Chapter One

Introduction

American literature, like all other literatures of the world, has been the reservoir of the collective possessions of generations belonging to the continent. It is unique in that, it is evocative of a collective history generated by the immigrants from all over the world. Hence, it could be regarded as a literature eventuated by a multicultural scenario and a multifaceted history. At the time when American literature was evolved, it was seen as the folk expression practised by the natives and then, by those who immigrated into the continent. Thus, one finds the American societal structure as characterised by Catholicism, Protestantism, Puritanism, the native Indian tribal rituals, the African worship patterns, so on and so forth. As Howard Temperley and Malcolm Bradbury observe:

Here was a continent enormous in area, rich in resources peopled by men of exotic and diverse cultures, whose very existence up to that time had been unknown. But above all – and this was what made it so peculiarly fascinating it was a New World in the sense that it had developed in its own way. (3)

Emanating from the entire multifaceted cultural scenario, one finds American Literature today, as the voice of the historical past and even the present. Further, it is formulated by the exultant and the high temperamental mindset of those intellectuals
available on the continent. In possession of the miracle of words and themes which consequently formulated writings, American literature is the product of history carried out by the lived experiences of an assorted human kind. This is essentially a framework in which one could also witness a literature through the most ideal kind of figurative language. So history comes in formulated and segmented forms characterised by the ornaments of words which make American Literature a storehouse of a unique enlightenment.

Essentially, art is reflective of life and ultimately life is evocative of a kind of literature belonging to a particular time and space. Time and space, taken as two separate cultural components, decide the worth and the literary potential of Art. The character of time and space is constituted by the particularity of cultural experiences. Hence, the literature generated during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries stood deep rooted in the morality tradition taking the Christian faith for granted.

The statement that American literature is forged in religious manacles should be modified. Much of the native Indian literature did not exactly start out being religious as it often ends up being so. Thus, the native Indian literature is an exception since it has been characterised and perfected by the native Indian literary tradition which is fundamentally an oral tradition, and over the years, it has been circumscribed by a not so ever-changing time and space. The time and space, as initiated by the native Indian literary tradition, are in fact, characteristic of a cultural paradigm, punctuated by Nature and its creation. Naturally, the literary tradition has become associated with symbols of Nature like the sun, the moon or the stars. The folk songs, the folk tales and the aphorist recitals of poems during full moon days and also, the
rendering of spiritual treaties during the marital ceremonies, have become the constituents of the native Indian culture. In order to maintain a manipulation of authority, animal stories were supplemented. The animal stories cannot be fixed in time and space since they belong to the oral tradition. Hence, the native culture controlled a literature not historically fixed but historically rejuvenated. Hence, this literature could not be compartmentalised into segments as one finds in the British literary tradition.

It is natural that many of these local myths and rites, which were once under the custody of the native literary tradition, had either disappeared or amalgamated into a new pattern. It is astonishing to find this historically distanced rich tradition encapsulated in the postmodern literature. This is where one beholds literature as encompassing historicity, a sense of relived experience in a refurbished time and space.

The speculative content of the American literature is essentially a recollection of the principal concerns of a culture lived through the years in a multi-cultural time and space. If one were to perceive the American literature in its particularities, that is, the specific areas of experience, one might perhaps encounter a kaleidoscopic spectrum of cultural patterns. Significantly, American literature is the resultant factor generated by the amalgamations of a complex, yet interconnected time and space.

Despite these occasional combinations, during the initial stages of literary productions, the structure and convention of art have been overwhelmingly predominated by an interdisciplinary space. For instance, the very techniques involved in sculpture or in painting have been taken as the potential constituents of
the American art. This is one significant factor of American literature which has
preoccupied itself with the various distinctive styles of the interdisciplinary
architectural patterns. Nevertheless, the primary focus of American literature lies in
its comprehension of the historical origins of culture, society and psyche.

Thus, American literature is exemplified by the character dominated by
historical myths, mythologized history, ancient traditions and legends. These elements
of the past come in handy even in the scrutiny of postmodern literature. One is given
to perceive postmodern literature as encompassing *pastiche* of a secular context. And
then, one finds that it had deviated into a specialized context intertwined with the
manipulation and exploitation of those historical sediments of yore. The historical
residuals, after having been restructured into a modern form, generate a new pattern
of literature which speaks of the inevitable momentary passions of yore. The residuals
are captured from the abyss of time and space and sent through a modern
technologically patterned time and space. One finds this secular development as
brilliant in its expressions characterized by complexity. Consequently, one finds
American literature as an expression of emotional convictions identified and
recovered from the differential time and space. One, who is exposed to American
literature, is naturally and obviously involved with these literary benefactions. And, a
reader of American literature has a point to note in the sense that s(he) should view it
as a specific body of creative art, principally expounded in the deep rooted sense of
history initiating a multi-faceted and an intricate perception of consciousness. One is
aware of the fact that, it is also a reflection of a modern consciousness and hence a
discussion on this consciousness in a socio-cultural perspective will help to identify
the various patterns of American literature before one narrows down the focus on the American fiction.

While discussing the beginnings of American literature, Richard Gray has been aware of the various functional changes that have taken part in the evolution of the literature and he observes in the introduction that:

In this history of American literature, I have tried to be responsive to the immense changes that have taken place over the past thirty to forty years in the study of literature in general and American literature in particular changes, that among other things, have put the whole issue of just what is American and exactly what constitutes literature into contention. (ix)

In the meantime, a significant impact was made by the Christian denominations which later began to affect the verve of American literature. From the Catholic narratives to the Puritan evolution of theologies, revolutionary changes have altered the voice and spirit of American literature. Significantly, all traditions speak of the central fact of American experience – the loss of identity. As Richard Gray observes, “Along with that, as in so many American stories and poems, went the discovery of the sense of being that in America – sometimes exhilarating and at others, as here, genuinely terrifying” (19).

Although American literature has undergone crucial changes over the centuries, one significant fact attracts attention. It is the literature’s inability to sever nexus with the ancient native Indian tradition. The American tradition, which is
invested with all the familial rhythms and patterns of literature, are narrowed down to
one significant theme, the celebration of animals. Animals are a constant factor which
comes as the consistent interactive presence and at one point, the animal and the
human circles merge to erupt into a sacred fellowship. Also, the native literature is
linked to the trickster stories extended into romance, and consistently fixed in themes
of longing, quest and desire. According to Richard Gray:

The animal and human realms merge in Native American and belief,
humans metamorphose into animals and vice versa…. Animals are
familiar creatures in Native American lore, they are scared…. Stories
of love between humans and animals often modulate into stories of
love between humans….. Tales of longing, pursuit of an elusive object
of desire. (14-15)

The Native American stories are yet, centred on humanity, with the cycle of
life and death which is essentially mixed with ritual and romance. Stories are
inseparable from rituals. They enact and re-enact the acknowledged cycle of the past
life in order to ensure and establish a continuum of life. This sense of mutuality
evolves the quintessence of the native tradition in which the human beings oscillate
between the [wo]man and animal and vice-versa. Again, all those native myths are
about life and the continuum of life. Essentially, by bringing in the nexus between the
living and the dead, a new paradigm emerged. Ultimately, the native tradition is all
about the essential link between the past, the present and the future. Pioneers like
James Fennimore Cooper, Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman
Melville had been aware of this cultural nexus with the original native images. As E. M. Forster observes:

We need a vantage post, for the novel is a formidable mass, and it is so amorphous – no mountain in it to climb, no Parnassus of Helicon, not even Pisgah. It is most distinctly one of the moister areas of literature – irrigated by a hundred rills and occasionally degenerating into a swamp. I do not wonder that the poets despite it, though they sometimes find themselves in it by accident. (13)

The idea of process which was involved in this tradition is “The notion of time” (105). Owing to the evolutionary changes, this literature began to incorporate the history of the Frontier West. As Leslie A. Fiedler puts it:

Such considerations leave us trapped in the chicken-egg dilemma. How can one say whether the quality of passion in American life suffers because of a failure of the writer’s imagination or vice-verse? What is called love in literature is a rationalization, a way of coming to terms with the relationship between man and woman that does justice, on the one hand, to certain biological drives and, on the other, to certain generally accepted conventions of tenderness and courtesy; and literature, expressing and defining those conventions, tends to influence real life more than such life influences it. (31)

The literature of the Frontier West significantly added the conventional images of the native Indian history and also the contemporary political images as evidenced
in the terms like “Boston tea party”, “I saw an Elephant”, “he went west”, so on and so forth.

In a wider significance, American literature has been strongly fostered and nurtured in the cultural bed of a teaming multiculturalism. As Northrop Frye puts it:

When we start to think seriously about the novel, not as fiction, but as a form of fiction, we feel that its characteristics, whatever they are, are such as make, say, Defoe, Fielding, Austen, and James central to its tradition, and Borrow, Peacock, Melville, and Emily Bronte somehow peripheral. This is not an estimate of merit. (25)

The American immigrants had brought with them a wide spectrum of histories. Though it is not so easy to pinpoint the exact quantum of history available with the migrant, one could categorize it as emerging according to the immigrant’s faith and culture. The American landscape had encountered not only an unfamiliar culture as that of the Jewish but also had encountered strange languages like the Irish, German and the Italian, which accelerated a spurt in a new literature that had begun to be the supportive factor. Thus, the American landscape has been the breeding ground of the old world values in conflict with the evolution of the new generation values. This is what Mary Antin makes of the immigrant experience as she writes:

We had to visit the stores and be dressed from head to foot in American clothing; we had to learn the mysteries of the iron stove, the washboard and the speaking-tube; we had to learn to trade with the fruit peddler through the window and not to be afraid of the policeman
and above all we had to learn English…. with our despised immigrant clothing we shed also our impossible Hebrew names. (187)

Quite clearly, the immigrant literature speaks of the experiences involving the uprooting, migration and re-routing over the decades. Inevitably, yet astonishingly, there emerges a new literature packed with a magical scenario, which even the great cultural anthropologists of the time could not demark a unique identifiable culture. Naturally, the animal stories drawn from the historical Native American tradition have been proved to commission strength, sustenance and coherence of individuality. The animal images also have evolved new cultural patterns which enunciate a new ideology of life. According to Brain Lee and Robert Reinders:

Evolutionary thought, in particular, its concepts of inevitability and the realities of industrialization and Urbanism, forced literary figures to observe and analyse the world in a new way, and to discover new literary forms in which the new dimensions of society could be expressed. Writers coerce freed from the incubus of the past which was, in Spenserian terms at least, meaningless. The contemporary scene was found in the spatial dimensions of the city, the binding discipline of commercial or industrial work, and all determined by forces over which the individual had little control. (190)

Understandably, urbanity comes as a conflicting pattern in which one finds a confusion of values and ethical imbalance similar to the postmodern anarchy. As Brian Lee and Robert Reinders observe:
A new literary form was reconstructed which was responsible for generating a postmodern *pastiche*, and in one respect this pushed the natural increase of writers in the form of poets and novelists. With the emergence of this new American Literature, *reconstruction* or in the European sense *renaissance* had been made possible. This literature is the paragon of the radical reconstruction which spelled out a new ethics and the new values. The advent of industrialisation and Urbanism necessitated those creative writers to perceive the world in a different perceptive and to discover new literary forms and new frameworks which never resemble the pre-Elizabethan age and rules and regulations (190).

Again, the American literary scenario has experienced a new directionality with the arrival of a host of women writers. These women writers manipulate the ancient myths and negotiate a new mode of personal relationship, life style and even codes. Over the changing times, this increasing number of women writers has been at logger heads with the male writers, though some of the latter were, in fact, sympathetic towards women and sexuality. Further, the women writers have oriented themselves towards a new form of creative literature. They have capitalized on the components of history before they create a new feminist literature deeply fixed in its historicity.

As of the past, when women emerged on the literary scene, they came with the burden of gender. They were aware of those female individuals who negotiated an identity through collusion, conflict and manipulation of myths. The Native American
folk tradition had offered congruence and consolidation of the historicity that lie embedded in it. Further, the colonising cultural enterprises enhanced the idea of the feminine. Consequently, these female writers began to negotiate a new pattern of existence deconstructing those negativist myths of womanhood. Eventually, they were all set on a quest for individuality and liberation in a new direction. This quest is the undercurrent. Alice Borchardt is an illustration of this.

Alice O'Brien Borchardt (October 6, 1936 – July 24, 2007) is a writer of fiction oriented in history. She was initially recognized as the sister of the novelist Anne Rice. Anne Rice (October 4, 1941) has been identified with Gothic fiction and sometimes erotica. Stan Rice (November 7, 1942 – December 9, 2002) is another renowned poet. When Stan Rice married Anne Rice, the American literary world saw the emergence of a creative trio which has been associated with the longing to communicate with the non-human and sometimes even the dead. A listener to her sister’s story telling in New Orleans, Alice Borchardt nurtured an intentional desire for the histories of yore. Thanks to her father Mr. Howard, a postal employee, Alice Borchardt was blessed with a wonderful gift of her first library card at the age of seven. Besides, Alice Borchardt’s mother, Catherine Howard, was a profound influence who taught her the poetics of perception. In the company of her mother Catherine Howard, Alice Borchardt was able to emerge as a self-observed, yet an extrovert personality, specialized in the commitment to a classical epistemology.

Much of her travels had been an initiating factors no wonder, when Alice Borchardt pursued her career as a nurse in Houston. The vocation strengthened her individuality so that, she was able to predict a new legacy of writing flowing out of
her hands. She met her future husband in Houston when she was laid off her job by the hospital management. Her sister Anne Rice introduced her into the creative side.

The first novel *Devoted* (1995) was published when she was in her mid-fifties and significantly, *Devoted* came as a canon bashing. This was perceived by the critics of the times as a writing turning away from the contributory pattern of her novels. *Devoted* was slowly establishing Alice Borchardt as one creative writer who has the capability to traverse a new historical spectrum and highlight the internal fragmentations that were running deep in history. The literary world witnessed Alice Borchardt as an author of trilogy which included the medieval history of Rome. *The Silver Wolf* (1998), *The Night of the Wolf* (1999) and *The Wolf King* (2001) constitute an inextricable link to the non-human world. The trilogy is less concerned with inland human trajectories rather than to historical overlapping. Again, the trilogy manifests feminist orientations. It is quite clear that Alice Borchardt foresights the human as *Beguiled* (1996) moves away from the non-human into the more human configuration constituted by a holy order. *Beguiled* seeks to bring out, in more than a way, how religion and society affect the feminine.

*The Dragon Queen* (2001) and *The Raven Warrior* (2003) incorporated non-Christian paradigm as the cultural imperative of the times. The term *pagan* clinches a new meaning. The two novels again try to connect the idea that paganism is defined in relation to the male hegemony or the male power as represented by the Kings and the Bishops.

Alice Borchardt, in her fiction proclaims a new poetics of creativity. She forges methodical links between feminist principles and male hegemony. And in
doing so, she creates a new cultural code punctuated by a judicious mixture of the male and the female ethos. Eventually, her fiction enlarges its range to distant centuries that belonged to emperors like Julius Caesar. Again, her fiction suggests that the postmodern scenario is one cultural continuum of historical capitalism that had once enveloped the medieval centuries. All of her novels behold the fact that the very masculine is a pathetic slave to historical capitalism. This naturally enlarges the gender premise. And so, one could find in Alice Borchardt’s women protagonists, the constant endeavour to release themselves from the society’s dominant historical and materialistic claims. Borchardt’s fiction challenges this tradition and her novels address to the issue of women victimisation. Her single agenda is the liberation of the female individual. As Sally J. Scholz observes:

Liberation is both an individual transformation and a social transformation. Woman must see herself as a subject like man, not an object she must embrace her freedom. But women must also see themselves as a social group. Failing in this assists in maintaining oppression; women must recognize the unity in shared circumstances of oppression, they must, in other words, recognize the mystification of the eternal feminine. (70)

Alice Borchardt has populated novels with more than a few categories of women, who “recognize the mystification of the eternal feminine”. Domesticity is one idea which is fore grounded by Alice Borchardt to contest the historical male space. As Sally J. Scholz, liberation is possible in a space exclusively domestic. As she observes:
The domestic sphere – or private life – was commonly understood as a sort of mini kingdom. Even in contemporary law enforcement, police have long been reluctant to intervene in familial disputes of any kind. The home is a protected space and the various branches of the state, it was presumed, ought to stay out. (177)

Borchardt’s fiction manifests this potentiality of home, which negotiates challenges. In fact, Sally J. Scholz would like to call this negotiation, identity politics. As she writes:

Identity politics challenges traditional, social and political theory because in recognizing differences between groups, public policy must treat individual people differently. The political community must ensure that the structures of democracy weigh in the needs of oppressed peoples heavily in order to overcome the long historically entrenched disadvantages and oppressions which neglected those needs. (78)

In the light of Sally J. Scholz’s observation, one can fix Alice Borchardt as deeply concerned about the feminine survival. Hence, Borchardt’s fiction is centered on a contest of history. It is also projective of a new paradigm, which not only deconstructs myths but also recreates a new pattern of existence carved out of the distance history. As Stevi Jackson and Jackie Jones write:

Women are not a homogenous group. This is not merely to restate a truism that we are not all alike – but to underline the social
significance of differences among us. We are differently located within global and local social contexts and differently represented in art, literature and other media. Distinctions of nationality, ethnicity, education, language, family, class, employment, ability, disability and sexuality are important. (2)

Alice Borchardt’s women forge a new strategic existence, which not only provides them sustenance but also nourishes the human values of the ancient civilisation. The human values are constructed from the home premise which is indicative of the female values too. As Stevi Jackson observes:

The competing claims made about the value of domestic labour were entirely contingent upon the position of the housewife’s husband within the capitalist economy. It was in terms of his labour that her work was conceptualized. Yet relations between husbands and wives, particularly inequalities between them were largely ignored. For most Marxists it was unthinkable that working-class men might be oppressors in their own homes or that bourgeoisie women might also be oppressed. (17)

Significantly, Home is a construct with which Alice Borchardt evolves a new narrative pattern. This pattern comes as enunciating deconstructive strategies that create a new evolution of life. In the new evolution of life, woman is found playing the role of a redeemer. The redeemer is epistemologically drawn from the native woman myth. It is about the mythical woman who forced a man’s head onto the table
when he had laid his hands on her shoulders. It generates the idea of contest,
figuratively to anticipate the coming of a terrible beauty. This is very similar to much
of the women’s writing, which has been driven by the idea of femininity, centered on
the female body. This doctrine has come much closer to many of the male novelists
who prefer an emphasized form of emancipation. Their writings have come to
motivate small pathways that would help a woman to overcome the hazards of her
life. For which, Alice Borchardt projects a public sphere, in which women play a
pivotal role. One can naturally understand that a public negotiation is also needed for
a woman who needs to clinch an identity. A renowned feminist theorist Frazer
Elizabeth speaks of a public space apart from the domestic one. She writes:

And equally, publicity and public life is a value. Recently some critics
have begun to voice disquiet at feminism’s concentration on
interpersonal transactions, arguing that feminists must not forget the
importance of publicity of speaking and acting in those public areas
where the intention is that voice is audible and actions are visible to
public. (59)

In this regard, Jane Scoular’s observation warrants mention here. In her words,

The very concept of the liberal subject – the notion of the meaning –
giving agent – distinct from social structures and linguistic conventions
– has been deconstructed expeditions by pointing out that what has
been paraded as the universal lessons of man is merely the male in
disguise, and by suggesting that all theories of the subject have been appropriated to the side of the masculine. (68)

This is one idea of the culture which Alice Borchardt wishes to fix as the contesting point. One could term it as culturality. It is one aspect which has been perceived by women writers as male hegemony. Hence, women theorists do not hesitate to call the field of anthropology a totem of male chauvinism. As Harvey Penelope writes:

One important stage point in anthropology is that there is no culturally innocent (or culture free) reality. Any claim is to have a privileged handle on reality, to be able to perceive an extra-cultural reality are in themselves cultured (. . .) In heuristic terms, the real world is not simply “out there” waiting to be discovered, raw and in culture-free innocence, by science, rather science is actively constructing reality and has persuasive means to assert what is to count as real (73).

Hence, women writers are aware of the cultural imperative that a new language, exclusively feminine or rather feminist is mandatory. A new language, they always have felt, is new power. As Liz Kelly writes:

One of the most powerful things feminism has done, and must continue to do, is to create new language and meanings which provide women with ways of meaning and understanding their own experience . . . It was our experience of language as a form of power the power to name and define…which made it, such a key issue from the beginnings of
this wave of feminism. We didn’t need linguistic - how basic and fundamental an issue this was. It still is. (qtd. in Jackson147)

The women writers hoped that this will eliminate the sense of masculine perception of the female body. Naturally, they are pitted against media too. As Thornham Sue writes:

What relation, for instance, does spectatorship have to representations of women? What sort of activity is it looking at? What does looking have to do with sexuality? With masculinity and humanity? With power? With knowledge? How do images of women in particular speak to the spectator? Is the spectator addressed as male/female masculine/famine? Is femininity constructed in specific ways through representation? Why are image of women’s bodies so prevalent in our society. (213)

Media is one component which has a heavy influence on the postmodern scenario. Also, media is projective of an illusionary world. Hence, magical illusions have formed a special place. No wonder, media which has affected literature and life, has also incorporated the illusionary real. The postmodern novels have imbibed in themselves this concept. Alice Borchardt is no exception to this. It has more than once been suggested in the fiction scenario, by the renowned writers of the West, that their thematic content founded upon magic realism is necessarily linked to “intriguingly the first description of man-wolf” (ix). This is a hermeneutic diversion toward deconstructing the elements of a societal infrastructure which have turned out
to be obsolete. The postmodernist *Homo sapiens* come well as one existential illustration of this substantive worth. *Andros*, the Greek word for *man*, assumes a new per mutative and combinative variation within a normative system. In this regard, it would be appropriate to draw the illustration of Cotton Mather who finds a connection between business activity and religion. He writes:

A Christian at his two callings is a man in a Boat, Rowing for Heaven; the House which our Heavenly Father hath intended for us. If he minds but one of his callings is it which it will, he pulls the Oar, but on one side of the Boat; and will make but a poor dispatch to the shore of Eternal Blessedness. . . Yea a calling is not only our Duty, but also our safety. Men will ordinarily fall into horrible snares, and infinite sins, if they have not a calling, to be their preservative. . . The temptations of the Devil, are best resisted by those that are least at Leisure. . . An occupation is an ordinance of God for our safeguard against the Temptations of the Devil. A bird on the wing is not so soon caught by the Hellish Fowler. A man is upon the wing, when he is at the work, which God hath set him to do. (24)

Cotton Mather’s phrase *a bird on the wing*, is demonstrative of free will, which is a crucial cultural component of post modernity. One finds Alice Borchardt demonstrative of the free will. Hence, she foregrounds man as a historical being, consistently confined to the pattern of replaying history.
While one stands prefixed on this foregrounding of man as possessing relational properties, one is also awed by the prehistoric epistemological strain one finds in Alice Borchardt’s text. It is the enunciation of man as shape shifter. As Brad Steiger writes, “… the first depiction of man-wolf was apparently inscribed on a cave wall, suggesting that even pre-historic Homo sapiens may have been cognizant of this incredible duality” (ix). Brad Steiger, in his brilliant composition of *The Werewolf Book*, significantly avers the fact that notions of werewolf have played a potential role in various time related spaces. Dr. Franklin Reuhl’s *Foreword* supports Steiger’s book, as he foregrounds (pre)history before the readers. He writes in the introduction:

First, it should be stressed that the idea of a man morphing into a wolf is actually well within the reader of flexibility. Few among us have not lost their tempers on at least a few occasions. During such outbursts, emotions of uncontrolled emotions spew forth making us feel as though we have become transformed into some type of fierce beast.

(ix)

Dr. Franklin Reuhl forwards this idea through a Paper published by Dr. Harvey Rose Stack, a renowned Clinical Professor, who documents the case of a forty-nine year old woman as struck with lycanthropy, a disorder associated with werewolf. He writes in the introduction:

One evening, when the moon was full, she suddenly jumped to the floor and started to crawl about on all fours as she growled and salivated. Worse, she even began chewing and ripping up the furniture.
When she gazed into the mirror, she saw not a female’s head, but a wolf’s. (x)

One is thunderstruck, the moment one encounters Steiger’s proved assertions that not only do werewolves really exist, but everyone who will ever read this book *The Werewolf Book* was the seed of the wolf within his or her psyche.

While Steiger attaches a supernatural value to the human beings, one could also find his deconstructed version of the *Homo sapiens*. He is consistently aware of mankind having resorted to the relational properties of behaviour which is similar to the prehistoric proposition of human beings, as Terry Eagleton writes, “If every sign is what it is because it is not all the other signs, every sign would seem to be made up of a potentially infinite trace of differences” (110). Eagleton holds the doctrine that a signifier is different from other signifiers. For instance, a rat signifies, other than itself, so many things like a snake, a cat and a bat. Against this backdrop man as a signifier suggests so many other things, a werewolf in particular, as evidenced in Steiger’s observation of the postmodern individual. He writes:

While most of us have become demonstrated and hear the inner voice of conscience that has been strengthened by moral and spiritual values cultivated over centuries of civilized behaviour, those individuals who have succumbed to the more vicious seed of the wolf within them walk among us today as those sadistic sex criminals who slash, tear, rip, rape, mutilate and cannibalize their victims. (18)
Beyond the human being, there exist certain absent unspoken and a violent condition of network. As a result, while underlining the deconstructive strain involved in the depiction of human beings in the text, the writer naturally pushes him or her into the conceptual inter text. Inter textual elements are available a plenty, for example, an inter text is born out of the influence one exercises with other fields like science and medicine. No wonder, the werewolf epistemology is drawn from the pre history, as Steiger establishes, “1, 40, 000 years ago” (4). Steiger brings in the evidence of DNA that “shows that dogs began to evolve from their wolf ancestors about 1,35,000 years ago and that humans and their canine companions literally evolved together”(23). In this regard, Terry Eagleton’s observation warrants mention here:

All literary texts not in the conventional sense that they bear the traces of influences but in the more radical sense that very word, phrase or segment is a reworking of their writings which precede or surround the individual work.... is no such thing as literary originality no such thing as the first literary work, all literature is inter textual. (111)

Consequently, one could see that a novelist might experience new visions through accepting a participation of a distant space and a discursive epistemology. Naturally, the novelist subverts and decentres all conventional and established norms of perceiving the Homo sapiens, while decoding the psychological intricacies. The principle objective of a deconstructive text is to thwart the status quo associated with the tradition, so as to enable the viewer to encounter the unexpected and the undecided things. This might lead to anarchy of meanings signifying a world of
disorder. For instance, the concept of werewolf, gains a deconstructive paradigm, as Madison Brent says, “claim to knowledge that are full of internal tensions and contradictions or antinomies which end up subverting their stated goals and their own” (112).

The postmodern fiction highlights a signifying text through its rhetorical or figural techniques. Texts do not exist as a separate entity, but as a component tethered to the environmental impact and history. Art does not exist in a vacuum. This is indicative of the co-existent articulations of life and the arts’ reciprocity to the structural indices. In other words, art is culturally, socially, psychologically and eventually, historically linked. It is this nexus that constitutes art.

Alice Borchardt’s fiction art is no exception to this. It excavates the ancient tradition and history through a hyper textual reality. While her art exploits the werewolf descriptions of history over time and memory, it also draws materials from the century old associations of art with werewolf. Interestingly, a few of Borchardt’s protagonists are cerebrally, psychologically and subconsciously fitted to the werewolf precept. While the protagonists take on the garb of the werewolf, they emerge as realistically constituting a very grim reality, in which a woman is passive and submissive if she plays the traditional role of a woman. Yet contrastingly, if she usurps the role of a werewolf, she can manage a survival. Night of the Wolf, The Silver Wolf, The Wolf King are illustrations of a community supplemented by the presence of shape shifters. Also, these novels are projective of a history and hence, a historicist perception becomes imperative. According to Paul Hamilton,
Historicism, though, far from judging this enforcement of similarity bad or even barbaric, instead regards it as politic, creative and responsible. Out of a dialogue with the past, mutually cognizant of differences, historicism claims to reach an accommodation that expands the horizons within which we recognize what we have in common. (387).

While looking at Alice Borchardt’s fiction, one understands that history is obviously objectified. As she creates or rather re-creates authentic historical characters, she connects the readers with many historical figures. As George Lukacs observes:

What matters therefore in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters in that we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality (42).

Alice Borchardt parades her protagonists fitted by chance in the arena of historical events. She perceives historical events from multifaceted perspectives. As Lukacs observes:

what matters therefore in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. . . And it is a law of literary portrayal which first appears paradoxical, but then quite obvious, that in order to bring
out these social and human motives of behaviour, the outwardly insignificant events, the smaller . . . relationships are better suited than the great monumental dramas of world History. (42)

Before one begins with the discussions on Alice Borchardt fiction it is appropriate to furnish the detailed summaries of the selected novels. First comes *Devoted* (1995). According to Nancy Pearl:

In a top-notch example of the "heaving bosom, swollen manhood" subgenre of historical fiction, Owen, the bishop of Chantalon, and the enslaved Elin, who, like all the Forest People, is skilled in the arts of healing and magic, meet while both are escaping from Vikings. Their passionate love affair, which represents the melding of Christian and pagan beliefs, is graphically played out against the constant assaults on the town by Viking raiders. When Owen is captured by a Viking chieftain, Elin uses the strengths of both their worlds to rescue Owen and save the town. This first novel, which leaves ample plot room for a sequel, is plagued with a pedestrian writing style and a confusing array of indistinguishable characters. In addition, given the dearth of convincing historical detail, readers will be hard pressed to figure out when and where the book is set. (www.go.galegroup.com)

*Devoted* is an epic novel of France’s vibrant history punctuated by romantic love, turbulent wars and hypocritical religion. It intertwines history and magic with the romantic aspirations and the heroic ambitions of men and women. *Devoted* is set upon the tenth century France, where a consistent conflict exists between the
Christians and those who are against it. The forest people stand in contrast to these arriving Christians. Yet, they have to be united against the invading brutal Viking settlers, whose only aim is to kill before making their living.

Elin is the representative of the forest people. She has been trained by her mother in the mystic and the magic passions of the society. She is a victim of the brutal Vikings who force her into prostitution. Yet, she finds solace in the Christian Owen. Owen is the Bishop of Chantalon. He saves Elin and makes her his woman. As Owen’s Lady of Honour, Elin strategically reinforces a fusion of magical mysticism and Christianity. To Alice Borchardt, magical mysticism is something, she pulls off the Bible with God working out magical wonders on His people. *Devoted* is filled with many a journey which both Bishop Owen and Elin encounter, in order to forge a new philosophy of life. While Bishop Owen holds the responsibility of saving his community, Elin supplements the Bishop with a life force constituted by the mystical aura found in the forest people. The forest people need not be taken literally. In its right perception, the forest people are the imaginative constructs of Alice Borchardt, who is ecologically poised towards life. Also, *Devoted* presents Reynald and his wife Elspeth as a supplementary force, which constitutes a new way of life. Reynald, together with his wife and Anna the housekeeper, forges a new practical theory of evolution. On the other side, Bishop Owen has his friends too Godwin, Edgar, Gowen and Wolf the Short and Wolf the Tall.

Bishop Owen is a multifaceted expression of human love and relationship. No wonder, Enar who once attempts to kill the Bishop, joins him later to fight with the Vikings. Alshan is one illustration of the innate spirituality of the forest. He is a
wonderful counsellor to Elin. *Devoted* gains elegance by its declaration of time and space – the time being 900 B.C. and the space being Circa, a French border. Sybilla is another representative of the forest people who anchors herself in the tribulations faced by the community before giving a new order of survival.

It is Alice Borchardt’s intention to establish the novel as having been subjected to new humanism. New humanism is a judicious mixture of both the masculine and the feminine values. Hence, the novelist deputes more than one human agency to reach the sense of truth. The novel comes to a close with Owen and Elin rescripting the Christian idea of enlightenment. When they finally emerge as the saviours of the community, they subvert the Christian idea of enlightenment. As found in *The Publishers Weekly*:

…it’s Gut-rolling battle scenes are the strength of this first novel set in ninth century France, but they come too late and too infrequently to inspire most readers to forgive the overwrought prose that surrounds them. Owen, Bishop of Chantalon, risks his life to save Elin, a forest girl of sorceress like powers who has escaped the Viking camp where she was enslaved. Undying love develops between the two—instantly, with no setbacks and little tension—and is expressed often and graphically. Viking raiders are terrorizing the region; their menace is exacerbated by Count Anton and his bastard son Gerlos, who collect tributes from the people for the Vikings but keep part of the confiscated riches for themselves.
Betrayed by his friend Reynald, Owen is captured by the "Northmen" but quickly saved by his Saxon henchman Enar and a band of Elin's "forest people." Later, Elin's mystical powers curse Reynald to his death and bring on a storm to defeat the northern invaders. Borchardt effectively conjures life in a far-flung era, but more action and less romance might have made this tale of an odd alliance between early Christians and European pagans a fresher read.

Alice Borchardt does not spare Christianity even in *Beguiled* (1997), which is again the story of Elin and her man Owen. This novel projects Elin and Bishop Owen’s encounter with the Norseman Hakon. The novel is centered on the Bishop Owen’s venture into an unknown land accompanied by Alshan and Sybilla. Alice Borchardt positions both the Bishop Owen and Alshan to contest Faith. Alshan holds the Christian Faith in baptism as connected to the conquest of women. Alice Borchardt has submitted a lot of forest resorts in order to establish the supremacy of eco humanism. Sybilla comes as one representative of the forest. In the company of Sybilla, Bishop Owen is exposed to the pristine glory of the forest.

In the meantime, Elfwine becomes a victim to Owen’s enemies. She is forced to poison the entire pork kept for lunch. Anna and Elin save one of Godwin’s men who taste the meal and is almost dying. When Elfwine’s plot is revealed, she is arrested and her unholy nexus with Rouchin comes to light. Rescue comes in the form of Elin, who manipulates an effective wing, when Elfwine is supposed to hold a
burning iron in her hand and walk around the Bishop Stowe. Here again, Elin comes as the liberator.

One section of the novel is reserved for Elin’s struggles with Hakon. The struggles with Hakon construct another part of history. While Hakon attempts to manipulate a belief that Elin is the witch of Chantalon, Elin interferes with Hakon to undo the myth. The triangular dimension of treason, betrayal and confiscation is constituted by Elspeth, Reynald and Hakon. Elspeth is Reynald’s widow and the second wife of Hakon. She is much concerned about her children Eric and the two daughters. Altogether, Alice Borchardt fixes both Elfwine and Elspeth as victims of male anarchy. They are again the victims of male abuse.

Hakon confronts Elspeth with the promise of salvation. While Elin holds Hakon and Reynald as deputies of male chauvinism, Elspeth is of a pragmatic type, as one finds her taking the leadership of a community which is fitted against Hakon. No wonder, Elspeth reduces Hakon to a state of inability. The novel winds up with Elin and Bishop Owen, restoring the community’s good will after destroying Hakon, the crucial proponent of villainy and abuse.

Alice Borchardt’s fiction incorporates new historicism, eco humanism and magic realism. She submits the events of the past skilfully making a distinction between what may be called the outside and the inside of an event. For instance, the passage of the Roman warlords across the river or the spilling of blood by the gladiators is an outside event. By the inside of the event, one means that which could be described in terms of thought. While the historian is concerned with the outside of the event, the literary artist is concerned with both the inside and outside of the event.
In the case of Alice Borchardt, magic realism comes as effective means to connect the literary artist and the historian. Magical realism is one literary component which not only penetrates events but also excavates truth. In this way, Alice Borchardt manures magic realism to establish the sterile condition of humanity. According to her, ethical values still exist in the non human world. Consequently, the literary strategy with which Alice Borchardt has been engaged, conceives an evolution which revolutionizes the very idea of art. One could also evolve a hypothesis on which the non human world could be regarded ultimately historical in character. This would imply that the events connected with the animal world are expressions of thought inhabiting the mind of an artist. As found in *The Publishers Weekly*:

In this chivalric sequel to her medieval saga *Devoted*, Borchardt returns to ninth-century France and the city of Chantalon, where the bishop, Owen, and his wife, Elin, confront Viking raids and treachery as they try to bring peace to their people. Hoping to fortify his meager troops, Owen, with the aid of the mysterious forest people, journeys to his father's stronghold to entreat his aid. Instead, he is captured by a hedonistic community of Bretons who offer him safety and peace for his people if he agrees to be their king-- and death if he does not. As Owen undertakes this hero's journey, Elin is left to defend Chantalon against treason and a deceptive inciter sent by the Viking lord Hakon. Like her sister, Anne Rice (who contributes an introduction to this novel, as she did to Devoted), Borchardt delights in wordiness and overwrought prose, especially in her graphic depictions of sex (in
language way over the purple top) and war (complete with disembowelling, beheadings, etc.). Fans of Marion Zimmer Bradley and other purveyors of historic fantasy and adventure will enjoy the richly rendered historic detail with which Borchardt embellishes her baroque portrait of a turbulent, violent time. (www.go.galegroup.com)

*Night of the Wolf* (1999), which gets an award from the Literary Guild, as a special book, unfolds the story of Maeniel, a shape shifter and his love for Immona. Like *Devoted*, the novel makes a venture into history of the Roman rule constituted by the fierce Julius Caesar. With Maeniel and Julius Caesar, Alice Borchardt is primarily engaged with her negotiation of history. With Maeniel, a grey wolf, she is engaged in a dispute of humanity. *Night of the Wolf* presents Dryas as a liberated lady of Nature found quite often mounted on a horse. She is identified exclusively by the poppy flowers and leaves on her hand. She comes as a liberator of the feminine gender. Since she feels that the old male order has come to an end, she joins hands with Maeniel. Dryas is part of distant history in the sense, she is a victim of the masculine perversion and also a witness to death, destruction and pain. She is given asylum by the Blairs. She is a part of the deep forest. Initially in the novel, she takes up the assignment of killing Maeniel. According to Blogger “Moonlight”:

Regeane is a secretive shape shifter living in Rome at the end of the Empire’s decline. Distantly related to Charlemagne, she becomes a pawn between the French and Italy’s scrappy Lombards when she is betrothed to Maeniel, guardian of a passage through the Alps who is sympathetic to the French king. Intrigues and counterplots abound as
Maeniel speeds his way to retrieve his reluctant bride and Regeane lends her supernatural powers to curing the leprous Antonius, whom the Lombards hope to use to discredit his father, Pope Hadrian, and turn the Roman citizens against Charlemagne’s advancing Catholic army. (www.werewolves.com)

In the meantime, Maeniel forges a new alliance, swaying between man and wolf, and he makes a hectic search for Immona, who is lodged in the distant castle. Alice Borchardt further intensifies her objective with Roman history and the cultural history related to it. Fulvia is part of Roman history. She arrives with the idea of kidnapping Dryas and taking her into Rome as a gift for Julius Caesar. For Julius Caesar, she arranges gladiators to fight and die in the Colosseum.

Alice Borchardt introduces the Roman representatives. Lucius is a gladiator who kills in order to earn his freedom. Philo is a Greek prisoner who attends on Lucius whenever he loses blood in battles. When the Roman legionnaires are put to encounter Maeniel, he holds the Roman intrusion as a male super structure, which has forced Immona into captivity. The death of Immona sparks anger in Maeniel. Alice Borchardt also presents Maeniel and Dryas’s sexual odyssey back-dropped by the Roman ambience. The Roman environment is constituted by Caesar’s secret paramours. Fulvia is the mistress, as she is found entertaining Caesar and Cleopatra. The company of Caesar and Cleopatra at Fulvia’s residence sparks of a grand eminence.

Rome is expressive of the revolution of power. Caesar is the deputy anointed for this monarchical hegemony. Rome creates wars and generates slaves to please
Caesar. Against Caesar, Alice Borchardt fixes Maeniel who can be considered a manifestation of the novelist’s eco humanist vision. Maeniel stands juxtaposed to Julius Caesar and his women. Cleopatra, Calpurnia and Fulvia are the female victims of the Roman Empire. They are oppressed till the end of the novel.

It is at this situation, Maeniel saves Dryas who has been trapped in a room devoid of light and air. She is lodged in a Roman city interested in sex, as illustrated by Caesar wanting Dryas to encounter the big cat, Terror. Caesar derives pleasure by watching Terror, tearing up Dryas’ body. The novel comes to a close with Dryas eliminating the big cat. She wins up freedom. Figuratively, she ends up as the contesting factor constituted by feminist orientations which are pitted on against male hegemony. According to Nicole Brinkley:

“The Dragon Queen” follows the development of King Arthur’s future queen. Guinevere is the daughter of a Pagan queen and, considered threatening to her people, gets banished and handed off to the protection of a werewolf, shape shifter. The evil warlock Merlin wants to prevent her destiny, so they do the best they can to protect her.

But, Guinevere isn’t just a pretty little princess — she’s a warrior queen, perfectly capable of traveling to the Underworld or the Otherworld or just across England and surviving. She’s got the protection of dragons, wolfmen and her dearest friends.
When Merlin banishes Arthur to a world of death in an attempt to control the world around him, Guinevere must take all her strength and “prove that she’s worthy of being Arthur’s queen.”

At least, that’s what it says in the official summary of the book; I don’t know why Guinevere doesn’t just kill everybody else and take the throne. She’d be one hell of a great queen in her own right. But no, they have to stick to Arthurian legend and make Arthur the one to bring the peace with the help of Guinevere. (www.oracle.newpaltz.edu)

*The Dragon Queen* (2001) is again a postmodern text which is punctuated by the postmodern aesthetics centred on *pastiche*. Alice Borchardt has well grounded the characters in history, politics and religion of the historical times. Guinevere is the Dragon Queen who is all set to conquer the dragon throne. She is the daughter of a mighty pagan queen. A prize catch that she is, Guinevere is hunted down by the dreaded sorcerer, Merlin. Yet, she is backed by Maeniel. The novel submits the picaresque adventures of both Guinevere and Arthur right through the remote coasts of Scotland. Alice Borchardt presents the animal world again in the company of Immonia, Dugal and Titus. Maeniel sets out to fight the evil Merlin. Immonia is the abandoned child in the animal world. In the company of the she wolf the child is just as happy to see to stay where she is. The child later turns out to be the historical Guinevere. Guinevere’s first encounter with the pirates foregrounds her evolution of life of a new consciousness. She is backed by the villagers and Kyra, who is another female victim in the novel. Kyra is the one eyed women. She is a rape victim of the
chief of the pirates. She has loses her husband and son, Camerin. Kyra joins Guinevere and together they begin to work out a new evolution of life.

The story centres on Guinevere who is part of the community’s economies, for she is engaged in having enough food for the community. Guinevere is aware of the cultural reality that women are the relegated other. Yet, Alice Borchardt equips Guinevere with the silver dragon in whose company, the former travels through the fathomless depth of the forest. In order to underscore Guinevere’s evolution of life, Alice Borchardt uses the magical worlds of the dragons and dolphins. According to Sheila Shoup:

Set in a Britain freshly rid of Roman rule, this tale is loosely based on Arthurian legend. Readers meet a noble Arthur, a wise Morgana, a mesmerizing yet nasty Merlin, and a very different sort of Guinevere. Raised by wolves and endowed with ivy like skin armor reminiscent of Celtic tattoos, this young woman is no frail maiden in need of a Lancelot. Young Guinevere blossoms into womanhood while finding herself at the center of a struggle for the soul of her country. On one side is the powerful arch druid Merlin, who has sold out to Romano-British slaveholders. On the other side are matriarchs, sorcerers, and sorceresses, all of whom honor the old ways. With a sense of destiny and the fire of youth, Arthur and Guinevere navigate worlds mundane and surreal. Magical encounters border on the whimsical while retaining an often-frightening edge. During these encounters, Guinevere discovers her
affinity for dragons and chooses her destiny with Arthur.

(www.go.galegroup.com)

The dragons have been metaphorically placed as offering a sacred union with the love of god. Now Arthur is under the custody of Merlin who has taken Ingraine a captive. Ingraine is Arthur’s mother. Arthur has two wonderful companions, Gawain and Cain. Both Gawain and Cain proceed with Arthur. Arthur has a mission like Guinevere. While Arthur is all set to recover the great soul, Guinevere proceeds to win the dragon throne. It is Guinevere’s wish to place Arthur on the throne. The novel is aesthetically placed on parallelism. The chapters alternate between Guinevere’s expeditions and Arthur’s adventures. The novel also has a psychological depth in that, it submits the identity crisis of both Guinevere and Arthur. While Guinevere’s crisis is the outcome of the conflict between the human and the non-human world, Arthur’s is eventuated by the historical reality that he is born of conspiracy and ill will. The novel closes with the evolution of Arthur as a victor and Guinevere as the Dragon Queen.

According to Neal Wyatt:

The tales of King Arthur are pure reading pleasure, mixing romance, magic, and myth into stories that continue to spin off into new threads. As winter melts slowly into spring, spend the last of the cold dark nights ensorcelled by the magic of Merlin, the boy he found, and the knights of the Round Table….is the classic text, relating the rape of Igraine, the birth of Arthur, the sword and the stone, the wedding to Guenever, and the many feats of the knights. A great companion is The
Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights, John Steinbeck's retelling of Malory's text. ([www.go.galegroup.com](http://www.go.galegroup.com))

*The Wolf King* (2001) presents the story of Maeniel who owes allegiance to Charlemagne. Maeniel resides on the Roman debris. He is all set to rescue his wife. He is joined by his horse, Audorale. This novel also presents Christianity through the ill will of the terribly malicious Abbot. While the novel prospers with Maeniel taking on a picaresque journey through the woods, Regeane, on the other hand manages, to escape from the abbey only to join him later. Together they reach Geneva. Maeniel is particular about saving his wife who is chased by the enemy camp.

*The Wolf King* also submits the value of friendship through Maeniel and Antonius. Maeniel presents a ring to Antonius. It is historically revisited through an incident of a siege in Geneva. One finds a terrible conflict between King Charles and Desiderus. Regeane could be perceived metaphorically the deputy of the feminine contest with the historical masculine. Hence, *The Wolf King* comes as the continuation of the feminine in contest with historical male hegemony. Silvie and her husband Hugo come as illustrations. Silvie suffers and is terribly attacked by her husband. She seeks an asylum in Lucila’s stronghold. Dulcinia, a senior in Silvie’s tavern joins them. Regeane comes as their redeemer.

Alice Borchardt strategically positions the animal kingdom to run parallel with the human world. Maeniel, as a shape shifter, has to fight his own male crisis. In the novel, the male hegemony is represented by a medical superstructure. Hugo’s mother Madonna Helen is a lab rat in the hands of the physicians. The novelist foregrounds this subordination of women in order to expose the male construct as represented by
Pope Hadrian. Alice Borchardt contests the ecclesiastical hegemony by submitting the Pope as having been illegitimately united with Lucila, who has brought forth two children, Antonius and Augustin, who are married into one of the wealthiest and most socially prominent families in Rome. As found in *The Publishers Weekly*:

Borchardt spices her usual recipe for breathy historical romance (*Devoted, etc.*) with a generous pinch of the supernatural. Regeane is a secretive shape shifter living in Rome at the end of the Empire's decline. Distantly related to Charlemagne, she becomes a pawn between the French and Italy's scrappy Lombards when she is betrothed to Maeniel, guardian of a passage through the Alps who is sympathetic to the French king. Intrigues and counterplots abound as Maeniel speeds his way to retrieve his reluctant bride and Regeane lends her supernatural powers to curing the leprous Antonius, whom the Lombards hope to use to discredit his father, Pope Hadrian, and turn the Roman citizens against Charlemagne's advancing Catholic army. In Regeane, whose woman and wolf selves often spar contentiously with one another, Borchardt finds the perfect metaphor for the once opulent Roman civilization, now hostage to its bestial appetites. She elaborates the decadent excesses of the time with gleefully vivid descriptions of gluttonous banquets, grotesque leper colonies and violent lusts sated both on the battlefield and in the bridal bed.
Readers who like their fantasy dusted with gritty realism and who can forgive anachronistic modern dialogue in a period melodrama will find themselves indulged with more than a few twists to this werewolf tale.

*The Wolf King* intensifies its contest with history through the wooded valleys as the backdrop. The woods are but one helpful reminder of a land which houses a non-human world crowned by ethics and love. Here, at the river valleys, the animals share a wonderful familial pattern. Thus, the forest becomes the backdrop which helps the novelist to manipulate her demonstration of gender contest. Regeane is now backed up by Maeniel who is half wolf. She gains sustenance when she puts up a fight with Armin, the king’s representative of the cloth trade. This cloth trade is one representation of the junk commercialism of history. The novel also presents a monarchical manner, which is expressive of the Lombards keeping the Roman women slaves. The novel comes to a close with Maeniel and Regeane salvaging humanism.

According to Tervicz:

One of the primary authors that I got into was someone called Alice Borchardt. I was captured by her book *The Silver Wolf*, following a young woman called Regeane who was trying to hide her nature as a shape shifter.

Long story short, she ends up loving and marrying another shape shifter called Maeniel who has some standing in the world. The story was raw in places, leaving the reader with the feeling it was an earlier book by the author. However, the plot, the story, the emotions and
simply the imagination of the book was very strong and powerful.

(www.tervicz.wordpress.com)

*The Raven Warrior* (2003) again, is a story of Guinevere. She is the queen of the dragon people. It falls on Guinevere that she must protect her community and the highland from the Saxons. The novel is not one unitary episode but a triangular paradigm which flourishes with Guinevere’s journey first, and the second one represented by Black leg’s initiation into manhood and finally the evolution of Uther and Morgana as king and queen. In the novel, one witnesses Guinevere and the black leg in communication with the spirits of the other world. Alice Borchardt positions the spiritual support to negotiate the evil Saxons represented by Merlin and Ingraine. As found in *The Publishers Weekly*:

Magic rules in this first volume of a trilogy that focuses on the fabled Guinevere's adventures before and after she comes to Camelot.

Borchardt (*Night of the Wolf*) paints a vivid portrait of the future queen, who is no pale Pre-Raphaelite princess. Suckled by a she-wolf, this child of power is protected by a Druid, Dugald, and the Gray Watcher, Maeniel, not to mention a shape changing wolf man. Daughter of a pagan queen, this warrior beauty takes control of her own destiny. Bold, courageous, prophetic and possessed of powers that enable her to communicate with dragons and wolves, as well as with a shrunken head, this Guinevere enchants an engagement with the reader immediately, even s a spindly toddler thrown into a wolves' den. A fine, lyrical storyteller, Borchardt reinvents familiar characters,
including a young Arthur and an evil Merlin, who seeks to control the-
once and future king of Camelot. This dark sorcerer may dismay some
Merlin lovers, as he would rather see Guinevere dead than as Arthur's
queen. It's an interesting concept in a long line of derivative
explorations of a mysterious character who has long enchanted
Arthurian fantasy devotees. In the prologue, Guinevere writes: "I am
myself a creature of the dance, the imitation of the movements
embraced by the dialogue between earth and sky," and readers will be
eager for the dance to be continued in the next installment. (www:
go.galegroup.com)

The main line of the story is centered on the painted people and the Lady of
the Lake. She has to counterbalance the Saxons backed up by the Frankish King
Clovies. Clovies is too cunning. He even faces the Huns to carry out raids on the
British Island. Adding insult to injury, the Roman Lords force the innocent farmers to
sell their children into slavery to pay taxes. Rescue comes in the form of Maeniel. The
dragon people of the deep forest of Wales and the painted people of the Highlands
forge an alliance to back Maeniel and Guinevere. Guinevere is shattered by the
manslaughter which the Saxon warlords indulge in. King Uther begins his travel to
London to protect his people. This is one historic event which manifests the cultural
anarchy of the historical times.

The story attached to Uther, Guinevere and Maeniel carves an epistemology of
timeless and endless struggles of humanity. Both Guinevere and Maeniel have to
salvage humanism braving the tyrannical Roman Saxon. Alice Borchardt backdrops
the virginal Nature as one is exposed to the woodlot filled with the dense forest. The
woodlot again develops into a metaphor of eco humanism, the spirit of which has
been carried across the pages. King Uther and his queen travel through this dense
forest before they gain victory over their enemies. Again, women are victims in the
novel. The tavern keepers are usually women who force women prisoners into
harlotry. The Roman warlords hold the taverns as their initiation into vice and
corruption. By the close of the novel, Guinevere and Maeniel manage to declare a
new humanism punctuated by a virginal Nature. According to Zachary Petit:

She's the writing legend who gave vampire fiction new life. He's one of
today's most promising young thriller authors. In this exclusive dual
interview, mother and son discuss the family reunion of sorts where
their writing paths are crossing for the first time: the supernatural
genre. If you try to envision the family tree of mother-and-son
bestsellers Anne and Christopher Rice, it might seem fitting to picture,
say, a live oak--one of those great, gorgeous Southern behemoths they
both grew up under in New Orleans, the same moss-draped giants that
occasionally populate their novels. (www.go.galegroup.com)

In the following two chapters, *Historicist Negotiation: the Circulation of
Feminist Energy* and *Toward a Poetics of Feminism: the New Historicism and
Postmodern Feminism at the Crossroads*, the researcher respectively elaborates on
Alice Borchardt’s concept of life and her serious concern about the predicament of
contemporary women’s situation. And for that, the technique of historiography, is
adopted which brings out the artist’s convictions and visions of life. That is why the researcher has relied on the historicist theory.

Chapter four *The Volatile Body: An Analysis of the Proclamation of Corporal Feminism* examines the perspective of new historicity in the analysis of Alice Borchardt’s fiction. The chapter further furnishes more than a few illustrations which strengthens Borchardt’s concept of life in the socio cultural context of her time. This is followed by the summation, which consolidates the ideas evolved in the previous chapters. It also establishes Alice Borchardt as possessive of the right vision of humanity and the feminine vitality of life. This is eventually, a new vision of a new order.

The researcher hopes that the oncoming discussions of the chapters will well attest the abovementioned proposal of the thesis.