.”¹²⁸

Kate, however, even as a child managed to show her empowerment and go against the flow while taking up the typically male activities. Moreover, Kate mentions feeling the need to keep her enjoyment of the male tasks a secret, as that would not be accepted by the stereotype-driven community. However, in a broader picture when we contrast the Amish society with the American, we could say that the Amish as a whole play an analogically feminine role, while Americans would constitute a rather masculine role. This thought can be exemplified in an excerpt from *Sworn to Silence*, in which Kate explains the grounding ideals and spirit of the Amish called *Gelassenheit* as “yielding to God, putting others before yourself and leading a content and modest life.”¹²⁹ This description of the Amish seems to bear rather feminine qualities, and together with the innate Amish pacifism and separateness, portrays them as rather weak and submissive, though typically feminine. In the same fashion we are able to draw an analogy between the Amish being separate community from the rest of the modern society, in the same way women seem to be separated from men and by extension from the opportunities available to men by being assigned mainly to the indoor space of the household. As you can see in the excerpt above, typical female chores take place inside the house, therefore, limiting women and their experience.

Although the Amish may be “[...] the most peaceful, generous, and loving groups of people”¹³⁰ as Paul L. Gaus, another writer setting his novels in the Amish milieu, poignantly describes

¹²⁷ Linda Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, (New York: Minotaur Books, 2011), 61.

¹²⁸ Paul R. Amato and Alan Booth, “Changes in Gender Role Attitudes and Perceived Marital Quality.” *American Sociological Review* 60, no. 1 (February 1995): 58.

¹²⁹ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 111.

¹³⁰ As cited in Šárka Bubíková and Olga Roebuck, *The Place It Was Done: Location and Community in Contemporary American and British Crime Fiction*, (Jefferson: Mc Farland and Company, 2023), 92.

them, exceptions do occur. Castillo creates such an exception resulting in Kate ultimately leaving the community and becoming emancipated. Kate was raped by an older Amish man when she was fourteen years old. Being exposed to such a level of violence resulted in her defending herself and ultimately shooting the perpetrator. Rape is a classic example of male dominance and aggression toward women, and in Kate's case, it serves as a trigger for her empowerment, a true life-changing situation. The shocking juxtaposition of good and evil is then further reinforced, as in this case it is not the corrupted outsider ambushing peaceful Amish life, but one of their own. Kate herself realizes that her life path would have been different and therefore more stereotypically patriarchal if it hadn't been for her killing her rapist when she says: "my life path [was] set on a course that would have been much the same as my mother's and grandmother's before me. All that changed the day I shot and killed Daniel Lapp."¹³¹ The ramifications of this traumatic experience then forever altered her relationship with the community, but primarily with her own family, projecting to a great extent to Kate's adult professional life.

After she killed her rapist, Kate's father decided not to contact the English police, as it was an 'Amish matter' and proceeded to cover up the crime together with Kate's brother. By doing so, he prevented Kate from getting the justice she deserved and supported patriarchal male dominance within the family. According to Bell Hooks commenting on feminist parenting, "children need to be raised in loving environments. Whenever domination is present, love is lacking."¹³² Therefore, although family up until then signified a loving environment and safe haven for her, her perception of family and men and her relationship with them were forever altered. Thus, although she decides to seek more contact with the remaining members of her family (sister Sarah and brother Jacob) in the aftermath of another traumatic experience at the end of *Sworn to Silence*, she never does so in the following *Pray for Silence*. For the Amish community, religion plays a crucial role in their lives, and Kate claims to have lost her "faith in both God and family" the day she was raped.¹³³ However, she does not seem to be completely estranged from her faith in God, as we see her wondering about God's intentions with her, his punishment, and even asking for forgiveness. Therefore, we might consider her family bonds more affected by her traumatic experience than her faith in God.

¹³¹ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 275.

¹³² Bell Hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, (Cambridge: South End Press, 2000), 77.

¹³³ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 50.

Even though Kate's relationship to the Amish is disrupted and one could assume that her traumatic experience would drive her to even greater detachment from them, she actually gains a tremendous compassion for the Amish and as a police chief tries to get justice for everyone who had been wronged in any way, the Amish especially. Her intimate knowledge of the community then can pose as both advantage and disadvantage for her investigations. The main disadvantage might be seen in her emotional involvement with the community. Her intimate knowledge of the Amish causes her to feel deep compassion for them, and some might suspect her from siding with them. Another advantage in Kate's favor considering her work with such a closed community is her knowledge of the Amish language, Pennsylvania Dutch. Although Kate states that "[she is] an outsider encroaching on a society [she] turned [her] back on a long time ago,"¹³⁴ many Amish people deal with her with a certain degree of familiarity and a huge advocate of that seems to be her knowledge of Pennsylvania Dutch. Kate in this sense acts as a certain bridge between two distinct worlds, the Amish and the 'English'. Moreover, she functions as a reliable narrator in the reader's eyes, providing insights into the Amish community and explaining their language, habits, mindset, and traditions. At the same time, she maintains her credibility as a chief of police and provides insights into the employed police procedures. Although the Amish world used to constitute safety and family, she claims her police officers to be her family now.¹³⁵ Like Linda Barnes' protagonist, Kate "has a network of friends and acquaintances who give her a sense of belonging."¹³⁶

Anne Hillerman, who sets her mystery crime fiction stories within the Navajo tribe reservation, introduces readers to another very specific environment. The Navajos are one of the largest Native American nations still living in America today. The Navajo Land stretches over 27,000 square miles in the area of the American states of Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico and, more importantly, also has its own government, laws, and police force, the Navajo Nation Police.

Her motivation to choose the Navajo Land as a setting for her novels is apparent as she decided to continue the already established tradition of her legendary father, Tony Hillerman. As one of the most successful authors of ethnic crime fiction, he is well known for his elaborate descriptions of the Navajo Land. While Castillo's choice of Amish society appears to be

¹³⁴ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 275.

¹³⁵ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 65.

¹³⁶ Šárka Bubíková and Olga Roebuck, "Female Investigators: Rewriting the Masculine Narrative of Crime Fiction." *American & British Studies Annual* 15, no. 1 (December 2022): 91–92.

commercially motivated, Hillerman seems to follow her father's lead and seems to continue his educational efforts with her fiction, as she employs a vast number of details about Navajo culture, traditions, myths, language and history among frequent elaborate descriptions of the landscape. However, she admits being concerned about the readers' appreciation of her books. Nevertheless, it seems fair to claim that her books were not tailored solely to the popular interests of readers, as she admits in an interview: "[I was] just really hoping that I would be able to come up with a book that would satisfy their expectations, as well as my own expectations."¹³⁷ Growing up and still living in the American Southwest, Anne Hillerman is closely acquainted with the territory to great depths even though she admits that with her background in journalism, conducting a proper research was just a natural step preceding the actual writing process. Therefore, for readers not acquainted with the area, it might sometimes present a difficulty to follow her elaborate descriptions, which often rather resemble driving directions. Despite these realistic depictions, her landscapes do not lack certain literary poetics, which she often reaches by combining the perceptions of the landscape by characters with mythical stories of the origins of the Navajo peoples, the *Diné*. Therefore, since there is so much space dedicated to the landscape within her books, we can almost consider it as a character of its own.

Tony Hillerman over the thirty years of his writing career has developed a whole set of complex characters, and his daughter, Anne Hillerman, decided to use one of his minor characters, Bernadette Manuelito, as the main heroin for her novels. She herself claims that she "wanted to present her as a competent, persistent policewoman"¹³⁸ since her father never actually had her solve a crime in his novels. The means of achieving this goal and ways of presenting Bernie as an empowered female police officer will be discussed in the following chapter. Anne Hillerman employs other crucial characters from her father's books, Leaphorn and Chee, while Bernadette Manuelito and Jim Chee present a married couple.

The Navajo society, compared to our western society and, by extension, to the Castillo's Amish, is traditionally matriarchal. Therefore, the position of men and women was more equal, and women were even seen as dominant in many areas. The gender dynamics then differs from the western patriarchal traditions. As this thesis focuses on gender innovations in crime fiction, it

¹³⁷ Anne Hillerman, interview by Jennifer Davin, Washington D.C, Augus 30th, 2014.

¹³⁸ Bob Hahn, "The Return of Leaphorn and Chee: PW Talks with Anne Hillerman" *Publisher's Weekly*, August 2nd, 2013.

is important to consider the grounds on which the character of Bernadette Manuelito was built, as the environments that form Castillo's Kate and Hillerman's Bernie differ tremendously.

As opposed to patriarchal societies dominated by men, women are the dominant ones within the matriarchy. Moreover, matriarchal societies value and are characterized by prioritizing values traditionally rendered as feminine, such as nurturing, cooperation, and communal decision making. Although Holly Kearl points out the partial loss of their economic and political status in the consequences of forced assimilation by the Euro-Americans during the 1920s and 1930s, she also links later re-emphasis of the matriarchy among Navajos to the contemporary feminist movement in the 1970s.¹³⁹ Although the influence of the feminist movement on the reestablishment of Navajo matriarchal values was indirect, as women saw the resulting changes in power dynamics rather connected to white colonialism rather than patriarchal oppression, Kearl still acknowledges its influence on the gender dynamics and economic power of women within the Navajo tribe.¹⁴⁰ Today, however, the majority of the Navajos have been influenced to a lesser or greater degree by the patriarchal values of the dominant white culture.

Compared to Castillo's Kate, Hillerman's Bernie did not suffer any life-altering experience that would lead her to the career of a police officer; rather, her decision appears to be greatly influenced by the life of the Navajo community and its dynamics. She strongly values the tribal heritage and honors family values. Hillerman then seems to be influenced by matriarchal traditions, as, according to her statement in an interview, "[she] honors a longstanding viable tradition of female leadership in the West and especially in the Navajo world."¹⁴¹ Bernie is then put in a position where she has to balance the lines between several worlds: her professional career, her primary family consisting of mother and sister, and her secondary family with Chee. Moreover, she has to negotiate the line between Navajos and white Americans. Bernie, compared to Castillo's Kate, remains an active member in the Navajo community. Thus, as a police officer in an area which is largely driven by tourism, she encounters white Americans on an everyday basis, as the Navajo Reservation is not so closed-off as the Amish society. And since each culture has its own traditions and rules, she must grasp an understanding of both.

¹³⁹ Holly Kearl, "Elusive Matriarchy: The Impact of the Native American and Feminist Movements on Navajo Gender Dynamics," *Historical Perspectives: Santa Clara University Undergraduate Journal of History* 11, no.1 (March 2006): 103.

¹⁴⁰ Kearl, "Elusive Matriarchy," 104.

¹⁴¹ Anne Hillerman, "Like Father, Like Daughter," *John Wayne the Journal*, accessed March 14, 2024.

During her work as a police officer, she often points out the differences between Navajos and white Americans, for example, considering revenge she points out: “Revenge was a *bilagaana* value, but some of these [Navajo] criminals had torn themselves away from the fabric of Diné life, lost their direction.”¹⁴² Hillerman in her books often uses the Navajo language and one of the most frequently used words is *bilagaana*, which means a ‘white person’. The above quote then signifies number of points at once. Bernie demonstrates her knowledge and realization of different values between the two cultures. At the same time, it seems to hint at a certain superiority of the Navajo values (at least in her eyes), which is logical, as she openly admits her unrelenting admiration and respect for her culture. In addition, she demonstrates her savvy as a police officer by combining her analytical skills with her cultural knowledge. All in all, she shows her ability as a Navajo police officer to take into consideration the differences between cultures while maintaining respect for both, as well as admiration of her own roots. To show that respect between cultures works both ways, we can use an example of an injured lieutenant Leaphorn’s doctor dealing with Bernie: “I should only speak to next of kin. I know from my years of experience [...] that the concept of kinship is different for us than for the Diné.”¹⁴³ This shows how the official rules of one culture can sometimes bend in order to be respectful of the other.

In fact, it is her Navajo heritage that deeply shapes Bernie’s personality. Although Castillo’s Kate shows deep knowledge and respect for the Amish, she is no longer a member of the community and is somewhat estranged from their values. Bernie, on the other hand, is a deeply rooted community member and the close-knit nature of the Navajo society fosters a sense of mutual support and cooperation, which influences Bernie’s approach to her work as a police officer. What speaks in favor of both Kate and Bernie is that they realize how important it is to consider the cultural differences and the possible cultural ‘friction’ in their work. Bernie describes her police department of the Navajo Division of Public Safety and the skills necessary for the officers as follows:

Most of the officers who serve are Diné—the Navajo word loosely meaning “The People.” Related or not, they treat each other like relatives, occasionally engaging in family feuds but, in times of stress, working together with a single focus. In addition to following police procedure, for the officers on the force, serving effectively means understanding relationships among and between the Navajo

¹⁴² Anne Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter* (New York: Harper, 2013), 37.

¹⁴³ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 80.

Nation's extended families. The officers need to know who has a grudge against whom, who has problems with drugs or drinking, who might be a little crazy, born mean, or both. They need to understand who respects the Navajo Way and who is estranged from it.¹⁴⁴

The excerpt shows how extremely personal Bernie's work is. Simply following the police procedures is not sufficient for her; as to be successful in her work with the Navajo Police, she must acquire a profound personal, even intimate knowledge of her people. This suggests that the professional detachment of a police officer could be counterproductive in her position. The entire picture makes an impression of small-town lore with gossip and background stories, although the Navajo Reservation spreads over rather extensive territory. Despite the familiar feeling between the Navajo, Bernie and Chee realize that they are still responsible police officers and renounce preferential treatment. When discussing a case in which Chee's cousin is involved, Bernie says, "If I thought a cousin of mine might be involved in something, I'd be tempted to tread lightly," to which Chee replies, "No you wouldn't, [...] you would never do that"¹⁴⁵, thus highlighting their fundamental moral standards.

Although the Amish society and the Navajo reservation are very different from each other, they have certain features in common. One of them would be religion. Although in very different forms, religion constitutes a large part of each culture. The Amish Anabaptist Christianity is a major building stone of the whole culture, and the society is essentially built on it while the Navajo religion is rather represented by certain mysticism, rituals, and nature. Another common factor would be a certain separatism from the surrounding world. Navajos represent a separate society, living on their own land, with their own government and police force, trying to maintain the traditional values within the United States, and the Amish strive to form a society in complete separation from the outside world. That brings us to the last common feature, which is the lack of modern technology. The Amish, for the most part, renounce and do not make use of any conveniences of modern technologies such as cars or tractors, in favor of traditional buggies, no electricity, meaning no electrical light, no kitchen appliances such as blenders, no vacuum cleaners, and no television. Although the Navajos do not reject technology and make use of cars and electricity, it is a fact that many places on the reservation are so remote that people do not have access to electricity, and especially older generations strive to keep it that way to maintain traditions and the harmony with nature. A certain 'clash' between technology

¹⁴⁴ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 15–16.

¹⁴⁵ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 158.

and tradition shows the Navajo language as well. Bernie, for example, mentions how “[the] computer voice twists up Navajo place names.”¹⁴⁶ To accommodate to modernity, new Navajo words describing functions of technology had to be invented. Hillerman points this ‘clash’ out when she has her protagonist notice the discrepancy using seemingly mundane device “Bernie smiled at the Navajo word for microwave oven. It translated to ‘you warm things up with it.’”¹⁴⁷

Although both Linda Castillo and Anne Hillerman chose the police procedural as an underlying form for their novels, they both embellish the subgenre in their own innovative ways. They both employ very specific culturally packed environments in their novels and, therefore, can educate the reader about those cultures, while also providing a gripping crime unraveled from a police force insider’s point of view. Most importantly, their protagonists are female police officers with an intimate knowledge of those specific environments, and therefore the readers are presented with the story from a specifically female perspective. As was shown in the discussion above, both protagonists and, by extension, their adult personal and professional lives are largely determined by the specific environments of the Amish society and the Navajo tribe. Moreover, the environments seem to provide the protagonists with so vital for their professional success.

4.2. Gender Roles in Chosen Novels

The following section provides an analysis of gender roles within the chosen novels. While the main focus will be on the female protagonists, Kate and Bernie, the main male characters cannot be overlooked. After the female agency is examined, the analysis will focus on the gender dynamics within the police force and mainly on the (personal and professional) relationships between the male and female protagonists. While traditional gender roles dictate that women be fragile, emotional, dependable, physically not skillful, and men stoic, strong (both emotionally and physically), independent and rational, we may find the chosen authors stepping out of those prescribed conventions.

Although it is expected from a female protagonist of a police procedural novel not to conform to traditional gender roles, nothing is ever black or white, and therefore, while the analysis focuses mainly on the ways in which female agency and emancipation are portrayed in the

¹⁴⁶ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 203.

¹⁴⁷ Anne Hillerman, *Rock with Wings* (New York: Harper, 2018), 177.

chosen novels, it examines the ways in which the protagonists rather conform to the traditional roles as well. In the following section, the characters of Kate Burkholder and John Tomasetti are first analyzed, followed by the analysis of Bernadette Manuelito and Jim Chee.

Kate Burkholder, in her early thirties already being a chief of police, undisputedly epitomizes a powerful and successful woman and lives up to an apt description of her as “a gun-toting, cursing, former Amish *female* chief of police.”¹⁴⁸ Castillo seems to have constructed the character carefully, as even Kate’s name hints at her emancipated qualities. The surname Burkholder in itself consists of meaning elements which can be expressed as ‘protection’, ‘brave’ or ‘hardy’¹⁴⁹ and Kate, indeed, possesses and projects these qualities which, traditionally, are not considered feminine as the brave, hardy protector is supposed to be a man. Her protective tendencies are then mainly directed towards the Amish community when she “feel[s] a sense of responsibility to the people [she’s] sworn to protect and serve.”¹⁵⁰ Due to her ‘hardiness’, Kate then seems to resemble rather a hard-boiled private eye detective despite being a police chief in the ‘public eye’ tradition of police procedural. Gavin describes American female hard-boiled investigators as “single, intelligent, and in their thirties [...], take a physically active approach to crime that is far from ‘spinster cosy.’ Fit, self-contained, and street-wise, they handle guns, face threats and attacks from men, and kill when they have to.”¹⁵¹ Despite being a woman and a former Amish, Kate indeed checks off most of these boxes and therefore significantly resembles a ‘tough-guy’ hero of hard-boiled crime fiction. Another feature of her tough appearance is the language she uses. In the same fashion as the hard-boiled detective would, she uses highly colloquial language and swearwords frequently. In her usage of language, she therefore does not differentiate herself from her male counterparts. She, in contrast, seems to use language as one of the agents in establishing respect and power dominance. In the same way that Christianson describes Grafton’s protagonist Kinsey Millhone, Kate “uses language to gain a little power within a patriarchal culture which still denies it to women, minorities, and members of the working class.”¹⁵² Kate apparently uses language to

¹⁴⁸ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 184.

¹⁴⁹ “Surname Burkholder – Meaning and Origin,” IGENEA, accessed March 06, 2024, <https://www.igenea.com/en/surnames/b/burkholder>

¹⁵⁰ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 169.

¹⁵¹ Adrienne E. Gavin, “Feminist Crime Fiction and Female Sleuths,” in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles Rzepka, and Lee Horsley, (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 264–265.

¹⁵² Scott Christianson, “Talkin’ Trash and Kickin’ Butt: Sue Grafton’s Hard-Boiled Feminism,” in *Feminism in Women’s Detective Fiction*, ed. Glenwood Irons, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 1995), 127–128.

establish herself as a respected leader within the male-dominated environment of law enforcement. In addition, she is also an occasional smoker and a regular drinker. All the aforementioned characteristics then contribute to her image of a ‘tough gal’. Similarly to Kinsey Millhone, Kate’s character seems to have strong links to the male version of the subgenre.

The first-person narrative used for the parts featuring Kate alternating with a third-person narrative in the parts of John Tomasetti is another feature that establishes Kate’s leading role. By narrating the story from Kate’s point of view, Castillo establishes her as the main character. The reader then encounters the story from a specifically female point of view. In this case, it is a woman in the position of power, which, however, did not come easy to her. By using first-person narration, Castillo provides the reader with an authentic representation of female experience in the patriarchal male-dominated environment. The same characteristic was again typical for the previous generation of hard-boiled fiction, and Gavin supports the ideas expressed above by commenting on the female detectives and stating that “their first-person narratives reveal women’s experiences in the face of patriarchal systems of both crime and justice [...]”.¹⁵³ Therefore, Kate is not simply an imitation of the masculine toughness, as Castillo incorporates specifically female issues such as rape and its traumatic consequences, unwanted pregnancy, and abortion, into the narrative.

Her tough image is important for Kate’s job, as it was not easy for her to gain (male) respect in the first place. She herself acknowledges how surprising and flattering it was for her to be appointed a chief of police despite her gender and her former Amish status, a fact which she keeps highlighting throughout the books. Although she realizes that it was rather a political decision, she does not fail to assert her leading position and establish credibility, which she ultimately considers as one of the hardest-earned and most valuable assets of her reputation. Kate admits being “floored”¹⁵⁴ when asked to be the chief of police as a former Amish and female and reflects on her hardships while earning respect of her male subordinate officers. In *Sworn to Silence*, Kate reports her experience as a young woman in charge of a male team during a meeting and admits that while men seem to be satisfied with her leadership at the moment, no such thing would have happened two years ago when she started in the position of chief of police and admits to “[ha]ve earned their respect.”¹⁵⁵ She values the respect and devotion of her male

¹⁵³ Gavin, “Feminist Crime Fiction,” 265.

¹⁵⁴ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 52.

¹⁵⁵ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 89.

colleagues and feels rather strongly about being judged or doubted in the eyes of men she herself respects: “The doubt I heard in his voice weighs on me. Being formerly Amish and a woman, I’ve had to work hard to earn the reputation I have. Credibility is important to me. I hate it that both of those things have come into questions.”¹⁵⁶ Kate in the quote expresses her feelings about John Tomasetti questioning her credibility and reputation while emphasizing her gender and former Amish status, both of which were aggravating factors in gaining her reputation in the first place. Despite her credibility being so hard earned, she does not hesitate to put it on the line and lie to her officers because of her personal past. When personal and professional come into question, Kate seems to lack in her professional qualities, and her personal Amish past wins over. Because of that, Kate jeopardizes not only the case and human lives but also her credibility. The fact that the officers follow her orders “just like that. No questions. No objections at being left in the dark,”¹⁵⁷ shows a great deal of devotion to their female chief.

However, Kate has faced several forms of male dominance since her young age. As has been already mentioned, an older man raped Kate when she was fourteen years old, and that was the first time she broke through her feminine submissiveness and executed resistance to male oppression by shooting the perpetrator. However, her father and brother then proceeded by hiding the body and covering up the crime, and hence completely disempowering Kate, stealing her voice, and not giving her justice. Therefore, she seems to be driven towards establishing agency and reserved approach towards men in position of power. The first situation in which Kate has to submit to male dominance in her adult life in *Sworn to Silence* is when John Tomasetti, a Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation field agent, is called in to help Kate handle a difficult case of serial murders. Kate feels threatened by a man in a position superior to hers and again lacks professionalism as being introduced to him “[she] make[s] no move to approach him or shake his hand.”¹⁵⁸ The threat to her power is further enhanced when she is labeled inexperienced by the city council, which consists mostly of men with an exception of one council woman who Kate perceives as “more dangerous to [her] than all the men combined.”¹⁵⁹ Eventually, the council even robs her off her powers completely when they terminate her employment for her incapacity in handling the case. The utmost example of male dominance over women would, however, be the murderer, a man who abuses his power on

¹⁵⁶ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 318.

¹⁵⁷ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 160.

¹⁵⁸ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 138.

¹⁵⁹ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 136.

several levels. Primarily, he uses his dominance to overpower, torture, rape, and eventually murder young women. In addition, being a police officer himself, he also abuses his professional powers. Ultimately, his domination as a man and as an officer is realized to its full potential when he attempts on raping and killing Kate. Castillo then conforms to the traditional aspect of female victimization in crime fiction. However, men also play the traditional role of heroic masculinity. That is, it is John Tomasetti, who rushes to save Kate's life in both novels.

Kate's determination to gain power in her life then seems to be connected to female issues. As she was raped and had never received justice for the wrongdoing, she is determined to get justice for others. While solving a case that bears substantial resemblance with her own traumatic experience, Kate says: "Seventeen years ago, I didn't get justice for a crime committed against me. But I'm a cop now. It's within my power to see this through, and get justice for another young Amish girl who can't do it herself."¹⁶⁰ She draws the reader's attention to the powerlessness of women, even more reinforced when they are Amish. In this sense, Castillo subverts the traditional perception of women as victims because even though Kate was raped, she managed to emancipate herself and recover from it, and the experience seems to have made her stronger instead of breaking her.

Kate's life is a life of many contrasts and she often finds herself balancing several roles. A woman, a police officer, an Amish, an 'English', roles that in many aspects do not seem compatible, and even Kate finds it difficult at times to manage them all. Then her "divided loyalties"¹⁶¹ between two different cultures seem to inspire Kate's uncharacteristic emotionality. 'Substantial empathy with victims of crime'¹⁶² is one of the characteristics Knight assigns to female investigators. Her empathy for crime victims is further enhanced by Kate's sympathies with the Amish due to her past involvement with the community. Kate admits to her excessive compassion herself when she says: "And I feel a lot more than I should. I know what It's like to be part of a close-knit group, to desperately want to belong, only to be held back by secrets."¹⁶³ The quote shows how her engagement with the Amish community is a significant trigger for her emotions. Kate's empathy and emotionality then led Stasio to call Kate "a competent if sentimental cop."¹⁶⁴ She indeed feels deep compassion with the victims, however, she strives to

¹⁶⁰ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 184.

¹⁶¹ Marilyn Stasio, "Prying Eyes," *New York Times*, July 22nd, 2011.

¹⁶² Knight, *Crime Fiction Since 1800*, 168.

¹⁶³ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 89.

¹⁶⁴ Stasio, "Prying Eyes."

conceal her vulnerabilities, as being perceived as feminine might compromise her credibility. Although Bubíková is right to assign Kate's empathy to her personal involvement in the community, rather than her gender,¹⁶⁵ Kate's overall emotions and mainly her effort to conceal them have strong connections to her gender image.

Many times, Kate refers to tears that "threaten"¹⁶⁶ her as "they are a female cop's worst enemy. One that can zap credibility faster than bad police work or sleeping around or both."¹⁶⁷ When it comes to sensitivity, Castillo makes Kate mention that it is the *female* cop who feels threatened by tears. Therefore, directly highlighting Kate's gender in this regard. Moreover, she portrays Kate as an officer who does not hesitate to show anger and use aggression while fearing and concealing her vulnerability. According to Tyson, "anger and other violent emotions are the only emotions permitted, even encouraged, in men"¹⁶⁸ in a stereotypical patriarchal outlook on gender roles. Tyson continues by explaining how effective anger is in suppressing fear and pain that are not allowed to maintain masculine perception.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, Castillo seems to mold Kate's emotions according to rather masculine standards.

Several aspects have been established here to play a role in the formation of Kate's emotionality. First, it is her Amish background that prompts her strong emotions, not only empathy, but also anger: "I know full well anger has no place in police work. But the part of me that is Amish is outraged that some unthinking moron would try to capture such a private, heartbreaking moment for the sake of entertainment."¹⁷⁰ In this situation, Kate shows her deep sympathies for the community when its integrity is disrupted. Secondly, it is Kate's gender image that influences her emotional appearance: "Relinquishing control of your emotions is the ultimate bad form for a female cop. Especially a female in a position of command."¹⁷¹ Castillo here brings attention to gender expectations for women in positions of power. Although it would have been equally uncharacteristic for a male cop to relinquish control of his emotions, it is only the female gender that is actually expected to fail in that way. Although Kate often fails to control her emotions, she realizes that it is unacceptable, especially in her position as a female police officer.

¹⁶⁵ Šárka Bubíková, "The Destruction of the Idyll: Linda Castillo's and Jodi Picoult's Amish Crime Fiction," *Ars Aeterna* 13, no. 1 (June 1st, 2021): 11.

¹⁶⁶ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 236.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 88.

¹⁶⁹ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 88.

¹⁷⁰ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 128.

¹⁷¹ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 230.

Furthermore, her vulnerabilities are in correlation with an earlier tradition of female private eyes whose “vulnerability is in places acknowledged,”¹⁷² despite their detective success.

This brings us back to Kate’s contrasting roles and how her emotions can sometimes stand in the way. Kate has to remind herself of her position as a police officer several times during both novels and even though “[she] tr[ies] to look at the body with the unaffected eye of a cop, [...] [her] emotions and the revulsion inside [her] are like a beast pounding its cage door.”¹⁷³ Castillo seems to highlight female emotionality as one of the main factors that stand in the way of female agency.

Regarding other female characters in the novels, there are few. Kate’s position as a powerful female leader is in contrast to young female murder victims. However, except for Kate, there are no other female officers. The handful of other women involved with the police station then play rather subordinate secretary-like roles. Significantly, Castillo places young women in the position of victims. By doing so, she does not seem to be complying with the victimization of women, but rather bringing attention to the dangers of male dominance and inequality between the genders. On the whole, she no longer portrays women as the “dangerous Other that must be contained and controlled.”¹⁷⁴

Although there is not much space dedicated to the feminine influence on Kate, two female bonds that strongly influenced the formation of Kate’s identity must be mentioned. Firstly, it was Kate’s relationship with her mother. Despite being Amish, her mother supported Kate even after her excommunication from the community. Kate claims to have “always shared a special bond,”¹⁷⁶ with her *Mamm* and that “she’d always been supportive of [her] when others have not.”¹⁷⁷ Castillo here shows how motherly love can surpass even strict Amish religious restrictions, as Kate’s mother “never stopped loving [her]”¹⁷⁸ and even violated the *Ordnung*, the rules of Amish church district, to support her. The mother-daughter relationship seems to pose as a building stone of Kate’s power, while her bonds to men have been severely damaged since her childhood. In words of Lee Horsley, “the juxtaposition of parental figures functions to develop a critique of a male-dominated society which is in a part played out as a conflict

¹⁷² Gavin, “Feminist Crime Fiction,” 265.

¹⁷³ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 147.

¹⁷⁴ Reddy, ‘Women Detectives,’ 194.

¹⁷⁶ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 50.

¹⁷⁷ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 51.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

between the formative influences of mothers and fathers.”¹⁷⁹ Another female influence on Kate was her friend Gina Colorosa. She was a ‘bad girl’ figure in Kate’s life who “taught [her] how not to be Amish”¹⁸⁰ and all the things Kate had been warned about, “smoking, drinking, cussing.”¹⁸¹ Gina impersonates a secondary mother figure in Kate’s new ‘English’ life. Both women also played a role in Kate’s career as Gina introduced her to law enforcement and the police academy, and it was only after her mother’s breast cancer diagnosis that Kate returned to Painters Mill and became the police chief. Castillo seems to indirectly highlight the importance of female bonds for women in general and for women in positions of power. Therefore, hinting at the feminist concept of “*sisterhood*— psychological and political bonding among women based on the recognition of common experiences and goals.”¹⁸²

John Tomasetti is a field agent called in from the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation to help Kate with murder investigations. While he gives the impression of a typical cold, stoic agent and he “[...] can be a hard, cynical man”¹⁸³ who has substantial personal issues and baggage. He is actually not portrayed according to the stereotypical standards of a patriarchal man at all. Tyson, in her analysis of patriarchy and gender roles, claims that “men are not permitted to fail at anything they try because failure in any domain implies failure in one’s manhood.”¹⁸⁴ However, John Tomasetti fails in many respects. First and foremost, he failed his family. His wife and two little daughters were tortured, raped, and burned alive by a criminal John was chasing after. John failed to protect and save his family as a husband and father and, therefore, failed in his masculinity. Moreover, as a consequence, he started failing in his job and his mental health started failing him. By burdening him with such a heart-breaking experience, Castillo might be highlighting his strength after all, as he managed to somehow recover, however, by burdening him with mental issues, something notoriously feminine, Castillo seems to rather retreat from the stereotypical portrayal of men. In Kate’s words, “to say that he has issues would be an understatement.”¹⁸⁵ Castillo seems to have burdened him with severe anxiety attacks to subvert the assumption that men are born masculine and that people with such issues are weak and feminine. Tyson mentions the example of hysteria

¹⁷⁹ Horsley, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, 252.

¹⁸⁰ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 51.

¹⁸¹ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 290.

¹⁸² Tyson, *A Critical theory Today*, 106.

¹⁸³ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 229.

¹⁸⁴ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 87.

¹⁸⁵ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 176.

which is deemed “a female problem”¹⁸⁶ even though it is “a patriarchal assumption, rather than a fact.”¹⁸⁷ The same then applies to the anxiety attacks. In the context of his mental health, however, John Tomasetti maintains his manly image as he feels he is “humiliating himself”¹⁸⁸ by attending his therapy sessions.

Bernadette Manuelito is the main character in mysteries by Anne Hillerman and our next focus. Hillerman’s fiction set in the Navajo world is, in general, substantially different from Castillo’s fiction. While Castillo emphasizes the striking juxtaposition of violence and Amish idyl, Hillerman does not make any use of such articulate violence. Her stories are rather centered on a true mystery and the investigative process itself, with an emphasis on the environment, landscape, myth and traditions.

The main character, Bernadette Manuelito, then seems to embody a rather romantic woman in comparison to Kate Burkholder. As a young married officer at the Navajo Nation, working and living happily with her husband, she seems to lead a more conventional life. Although Hillerman did not gift Bernie with such articulately masculine qualities, she opted for more subtle, and perhaps conventional assets of her personality to help her acquire and promote her power. Her name, again, already hints at empowerment and leadership qualities. Manuelito was a chief of the Navajo tribe who led his people to fight against the oppression of the United States and “remained a steady leader and visionary for [the Navajo] people.”¹⁸⁹ Similarly, Bernie has leadership qualities and executes them, despite being seemingly disempowered in her profession by male authority many times. Bernie, as compared to Kate, is not a woman in leading position which, however, does not disempower her. In fact, before Anne Hillerman made her the main character, she only served a role of a “girlfriend/gopher,”¹⁹⁰ however, Hillerman made her a real female detective with a voice and finally made her solve a case. Although Bernie possesses leadership qualities, we follow her story of early stages in her law enforcement career, and therefore we rather follow a story of her blossoming and development into an independent officer. This fact, however, makes Bernie’s character more believable, as she is not portrayed as unlikely super-successful for her age.

¹⁸⁶ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 86.

¹⁸⁷ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 86.

¹⁸⁸ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 107.

¹⁸⁹ Carlyle Begay, “Guest Essay: Chief Manuelito’s Words are Still True Today,” *Navajo Times*, December 4th, 2014.

¹⁹⁰ Anne Hillerman, interview by Jennifer Davin, Washington D.C, August 30th, 2014.

Unlike Castillo's Kate, Bernie does not have any experience with shooting a gun. In fact, she even expresses a concern about the possibility that she "depend[s] on a gun she had never fired before [...]."¹⁹¹ Therefore, compared to Castillo's Kate, she is a rather inexperienced officer. Compared to Kate's image of a 'tough gal,' Bernie is quite the opposite. She does not drink, smoke, or make use of any tough talk. She also does not display any level of violence or aggression; however, she does not hesitate to protect herself or others when necessary. Therefore, Bernie is not a character that bears a substantial resemblance in her actions to the hard-boiled 'tough guy' hero, but rather resembles the feminist detectives who "examine the meanings of violence and treat physical violence as an option they sometimes must use, but prefer not to."¹⁹² It is obvious that Bernie worries about her own capacity for violence and "acts violently only when necessary – usually in self-defence or in the defence of another."¹⁹³ Bernie herself said that "she rarely showed her anger. And she couldn't remember ever being this furious."¹⁹⁴ Although Bernie is not easily triggered into anger, her main source of that sort of frustration is connected to her deep compassion for the Navajo community and also her ingrained values. In this sense, she resembles Castillo's Kate.

Although Bernie does not make an overtly masculine impression with her habits, talk, or behavior, for that matter, she still possesses qualities that could be considered rather masculine. The narrator states that:

Bernie considered herself a practical, down-to-earth person. She liked facts, nailing down loose ends, corralling rowdy details one at a time and closing the case. She wanted to make the world a better place, not with art but in a concrete way. Her contribution as a police officer was to help make sure people like her mother and [her sister] could live in peace.¹⁹⁵

The quote is Bernie's self-perception. Many of those qualities could be described since rather masculine, as rationality and practicality are stereotypically considered male attributes. Her persistence and penchant for detail are all great predispositions for an officer, and nowhere does she stress her gender. Compared to Kate, who acts more individualistically, Bernie seems to rather stress her contribution to the overall team effort typical for police procedurals. Moreover, Bernie does not mention having to work hard to earn her reputation or credibility as a female

¹⁹¹ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 277–278.

¹⁹² Reddy, "Women detectives," 198.

¹⁹³ Reddy, "Women detectives," 199.

¹⁹⁴ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 41.

¹⁹⁵ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 240.

officer. Although she is not a woman in a leading position, it still implies a rather easier process of earning respect within the Navajo environment as compared to the bureaucratic scene in the United States. In addition, Hillerman uses other forms of establishing Bernie's agency, such as her university education, when she uses her knowledge to successfully solve a case.

Similarly to Castillo, Hillerman employs alternating parts for her female and male protagonists. Hillerman, however, does not employ the first-person narrative for her female protagonist, hence not distinguishing the distinctly female point of view. Instead, she uses third-person omniscient narration for the whole story, making Bernie and her husband, Jim Chee, equal counterparts in the story.

What distinguishes Bernie substantially from not only Kate, but many other contemporary female protagonists in crime fiction are her extensive family and communal ties. Both male detectives of the hard-boiled tradition and female adaptations of them were characteristic for "a lack of family ties."¹⁹⁶ However, "an extended connection with family"¹⁹⁷ is, one of the main characteristic features that Knight assigns to the modern, professional, female protagonists in the American crime fiction. The overt presence of familial and communal ties in her life is just another of many ways in which she deviates from the earlier tendency of creating rather masculine female characters acting as men. Bernie's feminine qualities and bonds are, in contrast, acknowledged. Bernie, in fact, possesses an abundance of family and community bonds. Her primary family bonds are represented by her mother and sister, Darleen.

The centrality of the mother character alone is significant, as, according to Bertend and D'haen, "[that] distinguishes female crime fiction from its male counterparts in which the mother only rarely appears and is usually dead if she really is a presence."¹⁹⁸ Castillo and Hillerman both remove their female protagonists from the "standard white female investigator, who either no longer has a mother [...] or else knows how to neutralize her mother's nagging."¹⁹⁹ Although it would be expected from Kate's mother to judge Kate for leaving the Amish community and joining the police academy, Kate claims that her mother "disapproved, but she never judged."²⁰⁰ Therefore, even after her mother's death, Kate remembers her as a loving and supportive mother.

¹⁹⁶ Bubíková and Roebuck, "Female Investigators," 91.

¹⁹⁷ Knight, *Crime Fiction since 1800*, 167.

¹⁹⁸ Bertens and D'haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 60.

¹⁹⁹ Bertens and D'haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 208–209.

²⁰⁰ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 51.

Hillerman chose a completely different approach and put her protagonist into a complex family environment where her mother takes an active part in the story. Rather than trying to neutralize her nagging, Bernie respects her mother, takes care of her, and consults with her.

The secondary family then consists of Bernie and her husband, Jim Chee. In addition, she has substantial ties within the Navajo tribe in terms of kinship and friendship. However, these “believable human connections”²⁰¹ are nothing new to the more recent hard-boiled fiction, and “some of the contemporary female crime fiction writers picture their protagonists functioning within a complex family context.”²⁰² While, on the one hand, it might seem like compliance with the traditional family model, Hillerman seems to highlight Bernie’s ability to juggle many roles at the same time. Moreover, her compliance to domesticity is deeply rooted in the traditional Navajo lifestyle which both Bernie and Chee value and cherish. However, the fact that her primary family is composed of women only is interesting. Even when mentioning her childhood, Bernie recalls that “she had been wrapped in love by her grandmother, her mother, mother’s sisters, and maternal uncles. Her father’s family, too, had taken an interest in her.”²⁰³ While naming all the female influences from her maternal part of her family, she mentions her paternal influence rather matter-of-factly. Hillerman seems to pay tribute to the matriarchal heritage of the Navajo tribe.

Similarly to Kate, Bernie finds herself in between different roles in her life. In addition to being an adept officer, she is a wife, a daughter, and a sister. Since her mother is battling arthritis and the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease, Bernie takes on the role of caretaker for her mother and her younger sister. The presence of the personal domain in crime fiction is a factor in female crime fiction. The involvement of the protagonist’s family especially, is assigned by Bertens and D’haen to “almost exclusively women detectives.”²⁰⁴ The emphasis on family togetherness and Bernie’s obligation towards her family is apparent when, in the words of Bernie’s mother: “You have to take care of [your little sister]. That is why we have families, relatives. We have to take care of each other.”²⁰⁵ In this sense, Bernie appears to be portrayed in a similar way to “a number of childless women detectives [who] have more or less pledged themselves to look

²⁰¹ Bubíková and Roebuck, “Female Investigators,” 92.

²⁰² Bubíková and Roebuck, “Female Investigators,” 92.

²⁰³ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 42.

²⁰⁴ Bertens and D’haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 59.

²⁰⁵ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 235.

after a child's welfare."²⁰⁶ Furthermore, Bertens and D'haen mention some authors who put their female protagonists in the role of a surrogate mother. Although Bernie does not exactly take on that role, as she takes care of her biological sister, it could still be seen as a form of empowerment and also female solidarity.²⁰⁷

Although she does not have any children herself, Bernie is already a motherly figure. Furthermore, although not explicitly mentioned, motherhood is expected of her, since although "mama never directly brought up the idea of Bernie becoming a mother, [...] Bernie felt the unasked question lurking in the corners of their conversations."²⁰⁸ This shows the traditional expectations of women becoming wives and mothers, which are a reflection of patriarchal male desire.²⁰⁹ The idea of motherhood is also related to the motif of a home. Traditionally, women are seen as the home creators, and home is considered to be where the woman is. This issue seems to be a concern for Bernie's husband who "heard her use the word *home* for her mother's house. When would his house, their house, be home? Maybe with a kid or two playing outside?"²¹⁰ His fears then seem to support the idea that "[women] are unfulfilled as women if they don't have children."²¹¹ Bernie herself, however, does not specifically express any desire to have children.

Bernie often finds herself balancing between her personal and professional life, as those two domains intertwine substantially. Her ever-present police principles can create a tension between Bernie and her sister since Darleen is "sick of Miz Law n Order who knows every single goddamn thing pickin' on [her] for everything [she] do[es]"²¹² when Bernie lectures her little sister. Similarly, when Bernie and Chee are leaving for their vacation, "[she] almost wish[es] [they] could have put off [their] trip just so [she] could find out what that [criminal] was up to."²¹³ This implies her persistence and the ever presence of her role as a police officer. In connection to this, Hillerman seems to make an analogy of finding the professional/personal balance with the process of weaving which is so important for the Navajo heritage:

²⁰⁶ Bertens and D'haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 59.

²⁰⁷ Bertens and D'haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 62.

²⁰⁸ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 52.

²⁰⁹ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 89–90.

²¹⁰ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 33.

²¹¹ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 97.

²¹² Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 234.

²¹³ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 17.

As she drove, she thought about weaving. Making beautiful rugs took supple hands and multilevel thinking. Traditional Navajo weavers like her mother held several ideas in their mind simultaneously, moving one to the forefront and then another, focusing on details while simultaneously remembering the big picture and making the process seamless.²¹⁴

This quote seems to reflect analogously, especially Bernie's police proceedings and her persistence and penchant for detail. In her job, she also has to focus on many ideas and clues at the same time and use them to put the case together piece by piece. With this quote, the connection between her traditional values and the Navajo history with her professional career is drawn.

Bernie then seems to draw her power mainly from her communal connections. Hillerman emphasizes community rather than individuality. Various relationships appear to be an asset in Bernie's profession rather than a liability. The family that other authors often reject as a primary source of patriarchal oppression seems to be the main source of Bernie's professional qualities as a police officer.

Chee teased that Bernie had her mother's tenacity when it came to working on a police case. "You're just like her," he said. "You work on a case, bit by bit, line by line, and you keep going until you figure out what's what. Spider Woman's daughter, weaving together the threads of the crime."²¹⁵

Hillerman not only points out the role of family heritage in Bernie's line of profession, but also brings it together with Navajo heritage. Thus, community and tradition and beautifully explaining the title of the volume is beautifully explained. Bernie is then portrayed as a woman who draws her professional qualities from tradition and a family background.

Furthermore, she is found to refer to both her professional and personal duties as 'her job:' "[Her] job is to make sure that Mama is safe,"²¹⁶ while "[her] job is to help keep other people stay safe, too."²¹⁷ By calling her family obligations 'her job,' Bernie attaches a negative connotation to it. These split loyalties then seem to be drawing attention to the often-unrealistic expectations of empowered women to tackle both domestic and professional roles. While no such thing is expected of men "many [...] women are still bound by patriarchal gender roles in

²¹⁴ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 239.

²¹⁵ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 52.

²¹⁶ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 33.

²¹⁷ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 184.

the home, which they must now fulfill in addition to their career goals.”²¹⁸ As Tyson puts it, “patriarchal gender roles have not been eliminated by modern women’s entrance into the male-dominated work-place, even if some of those women now hold what used to be traditionally male jobs.”²¹⁹ Moreover, Bernie even draws the reader’s attention to the expected gender roles in relation to her male colleagues when she mentions that “the men in the department didn’t have the complication of dealing with their mothers. Their sisters and aunts and maybe even their wives handled that.”²²⁰ Hillerman seems to be drawing our attention to the stereotypical split between women being expected to be the domestic caretakers while men are assigned the role of the breadwinner in the family. In *Rock with Wings*, Bernie even says that “sometimes she wished she’d had a big brother instead of a little sister,” therefore, wishing for the rather protective and independent male element in her family, which she would not have to take care of. Although the roles of her and Chee seem to be equal at their home, she also expressed her frustration over the fact that “she ought to be helping Chee. Not with the vacuuming. With the case.”²²¹

Despite being stereotyped into domesticity on the one hand, Bernie manages to establish her agency in the professional sphere of her life. Especially in *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, where Bernie appears as a key witness in the shooting of her mentor Joe Leaphorn, she finds a way to investigate and eventually solve the case, despite being taken off it. It is the male authority that holds her back. However, it is executed through the official procedures of law enforcement and as her supervisor, Captain Largo says to Bernie: “If you were a man, I’d treat you the same. Same as any officer who is there when a brother goes down. Don’t start thinking this is sexist or something. It’s normal procedure.”²²² Hillerman therefore highlights the police procedures that support equal treatment and position of men and women within the Navajo police force. Hillerman eventually replaces the motif of a ‘heroic man’ with the motif of a ‘heroic woman’ as it is, actually, Bernie who rushes to save the life of her husband endangered by a female criminal in *Spider Woman’s Daughter*. However, even though the position of men and women within the Navajo police force might seem equal, the Rotary representative with whom Bernie communicates about her upcoming speech stresses her excitement about a woman being sent to

²¹⁸ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 91.

²¹⁹ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 91.

²²⁰ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 68.

²²¹ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 233.

²²² Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 17.

give the speech. As a Navajo and a woman, Bernie still seems to be a rare example and the Rotary woman “know[s] people will have a lot of interesting questions for [Bernie] about[her] job and how [she] became a police officer.”²²³

In the professional sphere, Bernie has difficulty negotiating the line between personal and professional. Similarly to Kate, her personal involvement in her job is connected to her intimate knowledge of the Navajo community. Therefore, when being taken off the case she feels that Largo “is punishing [her] by taking [her] off the case.”²²⁴ Her personal involvement in her job then sparks strong emotions. Regarding emotionality, Hillerman portrays Bernie as a level-headed, rational, emotionally intelligent woman. She seems to be in better control of her emotions than Castillo’s Kate and, although she attempts not to, she does let herself cry compared to Kate, who “deprived [herself] that outlet for so many years [she] can’t.”²²⁶ It seems to be an outlet of emotions that occur naturally in private situations, and that she does not feel the need to fight. Her personal involvement with her job then sparks strong emotions of regret and self-blame, which even prompt her to call herself an “incompetent fraud.”²²⁷ In the investigation process of the Leaphorn shooting, Bernie, as the first responder on the scene, reflects on the situation: “If I’d run a little faster, I could have gotten a better description of the shooter. Maybe gotten a shot off.”²²⁸ She refers to her personal doubts about her own physical and professional fitness, which, however, stem from her personal involvement in the case. Furthermore, she expresses her concern for the community and teamwork as she “could have saved [them] all a bunch of grief.”²²⁹ However, she values the intertwined quality of those two dimensions and realizes that “if she hadn’t become a cop [...] she never would have met Chee, the man who made her life beautiful.”²³⁰

Chee himself is a “smart, competent husband.”²³² Although Bernie initially played the role of his girlfriend/wife and was therefore stereotyped into the position of a love interest, now their roles seem to be equalized in the professional environment. He is a very thorough officer who is devoted to his job as he is to his wife. By showing not only his professional qualities, but also

²²³ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 252.

²²⁴ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 41.

²²⁶ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 151.

²²⁷ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 42.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 240.

²³² Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 20.

his feelings and affection for Bernie, Hillerman makes him a balanced mix of masculine and feminine qualities, therefore dissociating him from articulately masculine hard-boiled tradition. Chee, like Bernie, is a Navajo and perhaps even more deeply rooted in the traditions than Bernie is. Despite being a male protagonist in a traditionally masculine genre, Chee exhibits qualities traditionally associated with femininity, such as empathy, introspection, and a strong connection to nature and spirituality. It is mainly his willingness to embrace the Navajo heritage and include the traditional teachings and practices not only to his personal but also his professional life that challenge traditional gender roles and notions of masculinity, which prioritize male aggression and physical strength. Compared to the ‘tough guy,’ Chee is portrayed as a rather emotional man. In *Spider Woman’s Daughter* Bernie mentions that “his eyes pooled with tears,” or that “the tears in his eyes matched her own.”²³³ His emotionality apparently stems from his spirituality and deep connection to the Navajo tradition, as his tears appear in relation to them. The first situation occurs when Bernie and Chee are observing a sacred rug from Navajo history, and the second emotional situation arises when Chee performs a sacred healing ritual for Lieutenant Leaphorn, which would be expected of a woman rather than a man. Moreover, Hillerman has Chee publicly display his affection and love to Bernie. Their affection is manifested mainly through words of affirmation and mutual support. Hillerman portrays him as a loving, thoughtful, supporting husband who does not epitomize any male dominance over Bernie, unless it is in his job description. For these reasons, Chee represents both masculine and feminine qualities and subverts the gender binary.

4.2.1. The (Professional) Partnership

The expression “detective ‘partnership’ connotes shared responsibilities; it implies equivalent if not equal participation; it presupposes mutual respect and trust; it suggests an equality between partners.”²³⁴ While the partnership between a man and a woman is nothing new to the crime-fiction genre, the equality of those partners is usually lacking.²³⁵ Castillo and Hillerman, however, use very different types of partnerships which are quite uncommon and definitely not entirely professional.

²³³ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 294.

²³⁴ Klein, *The Woman Detective*, 186.

²³⁵ Bubíková and Roebuck, “Female Investigators,” 95.

The partnership in Linda Castillo's novels develops gradually. The reader is first introduced to the story from the first-person point of view and therefore assumes her primary role in the story. The male protagonist, John Tomasetti, is then introduced in the first fifth of the book, and the reader gets to witness the development of their professional and personal relationship starting from resentment and developing into a romantic relationship.

Kathleen Gregory Klein comments on the male-female partnerships in the twentieth century, where she clearly denotes the dominant role of the male detective. "The detective is the novel's hero not only in structural terms but also in the content, tone, and impact of the story. His deduction, ratiocination, intuition, charm, class, and talent (choose several) are not shared by his associates; he is the superstar while they are the supporting cast."²³⁶ Although the police procedural, according to Klein, "attempts to establish a team approach to detection,"²³⁷ the varying degrees of power are still apparent while certain characters lack their power and there is still an easily recognizable 'main star.' What used to apply to male detectives in crime fiction of the previous century seems to apply to Castillo's female appropriation of the police procedural in the 21st century.

Kate is indisputably portrayed as the main star; although she values her colleagues within the police department, she is their chief, which establishes her supremacy in one way. As she herself claims while assigning tasks to them in the beginning of a difficult murder case in *Sworn to Silence*: "I'd rather do it myself; I've never been good at delegating."²³⁸ This shows her inability to bequeath responsibilities to her officers, and thereby discrediting them, as it implies her feeling that she would have done a better job herself and indirectly claiming supremacy.

Although Klein sees crime fiction featuring male-female partnership in the twentieth century as a "familiar tale of female-male inequality and of male privilege and power contrasted with female limitations,"²³⁹ Castillo manages to successfully break through this stereotype and establish female agency in her fiction. One way in which she does so is through the narration and the point of view. As already mentioned, she uses first-person narration for parts narrated from the point of view of the main female character, while she uses third-person narration for parts narrated from the point of view of the main male character. While in the previous tradition,

²³⁶ Klein, *The Woman Detective*, 185.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 41.

²³⁹ Klein, *The Woman Detective*, 187.

the authors chose the first-person narration for the male partner to establish his dominance and reduce the female partner to a secondary position,²⁴⁰ Castillo did that with the roles reversed. By choosing the first-person narration for Kate, she clearly establishes her primal role in the story and reduces John's by presenting him from the point of view.

Although Kate's dominant role is clearly established by the narration of the story, there are discrepancies between her and Tomasetti's roles within the professional environment. His position as a male agent from a superior investigation agency whose professional help Kate had to accept involuntarily already makes him a possible threat to her. However, their roles seem to be later evened out by the mutuality of their mental baggage. Although both are burdened by a past traumatic experience that continues to haunt them at present, the trauma seems to have affected them in very different ways. While Kate's past rape has made her into a stronger, powerful, emancipated woman, the murders of John's wife and daughters have almost broken him down and severely disabled him in his personal and professional life. "John hated what he'd become. A sick parody of the man he'd once been. A fucking junkie. Everything he despised. Weak. Dependent. Pathetic."²⁴¹ By describing him in such a manner, using stereotypically feminine adjectives, Castillo subverts the stereotypical perception of masculinity and femininity. By the different responses to their past trauma, the female-male inequality seems to have been evened out. While Kate's experience has made her stronger, John's trauma has made him weaker. By highlighting his vulnerability, Castillo subverts the stereotypical notions of male strength and masculinity. At the same time, by highlighting Kate's mental strength, she also subverts the traditional notion of femininity. By doing so, she undermines stereotypes and evens out their status.

The relationship itself feels inappropriate and unexpected. At first, it makes an impression of Castillo wanting to negotiate the utter violence of her fiction with a thrilling affair. However, the romantic subplot does seem to serve an important literary purpose, after all. It makes room for exploration of topics of intimacy and vulnerability connected to healing of past trauma, and most importantly it allows for the exploration of both characters and character development. Kate and John bond primarily over their past traumas, which allows them to confide in one another and provides an opportunity to heal and grow together.

²⁴⁰ Klein, *The Woman Detective*, 187.

²⁴¹ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 77.

However, the relationship also poses a threat to Kate's independence. In *Sworn to Silence*, she seems to be overcome by their mutual attraction and her feelings, while in *Pray for Silence*, she keeps her distance when their paths cross again as she might realize a possible threat to her independence. According to Maureen T. Reddy commenting on female investigators in crime fiction, "relationships with men are always possible threats to their hard-won autonomy and independence."²⁴² Kate and John have issues communicating with each other when it comes to intimacy and commitment due to obvious past traumas. However, Kate's inability to voice her feelings seems to be influenced by her independence being threatened. Kate de facto admits such concern in *Pray for Silence* when she states: "I'm honest enough to know that at least part of the reason I don't want to talk to him at this minute is because I need him. Such is the nature of our relationship. The thought of needing anyone scares the hell out of me."²⁴³

Tomasetti also serves as an important validation of Kate's qualities. Although he admits that their relationship could pose a problem for both and that "he had enough problems just getting through the day without taking on a complicated woman,"²⁴⁴ he also claims that "she was one of the most interesting women he'd ever met. She was tough, capable, and attractive as hell. This from a man who was not easily swayed by a pretty face."²⁴⁵ By providing his point of view, Castillo seems to validate Kate's strengths. Moreover, she seems to provide explanations for their rather unlikely relationship.

Then, their communicative issues result in difficult situations even in the professional domain. Although they seem to not let their personal affair affect the investigation in any way, Kate's communication problems persist in her job resulting in putting not only herself in danger, but also her officers. By failing to communicate her arrest plans to Tomasetti, who is still a more experienced agent, she puts herself and her team in danger. Castillo then seems to opt for a rather clichéd way of portraying Kate as not equally rational and logical as Tomasetti. Her errors in judgement then result in Tomasetti rushing to save her life in each book. In this sense, Castillo seems to conform to the stereotype of a 'heroic man' and a woman in need of rescue. Therefore, Castillo seems to be, to a certain degree, still influenced by romance novels, which is the genre she started with as an author. However, though in different ways, they seem to be saving each

²⁴² Reddy, "Women detectives," 198.

²⁴³ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 104.

²⁴⁴ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 109.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

other. While Tomasetti saves Kate's life quite literally, she saved his life by giving him hope again as "he may not have survived if it hadn't been for Kate. Somehow, she'd managed to cut through the bullshit when no one else had been able to reach him. She made him want to be a cop again. Made him want to live. Made him want to be a man."²⁴⁶ What exactly that entails to 'be a man' in this sense is unclear. Although his desire to 'be a man again' appears to stem from being able to engage in an intimate relationship again, it could also be related to the frailty and vulnerability caused by his trauma. After meeting Kate, he begins to feel a desire to be the strong, masculine man again. By giving Kate that power, Castillo portrays Kate as a sort of 'heroic woman,' as she managed to save Tomasetti's life without even actively trying to do so.

Anne Hillerman uses yet another approach to partnership in her fiction. While in Castillo's novel, we see the gradual emergence and development of the professional and personal relationship between Kate and John, we encounter Bernie and Chee as a complete 'unit'. Although Reddy concludes that detective adventures generally end with the marriage of the female protagonist,²⁴⁷ this is not the case for Bernie. Quite on the contrary, her detective adventures merely start with her marriage, as it was only after that that Anne Hillerman made her the protagonist of her fiction.

As Castillo does, Hillerman also uses the narration technique to break the stereotype of twentieth-century crime fiction. By using the third-person narration for both Bernie and Chee, she establishes a maximum equality between the two, even though she dedicates separate parts to them. Although they even investigate different cases, they stay connected through communication, and it often feels like they are investigating together. Therefore, they work as a small and effective team within the larger discourse of the police department. Although they are a part of the bigger team of police officers, Hillerman does not give much space to the actual inner workings of the department in her novels and, therefore, gives more space to Bernie and Chee almost working like a small investigative unit together.

By integrating the personal domain as such a vital part in her fiction, Hillerman fits into the tradition of female crime writing, where "by the mid-1990s this intrusion of the personal had become one of the major developments in recent crime writing."²⁴⁸ The introduction of real-life

²⁴⁶ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 54.

²⁴⁷ Reddy, "Women detectives," 192.

²⁴⁸ Bertens and D'haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 59.

personal issues into the detective's lives then gives the fiction a façade of reality compared to previous notoriously impersonal crime writing.²⁴⁹ In Hillerman's fiction, it actually seems that it is the personal life that drives both detectives to action and the main asset in their professional careers. The personal aspect is then further reinforced by the Navajo culture, where both Bernie and Chee are deeply rooted.

The situations in which the personal and the professional meet often humble Bernie and lead her to realizations or her gratitude. According to Bertens and D'haen, in the female crime writing "[...] the personal and the professional [...] do not simply exist side by side, as is usually the case, but gradually become entangled with each other, leading to often fundamental confrontations and insights."²⁵⁰ This is precisely true for Bernie and Chee, as their personal and professional domains are nearly inseparable. Bernie, for example, comes to a realization that "her husband would always love his work. She could be jealous of the passion, or accept it as something she'd known about him from the first day they met. It was who he was. And, she thought, loving his job didn't mean that he didn't love her, too."²⁵¹ This shows how detective adventures do not end with the marriage of either of the two. On the contrary, they often seem to put their personal lives and their relationship first, before their jobs. It shows in *Spider Woman's Daughter* when they meet in the police department after the shooting of their beloved mentor, Lieutenant Leaphorn: "He hugged her fiercely, without any more words, and she hugged back, forgetting she was in uniform, at work, with other cops around."²⁵² This clearly shows the superiority of their intimate relationship over the professional one. Another example is when "[Bernie] thought [they'd] talk business after pleasure."²⁵³ Again, expressing the primal role of the personal domain despite caring deeply about her work and the particular case as well. Even further into the story, Bernie says: "If we didn't work together, we'd hardly see each other,"²⁵⁴ again highlighting the importance of their personal relationship and connection.

However, their personal relationship, which is marked by equality of the partners, also contrasts with the professional partnership when, occasionally, Bernie has to submit to the dominant role of her husband at work. In *Spider Woman's Daughter*, Chee is put in charge of the investigation,

²⁴⁹ Bertens and D'haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 59.

²⁵⁰ Bertens and D'haen, *Contemporary American Crime Fiction*, 62.

²⁵¹ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 240.

²⁵² Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 18.

²⁵³ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 106.

²⁵⁴ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 188.

and Bernie recalls that despite him having every right to tell her what to do, “she bristled at taking orders from him,”²⁵⁵ thus showing the unusuality of them not being equals. Situations like that can cause frustration from his side as his professional respect is undermined: “Go ahead [...] why don’t you just take charge? I’ll keep looking through files, tracking down dead ends, spinning my wheels.”²⁵⁶ In addition, his frustration is sparked by an inappropriate flirting and expressions of affection of a married FBI agent, Jerry Cordova, towards Bernie. However, Chee is ultimately grateful for Bernie’s savvy and persistence when he acknowledges her merits: “You saved my life. You solved the case.”²⁵⁷ As it would generally be the ‘heroic man’ and not a woman who does the solving and saving, Hillerman subverts the stereotype by portraying her protagonists in opposite roles. Furthermore, Bernie and Jim’s personal bond seems to strengthen their professional partnership.

However, their intimate relationship also seems to be the main asset in the professional sphere. Brainstorming, mutual support, and cooperation are the main assets of their partnership. Mostly in *Rock with Wings*, when they get separated from each other professionally by working on separate cases in separate locations, they keep each other up-to-date and are an important asset to each other’s investigative efforts. Bernie expresses that “she wished Chee were there, or at least someplace she could reach him, so they could brainstorm.”²⁵⁸ This is especially significant as according to Klein many authors of the twentieth century crime fiction undermined the female investigators by not only the narrative style but also by letting the male detective solve the cases nearly by himself.²⁵⁹ In Hillerman’s fiction, both Bernie and Chee express the desire and need to consult and cooperate with each other, thus facilitating their progress.

The partnership between Bernie and Chee is built on mutual respect and trust. Hillerman portrays them as a couple of truly equal individuals who serve as a safe space and incentive for a personal growth to one another. Bernie recalls Jim’s uncle who wished for Jim to find “a Strong woman [...] who isn’t afraid of his power or of her own power.”²⁶⁰ Bernie further reflects that:

²⁵⁵ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 29.

²⁵⁶ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 187.

²⁵⁷ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 292.

²⁵⁸ Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 72.

²⁵⁹ Klein, *The Woman Detective*, 191.

²⁶⁰ Hillerman, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, 78.

In the two years of marriage, Chee had blossomed into his own gentle power. She saw his fierce sense of brotherhood with his fellow officers and his dedication to the people they all served. Some policemen grew cynical with the exposure to so much evil, but Chee became more determined to make things right.[...] He took the responsibility to help restore the land and its people to harmony seriously.²⁶¹

In this quote, it shows how their relationship serves as a soil for the personal growth of both them and how directly it, in fact, affects their police work. By mentioning Chee's 'gentle power,' Hillerman highlights both his masculine and feminine side. As a man and a police officer, Chee is powerful. However, his connection to traditions and the relationship with his wife mold him into not only a gentle man, but also a gentle police officer.

Hillerman also mentions extended family connections. Chee realizes "how lucky he [is] to have a wife who care[s] for her relatives and who expanded the circle to include his relatives [...]."²⁶² Hillerman then portrays both detectives with extended connections not only their own families, but also to the families of each other. Bernie even mentions an opinion that her mother has about Chee: "Mama liked Chee, his traditional, respectful ways, his courtesy towards her and his sense of humor."²⁶³ Their relationship explores themes of partnership, family, vulnerability, and emotional complexity. By highlighting the depths of their personal connection in their partnership, Hillerman defies simplistic gender stereotypes and portrays their relationship as nuanced and authentic. Moreover, by giving so much space to the personal aspects in the story to such an extent that they become dominant, and almost take over, she deviates from the traditional police procedural where the main focus would have been on the police proceedings and the professional aspects. Instead, Hillerman emphasizes culture, tradition, emotions, and human connections. Although female investigators are often seen balancing between their marriage and career, forced to choose between the two,²⁶⁴ Bernie seems to have no problems combining them and even benefiting from the combination.

4.2.2. Sexuality and Violence

Linda Castillo's first mystery novel *Sworn to Silence* opens with horrifying insights into a young woman's mind moments before her violent death. Descriptions of rape and torture culminate in

²⁶¹ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 78–79.

²⁶² Hillerman, *Rock with Wings*, 40.

²⁶³ Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter*, 57.

²⁶⁴ Bubíková and Roebuck, "Female Investigators," 95.

her exsanguination. The fact that Castillo decided to open the story in such a way shows how central violence is in her fiction. What is more, it is violence against women that she emphasizes.

According to Gavin, violence against women is, together with ensemble characters and issues surrounding motherhood, one of the major elements prevalent in twenty-first century feminist crime fiction.²⁶⁵ In *Sworn to Silence*, we encounter the story of a power-corrupted egoistic cop, Sheriff Detrick, who “hates [women], but [...] desires them. In deviant ways.”²⁶⁶ By having him violently torture, rape, and murder his young victims, Castillo brings awareness to violence against women. In *Pray for Silence*, Castillo then uses a team of three culprits who proceed to kill an entire Amish family of seven while drugs, pornography, rape, torture, unwanted pregnancy, and even a snuff film are involved. She goes into even more detail and describes the torture endured by the youngest girl in the family, whose uterus was cut out. Although Castillo indisputably chose such a level of violence to shock the readers by the juxtaposition of the peaceful Amish with the exceptional level of violence, it could be considered a protest against male violence as well. Although feminist crime fiction makes a gendered protest by emphasizing violence against women, Gavin also observes that some authors are using it in their fiction to simply tell it as it is.²⁶⁷ This seems to be the case for Castillo, who rather strives for realism. However, by making her novels abundant with exceptionally graphic descriptions, she sometimes takes it too far.

The level of violence used and its prominence in Castillo’s fiction are another characteristic that resembles the hard-boiled tradition of crime fiction, where “graphic descriptions of violence abound [...].”²⁶⁸ Castillo then might be breaking the gender boundaries, as she makes Kate rather short-tempered and aggressive at times. Although it would be an overexaggeration to describe Kate as violent, she can snap and use violent behavior. Reddy observes that “a man acting violently [in the hardboiled fiction] is behaving within gender boundaries, but a woman behaving violently obviously is not.”²⁶⁹ She further explains how feminist crime fiction redefines the treatment of violence as the unwanted last resort. Kate, however, with the treatment of violence from her side seems to be somewhere in between the hard-boiled and the feminist traditions.

²⁶⁵ Gavin, “Feminist Crime Fiction,” 267.

²⁶⁶ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 189.

²⁶⁷ Gavin, “Feminist Crime Fiction,” 268.

²⁶⁸ Reddy, “Women detectives,” 198.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

As Gavin describes, “women [in feminist crime fiction] are victims: captured, raped, murdered, butchered and in the hands of forensic detectives dissected into evidence.”²⁷⁰ This is exactly the case in Castillo’s novels. However, she takes female victimization to the next level by seeping violence through not only Kate’s professional life but also her private life. Castillo puts Kate in a position where she was raped at the age of fourteen, leading to her killing the perpetrator and even an unwanted pregnancy and abortion. Hence, demonstrating how closely are sexuality, violence, and female issues are linked. Therefore, when Kate encounters a case of a young girl, which is significant in resemblance to her own past, it sparks an intimate emotional response in her: “It’s indescribably sad for me to bear witness to a young Amish girl’s descent into a world she is unequipped to handle. Maybe because I discern echoes of my own past [...]”²⁷¹ Gavin considers unplanned pregnancy, miscarriages, or abortions characteristic issues dealt with by the twenty-first century feminist detectives and concludes that “such personal experiences leave emotional marks upon female sleuths [...]”²⁷² which is Kate’s case. Another example of such a situation was when during the investigation, Kate found out that the murdered family had an oldest son, Aaron, who was excommunicated from the Amish society. Kate proceeded to find out that he was gay and even had a juvenile record for sticking his father with a pitchfork and burning down a barn. This shows the contrast between old-fashioned religious Amish and the modern society and how intolerance and stereotypes can incite violent behavior.

Moreover, Castillo seems to draw our attention to the role that female gender plays in such crimes of violence committed against them. Lois Tyson argues that while our society has finally classified rape as a crime of violence instead of a crime of passion, we still fail to support victims of such mistreatment and she draws our attention to the concept of *blaming the victim*.²⁷³ According to Tyson “we want to believe that it is women’s aggressive or inappropriate or foolish behavior, not their gender, that can get them into trouble” and “there is a lingering belief that the victim must somehow be responsible.”²⁷⁴ Castillo shows how such an overgeneralized approach to such a complex issue can disrupt human relationships and at the same time demonstrates the difference between the old-fashioned beliefs of the Amish and the modern society. The fact that Kate killed her rapist creates a distance between her and her

²⁷⁰ Gavin, “Feminist Crime Fiction,” 268.

²⁷¹ Castillo, *Pray for Silence*, 123.

²⁷² Gavin, “Feminist Crime Fiction,” 268.

²⁷³ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 128.

²⁷⁴ Tyson, *A Critical Theory Today*, 128

brother Jacob. Although she believes that Jacob hates her because he and his father had to cover up the murder and remove the body, Kate finds out that he believes in Kate's responsibility for the rape. Jacob insinuates that it was her fault when he recalls: "[the rapist] looked at you the way a man looks at a woman. Katie, you smiled at him."²⁷⁵ Therefore, Castillo brings our awareness to the way in which society approaches such cases and the belief that men, just for being men are entitled to such violence.

Anne Hillerman, on the other hand, does not emphasize violence in her fiction. In both *Spider Woman's Daughter* and *Rock with Wings*, she refrains from any graphic portrayals of either violence or sexuality. The level of violence of the crimes in her fiction is generally more mellow, and violence does not meet with sexual deviance like in Castillo's novels.

Hillerman emphasizes rather familial and community relationships. As far as personal relationship between Bernie and Chee is considered, Hillerman does not use any vivid descriptions of physical love. In her fiction, sexual tension between characters is rather hinted at, and the portrayal of sexuality is understated. She prefers to emphasize harmonious romantic love and community relationships. Although Hillerman does not aim at the shocking contrast in her books and instead focuses on its educational aspects, graphic displays of sexuality and violence would seem out of place. However, since the book follows the married life of Bernie and Chee closely, it would add to its realism to add a bit more of physicality.

To conclude, while violence in relation to sexuality plays a role of utmost importance and, to a great extent forms the lives of characters in Castillo's novels, Anne Hillerman does not explore such a topic. In connection to the coveted shock effect in Castillo's fiction, the violence connected to sexual deviance set in the peaceful Amish society forms an especially horrifying contrast. Anne Hillerman, on the other hand, does not use any instances of violence, deviation, or mentions of physical contact for that matter. While in Castillo's novels the reader encounters graphically described scenes of abuse, rape, pornography, and even murder, Hillerman does not as much as mention any sexual relations, not even between the central young married couple. The absence of that angle in her fiction supports the emphasis on tradition and spirituality in Hillerman's fiction.

²⁷⁵ Castillo, *Sworn to Silence*, 101.

Conclusion

To conclude, although the history of crime fiction genre is rich, before the 1960s it was dominated by male authors. Since the 1960s onward, together with the arising feminist movement, even the female authors of crime fiction found their recognition. Consequently, a new tradition began to form within the male-dominated genre, both in terms of authors and characters. The tough-guy heroes underwent many feminist appropriations, and new female protagonists emerged.

As the women's movement incited changes in the professional and personal domains and seeped through every facet of our society, a discussion of gender roles followed shortly. Therefore, it is mainly those stereotypically male-dominated environments, such as law enforcement units, that provoked gender appropriation. The female authors then began a journey of creating female detectives that would not feel as mere imitations of the male traditions. Reflecting on the position of women in the male-dominated patriarchal society and employing specific female issues including pregnancy, abortion, violence against women or family relationships, female authors constructed a specifically female point of view. As Lois Tyson discusses, women had to learn how to escape the stereotypical roles and ideas about femininity imposed upon them by patriarchy.

Since the chosen authors Linda Castillo and Anne Hillerman do not promote a specifically feminist agenda, they can be considered liberal feminists. Their fiction depicting strong female characters in positions of power offers itself to gender-based analysis. As both Castillo and Hillerman use male and female protagonists in interaction, the gender dynamics within the police force offers itself to analysis, too.

As both authors set their crime novels in very specific environments, the interaction and interdependence between the environment and the protagonist is one of the main points of interest. It has shown that both authors use the distinctive environment to support women's emancipation. Although in Linda Castillo's novels the Amish society itself is immensely influential on both young and adult life, Anne Hillerman takes the involvement of the environment to another level, and the Navajo culture acts as another character in the novel. However, both authors use the environment as an important factor in their female protagonist's past and present. In other words, the environment does not function as a mere setting, but rather as an unconditional feature in female empowerment.

Amish society brought both a nurturing family environment and violence into the life of Kate Burkholder. However, an experience that was meant to break her, however, served to empower her and spark her emancipation. In the context of the stereotypically patriarchal Amish background, that seems to be an even greater accomplishment of Castillo's young police chief. The Navajo culture in Anne Hillerman's novels then seems to serve as an almost independent character that supports the equality between men and women, while highlighting the analogies of the Navajo principle of harmony and the harmonious lives of Bernie and Chee.

Although Castillo's protagonist Kate might make an impression of a mere imitation of male hard-boiled tradition, her profound empathy sparked by her past involvement with the Amish, and her experience with female oppression constituted by her personal experience with rape make her more than just an imitation. Castillo, in general, employs many specifically female issues such as pornography, substance abuse, female victimization, rape, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, and disrupted family bonds as an origin of inability to form a lasting adult relationship, which are not typically dealt with by male authors. At the same time, Castillo does not shy away from addressing the difficult topics of sexual violence and gendered oppression. Through the depiction of these topics, Castillo explores the realities of women's lives in contemporary society, highlighting the prevalence of gender-based violence. By giving voice to a female character in a position of power, she contributes to broader conversations about gender equality and the ongoing struggle for women's rights.

As far as gender dynamics is concerned, Hillerman chose a rather unusual family situation for a female police officer by which she modernized the genre and its 'limitations'. By situating her protagonist Bernie Manuelito within a marital union while putting her in a position of a caretaker of her mother and sister, Hillerman broke the 'loner' stereotype of both female and male detectives. By showing her protagonist successfully balancing her private and professional life, which are interconnected by the Navajo culture, Hillerman supports female empowerment. By putting Bernie in a situation where she has to balance many different roles, she draws our attention to often unrealistic expectations for emancipated women. Through her portrayal of Bernie, Hillerman presents a multidimensional female protagonist who navigates the challenges of law enforcement, personal relationships, and cultural identity with resilience and integrity.

While Castillo obviously strives for a shocking contrast of utter violence and peaceful Amish, Hillerman rather strives to highlight traditional values and spirituality in her novels. She achieves this not only by highlighting family and marital status, but also by making the Navajo

heritage a vital part of the daily lives of every facet of her protagonists. Through her character, Hillerman explores themes of tradition and modernity and the complexities of the Navajo identity in contemporary society.

Furthermore, the depicted relationships play a significant role in shaping the experiences and life paths of the characters. Whether it is the newly evolving partnership between Kate Burkholder and John Tomasetti or the established and deepening partnership of Bernadette Manuelito and Jim Chee, they offer insight into the complexities of personal and professional connections and intimacy amidst the challenges of law enforcement and crime solving. More importantly, Kate and Bernie are not defined through their relationships with their male counterparts. They are rather fully realized individuals with their own agency.

In conclusion, while both authors use the same form of police procedural to frame their narratives while sharing other distinctive features, they differ mainly in their treatment of individuality and community. The inclination towards one or the other then comes down to the cultural background of the protagonists. Although Kate's rejection by the Amish community drove her to individualism in both the professional and personal spheres, Bernie's rootedness within the Navajo culture and respect for its heritage emphasize community in her professional and personal life. However, both authors challenge the traditional concepts of gender roles. Although Castillo chose to employ striking contrasts to bring awareness to female oppression and violence against women, Hillerman opted for perhaps more realistic and relatable portrayal with emphasis on tradition, community, and landscape.

Resumé

Hlavním cílem této diplomové práce je analyzovat postavy žen policistek ve vybraných románech dvou amerických autorek, Lindy Castillo a Anne Hillerman. Skrze optiku feministické literární kritiky se tedy práce soustředí na způsoby, jakým jsou hlavní postavy policistek ztvárněny nejen v rámci žánru typicky dominovaném muži, ale také v prostředí policejních složek, které je taktéž stereotypně převážně mužským odvětvím. Pro účel literární analýzy pak byla vybrána celkem čtyři díla. Od každé autorky byly zvoleny první dva díly ze série knih s hlavní postavou policistky.

První teoretická kapitola se zabývá vznikem, vývojem a druhy detektivního románu. Nejprve jsou od sebe rozlišeny termíny ‚kriminální‘ a ‚detektivní‘ román, jelikož v anglickém originále nejsou tyto dva žánry zcela totožné a detektivní román je častěji považován za určitý poddruh či podžánr románu kriminálního. V této kapitole je tedy přiblíženo, jakým způsobem je nahlíženo na zkoumaná díla v historickém kontextu žánru, jehož jsou díla součástí. Diskutovány jsou názory literárních kritiků, kteří se často neshodují na definici či klasifikaci tohoto žánru. Dále kapitola obsahuje diskusi děl předcházejících detektivnímu románu, ze kterých se tento žánr vyvinul. Neméně důležitou součástí je také definice policejního procedurálu, jenž je jedním z dalších podžánrů detektivního románu. Právě tuto formu, která je typická pro svůj realismus a vyobrazení reálných policejních postupů si zvolily Linda Castillo i Anne Hillerman jako rámcovou strukturu svých románů. Právě díky vrozenému realismu policejního procedurálu bylo mnoho autorů schopných zpochybnit zavedené sociální struktury a podrobit žánr etnickým, rasovým, či genderovým adaptacím. Genderové inovace jsou dalším subjektem zájmu této práce. Na podkapitolu diskutující policejní procedurál tedy navazuje část zabývající se genderovými inovacemi detektivních románů zejména ve Spojených Státech Amerických. I přestože byly autorky v USA úspěšné v oblasti detektivního románu, nedostávalo se jim stejného uznání, jako mužům. To se ovšem začalo pozvolna měnit s nástupem feministického hnutí v 60. letech dvacátého století. Díky tomu, že ženy postupně začaly získávat větší uznání a moc ve společnosti, i hrdinky detektivních románů začaly povyšovat z pozic sekretářek a pouhých pomocnic do rolí skutečných vyšetřovatelek.

Druhá kapitola se poté zabývá zvoleným analytickým rámce a sice feministickou literární kritikou. Stejně tak jako genderové adaptace detektivního románu se tento analytický přístup v literatuře začal vyvíjet s nástupem feministického hnutí. Feministická literární kritika úzce souvisí a přímo vychází z myšlenek feministického hnutí a ve své podstatě tedy zkoumá nerovné

postavení žen a mužů v literatuře. Jelikož je naše společnost ze své podstaty společností patriarchální, názory o nadřazeném postavení mužů jsou v nás natolik zakořeněné, že se promítají do všech složek našich životů. Kapitola nejprve definuje patriarchální společnost a pojem genderu, a dále pak diskutuje rozdíly mezi pohlavím (anglicky ‚sex‘) a genderem na základě jejich biologické, respektive sociální konstrukce. Diskutovány jsou zde pak především genderové role související se zažitými společenskými stereotypy o projevech ženskosti či naopak mužnosti. Tento přístup tedy zkoumá, jakým způsobem literární díla buď posilují, anebo naopak podkopávají podřazené postavení žen ve společnosti a stereotypy ohledně pohlaví a genderu.

Následující kapitola pak pouze stručně představuje zvolené autorky. Jelikož jsou Linda Castillo i Anne Hillerman autorkami 21. století a jejich dílo je tedy relativně nové (s vybranými knihami vydanými v letech 2009, 2010, 2013 a 2015), je potřeba je zařadit do literárně-historického kontextu. Kromě samotných autorek kapitola stručně představuje jejich dílo a série románů, jejichž jsou vybrané knihy součástí. V neposlední řadě jsou také zmíněna specifická prostředí, do kterých autorky zasadily své protagonistky, tedy prostředí Amišů a Navajů.

Následující čtvrtá kapitola je pak již kapitolou analytickou. V této části se práce zaměřuje na analýzu vybraných knih; *Sworn to Silence* a *Pray for Silence* od Lindy Castillo, a *Spider Woman's Daughter* a *Rock with Wings* od Anne Hillerman. Vzhledem k tomu, že obě autorky zasazují své hlavní postavy policistek do netypického prostředí, analýza se nejprve soustředí na vzájemnou podmíněnost mezi tímto prostředím a hlavními postavami. Linda Castillo i Anne Hillerman nevyužívají tato prostředí pouze jako pozadí děje, naopak je zapojují téměř jako další literární postavu. Toto platí zejména pro Anne Hillermana, která po vzoru svého otce Tonyho Hillermana hojně zapojuje krajinu Navažské rezervace do děje. Krajina samotná nehraje významnější roli v knihách Lindy Castillo, nicméně podoba její hlavní hrdinky a její emancipovanost přímo vyplývá z traumat, která utrpěla během svého dětství, kdy patřila k Amišské komunitě. Navažské prostředí a kultura pak do životů hlavních hrdinů Anne Hillerman naopak vnáší spíše harmonii. Zatímco motivace Anne Hillerman k výběru tohoto typu prostředí se zdá být spíše edukační, Linda Castillo si ho, zdá se, vybrala spíše z komerčních důvodů, vzhledem k tomu, že staví do kontrastu poklidnou komunitu Amišů s nesmírnou úrovní násilí.

Další část analýzy se pak zaměřuje na genderové role ve vybraných románech. Hlavními body zkoumání jsou pak role samotných hlavních postav policistek jakožto silných žen s jistou úrovní

moci v prostředí typicky dominovaném muži. Již díky jejich postavení tyto policistky spíše podřívají stereotypní představy o ženách jakožto křehkých a podřazených bytostech. To pak zejména platí pro hlavní hrdinku Lindy Castillo, Kate Burkholder, která je již ve svých třiceti letech samostatnou velitelkou policejního oddělení. Obě autorky si také dokázaly najít svůj vlastní styl a neprezentovat své hlavní postavy jako pouhé imitace předchozí mužské tradice a jejich drsných detektivů samotářů. Přestože si Kate Burkholder zachovává drsnou image, svou emocionálností a empatií se zcela vymyká starším žánrovým restrikcím. Hlavní hrdinka Anne Hillerman, Bernadette Manuelito, pak v porovnání se samotářskými detektivy úspěšně balancuje profesní i soukromý život a reprezentuje tak skutečné požadavky kladené na emancipované ženy a jejich očekávané role. Hlavní postavy policistek jsou pak definovány také skrze jejich vztahy s hlavními mužskými postavami. Manželský svazek Bernadette Manuelito a Jimma Chee boří žánrové hranice podle nichž se manželství s profesní kariérou ženy policistky ve většině případů neslučují. Nově se vyvíjející partnerství Kate Burkholder a externího agenta Johna Tomasettiho pak spíše ukazuje ohrožení nezávislosti emancipované ženy. Obě autorky ovšem ukazují, jak snadno může pracovní partnerství přerůst v osobní a že se tyto dva vztahy nemusí nutně vylučovat. V neposlední řadě pak kapitola diskutuje násilí, jímž oplývá zejména dílo Lindy Castillo. Násilí je v tomto případě často spojeno se sexualitou a deviací. Linda Castillo díky zobrazení takového stupně násilí páchaného na ženách poutá pozornost k útlaku žen ze strany mužů.

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