

## **Exploration of the Complex Relationship between Women and their Environment in George Gissing's *The Whirlpool***

**Mohammad Hossein Afsharzadeh**

MA in English literature, Department of English Language and Literature,  
Tehran North Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, IRAN

**Hoda Shabrang \***

(Corresponding Author)

Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature, Department of  
English Language, Faculty of Humanities, Khatam University, Tehran, IRAN

**Newsha Ahmadi**

Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature,  
Tehran North Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, IRAN

emails: [m.hosseinafshar@gmail.com](mailto:m.hosseinafshar@gmail.com); \* [h.shabrang@khatam.ac.ir](mailto:h.shabrang@khatam.ac.ir); [n\\_ahmadi@iau-tmb.ac.ir](mailto:n_ahmadi@iau-tmb.ac.ir)

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**Abstract:** This article examines the relationship between women and their environment in George Gissing's novel *The Whirlpool* at the height of 19th century patriarchy in London industrial society. Since George Gissing's novels are very realistic in describing and accurately describing scenes and characters, they can be a good reflection of the society of their time. The analysis of the relationship between women and nature in this article is based on the theories of Karen Warren, the great theorist of ecofeminist theory, in which she expresses the types of relationship between women and the environment and examines the oppression and dominations against them by the patriarchal system. In addition to this analysis, what was studied in this article is an examination of the solutions and strategies that women take to save themselves from the clutches of patriarchy in the industrial society of the 19th century. The result of this research was that women and the environment in Gissing's novels are not only deeply and inextricably linked, but both are somehow suppressed and dominated by the patriarchal system. Gissing critically addresses this oppression in his novel and questions it. He also shows that the main burden of saving nature from this oppression and domination that is the result of the industrialization of society at that time is on women.

**Keywords:** Ecofeminist analysis, patriarchy, oppression, domination, women-nature relations

## **INTRODUCTION**

George Robert Gissing was born in 1857 in Wakefield. He studied at Backline School in Wakefield and when he was a teenager, he read his first book *The Old Curiosity Shop* by Charles Dickens. His literary interest grew by his father's engagement and was inspired by books from his family library. In 1872, winning a scholarship, he attended Owens College, university of Manchester, when he won many honorable prizes such as a poem prize in 1873 and the Shakespeare scholarship in 1875. In 1876, he traveled to the United States, and lived in Boston and Waltham, Massachusetts for a while. After facing economic problem, he moved to Chicago and started writing short stories while working for different newspapers such as Chicago Tribune. The story of this experience is depicted in his novel *The New Grub Street*. He died in poverty at the age of forty- six in 1903 (Coustillas).

George Gissing is so exact in his expressions of events and characters that there will not remain any doubt that he had experienced his characters' lives. His streets are the streets of poverty of all world. In portraying the places and circumstances, Gissing is extremely attentive and does not interfere any redundant element while many writers in his era used many explanations. By illustrating the life of poor people of the second half of the 19th century England, this realist writer finds a way to elaborate the other side of the coin of urbanization, in his novels. In his novels, illustrating the reformation of the society in 19th century England, there is a tragic picture of lands defeated from realities and values.

In the heart of the historical moment when the interwoven nature of imperialism, ecological degradation, exploitation of workers' racism and women's oppression is painfully obvious to many, ecofeminism appears to be gaining in popularity. Karen Warren in her book *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture and Nature* states that Ecological Feminism has roots in the wide variety of feminism, but what makes Ecofeminism different is its insistence that nonhuman nature and naturism (for example unjustified domination of nature) are feminist issues. She believes that Ecofeminism philosophy extends familiar feminist critique of socialisms of domination (racism, classism, sexism, and so forth) to nature. Karen Warren's works has been incredibly influential in development of ecofeminism, especially as a philosophical perspective. In her essay "Feminism and Ecology, Making Connections", she argues for a basic ecofeminist position: that feminist ought to pay attention to environmental issues, ecological interdependencies and environmentalists ought to attend to connection among ecological degradation, sexism and other forms of social oppression (Cuomo, 2002).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

George Gissing's *The Whirlpool* is used in this research as primary sources. In *The Whirlpool* the significant impact of the pressures of a patriarchal society and its strict rules on women's social activity were studied. The study of the relationship between women in society like Mrs. Morton and nature along with their mutual oppression was on other case studied in this novel. The study of all kinds of repressions and dominations, whether by men, society, or other women, was one of the topics of interest in this novel.

Although Gissing is considered as one of the great writers of his time, little study has been done on his works. However, a number of different critics have studied his works from different approaches. Social studies, civilization and alienation, and women and civilization are among the

aspects from which Gissing's works have been studied. The works of these critics are considered as secondary sources as well as a source for receiving ideas and inspiration for the researcher. Women in civilization is investigated in Gissing's novels by different scholars. This important perspective, has greatly contributed to the approach of this research. One of the most fruitful studies on Gissing's novels has been done by William Greenslade. In his article "Women and the Disease of Civilization: George Gissing's *The Whirlpool*", he studies Gissing's female characters and their natural role in the society of 19th century. Then he states the idea of Herbert Spencer in his book *Education* (1861) that "if women demand too much in the way of cerebral activity and independence, the "nature" would exact its price, and neurasthenia or hysteria would result" (Greenslade, 1989, p. 509). Finally, he applies this theory to Gissing's *The Whirlpool* and states that Gissing's difficulties with women's "nature" were longstanding. "The essence of the problem for him was to square his genuine respect for the intelligence of women with his aversion to what he took to be their destructive emotionalism" (Greenslade, 1989, p. 510). The study of this work was important because it made the researcher more familiar with the conditions of women during the industrialization period in the Gissing era.

Although all of the writers and figures above did their best to expand the theory of ecofeminism or study Gissing's novels, none of them used the descriptions of Gissing's novels to find out the social situation and life style of that era to study the effects of environment on human life, body and soul. None of the theorists and literary critics have examined the relationship between women and the environment, the oppression and domination of patriarchal society towards women and nature, and the solution that women have devised to save themselves and nature from the clutches of domineering patriarchy. In other words, Gissing's work has not been studied from the perspective of ecofeminism yet. In this research, it is tried to make a new vision to Gissing's novel through the lens of ecofeminism.

### **Critical Approach and Concepts**

In *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, Karen Warren states that feminism is a movement committed to omission of male-gender power and privilege or sexism. Although, all feminists agree that sexism exist, is inaccurate and ought to be changed and it should put an end to sexist oppression, academic feminists have come to see that liberation of women cannot be achieved until all women are liberated from multiple oppressions that structure our gendered identities: women of color from racism, poor women from classism, lesbian women from heterosexism, young and older women from ageism, and so forth. Therefore, "feminism is intrinsically a movement to end racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism and so on" (Warren, 1994. p. 4). Warren in *Ecofeminist Philosophy* states that "something is a feminist issue if an understanding of it helps one understand the oppression or subordination of women. She brings different examples such as equal rights, comparably pay for comparable work, day care center that understating them sheds light on the subordination of women" (Warren, 1994. p.1). She also expresses that "even trees, animals, toxics and nature language are feminist issues because understanding them helps one understand the status and plight of women cross-culturally" (Warren, 1994. p.1).

Warren argues that "something is a feminist issue if an understanding of it helps one understand the oppression, subordination or domination of women" (Warren, 2000, p. 4). In a sense such a definition is widely open, taking various approach and issues to be worthy of feminist attention. At the same time, it certainly does not allow just any perspective to count as feminist.

Throughout *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, Warren defends multicultural ethics while clearly advocating specific transcultural values, such as justice caring:

If we dare to care, if we dare to enter into community with others through an honest recognition of our commonalities and differences, we will be poised to create generally respectful, nonviolent, care-based, intentional communities where commonalities and differences are just that . . . Such intentional communities are a creative alternative to violence-prone communities where order is imposed from outside through unjustified domination. (Warren, 2000, p. 204)

In her widely-read 1991 essay “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism”, Warren argues about basic issues of her ecofeminist philosophy. The view she explained is that a “logic of domination” that divides the world into bifurcated hierarchies is basic to all forms of oppression and domination. This logic (which Warren also calls a “conceptual framework”) is a way of thinking that encourages separating form and mistreating nature and members of subservient groups, for no good reason. In addition, the conceptual frameworks that are used to justify racism, sexism, and mistreatment of nature, are interwoven and mutually reinforcing (Cuomo 2002).

The analysis of the theoretical frameworks that deal with the oppression of women and nature is the basis of the theory of ecofeminism. Today, the fusion of nature and women has become more prominent. Ecofeminists believe that the logic of domination supports the joint repression of women and the environment. Warren in *Ecological Feminist Philosophies* explains that “ecofeminism challenges patriarchy as a belief system, replacing it with non-dominating beliefs, values, behaviors and relations between humans and non-human nature” (Warren, 2000, p. 119). Philosophical attention to ecofeminist spirituality explains the role that women's experiences play in eliminating patriarchy. The idea that ecofeminist spirituality is used to empower women, while challenging patriarchal structures and practices, demonstrates women's creative ways of improving their lives and nature.

As Chris Cuomo states in his article Karen Warren express an ecofeminism that is about strategies and solutions, as well as precise descriptions of problems. This ecofeminism includes sophisticated analysis of gender, race, and colonialism, and it is fundamentally linked to struggles for global justice and ecological flourishing (Cuomo 9). Although Karen Warren's approach to ecofeminist analysis sometimes goes so far as to emphasize the aspects of ecofeminism that are about understanding oppression and domination, her philosophy of ecofeminism is a logic that embraces the logic of domination and oppression as well as the solution to liberation from it in general. Her theory makes a significant contribution to the development of philosophical theories and political practices that provide a realistic and accessible alternative to hegemonic frameworks as well as the elimination of existing ones.

In literature, too, the subject of the relationship between the oppression of women and dominion over nature came sharply to prominence, particularly in the context of women and feminists' ideal vision. Returning to the central image of Carson's work, nature is often described as silent; humans are no longer able to listen to its language. Only when they begin to tune in to nature will they be able to work towards its preservation. Through the literary devices of fantastic literature, novels and utopian tales see women living in synch with nature in a dynamic, spiritual and communicative network, and freely developing those feminine qualities of theirs that patriarchal power has always stifled (Bianchi 2012).

### **Ecofeminist Reading of *the Whirlpool***

With the onset of London's industrialization, there was an onslaught of urbanization and environmental degradation. These migrations were so large that at one point about 20% of London's population were Irish immigrants, numbering about 200,000 (Garwood, 2009, p. 245). In the 1980s and 1990s, tens of thousands of Eastern European Jews immigrated to London for fear of poverty and persecution. About 11,500 Italians immigrated to London in 1900, of whom only 4,000 settled in Clerkenwell (*London Municipality Journal* 2020). All these statistics show the influx of people to industrial cities, especially London, for various reasons such as work, escape from war and poverty and so forth. But this migration had no consequences other than poverty, the spread of various diseases and the destruction of morals. George Gissing illustrates this beautifully in his novel. Throughout his novel, he attributes the cause of human mental and physical failures to industrialization and migration to cities, and states that the only way out is to return to the arms of Mother Nature.

With the rise of a male-dominated society whose legislators and politicians are men, and whose decision-making power is in the right of men, the repression of women, as well as the suppression of the environment took on various aspects. *The Whirlpool* reflects the presence of women in society of London at the time. Now, thanks to many feminist movements, women have the ability to participate in society and can enjoy some civil liberties such as attending a music concert. The main character is a young girl named Alma Frothingham. Alma, who has been playing the violin since she was a teenager, gets the attention of her family and those around her so much that at most family outings and parties, she is asked to play the violin for her guests. Gradually, playing the violin becomes a symbol of Alma's aspirations, and she devotes all her efforts to improve and strengthen her playing. At one of these parties, Alma meets a young man named Harvey Rolf who is the main focus of the male character in the story. He does not have a good view of the women of the society, so that even in responding to them, he does not observe the condition of politeness and respect, and expresses his opinion rudely and frankly. Alma also meets the family of Harvey's friends, Hugh Carnaby and his wife Sibyl, at the beginning of the novel.

### **Women and Nature Connections in *The Whirlpool***

Karen Warren believes that women are connected to nature in many different ways. She believes that women and nature are conceptually, symbolically, ethically, etc. related to each other (Warren, *Feminism and Ecology Making Connections*, p. 9). Studying these connections helps us to have a full understanding of true and accurate analysis of the theory of ecofeminism. In this section, we will study the three conceptual, symbolic, and ethical connections in *The Whirlpool*. In *The Whirlpool*, the domination and oppression of women and the environment are very clearly seen, which indicates the existence of disjunctive pairs between nature and women. Alma is the main female character of the story, dominated by her patriarchal society, which is symbolized by Harvey. It is the dominant man in the novel who creates the value hierarchy. In this novel, Karen Warren's value dualism is consistently traced. These value dualisms are seen in the form of culture/nature, man/ woman, family/work and even reason/emotion. Men are always on the oppressive side and at the top of the value hierarchy. This value hierarchy can be seen as Harvey/Alma, Carnaby/Sybil and also London/Carnavonshire.

Power is defined from top to bottom in this novel. Men in society see themselves as powerful and allow themselves to be empowered towards women and their environment. In other

words, it is Harvey the hero who decides how and where to live. It is he who, despite calming down in rural life, chooses the city and, regardless of his environment, returns to London, drowning himself in a whirlpool of misery and stress. Or he is the one who recognizes Alma's femininity in raising and caring for his child and allows himself to define a superior lifestyle for Alma. Harvey gets upset when Alma speaks in a letter about her interest in continuing her music career. "He read through the pages again, and grew angry. What right had she to make such a request as this, and in the tone of a demand? Twice in the letter she asserted that she had a right, asserted it as if with some mysterious reference." (Gissing, 1987, p.463).

It is noteworthy that throughout the novel, the men of the society are in search of a power-over, something that Warren criticizes (Warren, 2000, p.6). This will continue the repressions of the patriarchal society and should be changed to power-with. Therefore, by examining the oppressive behaviors of the male characters in the story in relation to life in nature and the environment, as well as the female characters, one can find the existence of that conceptual connection between nature and the women in *The Whirlpool*.

According to Karen Warren, there is a symbolic connection between women and the environment. This type of relationship can be inferred from the fact that women are often described in the literature as animals and nature, and vice versa. This type of connection is also called linguistic connection. Thus, it can be argued that the literature that expresses nature as feminine and gives it feminine qualities, as well as describing women with nature and natural elements, is a reflection of the simultaneous oppression and domination of women and nature by a patriarchal society (Warren, 1997, p.12).

In *The Whirlpool*, this mutual connection can be seen. In the characters of the story there is Morton family who. Basil Morton's wife is a simple and beautiful village woman who, like Mother Nature, raises children. She entertains herself by working on farms, animal husbandry and raising animals, and teaches her children the names of trees and plants. She is a symbol of growth, peace and tranquility. Gissing describes her as beautifully as possible:

Mrs. Morton had the beauty of perfect health, of health mental and physical. To describe her face as homely was to pay it the highest compliment, for its smile was the true light of home that never failed... Into her pure and healthy mind had never entered a thought at conflict with motherhood. Her breasts were the fountain of life; her babies clung to them, and grew large of limb. From her they learnt to speak; from her they learnt the names of trees and flowers and all things beautiful around them; learnt, too, less by precept than from fair example, the sweetness and sincerity wherewith such mothers, and such alone, can endow their offspring. (Gissing, 1897, p. 436)

The important point in the story is that this woman, who is also a symbol of nature, although sometimes comes to the aid of the main character in the story and helps him to make decision, but always moves in her own range and always tries not to go beyond her framework. Her husband and children only expect her to work and take care of them, and repeated, various requests prevent her from expressing her feelings and opinions. It can be deduced that the similar behavior of the male characters in the story with Basil Morton's wife, as well as their surrounding nature and environment, is reminiscent of the symbolic connection that Karen Warren refers to.

As mentioned earlier, Karen Warren believes that women and the environment also have an ethical connection. This connection is the internal relationship between the perception and

behavior towards women and nature that is carried out by a patriarchal society. Being second-sex or "other" is a concept that exists in dealing with women and the environment in patriarchal society. Karen Warren believes that the goal of ecofeminism is to create a new development and attitude that is not male-centered and values nature (Warren, 1987, p. 9). In different parts of the novel, one can find an ethical connection with regard to the equal portrayal of women and the environment, both in the treatment of patriarchal society and in the repressions against the environment and women. For example, Alma, the female protagonist of the story, is simultaneously oppressed by her husband, the patriarchal society, and even other women. At the same time, it can be seen that the patriarchal society of that time, with a domineering look to nature and the environment, only intends to exploit nature and provide its own interests, and abandon the rural environment and living in the lap of nature in order to find better life and progress and development and migrates to the city. This is the beginning of tensions and pressures for him. Thus, it can be concluded that there is, as expected, an ethical connection between the female characters in *The Whirlpool* and the environment and nature around them.

In a closer study of the novel, it can be concluded that the female characters in the story, especially the main character, Alma, have an undeniable connection with their environment either through the similarities in the descriptions and performance of the roles or through the oppression suffered by the patriarchal society. Conceptual, symbolic, ethical, and other connections that Warren refers to are clearly visible in the novel. Therefore, it can be concluded that women and nature in this novel are connected to each other.

### **Oppression and Domination of Women and Nature by Patriarchal Society**

The main character of the story, Alma, is a girl who has always tried to get out of the dominance of her father's name since she was a teenager. Alma's father, Bennet Frothingham, was a scammer who committed suicide in his office. At the beginning of the story, Alma, who was affected by the news of her father's fraud, found herself oppressed by the shadow of her father's notoriety and was unable to continue her artistic activity. Therefore, it can be concluded that the first repressive factor of Alma, who is the symbol of woman in the society of that day, is the shadow of her father's notoriety.

Alma read, and tried to view the proceedings as one for whom they had no personal concern; but her sky darkened, her heart grew heavy. The name of Bennet Frothingham stood for criminal recklessness, for huge rascality; it would be so for years to come. She had no courage to take up her violin; the sound of music grew hateful to her, as if mocking at her ruined ambition. (Gissing, 1897, p. 94)

Later she marries the main male character of the story Harvey Rolfe who is the symbol of modern patriarchal society. A marriage that the author beautifully predicts will only result in more repression for Alma. Harvey is a domineering and misogynistic character, as we often see his repressive behaviors towards other women in various parts of the novel. Even in his conversation with his friend Hugh Carnaby, we see that he explicitly admits this:

All ordinary housekeepers are at the mercy of the filth and insolence of a draggled-tailed, novelette-reading feminine democracy. Before very long we shall train an army of menservants, and send the women to the devil.'

'Queer thing, Rolfe,' put in his friend, with a laugh; 'I've noticed it of late, you're getting to be a regular woman-hater.'

'Not a bit of it. I hate a dirty, lying, incapable creature, that's all, whether man or woman. No doubt they're more common in petticoats.' (Gissing, 1897, p. 25)

In the interaction between the two main characters, Alma as a symbol of female society in the 19th century and Harvey Rolfe as a civilized patriarchal urban society, two main issues are always discussed and Harvey has always tried to increase his domination toward Alma by suppressing them. The first is Alma's artistic life or her playing violin in concert. Harvey tries to prevent Alma from playing the violin in a calm and peaceful way. He does not support first, then tries to replace music with his painting (which is done at home and under his supervision) and finally with harsh and annoying words tries to prevent Alma from her favorite art. The violin (as Alma herself points out) can be seen as a symbol of the aspirations and goals of 19th century women's society. Now, due to the struggles of the feminist society, patriarchy has taken on a soft and peaceful form and is trying to increase its domination in a non-violent way.

The second thing that Alma and Harvey always argue about is where they live. At first Alma welcomes living far away from the city and goes with Harvey to Carnarvonshire in North Wales where there seems to be no trace of patriarchal repression at the beginning of their life together. With the return of Hugh and the return of Alma and Harvey to London, and on the other hand, with the seriousness of the issue of performing Alma's concert, tensions and repressions gradually increase. In other words, with the suppression of nature and the avoidance of it, the repression of Alma is gradually intensifying. So that at the end of the story, when we see a Harvey who is tired of fighting and arguing with Alma, does his best to return to nature and live a peaceful life. This time it is Alma who opposes, so that Harvey once again shows an unmasked oppressive face, and this time explicitly shows his domination over Alma. When Harvey asks Alma to go to the village to start a quiet life and Alma replies negative in a letter, he gets very angry and recklessly reads Alma unjustly: "He read through the pages again, and grew angry. What right had she to make such a request as this, and in the tone of a demand? Twice in the letter she asserted that she had a right, asserted it as if with some mysterious reference." (Gissing, 1897, p. 463)

### **Strategies and Solutions of Female Characters**

In *The Whirlpool*, women have different behaviors to save themselves and nature from the oppression of patriarchy. In fact, Gissing has categorized 19th century women by portraying different behaviors of different characters. In general, Gissing shows women as either militant or passive. The women of the Gissing society, as active and influential members of patriarchal society, either fight for their own salvation and the nature around them, or passively accept it and spend the rest of their lives in this oppression. What is certain is the impact of these oppressions on the decisions of the women in the story of their life.

In this novel, women may be divided into three categories. A group like Alma fight. A Group like Mrs. Morton or Mrs. Abbott accept defeat and continue with their oppressed lives. In order to get rid of the oppressions, a group join the patriarchal society and oppress other women. What is certain is that these women, no matter what group they belong to, end up being defeated and oppressed. According to Karen Warren: "The basic starting point of ecofeminist philosophy is that the dominations of women, other human Others, and nonhuman nature are interconnected,



are wrong, and ought to be eliminated” (Warren, 2000, p.155). Thus, the struggle of the women of the novel is also to eliminate the repressions of the patriarchal society towards themselves. On the other hand, women are more active in eliminating and countering patriarchal repressions of nature. The role of women in the story, such as Mrs. Abbott or Mrs. Morton, in defending nature, living in the environment and preserving it is more prominently than men.

Alma is a symbol of women who fight to achieve their goals. She fights not only with her husband, but also with the patriarchal and utilitarian community of London, represented by Redgrave and Dymes, and even fights to protect her reputation against the slanders and rumors of Sibyl. Alma is doomed to war as a teenager, first for her freedom, then to free herself from the shadow of her father's notoriety, then to fulfill her dreams in music, and finally to defend her reputation and her only refuge is life in the heart of nature, where there is peace. She eventually dies at the end of the story due to high stress. By depicting her death, Gissing condemns the struggle against the intertwined and invincible disciplines of patriarchy in society to defeat. By sacrificing the main female character of the story, he reveals the dark face of city life in which libertarian women are doomed to failure:

There are women who can breathe only in the air of lies and of treachery. Alma rebelled against the fate which made her life dishonorable. Fate—she declared—not the depravity of her own heart. From the dark day that saw her father's ruin, she had been condemned to a struggle with circumstances. She meant honestly; she asked no more than the free exercise of instincts nature had given her; but destiny was adverse, and step by step had brought her into a position so false, so hopeless, that she wondered at her strength in living on. (Gissing, 1897, p. 557)

On the other hand, Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Abbott are two characters who are more connected to rural life and nature and as mentioned before, Mrs. Morton is a symbol of women farmers in society and in a way reminiscent of the Mother Nature. These two characters, despite their long thoughts and deep views on issues, are oppressed by the patriarchal society. The remarkable thing about these two characters is that they are instructive. Both Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Abbott teach their children. Mrs. Abbott is a private tutor and takes care of and teaches the orphans of one of her relatives. Mrs. Morton also teaches her children the names of flowers, trees, and so on. This can be associated with the nurturing role of nature and the commonalities between women and nature. Both Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Abbott have been oppressed by this patriarchal system and are living in extreme poverty and working hard for a living. However, they have accepted these conditions and do not try to change them. They are more connected to the environment through life in nature and the countryside than other characters, and try their best to prevent environmental degradation. But the hegemonic pressure of male-dominated society is far greater. They are condemned living under the domination of the patriarchal society of their time until the end of their life. They make no effort to change their circumstances and by accepting these conditions they prepare themselves to live in difficult conditions.

The third group is represented by Sibyl, which, in order to achieve her goals, joins the oppressive patriarchal society and oppresses other women. Sibyl chooses to live in the city, which is a kind of repression of nature. By spreading rumors of Alma's relationship with Cyrus Redgrave and betraying her husband Harvey, Sybil tries to find herself alone in the arena of power and attention by destroying her rival. The fact that Sibyl herself has a contradictory behavior and behaves differently in the presence and absence of her husband Hugh Carnaby, indicates her

selfishness and ambition. As we can see at the end of the story, she has become one of the feminist speakers of her time. It is noteworthy that despite her immoral efforts, Sibyl has also been somewhat oppressed and is doomed to failure and live alone. Characters like Sybil contrast with that of Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Abbott. They are urbanized, up-to-date, modernists and pro-civilization women who are alien to nature and are not only silent in the face of environmental destruction and repression, but sometimes they themselves are willing to sacrifice it to achieve their goals.

## CONCLUSION

What is certain is that in this novel, Gissing beautifully portrays the relationship between women and their environment, and at the same time portrays the domination and repression of a patriarchal society. In order to free themselves and nature from oppression of patriarchal society, Gissing's women are divided into three groups of militant women, passive women, and women who join men's society in repressing other women and the environment to pursue their own interests. It is clear that Gissing shows that none of these women succeeds in conquering a patriarchal society and are defeated and doomed to either die or live in a difficult condition. With this image, Gissing strongly criticizes the conditions of his time and considers it extremely dangerous for human beings.

George Gissing has well illustrated the problems of his society in his novel. He believes that human mental and physical problems began when he distanced himself from nature. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he strongly opposes the industrialization of cities and considers modern science to be the main cause of the deplorable human condition and calls it the ruthless enemy of mankind, because it destroys the simplicity, peace and beauty of the world. His works are a protest against the failures and loneliness of modern life that has beset all social classes. In his novel, Gissing as beautifully as possible attacks the discriminatory laws of the patriarchal society of his time, and by portraying the oppressed faces of the women of his time, makes the reader identify with them in order to make them understand the situation of 19th century women. Gissing like a mirror, with accurate and complete description of the scenes, but by avoiding the elaboration of words, has shown his time conditions well.

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