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Female Alienation in Anita Brookner's *Providence*: A Feminist Reading

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Letter of Recommendation

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Female Alienation in Anita Brookner's *Providence: A Feminist Reading*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Shrijana Sigdel has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research seeks to foreground women's resistance against repressive patriarchy in Anita Brookner's *Providence*. Through the depiction of a female character, Kitty Maule, Brookner in *Providence* tries to portray the resistance and self identity of a woman despite deep rooted patriarchal domination in the society. The female characters in the novel get united to subvert the artificial norms and values of the patriarchal mechanism in the contemporary society. The unification of women in the novel becomes instrumental to subvert such male hegemony. It is the traditional belief and roles of females which restrict them to be enslaved within their own house. That is why, to be free from such hierarchical domination and exploitation, construction of female bonding and resistance to such oppressive patriarchal mechanism is inevitable.

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I. Anita Brookner's *Providence* and the Issue of Female Alienation: Introduction

This project explores the sufferings of women partly and basic thrust lies in exploring resistance against repressive mechanism of patriarchy in Anita Brookner's *Providence*. So, this project focuses on the sufferings of female and their sense of resistance against the existing patriarchal norms and values. This thesis tries to analyze the marginalization of women. It explores the patriarchal conditions of female under which female have been oppressed in contemporary society. Through the depiction of female character Kitty Maule, Brookner tried to depict the patriarchal suppression of women and their resistance against it as well as their struggle against it. Here, Brookner is trying to plug the gap between the pathetic conditions of females in regard to the discrimination caused by gender difference. This research also tries to analyze how Brookner critiques the life for the marginalization of women.

The female character in the novel, Kitty Maule is deserted by males. Since the initial days of her upbringing, she lost her father. This resembles her distance from patriarchy to a great extent. Along with this, she has been left alone to suffer the taboos of the society. She has been hated and alienated by the society and forced to struggle and sustain herself on her own. In the course of the novel, Maule sustains herself without the support of males in the oppressive patriarchal society.

Women do not have the equal rights in all cultural domains like familial, religious, political, social, legal and artistic like men have. It is so because the property is always in the name of men and there is no property in the name of women. Brookner's *Providence* explores themes of emotional loss and difficulties associated with fitting into society, typically with the depiction of intellectual, middle-class women; Kitty Maule, who suffer isolation and disappointments in love as well as from the society too.

As both the novelist and the protagonist in the novel are unmarried, childless and “outdated”, it is felt like autobiographical fiction. The struggle of women throughout the history is portrayed in Brookner's writing and also is praised for insightful and fascinating portraits of women's life in particular and their experiences in a sexist and racist society. In *Providence*, her women characters display strength, endurance and resourcefulness in confronting and overcoming the oppression in their lives. Brookner has continued to explore the unique problems that women have to face in contemporary society. Her work depicts the emotional, spiritual, and physical devastation that occurs when family trust is betrayed. Her focus is on women, who grow to reside in a larger world and struggle to achieve independent identity beyond male domination. As a feminist writer, Brookner gives emphasis to the issues concerned with women and the difficult life they lead in the hand of men. She is well-known to the society where the female are always dominated by the man. So she became interested to explore the difficult and painful life of women in her novels. Brookner herself had been abused by one of her male relatives at the age of 14 and also her one eye has permanently blinded to silence her. From the moment afterward, she knew the value of women life and started to write several works of art related to her own experience which seem miserable. In spite of the women's poor and abused life in the society, Brookner gives strength to the women that they can also be powerful if they are encouraged to struggle against the male body of the society. Brookner has been recognized as one of the most celebrated contemporary female writer.

Brookner creates a very powerful woman character Kitty Maule in her novel *Providence*. All the female characters in the novel are maintaining their domestic life themselves without any help and guidance of male. Particularly, the novel chronicles

around the life of woman around thirty, KittyMaule as having choice on her own, who despite poverty, physical and mental alienation, transcends her plight through self-awareness, and attempts to scale the subtle and warm dimensions of womanish consciousness. This epistolary novel explores the real truths and suffering of women's life during late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The novel centers on Kitty Maule, a young woman, who at was alienated from her family since the time of her upbringing. Kitty Maule, though she was educated and got job at university, she is not allowed to express her pain with others. Gradually, Kitty feels free to stay alone busy with her college duties. Kitty Maule gets power to raise voice against the male violence to live free and independent life in her university where she gets physically, mentally and economically powerful with her teaching profession. The self-actualization Kitty achieves transforms her into happy, successful, independent women. Kitty takes the act of teaching as her profession, which is traditionally thought of as a mere task for males where females are confined to a domestic role, and turns it into an outlet for creative self-expression and a profitable business. After being voiceless for so many years, she is finally content, fulfilled and self-sufficient. Kitty Maule emerges as an empowered woman in her own right, through both financial and sexual emancipation.

Generally, patriarchal ideology tries to present female as submissive and devoted to husband in particular and male members in general but to the dismay of that very ideology, Kitty Maule runs away from loveless relation or she has sacrificed human relationship. So this is slap from the side of Kitty Maule to the contemporary patriarchal ideology. More than this she even keeps teaching at university for company and sustenance. She wants to be economically strong by teaching at university. In this way she has established her own economic structure and maintained

domestic routine. Most of the female character in her novels have been abused in different ways and are also silenced as they would not express their pain with others.

This novel has received much critical appraisals since its publication.

Different critics have viewed it from different perspectives. Some critics have called it an Eighteenth century novel, a historical novel, a tragedy, a love story, an epic and the like. Others have interpreted this novel as adventure story, a narrative of quest, and a fusion of naturalism and romanticism. Critics have also drawn comparison between *Providence* and other literary works. Apart from this some of the critics delineate feminist perspective in the book. Major female character in the novel, Kitty Maule is vitally important as she illustrate the contradictory representation of complex social structure. In fact, Anita Brookner's *Providence* has been analyzed by different critics in different ways. In *Providence*, most of the female character like Kitty Maule, Louise and Caroline has been silenced and they are forced to do whatever the male guide. Males not only undermine the capacities of females; but also forcefully silence their words and never take care of pain and feelings of females. The male colleague at the university, Maurice Bishop also seems not caring Kitty though she was secretly in love with him.

While Kitty gets into the affair of teaching at university, though her financial desires are fulfilled and seems happy outwardly, her utter longing to be engaged into marital relation and choosing appropriate life partner has been unsuccessful. In this regard too, she has been silenced. Kitty later takes males as beings without sentiment and human heart as they were using females just as the means to satisfy their desires. Though she has been abused, she has nobody to share her pain. So in this part also, Kitty Maule has been silenced socially. To be wife for her means to be submissive, to be subordinate and to be a punch bag for the man. Kitty may be afraid of the

convention of patriarchal society that females are ranked as animals and follows the traditional rules and regulation in which they believe that female should be under the control of their husband. Here, in the novel too, Kitty never receives the love from the male members of the family, as her father was dead in her childhood and is living separate from other male members like uncle and grandparents but only gets trouble and has nobody to express her pain.

The contemporary male ideology characterizes woman as weak and powerless but to the dismay of this very ideology, Kitty Maule seems powerful, strong, and bold enough in the novel. Patriarchy oppresses and suppresses the female characters and as a result of which they live a very miserable and difficult life. Their identity and freedom comes under crisis. When the situation becomes unbearable, they start to resist against it. The female character like Kitty Maule, in Anita Brookner's *Providence* makes resistance against the hegemonizing interference of the male characters. Some of the female characters even ignore the norms and values of patriarchal society. Kitty Maule, who was grown up in her father's home and had been educated beyond the point, was considered wise for females. Even though she was highly educated, she moved with her grandfather at Chelsea for his recovery from illness. So in contemporary society, females sacrifice their talent, knowledge and freedom for the sake of males in one or other way. They are not free to live their life in their own. In this novel too, though Kitty Maule was much talented, she sacrificed her talent for her family and, she is in the state of despair which narrator mentions in this manner:

It was almost dark in the gloomy room, and in that moment before the lights were switched on, she thought ahead in panic to her return home, with its docile routines that that she long to bring to a violent end. Her

sedulously careful rituals for outwitting the long nights, the exorcism of her various familiars and dreams were losing their virtue and their ability to soothe her. (36)

In the above lines, narrator describes the futility of Kitty Maule's skill and talent.

Kitty was well educated but obliged to go with her grandparents at Chelsea, though for a time being. She was not free to live her life in her own. But at present when she has to manage Chelsea flat, she laments over her skill because to manage a family needs more practical knowledge. But gradually with the friendship of Caroline and Louise, the colleague at university, she learns all about the family and domestic affairs. And Kitty decides fully to live in Chelsea till her death.

We can observe the sense of isolation in the life of central character of the novel: Kitty Maule. Similarly, the contemporary socio-cultural practices of Britain are equally responsible in creating the sense of isolation among different characters. It is due to the typical British tradition that they do not lay emphasis on the mutual family relationship. On the other hand, in the rural South, however, economic hardship had been a way of life for years during when the novel was set. Similarly, the alienation promotes because of biased manner and different doctrines about life in the family members of Kitty Maule. The contrastive relationship of love and hate between Kitty Maule and her colleague Maurice Bishop is also equally responsible to create the sense of isolation in her:

Kitty Maule, dressed in her best, although Maurice could not see her, would watch the smiling figure mounting the steps to the platform, and try not to sigh as he surveyed the image on the screen before turning to his audience, his hands on his hips, his legs and buttocks braced as if for sexual activity. He was a beautiful man and everyone

was faintly in love with him. Kitty herself had loved him for two years and had entertained secret hopes. But their brief affair had settled down into a strange comradely routine which puzzled her but which she accepted. (19)

The biased manner of Maurice Bishop towards Kitty Maule creates the sense of alienation in Kitty. She shows her deep love to Maurice Bishop but he shows no any sign of hope for love toward Kitty and did not pay his attention to the little poor lady. So, the feeling of jealousy and hatred along with inner and unexpressed love strongly appeared in the relationship of Kitty and Maurice. Kitty's desire for being loved has been silenced by the fellow mate's neutral behavior. At the same time, the passive role of the Maurice Bishop is equally responsible to emerge the feeling of isolation. He is failed to give proper co-operation to Kitty and became unable to play the role of a true lover in their mutual relation. Later, instead of searching godlike figure in her chosen mate, Maurice Bishop, she finds his demeanor like ghost because of sense of hatred that she has developed towards him. So, this kind of hatred towards her own lover can be interpreted as her revolt against the patriarchal norms and values in general.

Though the issue of alienation and existential crisis is left at the centre of the text, it is worth noticing because many critics have raised different issues in the book and completed their researches. Hilma Wolitzer is one of the critics to interpret this novel as, "Brookner's vision of human behavior is scrupulously honest without ever being cruel" (4). Wolitzer regards Brookner's *Providence* as the careful elaboration of human behaviors and their inner quest for serenity.

Another critic Judy Pederson argues:

Kitty Maule longs to be "totally unreasonable, totally unfair, very demanding, and very beautiful." She is instead clever, reticent, and self

possessed, and striking. For years, Kitty has been tactfully courting her colleague Maurice Bishop, a detached, elegant English professor. Now, running out of patience, Kitty's amorous pursuit takes her from rancorous academic committee rooms and lecture halls to French cathedrals and Parisian rooming houses, from sitting with her dress making grandmother to scenes with a grandmotherly psychic. Touching, funny, and stylistically breathtaking, *Providence* is a brightly polished gem of romantic comedy. (17)

In this way Pederson gives historical taste to this novel. He argues, although, a work of fiction is made up with intense poetic sensibility and imagination but it sometimes blends imagination with family history. Therefore he appeals to read this novel as semi autobiographical family history. The heroine of the novel, Kitty Maule resembles to a great extent with the character of Anita Brookner. More than this, there are many historical details in the novel, the country home where Brookners parents lived resembles with Kitty's grandparents home at the suburb of London. Thus, she gives historical twist to the novel. Pederson argues that *Providence* deals with multiple issues like courtesy, family values and their importance. Brookner is praised for her such art of craftsmanship.

Another critic, Michiko Kakutani focuses up on female characters and their bonding for survival and livelihood. He opines:

Providence recounts, with elegance and precision, the story of a timid woman's thwarted efforts to create a new life for herself. A lecturer in "The Romantic Tradition" at a small English University, Kitty Maule is one of those well-bred, perhaps a little too perfectly dressed - a woman

who might be called pretty, were it not for the perpetual look of disappointment she wears on her face. (22)

In the above passage, the researcher critically analyzes Kitty's state of despair and her overcome of circumstances when she comes in contact with her colleague Maurice Bishop, who is more practical and resourceful. Later, Kitty develops sense of hatred towards him. But the researcher focuses on how she is able to overcome the situation when she teams up with the faculty, Maurice. It means to say that, when women team up and share common interest, they are no longer weak and can overcome any kind of circumstances. According to a review:

Providence is a quiet, beautifully observed and enjoyable novel, it is the kind of novel where little happens – but I like novels like that, and there is some truly brilliant characterization. The pervading atmosphere of the novel is one I recognized as typically Brookner – just it is less bleak than some of her later novels – although there are no smiles at the end, we can hardly expect that now. I often find it hard to like Brookner's central character, but in Kitty Maule I find she has created a character I actually rather did like. It was Maurice I couldn't take to. Kitty is a fairly typical Brookner heroine, she does rather wait for things to happen – she compares herself with the other unmarried women that she knows and allows herself to remain disappointed in her life and in her relationship and does nothing to further her own happiness. The ending was for me, therefore in no way unexpected. Providence would actually provide an excellent starting point for anyone coming to Anita Brookner's work for the first time. (II)

Given comment regarding *Providence* regards Brookner as a novelist whose specialty is the careful examination of the lives of unremarkable women. She portrays the women with dignity and tolerance. Brookner generates novels of intellectual and emotional compulsion. Although, different critics have analyzed *Providence* in different perspective and they agree and disagree about many aspects of this novel. *Providence* is a story based on Brookner's life somehow where she expressed the position of women in the patriarchal society and of course they are always under the domination of patriarchy. In this regard, we can read the text as silencing the feminine subjectivity in Anita Brookner's *Providence*.

Dawn Schmidt is another critic commentating upon Anita Brookner's *Providence*. He opines that:

It is a book about a lonely academic woman who longs for love. She is extremely successful in the world of academia, but cannot reconcile her intellectual life with her love life. She doesn't believe she can start her life until she has found a man to live with and she gets all self-worth from the affirmation of Maurice, the man she pines away for. She hates leaving work for an empty home every day and all she wants is to be loved in such a way that even when parted from the other she would never be alone. After reading this book, a person is left to wonder about the plight of the single life. Many questions arise such as: Can a single person be happy, fulfilled? Can academia fill emotional voids? Where does a person get self-worth? "*Providence*" is a love story. It's about a love freely given, but clearly denied. What makes *Providence* such a profound and intriguing book is that it mirrors the author's life. (3)

Schmidt interprets *Providence* as a novel truly dealing with the issue of love. He finds it impossible for a single being to live survive without life partner though she is academically strong and financially alert. *Providence* has so much to say about women "of a certain age" who start questioning the choices they've made.

All the critics discussed and researched the novel and reveal varying argument, but my area of research is hitherto unexplored. This paper argues that, the female characters in the novel, though partly dominated, subvert the traditional stereotypes of femininity. By decentering traditional gender roles, they not only resist the mound of patriarchy, they also realize their self and subjectivity.

Feminism as a broad movement embraces numerous phases of women's emancipation and aims to understand women's oppression in terms of race, class, gender and sexual preferences and its effort lies in changing it. It no longer seeks to abolish the systems, status and societies. It aims to realize the total self-actualization of the individuals. It is against the inadequacy, injustice and violence which the males have created.

Feminism refers to all those who seek to end women's subordination. It is an aggressive conscious feeling of woman who began to reject the passivity. The main aim of the feminist movement was to develop women's personalities. So, it studied women as people who were either oppressed or suppressed or rejected the freedom of personal expression. All women writers who struggle against patriarchy to gain their womanhood were gradually considered feminist. Feminist stepped forward against male dominance in order to enhance women's rights and to secure women's emancipation. In these aspects Troil Moi, a feminist says, "The word feminist and feminism are political labels indicating support for the aims of new women's movement" (135). She further makes clear that "Feminist criticism, then, is a specific

kind of political discourse, critical and theoretical practice, committed to the struggle against patriarch and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature”(204).

Here, she focuses on the nature of feminist criticism which concerns gender differences and its social, institutional and personal power relation between the sexes.

Feminism is concerned with marginalization of women, who are reduced in the state of secondary position. Feminism comes into practice as an attack against female marginalization as our society and civilization is pervasively patriarchal, it is male centered and controlled and is organized and conducted in such a way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains; “familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic”(Abrams 89). It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature-which is described as feminine. By this cultural process, the masculine in our culture has come to be widely defined as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, and creative, the feminine by systematic opposition to such traits has come to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional. That’s why feminism is committed to eradicate the ideology of domination and discrimination.

The first blow on patriarchal structure was first given by Virginia Woolf in her *A Room of One’s Own* (1928). She believed that women always faced social and economic obstacles to their literary ambition. She was also very conscious of the imposed limitation of her own education. In this book explores deeper concerns- men’s anger to women, misunderstanding between the sexes and above all psychological conditions under which women are brought up. Her writing often explores the concepts of time, memory, and people’s inner consciousness and is remarkable for its humanity and depth perception. Woolf contends in *A Room of One’s Own*, “The history of man’s opposition to women’s emancipation is more

interesting than the history of emancipation itself.” In this way she analyzes women’s oppression as long run history.

Simon de Beauvoir, an existentialist feminist critic and writer of France, strongly opposed the tendency of viewing women as second sex born to assist their male guardians. She believes that existence always precedes essence. Beauvoir objects to men’s attitude to discriminating between sexes as “self” and “other” “men being the former and women the latter. In the feminist world, a subtle and radical critical mood was launched by Simon de Beauvoir with her book entitled *The Second Sex* (1949). Through this book Beauvoir established the principle of modern feminism. She focuses up on pitiable condition of women in patriarchal society stating that where a woman tries to define herself, she starts by saying “I am a woman; no man would do so...man defines the human, not women” (Seldon 134). It reveals the fundamental asymmetry between the term masculine and feminine. She argues that “Men define the human, not women. Woman is in a lopsided relation with man, he is the one, she is the other” (Seldon 135). In the book, the problem Beauvoir emphasizes is that woman perceive man as self (as subject) and themselves as other. And she explicitly exposes the condition of woman so that they could realize their existence. She says:

Women have been essential as the one born. To be a wife or a mother. But she is stripped off motherly rights because motherly rights overpowered by fatherly rights. A wife’s duty is to be in the bed to gratify the husband lost but the husband is not aware whether he is gratifying the lost of his wife. (145)

Therefore, the woman is inessential in the eyes of men who want to accept her as “other”. She strongly refuses the notion of female essence prior to individual existence and attacks the patriarchal myths of women that presume the false essence.

The present research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents an introduction to Anita Brookner, a brief outline of the present study and a critical review of literature. The same chapter presents feminism as the theoretical tool to interpret the text. The second chapter aims at providing the theoretical methodological reading of the text briefly with both textual and theoretical evidences. It attempts to examine the characters’ resistance to the patriarchal codes. This part serves as the core of the present research. The third chapter concludes the ideas put forward in the earlier chapter, focusing on the outcome of entire research. The logical conclusion will be summarized as the proof that the novel has forwarded the radical ideas of resistance to patriarchal norms and values by highlighting the whole research.

II. Female Alienation in Anita Brookner's *Providence*

The present research work entitled female alienation in Anita Brookner's *Providence* explores the female's condition and their consciousness for their position in the society in general and their family in particular. Though the female characters in the novel are suffered from patriarchal norms and values but they are conscious for their roles and identity in the society. The moment the females realize the cause of their pathetic condition in the family in particular and in the society in general, they acquire the sense of resistance against the contemporary male dominated society. The major female characters such as Kitty Maule, Louise and Caroline try their best to construct the world which lacks all kinds of hierarchy between male and female and they are busy to create their domain of freedom and emancipation.

Alienation is a condition of estrangement and loss of identity in general. It is a condition in which an individual cannot realize all the potential of his/her life; s/he feels outcast in terms of his relationship to the society and his/her fellow men. This is different from what alienation is in religious and existentialist's terms. In this particular dissertation, the term alienation will be understood as a state of mystification or suffocation resulting from the molestation of an individual's labor power. Work is the primary characteristics of human being that defines his entity as distinguished from any other creature.

Feminism is a school of thought which tries to dismantle the patriarchal social norms and values as opposed to the laws of equality to liberate women. As a movement, it declares that women are also human beings as equal to men. It is a commitment to eradicate the ideology of domination to establish a healthy and equal society for both male and female. Feminist theory is an extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical ground. It encompasses work done in broad variety of

disciplines, prominently including the approaches to women's role and lives and feminist politics in anthropology, sociology, economics, gender studies, feminist literary criticism and philosophy; especially continental philosophy. Feminism is an expression of resentment at the treatment imposed upon women.

Throughout the history, women have been devalued as inferior, passive, emotional, weak, and powerless, whereas men have been regarded with the prestigious positioning of superiority, rationality and powerfulness. Though there is not such natural rule and characteristics to prove hierarchy between men and women, patriarchal ideology from ancient to the present assumes woman as the “other” of man’s “self”. Male supremacist ideology taught and directed women to internalize gender biased assumption that, they are of less value and they are genuinely inferior and unequal to men. Because of the unequal power relationship, females are compelled to do what males want them to do. Men use women whenever and wherever they want. Women are just like commodity for men in patriarchal society. The patriarchal norms of manners, morals, customs and conventions are still prevalent in present day modern society too, where the slavish devotion to custom is expressed in the form of social rituals.

The voice of the female writer is more concerned with the quest for intimacy and with painting a landscape of herself. The women in the contemporary society want to reclaim equal status as men but they are compelled to accept otherness in the society. Their independent success is in contradiction with their femininity.

Assimilating these facts, Simon de Beauvoir proclaims:

The women of today are not women at all... In sexuality and modernity, woman as subject can claim autonomy, the men of today show certain duplicity of attitude which is painfully lacerating to

women; they are still requiring her to remain inessential with man there is not break between public and private life...where as women's independence and success are in contradiction with her femininity, since the truth woman is required to make herself object, to be the other. (276)

The difficult and dominated life of woman is always in the state of otherness and they are inessential object for males with no importance. Therefore, because of growing consciousness women of today are resisting such subordination. The male dominated patriarchal society regards women as weak and powerless who cannot stand at her own. There lies the long established hierarchy between men and women in patriarchal social backdrop since the beginning of human civilization. So, the patriarchy never sees potentiality in women that they are strong and capable enough as the men are.

Because of the domination and exploitation by males, women are becoming conscious about their actual condition in the society and gradually they are becoming more strong and powerful. In this sense, the narrator describes Kitty's actual condition in her home at Chelsea after her father's death, and how she is becoming powerful and capable enough to cope with the prevailing situation as:

Feeling in need of sudden need of protection in the small sunny stony garden, Kitty rose and turned her steps towards home. She would take her books back to the flat and then visit her grandparents for a cup of tea. In the flat - suddenly dark after the brightness outside - she found a postcard, a view of the Christ in Majesty from the tympanum of the west door of Autun. She turned it over quickly. . . .His tiny even handwriting affected her like a powerful shock. How I miss him, she

thought, when I know he is physically out of my reach. How dull I am without him. But I shall see him soon. (93)

In the given paragraph, Brookner deals with the state of home sickness of Kitty, where she longs to be with her old grandparents. It indicates that how women are becoming strong, powerful and capable in the society. Though men and women are the product of same society, man is called human whereas a woman is called as being with wildness. Men are always overpowered with the sense of "I am man; she is woman in man. I am strong; she is weak. I am tough; she is tender. I am self sufficient; she is needful" (Ruthven 54) In order to collect courage from the hostile environment, she seems strengthening intimacy with her grandmother.

After the feminist movement, women are more conscious about male domination and exploitation and to get victory over that very domination and exploitation, they have started establishing female friendship. And their growing intimacy which is based on common interests becomes a kind of challenge to patriarchy. In this context Beauvoir argues:

A woman supported by man is not emancipated from the male because she has a vote; if custom imposes less constraint up on her than formerly, the negative freedom implied has not profoundly modified her situation; she remains bound in her condition of vassalage. It is through gainful employment that woman has traversed most of the distance that separated her from the male; and nothing else can guarantee her liberty in practice. Once she ceases to be a parasite, the system based on her dependence crumbles; between her and the universe there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator. (641)

Many women are aware of the male domination and exploitation, and they have developed the thought that until and unless they are not emancipated from the clutches of male, they are no longer in the state of independence. And their belongingness to males puts women in the chain of domination. This is the reason females have developed friendship between females and that very bond between them can guarantee their liberty and freedom which no longer requires masculine mediator for their survival.

The patriarchal mindset in the society wants to keep females under their restricted rules and regulation and the females are obliged to live under their grace being dependent to male. But the moment they realize their pathetic condition, females slowly seek for independency by establishing a female friendship. In this sense, Kitty and her grandmother make a strong bond between them and they no longer need males help and guidance. This very female friendship and their solidarity can be interpreted as threat to patriarchy.

In male dominated society, woman is not supposed to develop her own interest; she should rather enjoy what her husband enjoys. There has always been the relationship of power between man and woman in which women are sometimes idolized but most of the time oppressed and exploited. They have often been the target of male sexual violence. Despite of being hand doll of male, they are also being silenced by the male body of the society. The problem of women and silence has been spread everywhere like the dangerous disease which affects the society. In every social, economical, cultural and religious environment of human life men dominate women. The partiality exists and sustains itself in the form of male domination against female subordination through ideological practices. The patriarchy fosters the gender based inequalities that decides man as superior and woman as inferior, man as

powerful and the woman as powerless. One of the leading American feminist Kate Millet sees, "patriarchy as grotesque, increasingly militaristic, increasingly greedy, colonialist, imperialistic, brutal, with a terrible disregard of civil liberties, of democratic forms"(511).

However, life is gift of nature and it should be equal for all human being but women are still dominated and have been used as a working machine and to fulfill male sexual violent desire. Human culture and religion also agree with this truth. But the man of society only conceives of anatomy as destiny. Ever the great thinker and philosopher from Plato, Aristotle and St. Augustine to Aquinas, Hobbes and Roseau have also depicted women as inferior and immature in their intellectual potential.

The ancient mythologies of the west have attributed some peculiar characteristics to women in the form of goddesses. Apollo represents wisdom, knowledge and supremacy while Venus and Eros represents beauty, sensuality and jealousy respectively. There is no god representing man's handsomeness nor is there a goddess representing qualities of Apollo. Goddesses have inferior position. Bible is one of the most discriminating holy books as it portrays women as credulous, deceiving as to have been created from a rib of man. This description has pushed women into a degenerate and subordinates position. One of the critics Mary Daly says that the power of naming was confessed by god on Adam but not on Eve, and in naming the animals Adamm took domination over them. In Daly's term, women will remain powerless until they exercise the power of naming. In this context Bible also proves that women are inferior being and till now the system of dominating has been applied in the society by the male body.

The problem of women and silence has been spread in almost all the society like the dirty pollution. The same problem of women and silence has been presented

by Anita Brookner in *Providence*. Brookner's protagonist in the Novel is a female not male, and also confined and silenced. Along with this, the issue of love, beauty and other feminine aspects is closely related to the female characters of Brookner.

The female protagonist, Kitty Maule is totally alienated, dominated and unaware about her female identity though she has been working as professor at university. She remains mute although social norms of patriarchal society oppress and suppress her humanly desires. She is forced into silence by her closet patriarchal authority. She is told that the act of speaking, revealing her inner self will literally kill her dignity. Patriarchal authority dictates that she must repress all anger, no matter what the cost to her own personhood. As a result she can't feel anger with her selfish faculty Maurice Bishop because she has been taught to accept any behavior from males as good luck for females on earth from the society she was grown up. In other words, Maurice Bishop is displaced as patriarch from his former dominance. Kitty Maule feels used, and she feels that she is a victim, and she doesn't understand why all this has happened to her. She doesn't complain; she simply wonders why. In fact, so many bad things have happened to Kitty Maule that she feels worthless. She has very little self-worth and self-esteem.

Similarly, in the male oriented patriarchal society women are presented as an object and the means of fulfilling male's desires. Females are victimized mentally, physically and sexually. They are always victims of male gaze. So, patriarchy gives torture to women in one or other way as a result they become conscious of their own condition and start to revolt and resist against male domination and exploitation. So, Rosemary Tong realizes the patriarchal domination and views the cause of it. She states:

Patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant, or masculine and women always have the subordination or feminine ones. This ideology is powerful...that men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress. Men do this through institution such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men, resulting in most women's internalization of a sense of inferiority to men. (65)

Here, for Tong, in the patriarchal society, females are categorized or victimized as other and the society gives them secondary position. So, in the society, the social institution such as academy, church and others themselves allow men for the domination and subordination of woman. Social institutions are responsible for male domination over female. As a result females too realize and internalize their sense of inferiority to men. So, to liberate female from long run domination, this hierarchy should be dismantled.

In this way, male dominated patriarchal society goes on dominating and victimizing women both physically and mentally. They are attacked by men in various ways. But the moment, the burden of domination is much to carry on; females want break from strict patriarchy. Though a product of patriarchy, she is wounded and slighted by it. And this is the reason she wants break from patriarchy.

In patriarchal society, females today have finally recognized that the world they have described is not the whole world because its central concern is social distinction between men and women. Therefore it is committed to destroy the ideology of suppression and oppression. The females reject the centuries of male dominated culture in which women were only valued for the work, they produced,

they do not accept the cultural and traditional images of women as petty, irrational, silly, weak or even powerless. Rather they affirm their capacities to the capable, strong, intelligent, successful and ethical human beings. They also reject the attitude that regard the traditional masculine characteristics of aggression, power, and competition as good and desirable and the feminine characteristics of compassion, tenderness, and compromise as weak and ridiculous. They believe that the majority of attitude and beliefs regarding women are false and wrongheaded, based on ignorance and myth. It has now become necessary to replace ignorance with knowledge and myth with reality which is created by women.

Through out the history, the male oriented society has not positive attitudes towards the females in the family and other social activities in the society. In the patriarchal mindset, females are considered as weak, emotional, and secondary class human beings than the male. The society have defined women and attributed them with negative stereotypes like irrational, weak, powerless and timid. So, this type of female inequality has existed for thousand years. Males are regarded as more perfect and capable of leadership. But on the other females are considered to be imperfect and weaker sex. Therefore, it became central to the patriarchal male dominated society. While analyzing how the long run history is biased to females, Simon de Beauvoir argues:

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determine the figure that the human female present in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male eunuchs, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as another. (273)

So, the society mediated by the patriarchal ideology regards female as the other and it is culturally conditioned. Her identity is gendered one that has been shaped by the patriarchal culture with the continual biases to the females. The otherness of woman in the contemporary society is biased. Patriarchy describes woman as feminine who is weak and powerless.

The male dominated patriarchal society has fixed some roles to be performed by the women in the society. Women are kept into ignorance throughout the history. They are deprived of minimal requirements in the family and society. They are taught only to be limited under the four walls of male made rules and regulation. The patriarchal society creates binaries among male and females and keeps female under their control. They are compelled to follow what society orders. Contending such position of woman Virginia Woolf protests:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercised for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation precisely a woman would suffer; and it is narrow minded in their more privileged fellow-creature to sat that they ought to confine themselves to making pudding and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags it is though less to condemn and laugh at them. (75-76)

The male dominated ideology of the contemporary society does not think women as similar to men. It wants to confine women only in the house and only be involved in the household duties like cooking, knitting, and embroidering and denies them to come out of the home and involve in other activities outside regarding the as weaker

sex. But Woolf protests such biased attitude of patriarchy towards female and argues that women are equally capable as the men are.

In the novel, Kitty involves in outdoor activities like working as lecturer at University and getting involved in outdoor program out of university, which came in opposition to the male biased attitude which tries to confine and prison woman only in the house and household duties. The narrator describes the professional personality of Kitty Maule as:

Kitty, who had become rather thin, looked at her pale face in the glass and decided after all to accept Pauline Bentley's invitation for the weekend, hoping that she might return to London looking rosy and refreshed. The whole point of this was to appear in a good light when she got to Paris. She did not know Bentley well but they enjoyed the environmental abstracted comradeship of those who understand each other's work. (77)

Above mentioned statement indicates that women are also capable performing outdoor works as males. Patriarchy always confines women at home denying them to go to the outer world. But Kitty involves in teaching at university and being involved in other outdoor activities that was conventionally thought to be merely masculine duty and experience new thing in her life. Kitty seems capable in such kind of affairs no less than professional males. She is very careful and succeeds in her mission. This very action of Kitty subverts the traditional gender roles and proves that women too are not weak and powerless and can go where ever they like and involve in outdoor activities like males. Thus, she deconstructs the patriarchal ideology which views woman as weaker sex who is capable only for child bearing and rearing being limited

within the home. Here it seems that she do have also inner power to resist the difficulties and problems given by patriarchy in general.

Women are discriminated in the various fields in the society. In the patriarchal mind set females are categorized or victimized as other and the society gives them secondary position by generating some ideology relating with gender and sex. Sex is natural which differentiates females from male. But gender is social construct which forwards artificial boundary between male and female. Gender is related with culture where as sex is biological aspect. That is to liberate females from the long run domination and victimization; the concept of gender should be dismantled from the society. In this regard, in her book, *Gender politics*, Judith Butler writes:

Originally intended to dispute the ideology is a destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed, hence gender is neither casual result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex. (9-10)

Butler clarifies the process of the construction of masculinity broadly in given argument. For her sex and gender are different concepts. Sex is biological difference between male and female. It is natural and continuation of the human race is possible by means of this very difference. But, on the contrary to it, the concept of gender is constructed by society. It is created by patriarchal society to dominate females. With the passes of time it becomes a part of culture and tradition. That is, there is not any relationship between the idea of sex and gender. Therefore, the hierarchical relationship between male and female is on the way to blur.

In any patriarchal society, males are regarded as superior, more intelligent and powerful than females. And the women are assigned certain tasks to be performed

without any complain. But, in the novel, particularly Kitty is such a character who is on the verge of disrupting this hierarchy. As the narrator sates:

. . . Because, she said, even more bitterly, "we are to spend the night in a hotel near the Gare du Nord. They will be trying to escape all the night, to see the sights, as they call it. You can imagine how plentiful those are around the Gare du Nord. They will want night clubs and champagne and they will eat all the wrong things. And to think I might be walking in the Dolomites, as I originally planned." Kitty sighed theatrically. (106)

The contemporary patriarchal society, based on gender biased attitude does not allow females to get involved in activities out from the premise of family, but Kitty seems to be a revolutionary figure as she seems travelling in the course of the novel. She is in the process of blurring such hierarchy. She finds it impractical to be confined within the four surrounding walls of family. So, she sees the benefits of travelling and interacting with the broad horizon of the world. That is to say, Kitty ultimately realizes that how women are kept into ignorance by not allowing them to know the reality and enjoy in the free realm of universalisation. So, Kitty's realization of the benefit of wearing pants can be regarded as her journey from ignorance to knowledge. So, her act of travelling and involved in academic practice should be viewed as resistance against patriarchal norms and values. Brookner has employed such female characters who are completely on the verge of resisting the then patriarchal ideology and appear to be more powerful than males.

At the end of the novel, Kitty Maule seems had got rid of the burden and isolation that was caused by the patriarchy. As the narrator mentions:

As Kitty sat in the garden of her grandparent's house, she was aware that the time had come to say goodbye to those who had been with her on the first hour of her journey, and that she must now prepare to live a different sort of life. No more clairvoyants, no more waiting at hotel rooms, no glummer acceptance of Caroline's advice. From now on, she would be more definite, more admirable, she thought. She would eat reasonable meals, she would not panic before her lecture, and she would deal sensibly with everyone, but would not allow anyone to dominate her. (143)

Here, Kitty does not enter into conventional patriarchal system and does not follow its rule and regulation. Therefore, her new journey is a story of female triumph. She seeks to convince men that females too can be productive in the home and outside the home by their spirit and dynamic drive in economic areas. This is an indication that women are interested in re-humanizing the world by enhancing their roles positively, over considering themselves more suitable for certain roles than men. Women have been involved in fighting for the rights of their societies. They seek an inclusive basis for action across class and ethnic lines. The women are tired of their dominating counterparts. Women need equality with men and among themselves, in order to be self-assertive and very confident to stand by themselves without the support of men.

The male dominated society has excluded the females in the status of other and weaker sex since the time immemorial. Realizing these facts Simon de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex*, argues:

History has shown us that man has always kept in their hands all concrete power since the earlier days of patriarchy they have taught best to keep women in a state of dependence; their codes of law have

been set up against her; and thus she has definitely established as the other. (159)

The given extract shows that, in the patriarchal society males are considered as superior, more intelligent, and powerful than the women. There is full authority of male in all the property and concrete power and as a result females are in the state of dependence, who live in the grace of men. The patriarchal rules and regulation are set against the females and their desires. Therefore, Beauvoir strongly opposes the tendency of twisting women as second sex and other. She also rejects the patriarchal ideology of discriminating between sexes as self and other men being the former and women the latter.

In the novel, *Providence*, protagonist, Kitty develops her more courageous and bold character than the other in contemporary male dominated society. She does not even like to imagine image of her boy friend in particular and whole patriarchy in general which regards women as other and second sex. She is much tired of male domination and goes on resisting to the patriarchy. The narrator states the resistive psyche of Kitty while she intends to make a scare crow to set in the field:

For two days she sat in the garden or walked about the streets, and she would remember those two days as a curious interval, when all things seemed possible, an almost mystical time of promise and anticipated fulfillment. The hours of the day were uniform in their bright silent intensity, and the sun did not appear to move. There was a suspension of appetite and of all agitation, replaced by an extraordinary concentration of the faculties, stillness, something strange and new. It was as if some genuine metamorphosis was taking place, yet she did not know what it was. (144)

Given paragraph illustrates that, the females are considered as if they are not human beings and as a result females are compelled to seek freedom from society. The male dominated society treats woman as one who is born to work hard and die. Patriarchy never respects female values; rather it devalues and disintegrates them. Such male ideology of dominating woman as the second class human being and working machine under male domination creates a sort of emotional and psychological shock in women. So, male oriented society always controls and stretches its palm over the realm of the women causing their life live in subordination and misery. Realizing these very facts, Simon de Beauvoir writes:

When she becomes a young girl, the father has all power over her; when she marries he transfers it to the husband. Since a wife is his property like a slave, a beast of burden, or a chattel, a man can naturally have as many wives as he pleases; polygamy is limited only by economic considerations. The husband can put away his wives at his caprice, society according them almost no security. On the other hand woman is subjected to rigorously strict chastity... when the wife belonged at once to the patriarchal and to the conjugal family, she managed to retain considerable freedom... (107)

Here, the given statement shows that how females are suffering since time immemorial at first from her father and later from her husband. A woman is treated in the way a slave is treated by land owner. Notwithstanding emotion, feelings and sentiments a woman is treated like working machine. The society allows a man to have as many wives but on the other female is told to be in strict chastity. This shows how females are suffering by male domination. But, a woman when realize all the

sufferings in the home and society, she starts to seek freedom from the clutch of male domination to live an independent life at her own.

In the novel *Providence*, Anita Brookner presents the female character more conscious to her rights and independent life. Though there is implicit male domination in her family and society, she resists and tries her best to get success in her mission. Brookner has employed a character named, Kitty Maule: strong and bold character who never accepts the male domination submissively as other general woman of her days. She protests as well as rebels against the feminine roles assigned by patriarchy and finally maintains her life at her own. In this context, Kitty tells her story to her colleague Caroline, how she came alive alone independently and freely without domination after her father was dead in war when she was a small child:

They sat at the oval table, under the dim ceiling light, the cake unpacked from its box and divided into portions which they ate with spoons. They drank the sticky liqueur from small glasses. The faces of the old people looked drawn in the bad light; they were somber and impassive, for they had much to think about. Kitty knew that they would go to bed as soon as she left. And now she was very tired herself, longing for a bath and her own bed, where she would think about the memoirs of her childhood days over and over again. She cleared her throat. 'You know I am going to Paris next week,' she said. 'I don't know when I shall be back. But I'll telephone every day, as usual. (148)

Thus, the present extract shows that, the females are considered as if they are not human beings and as a result females are compelled to seek freedom from society.

The male dominated society treats woman as field hand who is born to work hard and

die. But Kitty has chosen to live on her own. As she is living on her own choice, she is free to carry out any actions she likes. Because of the overburden of domination upon the females of her time, she finds it pleasurable to stay alone rather than to be entangled in any sorts of relation in the concluding part of the novel though she had dreamed for Maurice Bishop initially. From given extract, we can allude that woman is more conscious about the domination and exploitation; she is now ready to run away from such inhuman affairs and maintain their life independently at her own. Here Kitty's escaping to Paris shows her breaks and escapes from her boyfriend in particular and entire patriarchy in general. This also shows that, the moment women realize their pathetic condition in families and society; they are no longer in the state of bearing all burden of domination and seek freedom and independency. So, this very act of Kitty Maule can be regarded as resistance to the patriarchal norms and values.

Kitty Maule is such a rebellious character who is well aware about the male domination that is prevalent in the society throughout the history. She raises voice of rebel to the each and every action of patriarchy. While talking to Louise, she raises the voice of resistance to the tendency of patriarchy. As the narrator mentions: "She pointed her pipe stem and said: Marrying a woman for her beauty makes no more sense than eating a bird for its singing. But it is common mistake nonetheless" (148). That is to say, patriarchal ideology regards woman as object of beauty and does not see individuality and subjectivity in her. The society wants woman to be beautiful and pretty which pleases man much. The patriarchal mindset marries a woman for her beauty but Kitty Maule considers the idea as foolish act of patriarchy because marrying a woman for her beauty is like eating a bird for its singing which has no meaning at all. So, Maule subverts the patriarchal ideology that views woman as beautiful object and marries only for her beauty.

All the female characters in the novel including Kitty have developed resistive attitude to the repressive patriarchal mechanism in the society. They even are playing the role of provider to men that a man has once filled. They no longer require masculine mediator for their survival, and are well aware about the fact that, until and unless they are not free from male mediation and domination, their emancipation and liberation is at risk. Therefore, the women by developing their rebellious idea and establishing a certain kind of bond are able to celebrate their individuality and subjectivity ignoring the norms and values of patriarchal ideology. The unification of female characters in the novel like Kitty, Louise and Caroline becomes instrumental to subvert such male hegemony. It is the traditional belief and roles of females which restrict them to be enslaved within their own house. That is why, to be free from such hierarchical domination and exploitation, construction of female bonding and resistance to such oppressive patriarchal mechanism is inevitable. This study concludes that the exercise of their agency becomes pivotal to come together and to stand firm against repressive patriarchy.

In the novel, Maurice Bishop, the one sided lover of Kitty is a representative character of strict patriarchy. Kitty, whose father dies during her childhood days and leaves her with her sick mother and old grandparents caused her bring her up in very bad manner to be dependent up on him. But the moment she realizes the suffocative environment caused by Maurice Bishop in particular and patriarchy in general, she rescues herself from patriarchy and never returns to the society she was living in, which too is representative of oppressive patriarchal mechanism. Therefore, Kitty's father's death itself is for her, a clean break from patriarchy. And when Kitty comes in contact with Louise, who is also fatherless child since her birth slowly she travels to the domain of freedom and independence. They from their close friendship and are

able to establish female pastoral tradition which comes in opposition to male pastoral tradition. Patriarchy regards women to be weak and powerless who cannot survive without male guidance and support. But Kitty and Louise are such bold characters who are able to maintain their life at their own without any male mediator. So, Brookner's female characters make a strong resistance to the hegemonizing interference of the patriarchy by ignoring norms and values of the society as a whole.

In Brookner's *Providence*, the female characters such as Kitty, Louise and Caroline maintain their life at their own and are able to cope with any kind of circumstances. So, they are on the way of crossing the rules and regulations set by patriarchal mindset in the society. Patriarchy wants women to be beautiful pretty enough to please male desires by offering her beauty. But Kitty stands in the opposition to such patriarchal ideology. Physical beauty, so crucial to the male dominated society becomes minimal concern for her. She looks like mad woman ignoring her physical appearance and beauty. But her madness is a strategy to go against patriarchy and its norms and values. Louise is more powerful woman who is on the way of destroying whole patriarchy.

The female characters in the novel have developed resistive attitude to the repressive patriarchal mechanism of the society. They even are playing the role of provider to men. They no longer require a male to support for their survival, and are well aware about the fact that, until and unless they are not free from male mediation and domination, their emancipation and liberation is at not possible. Therefore, the women by developing their rebellious idea and establishing a certain kind of bond are able to celebrate their individuality and subjectivity ignoring the norms and values of patriarchal ideology as such.

III. Subversion of Patriarchal Normativity in Anita Brookner's *Providence*

This work draws the analytical exploration of Anita Brookner's *Providence* in which the female characters get united to subvert the artificial norms and values of the patriarchal mechanism in the contemporary society. The unification of women in the novel becomes instrumental to subvert such male hegemony. It is the traditional belief and roles of females which restrict them to be enslaved within their own house. That is why, to be free from such hierarchical domination and exploitation, construction of female bonding and resistance to such oppressive patriarchal mechanism is inevitable.

This study concludes that the exercise of their agency becomes pivotal to come together and to stand firm against repressive patriarchy. Maurice Bishop, one sided lover of Kitty Maule is a representative character of strict patriarchy. His refusal to accept Kitty's proposal of love can also be interpreted as patriarchal society's denial to accept the changes regarding equality. Kitty, whose father dies during her childhood days and leaves her with her mother and old grandparents who brings her up. Therefore, Monroe's death itself is for Ada, a clean break from patriarchy. At the same time, the moment she realizes the suffocative environment caused by Maurice Bishop in particular and patriarchy in general, she rescues herself from patriarchy and never returns to the society she was living in, which too is representative of oppressive patriarchal mechanism. And when Kitty comes in contact with Louise, who is also fatherless child since her birth slowly she travels to the domain of freedom and independence. They form their close friendship and are able to establish female pastoral tradition which comes in opposition to male pastoral tradition.

Patriarchy regards women to be weak and powerless who cannot survive without male guidance and support. But Kitty, Louise and Caroline are such bold characters who are able to maintain their life at their own without any male mediator.

So, Brookner's female characters make a strong resistance to the hegemonizing interference of the patriarchy by ignoring norms and values of the society as a whole.

In Anita Brookner's *Providence*, the female characters such as Kitty, Louise and Caroline maintain their life at their own and are able to cope with any kind of circumstances. So, they are on the way of crossing the rules and regulations set by patriarchal mindset in the society. Patriarchy wants women to be beautiful and pretty enough to please male desires by offering her beauty. But Kitty stands in the opposition to such patriarchal ideology. Physical beauty, so crucial to the male dominated society becomes minimal concern for her. She looks like mad woman ignoring her physical appearance and beauty. But her madness is a strategy to go against patriarchy and its norms and values. Ruby is also more powerful woman who is on the way of destroying whole patriarchy.

Patriarchy wants women to put on certain kinds of costumes or dresses such as gown and skirts which impedes their action and activities. But the female characters in the novel are not on the way of following such rules and regulations. They put on trousers and pants and realize that wearing trouser is more comfortable than gown. So, their realization of easiness and comfort feeling while wearing trousers indicates their journey from ignorance to knowledge. This is the reason that they are on the verge of destroying patriarchal values. Not only that, patriarchal ideology wants women to be restricted within the four walls of house and perform certain household duties assigned by patriarchy. But Kitty crosses such boundaries and starts working as faculty at university which patriarchal mindset regards only to be performed by men. She also emphasizes that the relationship between woman to woman is more important than that of woman to man. Here, Kitty emphasizes the importance of female bonding which is threat and challenge to the patriarchal society. So, this very

act of hatred to her father refers that she is developing the sense of hatred to the entire patriarchy in general.

Kitty Maule is a powerful and rebellious character. Generally, patriarchal society wants woman to be devoted and submissive to the males. But to the dismay of that very ideology, she runs away from her loveless affair with the faculty named Maurice Bishop, leaving her desires behind. So, her act of leaving her boyfriend behind and maintaining her independent life alone in the university can be interpreted as a resistance against patriarchal norms and values. All in all, this shows that Brookner's *Providence* is a manifesto demanding the liberation of women from all forms of domination and exploitation.

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