Chapter Five

Summation

Alice Borchardt could be designated as one deputy of the American Literature in that, her fiction has turned out to be the reservoir of the collective belief in history. Not much known in the literary arena, Alice Borchardt's fiction emerges as one with the unique capability of evoking a collective history, belonging to various epochs. As representations of the postmodern poetics, Alice Borchardt's novels manifest a new historicist position, which is naturally a component of postmodernism. A postmodernist text it is, Alice Borchardt capitalizes on the historic impulses which make up the retro postmodernism. The novels are projective of a unique European historic scenario which documents the metaphorical implications of art. Alice Borchardt's creative verve rests on those configurations of historical allusions which eventually generate feminist orientations too. Ultimately, Alice Borchardt's fiction could be seen as a folk expression of humanity on the one hand, and the feminist perception on the other.

Art is reflective of life and by extension, reflective of a contest or a negotiation with life. Hence, the novelist's demonstration of time and space is constituted by the particularity of the historical experiences which evoke naturally, many a contest with history. New historicism is a relevant factor which manipulates an effective penetration into history. Alice Borchardt has an agenda in her depiction of history. She is primarily concerned with the male hegemony which stays
tyrannical in its claims over the female autonomy. This is essentially a frame work in which one could witness Alice Borchardt adopting the picaro. Picarasque is one essential operative of postmodernism. It is part of the postmodern pastiche. It is one literary demonstration of the artist who allows the objects and events of the art to gain a metaphorical significance. As an illustration one could fix Alice Borchardt's fiction as having been engaged in a lot of travels, adventures and misadventures.

Landscape is paradoxically an ever shifting space allowing the metaphoric recitals of events. Hence, even the animal stories slip off the essential literariness to gain metaphorical allusions. This is one segment which naturally evokes the application of magical realism. Alice Borchardt's fiction manifests the configurations of magical realism which amalgamate event and experience. In a sense, the application of magic realism, naturally connects one to the local native myths, connected with forests and animals and also the Native American history. Also it encompasses historicity in such an effective way that one gains a sense of reliving in a historical time and space refurbished by contests with history. Thus Alice Borchardt's fiction is exemplified by her talent as an artist whose creativity rests on the recovery of myth, and the doubts about the mythologised history.

Alice Borchardt's novels Devoted (1995), Beguiled (1996), The Night of the Wolf (1999), The Wolf King (2001), The Dragon Queen (2001), The Raven Warrior (2003) celebrate the feminine gender and the cycle of life and death attached with the feminine. The novels are illustrations of the acknowledgement of a cycle of life in which women ensure an order before establishing a continuum of life. The female protagonists enact a sense of mutuality and sustenance which constitute the
quintessence of gender. Borchardt's presentation of female characters proclaims a new value, a new meaning and a new consciousness. They are part of a landscape in which they are engaged with subverting the pre-conceived cultural notions and myths that are inextricably linked to male chauvinism. Consequently, the female protagonists generate a new epistemology of gender. This doctrine of gender draws its roots from the old historical positions. In a wider significance the principle female characters demonstrate a wide spectrum of history in which they play a pivotal role of representations.

By foregrounding new historicist criticism and cultural materialism the researcher has been concerned with the investigation as to how the artist’s feminist perceptions penetrate the realms of history. Eventually, Borchardt's fiction is attributive of a specific, yet an independent feminine value to cultural materialism. Borchardt's choice of Roman history has a purpose. Rome, during the historic times, had emerged projecting an economic paradigm which is inclusive of junk commercialism and cheap materialism. Women are the subaltern sediments. They had been specifically perceived as a socially defined category. Women as victims enable an assessment of the ethical values during those historical times, which provide a grand subordination to male hegemony.

Alice Borchardt's fiction helps one to understand the agenda. Behind the hegemonic totems like Abbotry, kingship and ship owners, she places a unique feminist system of negotiation. All of Borchardt's lady protagonists not only stand helpful to their male counterparts but also emerge as redeemers of the principal male characters. They seek to redefine the male supremacy. The forests, housing the
wolfdom could be figuratively extended into enunciating an eco feminist orientation. The non-human world manifests not only the sterility of the male order but also concretizes the potential liability of the male supremacy. Hence the ship owners, and even a king like Julius Caesar turn out to be historically sterile in the process of negotiations with the feminine.

One significant fact about Alice Borchardt's fiction lies in its authenticity of the feminine involvement in the upkeep of the social economy. While the Bishops, the Abbots, the merchants and the kings produce an anarchical male order, the feminist vanguards, warped by eco feminism, suspends the tyrannical claims with immediate reciprocation. Reciprocation is one term not similar to retaliation. Reciprocity is inclusive of contest with male values before establishing the feminine grandeur in all its glory and splendour.

Alice Borchardt fixes Nature as one constant backdrop in which the participants experience the practice of ethical exchange. For instance, a bear comes as operating within a socially defined design. A bear or even a wolf has been rejected as an enemy by the male system. “Predator” is a term which acknowledges this position. In Alice Borchardt's fiction, they are part of the feminine habitats as sincerely playing the role of redeemers to woman. Thus, the animal world stands in opposition to the male hegemony. Also, all of Nature’s creations available in the novel collectively offer a symbolic resistance which naturally delimits the reproduction and transmission of the male values. They help in assisting the female protagonists by offering practical strategies.

The non human world, therefore, operates for Alice Borchardt within her own
perception of the male autonomy. Her fiction, seen in the light of the new historicist perspective, betrays a certain self reflexivity constituted by women. Alice Borchardt is of the strong opinion that woman has a specific value and the value could be constituted only by a judicious mixture of the feminine and the masculine. The church begins to emerge as a constructive social construct when it is no longer dictated by women. The involvement of women alone will constitute a legitimate ecclesiastical structure. Women are one source of legitimacy. They not only balance the male autonomy but also redefine the cultural artefacts of the male domain. At the superficial level Alice Borchardt's fiction will very much look like a fairy tale. But going deeper, her art extends figuratively into the domain of literariness. The text in all its formalist patterns emerges as an epitome of a great literary piece.

*Night of the Wolf* contests the historical fascinations of Julius Caesar with Immona. Julius Caesar emerges as personifying male anarchy. Immona on the other hand, is the representative of the feminine. She could be regarded as the symbol of resistance as she fights all those violent masculine forces pitted against her. Immona is intelligent in the way that she manipulates Maeniel the shape shifter. Alice Borchardt projects Immona with the capability of triggering a potential strength in women. While Immona demonstrates a strong physical agility, she also teaches Maeniel what it means to be in love. The *picaresque* one finds in Immona figuratively extends into a metaphorical position in which a women might have to sway between the warrior woman and the gladiator. The gate of Rome as the final destination encompasses the gates of history.

Significantly, Maeniel comes as a common denominator which comes as
acknowledging the potential credibility of the feminine. In *The Wolf King* Reagane is another lady who resists the tyrannically masculine Saxon warriors. As a protagonist Reagane is one configuration of *picaresque* who braves the rough weather to rescue her husband Maeniel. The *Picaresque* Reagane again extends herself metaphorically into a contesting force which resists the monarchical thirst for body and the overvaulting ambition. Alice Borchardt works out Reagane in such a way that the demand of men loses credibility as evidenced in the thirst for blood and revenge. Reagane forges an ethical paradigm which balances the animosity exercised by the great kings and then the common man she could also be regarded a balancing force, which not only attempts to eliminate the revenge motif but also salvage the ethical balance of humanity.

Alice Borchardt carries Reagane into *The Silver Wolf* where she emerges as one questioning the sterile Rome as back dropped by the dark ages. Passionately involved with life, Reagane is projective of an enigmatic personality, which not only exposes Rome as decadent but also culturally impotent. This is one position which stands contradictory to the historical position which projects Rome as the beginning of civilisation. Rome is of the dark ages. Alice Borchardt foregrounds the idea through the murder of Reagane's father. Though a royal child, Reagane has been dumped as a sepulchral entity. Her character as a shape shifter metaphorically enunciates the two extremes a woman has to sway between--woman and wolf, victor and victim. Reagane has to retaliate sometimes quiet paradoxically, to establish the greatness of love. The *picaro* Reagane goes back deep into the primal history consecrated by ignorance and innocence. A life coming out of the past, the barbarian
masculine mysteriously surrounds Reagan. And hence, outside the gates of Rome, she has to sway between the dark wolf and the dove lady. A woman must fight. She must fight all the time to establish her identity and also to loosen the male sovereignist noose around her neck. Thus, Alice Borchardt fiction demonstrates the configurations of the feminine punctuated by beauty, dignity, duty and love.

Like Reagane, Guinevere is another symbol of resistance in *The Raven warrior*. Again, Guinevere contests the masculine ideology. *The Raven Warrior* proclaims a new feminist epistemology. Guinevere is the deputy anointed by the dragon people, who stands juxtaposed to the monarchical hegemony as represented by the Saxon riders. While the Saxon riders are concerned with the conquest of the highlands followed by the destruction of its pristine glory, Guinevere is much concerned about the restoration of the highlands. Hence, this novel could be seen inclined to an ecofeminist position. Guinevere's first battle against the masculine is aided by the spirits of the death. Here the spirits of the death figuratively expand into resurrecting the suppressed ethics constituted by the ancient women. Guinevere teaches the basic concept of life as evidenced in her greatest attachment to Black leg, her childhood companion. A postmodern *picaro* Guinevere is, she is used by the novelist to excavate the inner reality of old history. Her perilous journey is again a metaphor of postmodernism. One finds Guinevere involved in a non-linear progression of journey, and by resistance, through a volume of experiences by both land and sea.

*Beguiled* is a novel which beautifully has woven a medieval tapestry in which Alice Borchardt projects Elin. Elin negotiates the historical masculine intrigue before
forging a judicious mixture of gender and love towards a new ethical position. Like Guinevere of The Raven Warrior, Elin is a representative of the pagan forest people. The pagan forest people like the dragon people of The Raven Warrior enunciate the ecofeminist position. While Guinevere, with the help of the dragon people sets out to rescue King Arthur. Elin, backed by the pagan forest people, sets out to rescue Owen the Bishop of Chantalon. Figuratively, it is a feminine contest against the masculine. Again, it is all about a woman who sets out to redeem the feminine epistemology is hidden in history. Like Guinevere, Elin has to fight the brutish Viking invaders who are basically oriented towards disfiguring the feminine body. Also, she has to face new dangers coming from the Norsemen like Hakon. Historically, Elin is a raped victim and slave. Yet, she forges a new world occupied by the forest people who demonstrate the simple annals of the ethical living. Elin is desperate, sometimes loving and at times even radical. These are some of the feminist radical positions with which Alice Borchardt designates Elin. Elin, extends into the lush Nature of France's historical part, punctuated by war and romance, religion and male chauvinism.

*Devoted*, just comes up as a novel of a woman who is destined to fight the greatest and the most powerful male superstructures like religion and monarchy. Elin is again a deputy of the forest people of the 10th century France. She has to negotiate a new Christianity, a new ruler and pitiably a new God. Yet, Alice Borchardt uses Elin as a symbol of a strange power emanating from the forest.

Eventually, Alice Borchardt's fiction could be considered as enunciating the new historicist tenets that intersect the postmodern precepts. Her novels, address the issue of women as the subaltern. The viability of eco feminism, very much available
in her fiction demonstrates how art could reconsider history in a postmodern perspective. Paradoxically, this is one point, where one finds history at the cross roads with postmodernism. Altogether, Alice Borchardt's fiction is not only a contest with history but also a re writes of history. Eventually, Alice Borchardt world might be perceived as an artist whose fiction is centred on the manipulations of many of the most sensitive issues of history.