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**TÍTULO:** Un estudio de la genealogía madre-hija de Irigaray en Brush Back de Sara Paretsky.

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**RESUMEN:** Luce Irigaray, la filósofa feminista psicolingüista, afirma que la subjetividad femenina es alcanzable a través de algunas conductas activas de las cuales la genealogía madre-hija es la más prominente. El conocido mito de Perséfone y su madre, Demeter, es la base inspiradora de la relación madre e hija de Irigaray, que también se puede identificar en el Brush Back de Sara Paretsky. Analizar las similitudes y las diferencias entre la noción de Irigaray de la genealogía de madre e hija en el mito y la forma en que Paretsky utiliza el tema en su novela, sería el resultado concluyente de este estudio que también recordaría indirectamente al lector la necesidad de reconocer la genealogía madre-hija para construir una cultura mundial.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** Deméter, subjetividad femenina, Irigaray, genealogía madre-hija, Perséfone.

**TITLE:** A study of Irigaray's mother-daughter genealogy in Sara Paretsky's Brush Back.

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**ABSTRACT:** Luce Irigaray, the psycholinguist feminist philosopher, affirms that the feminine subjectivity is attainable via some active conducts out of which the mother-daughter genealogy is the most prominent one. The well-known myth of Persephone and her mother, Demeter, is the inspirational basis to Irigaray's mother and daughter relationship which is also identifiable within Sara Paretsky's *Brush Back*. Analyzing the similarities and the differences between Irigaray's notion of mother-daughter genealogy in the myth and the way in which Paretsky utilizes the theme in her novel, would be the conclusive result of this study which would as well indirectly remind the reader the necessity of acknowledging the mother-daughter genealogy in order to build a world culture.

**KEY WORDS:** Demeter, feminine subjectivity, Irigaray, mother-daughter genealogy, Persephone.

## **INTRODUCTION.**

Mythology has always been an indispensable part of human's cognition; from the time, it was the only meaningful explanation for the existence to the current time in which it reveals profound layers of meanings to our understanding of the human's essence.

The essential role of mythology in definition and conception of humanity has resulted in its presence as a decisive bulk of knowledge in most of the human doctrines. Literature can be seen as a mother who has given birth to the mythological stories and has nurtured and nourished them in multiple formations of the narration throughout the world. These mythological stories are filled with allegorical and metaphorical meanings to the point that their functions stretch into philosophical and essential meanings of existence. Due to this reason, there are plenty of literary philosophers and theoreticians who have sought mythology as a source of inspiration or even a thinking frame in developing their ideas.

Luce Irigaray can be counted as one of the best current feminist thinkers who has utilized mythology to illuminate her ideas. Irigaray (2004) suggests that the responsibility of human beings in this era is “the liberation or construction of a feminine subjectivity” which will lead into “the liberation of humanity itself” (p. xv).

Among the suggested feminist conducts of Irigaray’s philosophy, the relationship between mother and daughter has been intensely considered as an effectual means to the creation of feminine subjectivity. She (1994) indicates that to have an ethics of sexual difference, specially a feminine subjectivity, “the bond of the female ancestries should be renewed” (p. 109). As she (1994) demonstrates mother genealogy’s power of reclamation and healing, she turns to the myth of Demeter and Persephone as the ancient and original instance of the subject which indicates the obscuring of the divine female ancestry (p. 100). The myth clearly clarifies how the patriarchal culture usurps the natural mother genealogy and subsequently causes the infertility of the earth.

In *Brush Back*, the myth is repeated in an indistinguishable and yet paradoxical way which enhances the perception of the meaning of Irigaray’s mother-daughter genealogy. For an exact and thorough study of the myth-related feminist idea of Irigaray, the researcher will introduce and compare the four essential participants of the myth with their equivalent figures in *Brush Back* separately: Demeter, Persephone, Zeus and Hades.

## **DEVELOPMENT.**

### **Stella, A disintegrated shadow of Demeter.**

Stella Guzzo, who has been indicted for the murder of her daughter, Annie Guzzo, strives to exonerate herself from the accusation after her release from the prison.

Although the construction and language of the novel persuade the readers to believe in her guilt, eventually, it turns out that the assault has been done by the patriarchal society and was not attributed to her maternal genealogy.

Stella Guzzo, mother of the murdered Annie, has physical beauty and strength, which resembles the goddess of agriculture and harvest, Demeter. Coolidge (1964) illustrates Demeter as “Tall and majestic was her appearance, and her hair was the color of ripe wheat” (p. 28) and in the same fashion, V.I., the private investigator of her exoneration case, describes Stella’s appearance after twenty-five years of prison: “She’d kept her height even after all the years of bad diet and poor exercise. Her hair had that iron shade of gray that makes the face beneath it look hard-or harder, in her case-but her eyes were still a bright blue, like the sky over the lake as I’d driven south, and her arm muscles remained firm. She must have been attractive when she was young, in an athletic kind of way” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 23).

Moreover, she resembles Demeter in loss of her daughter, Annie, to the male dominant society. This loss is the most prominent feature which makes Stella the reflection of Demeter’s image in the novel. However, the unresolved case of Annie's murder adds complexity to the similarities and differences between Stella's character and Demeter.

As the mythological stories narrate, Demeter was a compassionate and sympathetic mother to her daughter and after Persephone’s abduction, Demeter did not forsake her for a moment. She was in such great pain and agony that she did not bestow her generosity to the earth after Persephone's theft and her resistance finally resulted in her daughter's temporarily freedom from the underground world of Hades. Edith Hamilton (1942) remarks that Demeter had one dear daughter, Persephone, the maiden of spring, “She lost her and in her terrible grief she withheld her gift from the earth, which turned into a frozen desert. The green and flowering land was icebound and lifeless because Persephone had disappeared” (p. 57), but in contrast to Demeter, Stella, in the novel *Brush Back*, has been introduced as an angry mother who was suspected to be the murderer and also had some effective impacts on Annie’s murder. Stella used to beat her daughter most of the nights and did not have a supportive passionate relationship with Annie. V.I., who also was a Chicago citizen, and also a

neighbor of the Guzzo's in childhood, recounts people's thoughts regarding the murder: "We all knew she hit her daughter, but what turned people's stomach was that Stella had beaten Annie to death and then walked up to St. Eloy's to play bingo" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 5).

Stella's violence towards Annie can be seen from two aspects: internal, regarding her own personal experience and external regarding Annie's behavior. For the first aspect, we recognize how Stella herself was a victim to the violent patriarchal society, "Stella Guzzo had grown up in a hardscrabble house herself and shouting and hitting were her main modes of functioning" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 5). In addition, the male dominant situation of her childhood life has turned her into a violent mother who used to find all the faults with the feminine part of the life's problems. She expected her daughter to be a submissive girl, to concede the rules of the father, to behave tamely at home, to follow all the orders of the house chores, and as well to anticipate her future in the same atmosphere in another male dominant household.

The second reason of Stella's ferocity, which is related to Annie's behavior, is the fact that Annie was determined to continue her education as a means of independency while Stella was not approved of education and the idea of a female's self-sufficient position could disturb her mentally. There is no doubt that Annie's persistence made Stella presume that Annie was not an innocent girl who deserved mother love. Stella remarked: "Everyone thought she was sweet-they should have heard what she was saying. If she died with those words in her mouth, she's been burning in hell for it" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 25), and also, she explained to V.I. that people thought bad of her because "I was trying to get Annie to see the facts of life. She was getting those big ideas, way above herself. She didn't think she needed to vacuum or do the laundry because she was going to school" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 5).

Stella's internal conflict, as V.I. names "Stella's obsession with sex" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 59), reinforced her external conflict with Annie when she found contraceptive pills and money in her drawers. "She went through Annie's dresser. Besides the pills, she found an envelope with two

thousand dollars in it” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 137). Stella got infuriated by the sight of the pills because in her phallogocentric worldview, women were the child-bearer of the cultural society who should not get forfeited by any external force. The issue even got worse when Annie tried to introduce the beneficial utilization of the pills to her sister in law, Betty. Stella got discomposed to the point that she beseeched the church's priest, a strong element of patriarchy whose sermon were mostly intensifying women's submission, to preach about the sin of contraceptive pills. “She'd tried to talk to her sister-in-law about contraception, that she didn't need to keep having one baby after another, and Betty punched her in the mouth, then called up Stella and told her, so when Annie got home she got a double whammy from her mother. Next they got that priest to preach a special sermon on the hellfires waiting for girls who used contraception, and unmarried girls who had sex. Annie walked out in the middle of sermon, and when Stella got back from church, she hit her again” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 248-9).

Irigaray remarks that as the patriarchal society has always defined the female sex by the role of motherhood, the female's definition of identity is based upon her ability to procreate. In fact, the contraceptive pills, which cease the females' reproductive system, can be seen as a threat to the patriarchal society which provides the definitions according to its male dominant apparatus. Irigaray believes that the female who does not yield into procreation for her subjectivity and instead confirms her subjectivity by creation, in this case Annie's desire for making an independent life relying on her education, is totally fighting back the patriarchal standards. Irigaray (1985) states: “Mothers, reproductive instruments marked with the name of the father and enclosed in his house, must be private property, excluded from exchange...Mothers are essential to its (re)production (particularly inasmuch as they are {re}productive of the children and of the labor force: through maternity, child-bearing, and domestic maintenance in general). Their responsibility is to maintain the social order without intervening so as to change it” (p. 171).

We may conclude that the eventual effect of Stella's lifetime experience in a violent and destructive patriarchal background was her constant obsession with the issue of sex. She deemed the act immoral and tried her best as a young woman to detach herself from the notion. One of her biggest mental complexes was V.I.'s mother, Gabriella, who in her eyes was a promiscuous woman because of the profound impacts she had on Stella's husband and daughter. V.I. reminds Frank Guzzo, Stella's son: "She always thought Gabriella was some kind of whore, that she cast a spell over your dad and then stole Annie" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 8). Her obsession with the subject, even made her trial harder, to the point that Annie's murderer, Mandel, was more nervous that Stella finds out about his coitus with Annie rather than killing her. Joel Previn, Stella's lawyer narrates: "I figured Mandel felt ashamed of giving Annie money. I thought he was afraid Stella would start asking questions, or bring up Annie's-Annie's behavior. Stella cared more about sex than anything, she couldn't stop being angry about the way Annie attracted men. I couldn't get her to shut up about it. It was why she was so hard to defend" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 123).

Although Stella is different from Demeter in her motherly behavior towards her daughter, regarding her internal and external reasons of violence, she reflects Demeter, regarding the way she as well has lost her daughter to the patriarchal rules of the society. Milton (1667) describes the agony:

"...that fair field

Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,

Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis,

Was gathered-which cost Ceres all that pain

To seek her through World (IV, ff.268).

In the myth of Demeter, Persephone who has been desired by her uncle, Hades, is given away without her own and her mother's consent. Coolidge (1964) remarks that Hades "came up to Olympus to ask Zeus if he might have Persephone to wife. Zeus bowed his head in agreement, and mighty Olympus

thundered as he promised” (p. 29). In fact, Zeus, Persephone's father, who resembles the law of patriarchy treats her daughter as commodity and upon his brother's ask, gives her secretly away without considering her wish or even seeking her mother's agreement. Persephone's involuntary subjectivity as a commodity, made it possible for the patriarchy to take and give her back at different spots; in the same way she was abducted by Hades upon Zeus' assent, she is given back to the earth by his demand. Evans (1970) states: “Zeus finally ruled that Hades must give her up” (p. 209).

Irigaray (1994) explains how patriarchy disdains the idea of female's sexuality, or the female's subjectivity, because it is assumed to be related to the myth of the original sin. In this regard, females possess no valuable subjectivity and the value of the maidens resides in their maintenance of their virginity, which keeps them from transferring into real female subjects. Conclusively, patriarchy has a trade of female's virginity among masculine in which the female's authorization is absent.

“Patriarchy is founded upon the theft and violation of the daughter's virginity and the use of her virginity for commerce between men, including religious commerce. Patriarchy has constructed its heaven and hell upon this original sin. It has imposed silence upon the daughter. It has dissociated her body from her speech, and her pleasure from her language” (p. 111-12).

The other aspect, which enhances the resemblance of the story to the myth but also causes Stella's anger, is the found money in Annie's dresser. The found money represents the pomegranate's seeds that have been offered to Persephone by Hades and Persephone's acceptance caused her impermanent confinement in the underground.

Hamilton (1942) narrates that when Demeter goes on strike and the vegetation stops growing, “that year was most dreadful and cruel for mankind over all the earth. Nothing grew; no seed sprang up; in vain the oxen drew the plowshare through the furrows” (p. 61). Zeus found out that “never would she let the earth bear fruit until she had seen her daughter. He told Hermes to go down to the underworld and to bid the lord of it let his bride go back to Demeter” (p. 61). When mother and daughter reunited,



they held fast and talked about the things that have happened to them and “Demeter grieved when heard of the pomegranate seed, fearing that she could not keep her daughter with her” (p. 62). The acceptance of Hades’ offering made Persephone his possession, thus she could not return to her maternal genealogy unrestrictedly and unconditionally. Demeter “must lose Persephone for four months every year and see her young loveliness go down to the world of the dead” (p. 62-3). In the same manner when Stella found out that Annie had hidden money in her dresser, she deduced that Annie had earned the money offered to her by exchange of sexual relationship; consequently, she understood that she has irretrievably lost her daughter to the patriarchal world. Joel narrates how Annie let Mandel mistreat her and was not aware of the fatal consequences which were anticipating her: “She knew he was an old goat wanting to act like he was still a young stud, she let him kiss her, he gave money to help with her college fund, it was a game to her” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 122).

As a matter of truth, Stella like Demeter was aware that her daughter has been oppressed and suppressed by the rule of the father however, she ignored her agony and did not resist the tyranny as Demeter did. Conclusively, as it has been explicated, Stella as Demeter suffered from the eventual loss of her mother-daughter genealogy to the patriarchy and accordingly both she and her daughter got deprived of their subjectivities. But the contradictory point resides in her silent acquiescence towards the male dominant culture, which not only slayed her daughter but also indicted her for the crime.

### **Annie, An Unyielding Persephone.**

To analyze the resemblances and the contradictions between Annie and Persephone, we may initiate with the fact that they were both inexperienced and immature girls when they got assaulted.

Annie, a small and fragile girl, was around fourteen when she died twenty-five years ago in the novel. She, who did not have any emotional and financial support in her family and was treated as an eccentric among the Chicago citizens, was in search of a way out, to a more liberal condition. She

was resolved to reach her subjectivity through education for which she had to earn money. In fact, for the management of her college expenses and also saving money, she was working as an assistant in a law firm. Eunice, a client, explains to V.I.: “The girl, Annie Guzzo, worked as a file clerk there part-time. Making money to help pay for the college, if I remember correctly. When she was killed, Mr. Mandel felt responsible, felt they should do something” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 70).

She was resolute in her fight to the point that even though she did not have any previous experiences she became quite expert in little time and the managers found her presence immanently inseparable from their company. Joel describes that Annie’s work was word processing “and guys like Spike or Mandel couldn’t type-they’d dictate their mail, so Annie picked up legal ideas from typing everyone’s letters and briefs and so on. She’d give Spike back his letters with paragraphs circled in red” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 254). Her adroitness made her one of the core members of the law firm who had access to most of the important letters of the company. Undisputedly she learned a lot about the language of law and also comprehended all the important confidential subjects that Mandel and Spike used to send via letters.

Due to the fact that she was in desperate want of money for her breakout, she extended her penetration to the system of the company by seducing Mandel into giving her money. In reality, her need to accumulate the required money for her education, made her plan for receiving money by flirting with the nearest and most available source of power and money, Mandel. Joel recalls witnessing Mandel’s flirtation with Annie: “I saw him one night when I was working late, she was in his office and I saw him kissing her, and then I went to the john and he was slipping something into the photocopier. I looked on my way back-it was a hundred dollars, and then Annie came out to copy something a minute later, and she stuffed the money into her purse. I never said anything to her, but I could see it was like a game to her” (Paretsky,2016, p. 122).

Her intentional and voluntary exchange of power with the patriarchal world seems to oppose the mythological image of Persephone who was forcefully given to Hades without her own consent. From this respect, Annie is not to be interpreted as naïve as Persephone, rather it is implied that Annie was absolutely conscious of the patriarchal game's rules. In contrast to her mother that was only an observer and follower of the masculine games of the culture, she was an ardent player, and she seems to practice "mimesis".

According to Irigaray (1985), through "mimesis" one can reach and also preserve her feminine subjectivity. By mimesis woman can play outside of a male-dominant tradition, "to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it (p. 76). In fact, Annie used mimesis in order to unsettle the patriarchal hierarchy and to "convert a form of subordination into an affirmation" (p. 76) and conclusively she started countering the system.

Although Annie is unlike Persephone in being a conscious opponent of patriarchy, she resembles Persephone in her resistance. When abducted by Hades, Persephone got enraged and to punish him she decided she would not eat or drink. Coolidge (1964) says: "she had neither eaten nor drunk since she had been in the land of the dead" (p. 34).

Annie like Persephone did not succumb into the patriarchal power and shrewdly planned her freedom by active participation in the hierarchical network of patriarchy. As Annie was in charge of correcting Mandel's letters and his trusted employee, she accessed some documents which could be the key to her liberty. One of the most important documents that Annie had found was a letter revealing a bribery. Scanlon, Mandel's friend and partner, had donated money under the name of charity to the police in exchange of their criminal partners' emancipation and as well ordering the murder of one police officer, V.I.'s father. According to Joel's memory, Annie was the only person who learnt about the conspiracy, as she was at Warshawski's when Mr. Warshawski received his reassignment: "She was over at your house, playing on Mrs. Warshawski's piano, and she saw your dad take it out of the

mail and read it. He looked upset and sick-I think Annie called it. Then he tore it in half and threw it out. She picked it out of the trash and took it away because she realized Scanlon had written the line at the top, that 'FYL, law and Order Man' (Paretsky, 2016, p. 462).

Moreover, Annie found the police's response to the letter of bribery which not only could prove the corruption and immorality of the law system of Chicago but also was the proving document of officer Warshawski's murder who had been aware of the violation of law and was considered a potential threat to the decayed system. The letter was: "Thanks for the \$7500 to our Widows & Orphans Fund. You know by now that your boys have been released-the SA agrees that your youthful high spirits aren't grounds for arrest. Our overzealous officer will be moving to the Seventh, where you can count on the unit's hostility to snitches to keep him from bothering you again" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 458).

Annie's method of resistance, however, was not a passive one, like Persephone's refusal of the offered food. In contrast, she assertively and actively struggled for her freedom by maneuvering her masters' weaknesses. Annie collected all the pieces of information she needed to support her claim of Mandel's and his law firm's corruption. Her writings and documents were all kept in her diary and she was anticipating the right time to reveal them which were critical threats to the whole corrupted male-dominant system of Chicago's politics.

As a resemblance to Persephone, who was captivated underground, Annie had buried her diary in a stadium basement. And similar to Persephone's liberation, the diary's unearthing could lead to uprooting the tyrannical practice of patriarchy over her. Joel describes Annie's documents: "A photo album that she'd stored papers in. I couldn't make sense of them: canceled checks, an accounting statement for the Scanlon Agency, a statement for the law firm and also one for Scanlon's youth club-his obnoxious say, Yes! Program that everyone who worked at Mandel and McClelland had to donate to" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 457).

According to Luce Irigaray (1993), the society which is based upon the patriarchal laws, enriches itself via strengthening its paternal roots and diminishing the maternal ones. By negating the rights of maternal genealogy, its existence and its effects, the male-dominant society extends its paternal genealogy to the point of terminating the maternal one.

Irigaray (1994) indicates that the negation of maternal genealogy is achievable by treating the females of the society as commodities to be exchanged among males. In the case of the mythology, the abduction of the virgin and in the case of the novel, the murder of the virgin, are to be counted as the examples of this violent act. And consequently, as Irigaray (1993) remarks, forsaking of the maternal genealogy and its disintegration does not remain as one dimensional act, it also causes the infertility of the earth.

“A fertile earth and a valuable commodity are not the same thing. Not infrequently these two productions are opposed economically, and the second is preferred to the first. But when the goddesses of cosmic fertility were suppressed to found so-called rich societies, certain problems arose. Every time man or men seek to build an economic order at the expense of the earth, that order becomes sterile, repressive, and destructive” (p. 80).

The mythology shows the infertility of the earth by the introduction of the cold seasons to the story, in which the goddess of vegetation deprives the earth of any greenery's growth. Coolidge (1964) states: “Nothing would grow. As the gods looked down, they saw threatening the earth a famine such as never had been known” (p. 33).

In the novel, the sterility of Chicago, the polluted air and the endangered natural resources are to be found in relation with the corruption of the patriarchal power of the society. The political corrupted men of Chicago who have been ruling over the city for many years, abusing and misusing the feminine natural subjectivity of the city, were in fact maintaining their power by restricting and eliminating women's existence and resistance. As Mandel finds out that Annie's value of life, being treated as a

commodity, is not more than the risk of their power's elimination, he kills her. Because the threat she may bring to the balanced patriarchal power of the political corrupted gang of Chicago is not negligible.

Murder of Annie enables the political gang to earn the auction of a project which eventuates in the soil and air pollution of Chicago described by V.I. after returning from the site of the project: "Every time I sneezed or coughed, I left a gray residue on the Kleenex. Thank goodness the Pollution Control Board had assured us there was no known individual health risk to coal dust. Like black lung or epithelial cancer" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 210).

Eventually, we can perceive that Annie and Persephone both were independent female figures who did not consent to get possessed by the masculinity, and the detachment from their feminine subjectivity caused both great agonies. Persephone's loss of subjectivity was in her break from her maternal genealogy and for Annie was her unfulfilled attempt to reconstruct a new subjectivity out of a shattered one which was the result of her original lack of maternal genealogy.

Like Persephone who was weeping, as Hamilton (1942) narrates, "down to the underworld. The high hills echoed her cry and the depth of the sea" (p. 57), Annie was not interested in any male characters in the novel either because she was thinking above the issue of love relationship. She was focused on constructing her own subjectivity as Joel remembers her response to his confession of love: "but she said she wasn't interested in love, not with any of us. I've got a future of my own, my own life, not slaving for some man, whether he's a lawyer or a hockey star or just a mill hand like my dad,' she said" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 461). However, both of them were partially harmed by accepting the offered proffers to them, whereas for Persephone it was the seeds of a pomegranate, for Annie, it was the money for her education, and consequently, both of them were not quite successful in their resistance and could not revive their subjectivity. While Persephone's resistance was accompanied by her mother's halt in generosity to the earth which finally made Zeus to bring her daughter back at least

for few months a year, Annie's lack of mother love and a healthy maternal genealogy conducted her absolute demise.

### **Zeus and Hades, The Reflection of Patriarchy.**

Aside from the female figures of the myth, we should as well study the male participants and their reflection, Zeus and Hades, in the process of the comparison. While in the myth, Persephone's father has the largest share of guilt in Persephone's abduction, in Annie's story her deceased father does not get involved in the story.

From the very beginning to the end of the novel, his presence is not discernible and when he is mentioned, the readers find him in an absolute pathetic and passive status: "It was a plate rolling machine that had killed Annie and Frank Guzzo's father. Mateo Guzzo's foot slipped, or a gear on the machine slipped, or Mateo couldn't take another hour of life under Stella's rule, local gossip provided a number of versions of his death" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 27-8). It seems that the role of father in the novel has been shifted from an individual scale to a social scale, that portrays the patriarchal society in which Annie has been betrayed. This patriarchal society which includes both political and religious apparatus, can reflect both the characters of Hades and Zeus.

The role of patriarchy has been partly played by the male-dominant religious power system of Chicago. The religion's interference with the case is vivid and yet obstinate from the very beginning. As an example to start, one of the most unethical criminals who has been working for the political corrupted band of Chicago under the fake job of a handyman, Jerry Fugher, has been seen for the first time in the church of St. Eloy's. This handyman, known as Uncle Jerry, was directly working for Scanlon, the head of the corrupted political band. "Scanlon's a fixture in the Democratic machine, Tenth Ward committeeman for starters, who as well was tightly connected to the church" (Paretsky, 2016, p. 199).

Scanlon is a man who expresses his powerful presence in political, religious and social domains. When V.I. asks Betty why Scanlon was involved in the case of murder and as well present in the court day, she answers: “Mr. Scanlon pays attention to everyone in this neighborhood. He's in church every Sunday, pays for the prizes at the bingo” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 5).

Moreover, V.I. is totally surprised when she learns that after Annie's murder, the first and most influential person who testified for Stella in the court room was the priest. He declared that Stella was harsh towards her daughter because she had to do so in order to keep her daughter away from sin. In fact, the evidences he asserted were reinforcing the patriarchal need of dominance over women disguised as the moral and religious codes. V.I. finds the following evidence while searching for Annie's document: “Father Gielczowski, the priest at St. Eloy's, had testified for Stella: She was a good woman, a dedicated mother. She didn't spare the rod, but that was what made her a good mother; she didn't tolerate the rudeness a lot of modern women let their children get away with” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 5).

Aforementioned, Stella had even asked the priest for an ordered preach about the sin of sexual relationship out of marriage, to chastise her daughter. More than the testimony which proves the interference of religion to the legal affairs, V.I. learns about the rumors of the priest's child abuse. Although the novel does not thoroughly follow the tracks of the child abuse, the intimate confession of V.I.'s childhood friend, Frank Guzzo, is sufficient for the reader to estimate the depth of religious corruption in South Chicago. V.I. thinks that: “The throwaway line about Gielczowski making Frank lower his pants, that was sickening, the whole story was sad and painful and sick. I'd never heard allegations about Gielczowski. Maybe he'd been caning boys, beating immorality out of them” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 42).



As we perceive, the role of religion is substantial in the construction of the novel, which is reflected in both the internal self-image of the characters and also the external social face of them. As Irigaray (2004) believes the religious dimension “is an important aspect of our culture” and we should consider “how we have been determined by this dimension and how we can in the present, situate ourselves with respect to it” (p.145). This dimension of the religion is observed to correspond to an external cultural force but at the same time it has entered an internal and an individual level which “holds together the totality of the self, of the community and culture” (p. 171). However, Irigaray (1993) states that “we must rethink religion” because “we are unable to eliminate or suppress the phenomenon of religion” (p. 73). In the novel, the patriarchal force of the culture which is represented in the religious façades, is opposed by the resistance of the female protagonist, Annie, who by her discerning observance of the male-dominated apparatus, managed to indulge some hideous hidden truths behind the alluring face of the religious society.

The political side of the patriarchal system is absolutely complicated and vast scope; thus, the researcher will restrict them just into the most essential figures. As we discussed the role of Mr. Scanlon in religious domains, we should heed that his role was not limited to the religious aspects and in fact his foundation within religion made him a potent and functional figure who greatly affected the political issues of Chicago as well. His charity donations and his endowments were not restricted to the church, his impressive benefaction to the police office, made him a decisive member in the unlawful political conducts. Lieutenant Conrad Rawlings explains: “Scanlon's a fixture down here,” Conrad interrupted. “Gives to our widows and orphans funds, takes part in our programs against gang violence. The quid he wants personally is a piece of the insurance action. We let him sell life insurance to any of our cops who want more coverage than the union offers. It's a fair deal in exchange for all he does for the community” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 199).

In reality, his expectation was not as simple as Conrad asserts, he had a strong connection to other political parties under cover of insurance. He in consort with Spike, Mandel and McClelland were part of the legislature and had controls over Illinois governors of Chicago. They were all tied into one homogeneous religion sect as Joel describes: “McClelland and Scanlon both worshiped at Saint Eloy's. Sol Mandel and my parents belonged to Temple Har Hashem. They pray together, then they get out of the pews and do business with each other” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 253).

This interwoven web of corruption and power in Chicago, including both religious and political iniquities, is the outcome of the patriarchal society which betrays Annie finally. All the powerful members of the patriarchy play the role of father for Annie forcefully, and consequently abduct her, playing the role of Hades, from her maternal abode and send her to the underground. This network of political and religious power suppresses women in the society and censors the natural relations of the maternal genealogy. Chicago, in the novel, as a very resistant patriarchal society treats its women in an unfair genealogical balance which leads to the elimination of the mothers and the daughters' subjectivities.

As Irigaray (2007) remarks the lost mother-daughter genealogies which “through incredible neglect and disregard, patriarchal tradition has wiped out” (p. 9), this patriarchal system of thought neglects the nature and disrespects the fertility of the earth and consequently makes the earth barren. Due to the negligence of the male-dominant corrupted governors of Chicago not only the maternal genealogy has been lost, for which the best sample is the murder of Annie and incrimination of Stella, but it also has left Chicago as a barren place, far from its fertile and fruitful days. One of the most intense sample of Chicago's pollution and deterioration is the pet coke in which Uncle Jerry was killed, when he brought no more advantage to the power system but was counted only as a potential threat.

The NEWS expresses: “Are the pet coke mountains in South Chicago toxic? That question has been hotly debated lately between the residents of the city's southeast side, who claim that breathing the dust particle is a health hazard, and the state's Pollution Control Board, which says there is no proof. However, this mountain of pet coke was definitely a hazard to the health of a man whose body was found here early this morning by tugboat pilot Gino Smerdlow” (Paretsky, 2016, p. 181).

Luce Irigaray (1994) clarifies that a male dominant system in which the relation between mother and daughter is neglected, lacks gender difference. As long as men are in search of power for construction of their subjectivity, they relate the dominance to the culture and whatever is man-made. “Man needs these yesses and noes to maintain a distance between himself and the matter that produced him” (p.17), in this way, they separate themselves from the natural realm of mother both in a cultural and social way. Masculinity is in a denial of his reality which is an attempt “to impose a second nature that eventually destroys the first or causes it to be forgotten” (p.18). As a consequence, both males and females are left to hold a subjectivity which is partial and is based upon the economy of the same. The result will be a society which is sterile and dead, females cut off their natural mother-daughter genealogy and males detached from their whole subjectivity.

Irigaray (1993) explains the affinity of the Greek myth and maternal genealogy as follows: “When women are forced to bear children within the genealogy of the husband, this historically marks the beginning of a failure of respect for nature. A new notion or concept of nature is set up, which takes the place of earth's fertility, abandons its religious quality, its link to the divinity of women and to the mother-daughter relation. Paradoxically, the cult of the mother in our cultures today is often associated with a scorn or neglect of nature. It is true that in a patriarchal genealogy we are dealing with the cult of the son's mother, to the detriment of the daughter's mother... once one genealogy has been reduced to the other's, it becomes impossible or at least difficult for the casual thinker to define two different genders or sexes (p. 3).

## CONCLUSIONS.

Sara Paretsky, as one of the best current writers of feminist crime fiction, creates her novels as if they are the practical conducts of building feminine subjectivity. Her protagonists, regardless of their genders, pave the way to a more balanced society.

The narration of the story is based upon the search for the missed sexuate difference which eventually leads into the construction of subjectivity. Rzepka (2010) believes that Paretsky's novels look back to feminist British writers of 1920s and 1930s, especially Virginia Woolf, attempting to challenge the wrong definitions of gender, particularly "Victorian ideals of womanhood" (p. 265). In this regard, we can observe how subtly her *Brush Back* represents the mother genealogy in a distinctive way which simultaneously follows and contradicts the including parts. Despite the oppositions that exist between the story and the myth, the conclusive impact is the reflection and also elucidation of Irigaray's definition of mother-daughter relationship.

As Irigaray (2015) believes thinking and changing of mother-daughter relationship "is equivalent to shaking the foundations of the patriarchal order" (p. 170), this reflection functions as a method to justify the eminent influence of mother genealogy and the disastrous outcomes which are formed by its lack. The tragic consequences do not only affect the femininity but also the masculinity, due to the negligence of sexuate difference which involves everybody irrespective of their genders.

*Brush Back* reminds us words of Irigaray (2015) that we must welcome all types of living beings. And in order to prevent the catastrophes in patriarchal culture we should construct a new world. A world which is not concentrated on a single one "by bonding all together through our own being a Being" but to create ties and attachments to others thanks to the "respect and fondness of difference(s)" (p. 294). We need to create a world in which the respected "mutual differences" create a balance for the growth and survival of mother genealogy, an opportunity for the individuals to exert their beings freely and respect others'. Reading *Brush back* calls us once again for our humane

responsibility for “building a world culture, and for governing the world with justice and humanity” (p. 294).

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