

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Elitist Representation of Women in Edith Wharton's *summer*

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of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English.**

By

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Resham Raj Kandel has completed his thesis entitled “Elitist Representation of Women in Edith Wharton’s *Summer*” under my supervision. I hereby recommend this thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Elitist Representation of Women in Edith Wharton’s *Summer*” by Resham Raj Kandel has been submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. It has been approved by the under signed members of the Research committee.

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Abstract

The present research work analyses why the protagonist, Charity Royall, in Edith Wharton's *Summer* doubly suffers as a lower class and as a female gender. Her guardian, Mr. Royall in the very beginning treats her as a daughter but at last he himself marries with her. Similarly, her sexual partner Lucious Harney also leaves her when he knows that she is pregnant. But Charity instead of taking any sort of revenge allows Harney to marry with another lady Annabel Blach and easily accepts the marriage purpose of Mr. Royal. Instead of being rebellious why Charity is presented as a tolerable and passive who loses her virginity and social prestige that deprives her from different socio-political opportunities. And the present research contends this dualism as the manifestation of the motif of capitalistic patriarchal society to keep the women in subservient position and play with women regarding them as submissive, passive and tolerable.

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I. Edith Wharton and Portrayal of Gender Inequality

This research intends to make a critical discussion of Edith Wharton's *Summer* from the light of how women have been dominated in the fashion of male ideology and their commodification and objectification in capitalistic societies. In patriarchal capitalist society women have been treated like an object to be admired, to be possessed, and the men play the role of connoisseurs. It examines the implications of reproductive technologies that detaches women from genetic, physiological and social motherhood and shows how the victimization of women prevails in society caused by the medical and legal institutions. Moreover, this research explores the American society, to which Edith Wharton herself belonged, did not give equality to women in legal, economic and sexual matters. Every aspect of American culture conspired to foster such an unequal treatment. The role of capital production further relegated woman to a non-productive role. Subsequently, greater accumulation of wealth as a result of commercial expansion and later industrial proliferation produced far-reaching changes in consumption of goods and ideas by women and society's attitude towards women as well.

Summer published in 1917, is one of only two novels that the prolific writer Edith Wharton set in rural New England. Wharton, who was both critically acclaimed and a bestselling author, was perhaps better known in her life time for her many novels set in New York City among the wealthy elite. In this novel, however, the author's keen attention to detail is turned away from fashion and manners and city life and instead directed at the wonders of the natural world as they echo the changes felt by the central character, Charity Royall. *Summer* was only a moderate success when it first appeared, but when Wharton's work was rediscovered in the 1960s the novel found a new, larger, and more appreciative critical audience.

Like the protagonist in *Ethan Frome*, Wharton's most widely read novel today, Charity in *Summer* yearns for a fuller life than the one she lives in her small town, but social restrictions and a certain weakness of character prevents her from realizing her dreams. One of the first American literary novels to deal frankly with a young woman's sexual awakening and her suffering of exploitation, *Summer*, begins with a chance encounter, has a passionate affair at its center and ends with a wedding. In this base outline, *Summer* appears similar to hundreds of "sentimental" novels of the period, but critics agree that Wharton's depth of feeling and rich processes have turned a conventional plot into art. The novel's contemporary reviewers argued heatedly over the meaning of the wedding, and the question continued to interest critics in the twenty first century.

Wharton seems both to satirize and respect the society she writes about in *Summer*. The woman surfaces in her fictional world where she is preoccupied with women and their problems. Wharton presents the helpless plight of women effectively. *Summer* reflects Wharton's awareness of the tremendous changes taking place in the world of Old New York. The First World War changes the whole consciousness and shape of the world, but other major changes would occur in the United States as well. But for women, the situation at the turn of the century was mixed. Many women privileged by race or class or by a combination of the two, found the three to four decades leading up to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and their gaining the right to vote exciting, filled with new opportunities. A number of traditionally male occupations were for the first time opened to them. So, widespread and sweeping were the changes that even by the early 1890s the term "New Woman" evoking the image of a confident, self-reliant, young adult capable of playing public as well as a private role in society had become

common place. Not everyone was pleased about the advent of the New Woman and not all women had access to the ideal. Furthermore, the ideal itself often varied depending on race, class, ethnicity, religion or politics.

Edith Wharton's *Summer* (1917) is a novel that has been made critical appraisal since its publication. Much appreciated for its author's ability is to weave together intrinsic characters and observation of passionate eighteen years old Charity who pleases her sexual desire. Though the society was guided by patriarchal ideology Charity is able to express her inner feelings i.e. sexual desire. Wharton, here tries to prove that biological need like sex cannot be repressed in male made cultural as well as social circumstances. The novel has accumulated the varieties of criticism and viewed from different perspective.

Kathy Grafton revisits the Wharton's *Summer* from the perspective of psychoanalysis. In her reading "the relationship between the heroine, Charity Royall, and her lover, Lucius Harney, depicts a kind of feminine sexual awakening that is profound by original in literature". She further says:

Both Freud and Wharton admired the works of Goethe and Schiller. Freud "could quote [them] by the hour", while Wharton reaffirmed "her loyalty to the older German literature and the German language" by immersing herself in the correspondence between the two. "Goethe always Schillered when he wrote to Schiller, didn't he? She observed".
(394)

Even more persuasive is the fact that Wharton often mentioned and discussed Freud among her friends during her excursion to Germany in 1913, as well as after her return to Paris that same year (352).

Freud's influence on Wharton then, though not unequivocally documented, is

apparent in that they often expressed similar concerns about cultural expectation and restrictions and in that they were both interested in critiquing the “attitudes to premarital and extramarital sexual experience [and] the precarious relation between parents and children” that they perceived in the societies in which they lived (134).

Grafton’s above lines where we can find out that the novel stands for psycho-sexual intensity grown up within Charity in the contemporary society. Charity, as a representative character, expresses sexual awakening of women like her. As the society is guided by patriarchal ideology it is quite difficult to women like Charity to express their own feelings.

Other critics like Veronica Makowsky and Lynn Z. Bloom re-read the novel from the perspective of class. In this issue, they are of the view that Edith Wharton is a social snob, pre-occupied with the manners and mores of the rich, who “are different from you and me”. They further say:

Wharton knew the difference made by having everything money can buy power, status, admiration, beauty of surrounding and clothing (if not always of face and physique), social and geographical mobility), freedom to escape the menial, the banal and the petty? If they so choose. The effort to acquire, augment, or retain money and its aura is the engine that drives most of Wharton’s plots. The complex interactions between class and character that dominate all of Edith Wharton’s rich tapestry of urban high society are likewise the themes in her novellas of middle and lower class society in rural New England, *Summer*. (356)

The aforementioned lines indicate that the issue of class has been penetrated the realistic picture, contradiction and binaries inherent in the New England of early

twentieth century.

Being born into an atmosphere of opulence, Wharton had access to all the privileges of an upper class upbringing; education, travel and the assurance of a good marriage. Yet for all the luxury of her youth, Wharton felt her individuality continually stifled by the rigid expectations and narrow perspectives of her class. Not surprisingly, these sentiments become central themes in *Summer*. Wharton belonged to an aristocratic New York family with ancestry dating back 300 years. Her role as a daughter of society was to learn the mannerisms and rituals expected of well bred young women in those days. Later she would rebel against this role but as a child she was schooled at home and had the privilege of use of her father's extensive library. But unlike her upbringing Joan Bridgman finds the traces of war in Wharton's novel. Linking the First World War the title of Wharton's novel, he says:

This book shines a light on an unrepresentative part of Edith Wharton's life, the period during the First World War. This wealthy New York socialite, a cultured representative of the American literati with an established reputation as a novelist, became desperately concerned with the war and threw herself into propaganda efforts to persuade the American public that their country should enter the fray. She saw Germany as imposing a master culture that posed a threat, an assault on everything she believed in. (47)

As the novel is set in the context of world war first, it is quite relevant to see the traces of war. In that context women also become the victims of war. So, the criticism seems quite relevant here in this context.

Wharton emerged as a major early twentieth century American author. Her novels shed light on the complicated world of upper class society – a world that few

novelists of her time could probe with such accuracy and authority. She exposes in her writing many of the social hypocrisies that shaped America's rapidly changing upper class. Her importance, however, goes far beyond the upper class society that she helped expose to the reading public. Wharton has influenced the imaginations of many other writers – her contemporaries as well as those she continues to inspire today. Wharton's creative imagination operated as well in a literary context with her contemporaries.

Summer like other novels of Wharton, is set in the changing world of Wharton's post – civil war New York society. The uneasy mixing of two different societies – the old, wealthy families who had ruled New York society for decades with the newer wealth that had sprung up from the war – is the source of many of her novels. Commenting on Wharton's characters, Carol Singley says:

Edith Wharton's characters often fail in their attempts to overcome social barriers to happiness. It is tempting to attribute these defeats to dichotomous, even mutually exclusive causes, that is, to failure either of character or circumstance –especially because Wharton's writing participates simultaneously in the literary traditions of manners and naturalism. However, such an approach simplifies the complex cultural and literary project at the heart of Wharton's work. Wharton's fiction is occupied, even obsessed, with vacillating tensions between stultifying social conditions and frequently imagined but seldom executed escapes from such environments. (497)

Similarly another critic Claire M. Tylee contextualizes the novel in relation to the war. As this novel is set in the context of First World War in Paris, essentially it provokes the theme of war. In this regard, Tylee quotes the idea of Cynthia Griffin

Wolff states:

Edith Wharton's *Summer* (1917), produced in Paris in the thick of the war yet set in a time and place far removed, that nevertheless in many respects, this is war novel. It was not only the intellectual frame work of the novel that stemmed from Wharton's experience of a country at war, enabling her to explore private problems. Using a phrase from Tolstoy's *War and Peace* quoted in Wharton's *Letters*, Wolff judges that the emotional intensity of *Summer* "captures all that was gay and terrible" recreates the unmitigated sexual intensity of those days. (327)

The quoted lines suggest that the setting and context of the novel also indicates the realistic picture of the society and its people in the context of war. It not only depicts the picture of war but also explores how people especially women were dominated in the name of war. So, it explores the bitter reality of the contemporary society.

The above mentioned critics have concentrated their views on different aspects of the novel but none of them has a sufficient focus on the suppression and exploitation of women in the contemporary patriarchal American society. This research indeed has drawn the case of how women like Charity face the problems in the male dominated capitalistic society. The representation of Charity as a village girl who seems docile, passive and tolerable makes clear that how women in patriarchal society are exploited in the name of capitalistic ideology. The passive tolerance of the character Charity as she cannot evoke her internal desire directly sexual or social as well as other shows the patriarchal domination. Therefore, the present research work explores the issue that instead of presenting rebellious woman character why Wharton presents such a submissive character like Charity.

Thus, to explore the basic compulsion of women like Charity, this research

intends to discuss the capitalist structures, processes, and contradictions that, at the level of mode of production, observe gender inequality that is always historical in the Marxist sense. Hence, social reality ought to focus not only on the elements that it has in common with other periods but also on those unique to the mode of production under consideration. The continual and unquestioned acceptance of sexual relationship of Charity with Harney and with Mr. Royall in one context and Charity's exploitation in other sectors like economic, social, cultural are not other than the ostracism of the twentieth century male dominated patriarchal society.

As Marxist feminists believe that the capitalism is primarily responsible for class structure in the society by creating the gender inequality, this theoretical methodology has been used in this research to explore main idea; elitist representation of women in capitalistic society, of the research. While making research the ideas of Marxist feminists and other critics like Shelia Ruth, Catharine Mackinnon, Joan Wallah Scott, Makowsky and Bloom, Kathy Grafton, Claire M. Tylee and many other references have been taken that made easy to explore the main idea of the research.

II. Elitist Representation of Women in Edith Wharton's *Summer*

Edith Wharton's novel *Summer*, as it is set in the contemporary society of America which was guided by capitalist male ideology, seems to quite relevant to explore the women position. As the society where the novel is set, was capitalist male oriented society women were not only dominated by gender but also by class. The patriarchal norms of manners, morals, customs and conventions are still prevalent in modern society where the slavish adherence to custom is expressed in the social rituals. *Summer*, as it presents the women characters submissive and tolerable, it only evokes the ideas as an emptily conventional and narrow interpretation of women's duties. Charity and other female characters have no real interest in fate beyond the maintenance of the appearance of respectability. When they inform about their appeals for help, society's reply causes them sufferings and many other negative consequences. Harney's blindfolded decisions are based on patriarchal convention and the roles of women in society. *Summer* illustrates that capitalism is primarily responsible for class structure in the society and questioning the existence of equality in capitalistic system where the optimal combination of the elements of the mode of reproduction, from the standpoint of capital, occurs within the oppressive features that should be examined from Marxist-feminist perspective.

Summer deals with the society that evaluates its members as well as characters constantly whether or not they are still worthy. The evaluation of its characters is necessary because of capitalistic patriarchal society. Charity Royall, the protagonist, is a member of this group though she herself is in impecunious condition. In order to sustain this society, she must marry a rich person. So as the society demands she first makes her love with Lucious Harney because of his social reputation and wealth. When Harney shows his true nature i.e. he deceives Charity, she even accepts the

marriage purpose of Mr. Royal. Her acceptance of marriage proposal is not because of her intuitional love but because of social practice. Because of such type of social practice and custom in capitalistic society she cannot live a happy, prosperous and affluent life.

Likewise, there is no gender inequality in general; gender inequality has causes and structural supports specific to each mode of production and is intrinsically related to other historical forms of inequality. What matters, therefore, is not the chronological origin of gender inequality but the historical conditions of emergence and persistence of gender inequality within a given mode of production. The society in which Charity dwells is a growing capitalistic society absorbed by material gain and monetary worth. In this society every thing is counted in terms of economic worth. For instance, for Harney and Mr. Royall, Charity is a valuable asset as long as she retains the superficial endorsement of the social taste. Although Mr. Royall pities her, once her reputation has been spoiled, she has no social worth unless she regains her previous position to affect her re-entry into society. Harney and Royall analyze everything in term of business transaction profit and object of protection. Internalizing this idea Harney as the member of that society says:

Women show little or no need to degrade the sexual object. The long abstinence from sexuality to which they are forced and the lingering of their sensuality in phantasy has in them, however, other important consequences. It is often not possible for them later on to undo the connection thus formed in their minds between sensual activities and something forbidden. (211)

The quoted lines focus the idea that in capitalistic male oriented society, women have been used as the sexual object. They are regarded only as the source of entertainment

and used for monetary purpose. The representative character of such society; Harney, regards Charity and other female characters as such things. So the portrayal of Charity in *Summer*, is a social snob, preoccupied with the manners and mores of the rich and sophisticated society, who views women as different from men. The society and its male representatives argue that they are superior because they have more money.

Regarding this idea critics like Makowasky and Bloom write:

Marxist feminists knew the differences made by having everything money can buy: power, status, admiration, beauty of surroundings and clothing (if not always of face and physique), social and geographical mobility, freedom to escape the menial, the banal, and the petty? If they so choose. The efforts to acquire, augment, or retain money and its aura is the engine that drives most of Wharton's plots. The complex interactions between class and character that dominate all the Edith Wharton's rich tapestry of urban high society are likewise the themes in her novels of middle and lower class society in rural New England .In *Summer*, Wharton's focuses on "transparent Muslim", whose more fragile fabric highlights the simple thematic design of "Charity". Further, although Wharton's upper class orientation provides breadth, depth and intriguing texture to the weave of her major novels, her privileged perspective produces strains, flaw and tears in the plot and characterizations of *Summer*'s delicate texture. (121)

These ideas of the critics also support to explore the point that in capitalistic society males always count every thing in terms of money. They view that money can buy every thing like power, status, beauty and many other things. So, the novel *Summer*, from the Marxist feminism, evokes these ideas of male capitalism.

Likewise, the presentation of women in the contemporary society i.e. World War I, is also another aspect that helps to portray the actual condition of women. As the novel is set in the context of World War I, in its introductory part, it tries to explore the women's condition and their sacrifices which Wharton in her autobiography, appropriately titled a background glance for its lack of wistful lingering over the part, she recalls her war time experiences:

Many women found their vacation in nursing the wounded, or in order philanthropic activities. Some developed a real genius for organization and a passion for self-sacrifice. I cannot honestly say that I was of the member. I was already in the clutches of an inexorable calling, and though individual cases of distress appeal to me strongly. I am conscious of luke warmness in regard to organize beneficence. And my first respite came when I felt free to return. (V-VI)

The context of World War- I where the contribution of women can be seen in war, but in return they could not gain anything. Though the society made lots of progress and achievement but women remained only as the source of reproduction and member of male exploitation. In this regard, Wharton through the protagonist, Charity tries to express her personal feelings and experiences of being woman, especially during the early years of her marriage and the continual round of social obligations she had to fulfill:

I have sometimes thought that a woman's nature is like a great house full of rooms: there is the hall, though which everyone passes in going in and out; the drawing room, where one receives formal visits; the sitting room where the members of the family come and go as they list; but beyond that, far beyond, are other rooms, the handles of whose

doors are never turned; no one knows whether they lead; and in the innermost room, the holy of holies, the soul sits alone and waits for footstep that never comes. (VII)

These quoted lines explore the bitter reality of women in capitalistic male dominated society. Because of men's' behaviors women are compelled to think themselves like a house that symbolizes the shelter for men who utilizes women for their own interests. But the society and its people never think and realize the innermost interests and feelings of women. So, women are always kept in the trap of men ignoring the real feelings.

In *Summer*, the young Charity Royall, cut off, unmined, and undiscovered, embodies this same feeling of isolation. And yet, by all accounts including her own, Charity had a great gift for friendship, and friends played important roles in her life. Much has been made of her association with Harney, of whom she said, “His friendship was the pride and honor of my life” (86). But Harney instead of Charity’s friendship shows his selfish nature:

Here they lunched on queerly flavored things, while Harney, leaning back in a crippled rocking-chair, smoked cigarettes between the courses and poured into Charity's glass a pale yellow wine which he said was the very same one drunk in just such jolly places in France [. . .]. The illusion was increased by their being served by a deep-bosomed women with smooth hair and a pleasant laugh, who talked Harney in unintelligible words, and seemed amazed and over joesys at his answering her in a kind. (96)

These lines even show that how women in capitalistic male dominated society has been dominated in terms of sexuality. Though Charity supposes that Harney is her

true friend but he in the name of friendship tries to seduce her. Charity's innocence nature and she herself becomes like a scapegoat in the mouth of the patriarchal society.

Wharton in her autobiography points out that nine years before she created Charity Royall. Through this character Wharton experienced her own sexual awakening with an American journalist named Morton Fullerton that shows how women in male dominated capitalistic society have been exploited sexually as well as physically. Wharton's sexual relation with Fullerton that ultimately turned into sexual exploitation can be traced out in Charity's relation with Harney. Therefore, Wharton presents Charity as her mouthpiece character who faces lots of problems and obstacles in capitalist male oriented society.

So, Charity's experience of exploitation in her contemporary society can be traced out as the exploitation in capitalistic male oriented society either sexual or any other sectors. Charity was keenly conscious of her experience, her age, and her vulnerability, and such other things. But in overcoming her doubts, less through force of will than through surrender to feelings, Charity abandoned herself to a love not founded on the future. So, too, Charity Royall feels that "all the rest of life had become a mere cloudy rim about the central glory of their passion", and she learns "what she was worth when Lucius Harney, looking at her the first time, had lost the thread of his speech, and leaned reddening on the edge of her desk" (XII).

But with first love comes first disappointment, and Charity's heart would be "ravaged by life's cruelest discovery: the first creature who had come to her out of the wilderness had brought her anguish instead of joy" (XII). These lines show Charity's love relation with Harney who at first lures her but later when he fulfills his sexual desire and makes her pregnant, abandons her. The treatments of sex as well as the

depiction of the impoverished life on the mountain were considered scandalous. This attitude may be hard to fathom today, when our fiction often has the outlandish or shocking as its ultimate goal, but critics argue that when Edith Wharton began writing, the expectations were decidedly different.

Charity Royall is a scapegoat whom Harney at first and Mr. Royall at last exploit so that she is compelled to have sexual affair. As Harney makes the situation clear that he is in love with another lady Charity publically allows Harney to make love and marry the lady to whom he loves. Though everybody knows the reality that Harney is a morally corrupted character the society and its people cannot do anything to Harney. Moreover, Charity is socially ostracized and compels to leave the society. The society and its people who do not show any pathetic feeling upon Charity even explore the condition of women in such society. So, the presentation of the character Charity as submissive and tolerable is not because of her desire but because of social custom and practice which is hard to digest.

So, the ideas of Marxist feminists who argue that women and men are social beings; their differences in resources, power, attitudes, and behavior are dependent variables that have to be explained. They focuses on the dismantling of capitalism as a way to liberate women and states that capitalism, which gives rise to economic inequality, dependent, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy relation between men and women, is the root of women's oppression. Current changes in the material conditions of reproduction reflect the development of the forces of production under capitalism and as such, require a Marxist feminist analysis. In this regard, Shelia Ruth writes:

The alternative, the women identified women, is surely a feminist vision. She is a person who indeed understands herself to be subject

(self), not object (other); she respects both her womanhood and her humanity, she takes her direction and definition from values that are her own, born of her own self-perceived qualities and goals as well as those of other women; she contributes to society that which she takes to be meaningful, and does so in her own way. (85)

Though the critics like Shelia Ruth argue that in society women have their own vision and they desire that they must be treated not like an object but like a subject. They even desire to sacrifice for the society and its people not being an object of other peoples' but being independent. Unlike this idea the society where Charity and other women are born they have been treated like an object of use-value.

As the society and its leading people are against the freedom of women Charity Royall faces lots of problems and obstacles to progress her life. “How I hate everything!” (2), Charity Royall utters, that shows her high spirit in the face of frustration. Usually it is a social stigma that thwarts these women like Charity Royal, it is her lack of education and dubious birthright. These women have the ambition to realize themselves but find they are held back by something – scruples, perhaps, or simply a practical world view. That their hopes are unlikely to materialize is a hope that unlikely to materialize is a realization that downs on them slowly. Charity Royall, the heroine and other characters are not helpless victims, however; they understand their helplessness. Charity Royall “was bland and invisible to many things and dimly knew it, but to all that was light and air, perfumes and colors, every drop in her responded”. (XIV) It is the heightened sensibility that animates Charity and other female characters – they are aware while their awareness may deepen their tragedy, it also allows them to retain their dignity – though sometimes at the cost of their lives.

Charity's descent from the house of Mr. Royall as well as society to the house

of her Mountain proves that in capitalistic society only consumer identity provides pleasure and escape, not happiness or social change. She is taken as the object that used only for that time when it was useful. But when she loses her value for the society especially Harney and Mr. Royall she is compelled to leave the society. This behavior of society towards the Charity shows that it was the time when the society was moving towards the capitalism women began to exploit doubly; class and gender. Just as the fact that wage labor predates capitalism is not helpful for understanding why it is the predominant capitalist form of labor, the fact that sexual divisions predate capitalism is not helpful for understanding the causes and meaning of gender inequality. In this context Heidi Hartmann argues:

Modern society must be understood as both capitalist and patriarchal. Although they have become bound up to each other, neither of this 'dual system' can, she says, be reduced to the other, and although at times they are mutually reinforcing, they may also come into conflict. Most notably when capitalism's need for women's labor power is opposed by the patriarchal demand for personal services within the home. (243)

Hartman's idea clarifies that the modern society is dominated as patriarchal capitalistic society. As capitalism and patriarchy both are two parts of society they can not be reduced to other. This standpoint does not imply a theoretical dualism: at the metaphorical level of analysis, production, i.e. the exchanges between humans and nature are twofold. It entails the production of things and the production of life, biologically, physically, and socially is part of the material basis of social organization.

In this regard, Barret says; "the oppression of women, although not a

functional pre-requisite of capitalism, has acquired a material basis in the relations of production and reproduction of capitalism today" (Bryson 243). Historically, i.e. within a given mode of production whether or not the organization of production determines the organization of reproduction depends on the level of development of the productive forces and corresponding changes in the social organization as a whole. Kinship was dominant in pre-class societies, but the development of the productive forces resulting in growth in the productivity of labor and, consequently, the possibility of surplus production, led to the emergence of private property, social classes and the state, and new kind of social organization: a society in which the system of the family is completely dominated by the system of property.

The capitalistic society counts everything in monetary values or in terms of property as Marxist feminists argue. Even the family relation is counted in terms of property. The more who earns in the society or family the more s/he deserves the high position. This ideology of capitalism can be traced out in the novel of Wharton. The position of Mr. Royall, Harney, Charity and other characters are ranked in terms of their earnings and property. Mr. Royall and Harney always take and ignore Charity because she earns little. So, she and other characters that have little property do not deserve high position. Because of property lessens they even not access to spend money for their basic needs. So, they are forced to die. In this context, when Julia falls sick she is ignored by other even when she is in death bed:

I can't help it. The house is on the corner of Wing Street and Lake Avenue. The trolley from the station goes right by it, and the day the minister took us down to see those pictures I recognized it right off, and couldn't seem to see anything else. There's a big black sign with gold letters all across the front - 'Private Consultations.' She came as

near as anything to dying [. . .]. "Poor Julia!" Charity sighed from her purity and her security. (88)

These lines where Charity remembers her friend Julia who dies because of lack of money. Though she can be rescued from her illness as well as death but as she does not have any money she is forced to die. The society and its people who are the owner of property and big amount of money are not ready to help to the propertyless women like Julia.

Similarly, the presentation of the protagonist Charity who is a person with disability and submissive nature to the capitalist society and its property owners to whom she becomes the refreshing object that the society wants to possess. Harney, the representative character of the patriarchal capitalist society accepts help and love from Charity. But instead of helping to Charity he keeps only sexual relationship and later betrays her. Instead of showing any sympathy he becomes ready to marry another lady Anabela Blach looking her huge amount of property. He fails to show courage to go to rescue Charity when she needs him the most.

As the Marxist feminists argue that in capitalistic society social welfare is ignored and priority is given to production and earning, Harney instead of being a social worker invests his energy into business to accumulate money and gets lots of success. But in the same society Charity, the women character, works as a librarian and house keeper and earns small amount of money. Even this division of working area shows that in such society male always tries to keep female to do high work from where they can earn lots of money. Though women have education, enthusiasm and courage, they are deprived from those opportunities. So they are compelled to depend in men and their high earning from where women get little amount of money because of being their workers. As a young woman, the protagonist, Charity, fully understands

that without the trappings of wealth she would have little value to the people with whom she has relation. She has been brought up to believe that middle class women are indeed the consumer of luxury goods, and so her excessive desire for clothes, jewelry and other items is more than individualized greed. Instead, it is an expression of society that encourages people to define their identity and create a sense of value, through luxury goods, she seeks to transcend this role forced on her and yearns for a more meaningful form of existence in which she fails.

In capitalistic society, patriarchy plays as an ideological foundation that serves the interests of men as well as the interests of capitalism. Through this capitalistic mode of society patriarchy exploits women. Commenting on the operation of patriarchy, Janet Saltzman Chafets writes:

Patriarchy is probably the oldest forms of exploitation of one part of population by another. It probably has also serves as the model for all other forms of relegation, on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion and class, once such a system is established, those in the high caste position, in this case males, develop a vested interested in the maintenance of the basic structure and their own advantaged status ... the short - run interests of the males as males and perhaps more importantly, as leaders of political, economic and cultural institutions are best served by maintaining and reinforcing traditional gender roles. (115)

Janet Chafets' idea tries to point out that within any class; women are less advantageous than men in their access to material goods, power, status, and possibilities for self -actualization. The lack of women access causes them to exploit by men. The causes of this inequality lie in the organization of capitalism itself.

Generational reproduction of labor of different qualities by giving access to education, health care, housing; family size, and so on are subordinate to the needs of production and have never been fully met. Fertility differentials according to social class, the welfare state, growth of underground economics, and the presence of a substantial proportion of the population living below or near poverty level in all capitalist conditions. Among the owners of capital, reproduction is subordinate to the maintenance and expansion of privately owned wealth.

The given idea of capitalistic male oriented society is also relevant in the novel *Summer*. Harney, the "lover" of Charity, intends to have sexual relationship to fulfill his sexual passion. He deceives her into believing that he can make a handsome sum of money for her without endangering the small amount she possesses. His ulterior motives become clear to Charity only when he tricks her into coming to his room with another lady Anabela Blach. He shows his boasted nature of masculinity over the female like Charity. He becomes ready to marry Anabela ignoring Charity though he knows that Charity is pregnant. He does marry to Anabela not because of his spiritual love but because of material prosperity and money as well. The relation of Harney with Charity and Anabela Blach shows the exploitation of patriarchy upon women.

In the capitalistic society where men play the role of leader women are unwillingly forced to follow the path that is deigned by male. The outward appearance and inward reality is quite contradictory in this sense. In this sense, appearance is what counts in this world; the appearance of propriety or of impropriety is more important than actuality. The continual and unquestioned acceptance of the sexual relation of the Charity is the guilt from the society is its examples. It is the decline patriarchal society at the beginning of the twenty century where the patriarchal norms

of manners, morals, customs and conventions are still prevalent. The slavish adherence to custom is expressed in the social rituals of Charity, which drawing up can be seen as an act which is as emptily conventional as her narrow and niggardly interpretation of her duties. She has no real interest in fate beyond the maintenance of the appearance of respectability. When she informs to Harney and Mr. Royall about her pitiful condition and appeals for help, their reply causes her suffering consequences. Harney's blindfold decisions are based on his conventional attitude of the roles of women which is very inapt in a changing society.

The society where they dwell judges everything on the basis of use-value. Charity's use-value lies in her works and elegant manners; it is her real asset. By investing this wealth she intends to find a savior. For this, she must also maintain as the house worker, thus she hates this kind of hypocrisy. Although the members of this society lack morality and propriety, they themselves demand it from others, and Charity is trapped in this contradictory nature of her society. Charity in her patriarchal society becomes a playful thing as:

"Don't stamp on those bramble flowers, you dolt!" She retorted, springing to her knees. The foot paused and then descended clumsily on the frail branch, and raising her eyes she saw above her the bewildered face of slouching man with their sun brunt beard, and white arms showing through his raged shirt. (38)

Charity Royall as a house worker faces lots of humiliation and exploitation from the side of male. The given lines even show that type of domination from male dominated society. Mr. Royall crudely utters these lines showing his dissatisfaction towards the works of Charity. His voice and behavior causes lots of suffering and humiliation to Charity. So, these lines capture the patriarchal ideology and their

exploitive behavior over women. The society and its representative male figures like Mr. Royall ignoring the pathetic condition of Charity expose his aggressive nature towards her.

Charity Royall is a female character who comes from a mountain area for her livelihood. She is from a poor family. Because of her father's death and mother's old age she becomes compelled to earn something. So, when she arrives for job, she got the job of librarian and house worker under the guardianship of Mr. Royall. When she comes there from her village she had lots of hopes and ambition of her life. So, whenever she meets Mr. Royall, she thinks, "It was the fact of having lived in Nettleton that made Mr. Royall, in spite of his infirmities, the strongest man in North Dormer; and Charity was sure that this young man had lived in bigger places than Nettleton" (35).

But her imagination and hopes of life turns quite adverse. Later she realizes that in capitalistic society where male plays the role of connoisseurs it is quite difficult to women. They cannot do any progressive thing being independent. So, Charity becomes a puppet who sometimes becomes the play thing of Harney and sometimes of Mr. Royall. The appearance and inward activities of male is quite different. The expectation of Charity to Mr. Royall and his real character depicts the bitter reality of patriarchal capitalist society.

The society which is male oriented that even shows the enmity between and among the male characters. Even male characters like Harney and Mr. Royall shows their corrupted morality. Not only for business purpose but also they show their envious nature for woman like Charity. As the novel also tells the story of a young woman's sexual awakening which becomes means of exploitation to Harney; representative of patriarchal ideology. Eighteen years old Charity Royall is bored in

the small town of North Dormer. She is librarian and ward of North Dormer's premier citizen Mr. Royall. While working at the library she meets visiting architect Lucius Harney. When Harney's cousin Miss Hatchard left the village, Harney becomes Mr. Royall's boarder, and Charity is companion. While he explores old houses for a book on colonial houses he is preparing, Mr. Royall notices their growing closeness and tries to put a stop to it by telling Harney he can no longer accommodate him in his house. Mr. Royall even plays many roles to make Charity his wife:

Since her return to the red house, on the evening of the day when Harney had overtaken her way to the mountain, she had lived at North Dormer as if she were suspended in the void.[...] She had nothing further to fear from Mr. Royall. Of this she had declared herself sure, though she had failed to add, in his exoneration, that he had twice offered to make his wife. Her hatred of him made it impossible, at the moment, for her to say anything that might partly excuse him in Harney's eyes. (124)

These lines explore the idea that in capitalistic society to exploit women even there is envious nature between and among the men. This sense of possession creates a kind of enmity between Lucious Harney and Mr. Royall. Because of such behavior Charity even shows her hatred towards Mr. Royall who time and again tries to possess her.

In a trip to Nettleton Harney kisses Charity for the first time, and buys her a present, a brooch. Afterwards they run into a drunken Mr. Royall, accompanied by prostitutes. Mr. Royall verbally abuses Charity, and Charity becomes overwhelmed with shame:

After they enter the little house and Charity seems to have calmed down, Harney tries to persuade her to go back to Mr. Royall's. Yet

Charity vows that she will not go back, and in giving Harney her reasons she disclose on even more demeaning aspect of her circumstances. At Harney's insistence that Mr. Royall's drinking accounted for his rude behavior at the wharf, Charity replies that she understands "all that". But she also adds that Mr. Royall would not have dared to speak to her "that way" has he not wanted her "to be like those girls" so that "he wouldn't have to go out". (114)

Mr. Royall's relation with the prostitute shows not only his true nature but also the nature of whole patriarchal society. He thinks women as a playful thing so he tries to change them time and again. This type of behavior creates a kind of aggressive feelings to Charity so whenever Mr. Royall shows his rude behavior she replies aggressively.

Similarly, the ambiguous portrait of Lucius Harney, the young, cultivated architect who arrives in North Dormer on Summer to do an architectural inventory of "old houses in these parts"(18), here Wharton partly interrogates her upper-class prejudices and artistic credo. As a woman with similar experiences of attraction and rejection, she is sporadically sympathetic towards Charity Royall, lawyer Royall's romantic but undereducated teenage ward. Critics have ended to privilege Charity's highly critical view of her guardian despite clearly perceiving her adolescent rebelliousness and silliness in other aspects of her life. We attempt to correct this negative view of Royall by demonstrating that he alone, of the three major characters, is capable of positive acts of Charity, in contrast to Harney's evasions and Charity's reactions.

Likewise, Mr. Royall, but not Harney or Charity, can exhibit an imaginative empathy that results in Charity. While one might argue that Charity is just another

class-bound virtue, we contend that Charity in its radical sense of “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. (VI) *Summer* demonstrates that failures of Charity in this basic sense are deleterious to those of all classes, including the novelist herself as a member of two classes, the privileged and the artistic.

Wharton’s principal defense against her discomfort at class and artistic exploitation, however, is displacing such activities onto Lucius Harney. Like Wharton, Harney is a well-educated, well-to-do artist, in his case a student of architecture who is making drawings of local houses. He enthusiastically informs Charity that “this part of the country hasn’t been much explored” (18). Like an imperialist colonizer or feudal lord, he views the country as unknown if people like him have not seen it. Harney’s own country of choice, the past, is equally inaccessible to North Dormer’s living inhabitants. Charity, as one of the living locals, finds it “incomprehensible, why he paused enchanted before certain neglected and paintless houses, while others, refurbished and “improved by the local builder, did not arrest a glance”. This observation is typical of Wharton’s ambivalence toward Harney. On the one hand, she recognizes his disregard for the comfort of living residents who might enjoy modern conveniences; on the other hand, the quotation marks around “improved” suggests that Wharton herself might want the inhabitants to remain in picturesque, fantastically feudal decrepitude. Harney can only deal with the living local by turning them into romantic art. Despite their initial indifference to the celebration of old home week in North Dormer, Harney “had taken the whole thing in hand so cleverly” (172) that the natives were firmly under the control of his literary imagination, safely relegated to playing roles from the past. He even manages to transform the history of “the Mountain”, where Charity’s hated and feared family lives, into what the social historian Lewis Lapham terms the upper class “romance of

crime”.

After telling Charity that the settlement was founded by men who “took to drink”, or got into trouble with the police” (66), he continues to glamorize them by stressing their lives beyond the boundaries of middle class morality. “They seem to be quite outside the jurisdiction of the valleys. No school, no church, and no sheriff ever go up to see what they’ve about” (66). Although Charity realistically blushes at her link to these people who abandoned her as an infant, Harney demonstrates his own peculiar affinity by saying that it makes her romantically or exotically “different” (67). Harney may prefer romantic blurs because, as Wharton frequently points out, he is quite near-sighted and misses detail. When he first enters the library, he is so intent on finding a book of local history that he misses the only person present, Charity the librarian, to whom he apologizes, “I thought there was no one here” (46). His remark reveals his true attitude: she is no one, anywhere.

Harney’s romantic affair is associated with his failure of perspective, his moral near sightedness. When he does focus on detail, it is with “the minute searching gaze of his short-sighted eyes” (164), so that he tends to overlook the larger ethical and social context. He regards Charity as an isolated, exceptional object of art, not a vital person embedded in a complex society of his own. While Charity fears that he is criticizing her stewardship of the library and the threatening her job, Harney continues to think of ways to improve the library’s ventilation: “the architect’s passion for improvement had already made him lose sight of her grievance” (50). Having “lost sight” of her as an individual, he continues to classify her with the valuable objects, pleading that his improvements would “make things pleasanter for you here; and better for the book” (51), his attitude is also much like that of a colonialist “improving” indigenous nature and society. Since he views her as one with the books,

his comment that he is “so fond of old books that I’d rather left to mold away like these” (49) belies any real human interest in Charity “moldering away” in North Dormer. His obtuseness also calls into question his pledge to her that “you can trust me, you know? You really can” (52). Harney’s failure as an artist also stems from his romantic egotism, which makes him unable to have any sense of his audience and her needs. He became “absorbed in his job, forgot her ignorance and her inability to follow his least allusion, and plunged into a monologue on art and life”(61). If his subject also becomes his audience, his obtuseness increases.

Harney's attitude towards Charity as an isolated, exceptional object of art shows his patriarchal attitude which does not think women as a vital person of the society. Instead of giving any vital position Harney's comparison of Charity with a lifeless object shows the pathetic condition of women in such society. Because of such judgment and exploitive nature of men women like Charity have always fear and sense of humiliation in their psyche. Harney's colonialist behavior also shows the patriarchal domination. In this sense, Harney shows his artistic failure as he only shows his boasted nature ignoring the actual human relation.

When Charity reproaches him with her assumption that he has complained to his aunt, Miss Hatchard, about her case of the library could be constructed as a personal criticism of the only person in charge of it. Similarly; Wharton’s own defense against her critical portrait of the area and these living in it was a claim of objective knowledge. Also like Wharton, Harney appears to have a moment of doubt about his use of the locals, particularly Charity. When he is preparing to leave North Dormer after his summer’s task has been completed, Charity watches his work through a window without his knowledge. He pauses from his drawing with “a look of weariness and self-disgust on his face: it was almost as if he had been gazing at a

distorted reflection of his own features” (103). Later, however, despite the hostility of her guardian, Harney said that “he could not, while he was in the neighborhood, give up the pleasure of seeing her as often as possible” (129).

As temporary sojourners in an area they believe to be relatively free of the bounds of morality for their class, Harney and Wharton cannot confront their unflattering minor images because each is unwilling to stop using the locals for aesthetic pleasure. During the Nettleton Fourth of July celebration, Harney discards any remaining scruples when, as the fireworks of Washington crossing the Delaware ironically explode above them, he kisses Charity from the bleacher above her “Kiss me again – like last night”, he said pushing her hair back as if to draw her whole face up into his kiss (115) .

Lucious Harney is asserting his feudal attitude to make love to her and then leave her to marry someone of her own class. Harney will not transcend class boundaries to become Charity’s husband, but he becomes the father of her child. Without knowing of Charity’s pregnancy, he leaves the region when Royall forces his hand by giving him permission to marry Charity. When Charity writes him, she does not tell him of her pregnancy but wants him to have “acted right” by marrying his finance Annabel Balch. His letter of reply to Charity epitomizes what Lewis Lapham calls the wealth’s narcissistic lack of “talent for love”, (13) as well as his failure as an artist empathetically to imagine the feelings of people outside his social class. He again asks Charity to “trust” him and praises her “generosity” and “understanding” (229), qualities he abundantly lacks. He wants to believe that he is exhibiting noblesse oblige, the duties attendant upon privilege, but is simply displaying moral myopia “if ever there is a hope of realizing what we dreamed of you will see me back on the instant” (229).

Harney is Wharton's worst nightmare of the kind of exploitative and obtuse artist she could become and fears that others believe that she is, as indicated by her defensive desire "to prove that I knew something at first hand of the life and the people" (14) of *Summer*. Ultimately, though, the comparison of Wharton to Harney breaks down, because as a woman, Wharton can see herself as one of the exploited as well as an upper-class exploiter. As Cynthia Griffin Wolff has pointed out:

Wharton's affair with W. Morton Fullerton is mirrored by Charity's with Harney: he does not need Charity and he offers her scant opportunity to rely upon him for anything more complicated than sexual satisfaction. (15)

Since Wharton knows that she herself can be seen as a sexual resource for an uncommitted outsider, she can sporadically sympathize with Charity. Although neither Charity nor Harney is the narrator of third person *Summer*. They illustrate the conclusions drawn by Elsa Nettels about the gender of Wharton's first person narrators: "It must not be supposed that Edith Wharton's male narrators with their microscopes or rare specimens [or drawing pads] have more insight than women do. If anything, the opposite is true. A number of male narrators confess their perplexity when confronted by changes in others and remain in the dark until ensuing events provide an explanation. The female narrator may lack knowledge of history and art, but they have a realistic view of themselves and others. It is only male narrators who are blind to the meaning of their own behavior, misjudge others, but believe them infallible" (16).

It can be argued that Harney is a failed imperialist, feudal lord and artist because he understands neither his subject nor his audience. He has no artistic or personal noblesse oblige, but arrogantly claims him successful architecture.

Consequently, he remains without charity or Charity. In contrast, Charity is potentially the better artist, in her romantic affinity with nature and feeling combined with her realistic appraisal of society and its repressions. Wharton however, will not permit Charity to construct her own world or art but compels her to respond to the world or misinterpretations of her “better”, Harney and Wharton. The words of Harney’s letter, quoted above, become the very negative word-made-flesh of Harney’s baby who will permanently keep Charity, and a charitable or sympathetic point of view, in their safely remote country. Charity Royall on the Frontiers of class and Charity until the end of the novel lacks full citizenship in either the country of her birth or the country of her rearing. She is an out layer, dwelling on the frontier, the “contact zone” between the propertied, orderly middle class village society of North Dormer where her guardian, Mr. Royall, “ruled” (23), and the Mountain squatter colony of her birth, populated by “scum”, heathen, or a “gang of thieves” (71).

Charity is kept firmly her place by Wharton’s class-bound perspective on her origins and her character, which restricts the young woman’s imagination, actions, and consequently her options in life. Although Dale M. Bauer observes that Wharton rejects the eugenics argument, popular in her day, that someone like Charity would biologically inherit her mother’s degeneracy, (17) it seems that while Wharton rejected biology as destiny, she could not renounce class as fate. Again, Wharton’s ambivalence complicates her portrayal of character, for while she does confine Charity to her class, she sympathizes with Charity’s romantic affinity for nature and passion and respects her final realistic and charitable decision. Charity grows up healthy and pretty, high spirited and saucy. She is a true child of summer. Like a romantic artist revealing in nature as an escape from social reality, “to all that was light and air, perfume and color, every drop of blood in her responded” (21). She

loves “the roughness of the dry mountain grass under her palms, the smell of the thyme into which she crushed her face, the fingering of the wind in her hair and through her cotton blouse (21), an affinity with nature and the sensual which will also manifest themselves in her passion for Harney during their *Summer*’s affair.

At the beginning of the novel, though, Charity only knows how to avoid the stigma of her birth by escaping into nature; she has not learned how to transcend class while remaining within society through aesthetic or intellectual pursuits or through the practice of Christian Charity. One of Charity’s early dilemmas pits the practice of Charity against escape from North Dormer through education. After Mrs. Royall dies, Miss Hatchard, who is the town patroness of culture and Harney’s rich aunt, suggests sending the fifteen-years-old Charity to boarding school. Royall rejects this practical plan for a reason that Charity intuitively understands: “it was the thought of losing her”. Royall can practice Charity in raising Charity, but he cannot practice it through giving her up for her own good. Charity, however, realizes that because both “had sounded the depths of isolation”, she knows that she is “the only being between him and solitude”, and elects to remain in North Dormer (25). This decision has irrevocable class consequences for Charity, for it limits her to the provincial perspective of North Dormer, which had “no shops, no threats, and no lectures” (11). It also, however, indicates that Charity is capable of learning charity through her sympathy with Royall as a fellow outliner. When Charity decides to stay with Royall, she cuts herself off from the romantic world of nature and from the possibilities of culture, and confines herself to uncomfortable liminality. Despite her lack of an education, when Charity is seventeen her membership in the household of the town’s most powerful person gives her sufficient influence to be appointed town librations over better qualified candidates (34).

Charity's high reputation is only regarded as a librarian when she becomes the wife of Mr. Royall. When she becomes ready only society regards her position. It clarifies that in capitalistic patriarchal society only women position is counted in terms of male's position. But whenever women try to make their position independently they are ignored. It shows that the society only gives position for production of object but not for their personal identity.

In another context the social behavior and practice are inauspicious, for Charity, self-willed nature's child, lacks both the education and the ambition to understand the artistic import of the books in her charge, or even of the value of reading. Unlike Harney, an obsessive bibliophile, she hates "to be bothered about books" (21). Charity's "ignorance of life and literature" (39) and failure to use upper class dialect contributes to the "sense of inadequacy" she feels "most painfully" when Harney plunges "into a monologue on art and life" (61). Her inculcation into the values of North Dormer bar from fully entering into a passionate relationship with Harney that could replace or supplement her passionate love of nature. Her lack of "education and opportunity had divided them by a width that no effort of hers could bridge, and even when his youth and his admiration brought him nearest, some chance word seemed to thrust her back across the gulf" (76).

The given textual idea proves that in patriarchal society women are exploited in various ways like socially, economically, sexually and in many other sectors. Like other women Charity is also exploited in several ways. Because of social exploitation she even deprives from her education that hinders her progress in her personal life. If we compare Charity with Harney she seems not so interest in reading books and other articles. Because of her lack of education she even lacks to use the words of upper-class. Her lack of education compels her to depend on other people like Harney and

Mr. Royall. It shows that in patriarchal capitalistic society women are also deprived from education because of that they become like a puppet in the hand of men which is also the policy of capitalistic society.

Similarly, when Charity is finally cast “back across the gulf” by Harney’s return to the city, she returns to the world of romantic nature. Debarred from a full relationship with Harney because of her class-limited perspective, she does not tell him of her pregnancy and decides to retreat into what she conceives of as the natural world of the Mountain. But that too, has lost its romantic charms. On an earlier visit with Harney near the Mountain, a storm forces the couple to take refuge in a derelict brown house. “Bare and miserable”, reeking “with the smell of dirt and stale tobacco” (83), and inhabited by those “living like vermin in their lair” (86). “This is where I belong? This is where I belong” (86), repeats Charity to herself, but the cleanliness and order herself, upbringing in the Royall household render this sentiment repugnant to her “every instinct and habit” (36). Later, when pregnant and abandoned, she decides to flee to the mountain, she may be choosing death over life, but she is still enough of a romantic to feel that this natural end will have a kind of poetic justice. Mother Nature and Charity’s own mother, Mary Hyatt, are a deadly, not a romantic, combination. Mary’s deathbed scene, a superimposition of Daumier’s social satire over Piranesi’s catacombs, exhibits every conceivable cliché in which Wharton stereotypes the undeserving poor. Instead of the maternal solace of the nature she so loved, Charity finds that her mother dies as she had lived, with indifferent casualness, “fallen across her squalid bed in a drunken sleep” (248). Her companions provide no sympathy, no social support; in their own drunken indifference they leave her “lying where she fell, in her ragged disordered clothes” with “a swollen glistening leg with a ragged stocking rolled down around the ankle” (248). Dirty and indecorous even in

death, “she lay there like a dead dog in a ditch” (250).

Charity poor and pathetic condition creates a kind of sense of sympathy and love. How she is, by her childhood, conventionalized that she is marginalized not only being of women but also of lower class back ground. Whenever she enters in to the world of capitalistic society which is quite different from her natural world, she feels uneasy in such a society. The custom, behavior and practice which she never prefers make her time and again to return to her village. Her thinking and reality seems contradictory because of that she always remembers her village life. Her stay with Mr. Royal and Harney does not give any proper justice rather she always feels a kind of sense of exploitation.

During the funeral sermon, the “savage survivors flight to claim a stove, which “wasn’t bears” (251). There is no eulogy, these semi-verbal creatures can never utter a whole sentence, let alone express a coherent thought or finish a prayer. Wharton, however, is not simply expressing her class biases in this internal scene, but is indicating her belief that in society people cannot behave “naturally”, as they would in a state of nature, but must consider other, in other words, they must practice Charity. Charity starts to learn this during her dark night of the soul “on the floor on a mattress, as her dead mother’s body had lain” (258), yet she feels herself “as remote from the poor creature she had seen lowered into her hastily dug grave as if the height of the heavens divided them”(259). Mother and Mother Nature have failed her, but Charity has her own maternity to confront, and she chooses not to behave with natural “selfishness, but to sacrifice herself for her child. To save the infant” from such a fate, she would find strength to travel any distance, and bear any burden life might put on her” (261).

Rejected by biology (her mother), the natural world (Mother Nature), the

aesthetic and intellectual world (Harney), she once again sacrifices her own romantic aspirations. She chooses lawyer Royall as she did at the age of fifteen when she decided to stay with him, though this time she exercises her charity for the sake of her child. Lawyer Royall's charity, however, has been unable to recognize Royall's acts of charity and has seriously misjudged him until the end of the novel. Her interpretation of her guardian is that of a young, uneducated, unsophisticated, resistant teenager who last look a good look at her benefactor at the time of his wife's death when Charity was twelve or thirteen. Regrettably, "she had always thought of him [as] someone hateful and obstructive", a "dull-witted enemy" (275).

Oddly, readers are inclined to accept Charity's view of Royall, even while they concurrently override her judgments of Harney. Only when we realize how wrong she is about "her" Mountain people we are impelled to test her adolescent stereotyping of her benefactor. Again, Wharton presents a main character ambiguously, but in Royall's case, in contrast to that of Charity, readers tend to overlook the positive more than negative. In fact, throughout Charity's entire life with Royall, he acts harshly on only two occasions, both precipitated by his intense feeling of her, a love that has grown and developed from that of benefactor rescuing an infant. When Royall approaches her room one night, "Charity, let me in", Charity assumes that he is making a sexual advance and rebuffs him, "you go right back from here" (29).

Yet, characteristically, acting on instinct, she may have misinterpreted his plea, for he leaves meekly, and within the week, after Charity has announced her eagerness to move out of North Dormer, he proposes marriage to her, Charity sees him as a "hideous parody of the fatherly old man she had always known" (34), and her refusal is cruelly uncharitable: How long is it since you've looked at yourself in

the glass? I suppose you think it would be cheaper to marry me than to keep a hired girl. Everybody knows you've the closest man in Eagle country (34). Royall is probably in his mid-forties, and his actions consistently speak a generous character. Despite his marginal income (69), he responds to her rebuff with the imaginative empathy so she conspicuously lacks and hires a housekeeper, who insulates Charity from domestic responsibilities and from Royall himself. Charity, with her adolescent righteousness and tendency to dramatize, also erroneously believes that Royall is a chronic and problem drinker, for since childhood she remembers having "seen him, as she went up to bed, sitting morosely in his office, a bottle at his elbow, or coming home, heavy and quarrelsome, from his business expeditions to Hepburn or Springfield" (152).

However, he is sober when he intrudes on Charity, who has taken the whiskey cupboard key: "I don't want the key. I'm a lonesome man" (29). In fact, he seems to be perfectly sober throughout most of the book, despite Charity's hyperbolic reminiscences. The exceptions are the fateful night of the fourth of July, when Harney and Charity, in their first and only public date, encounter Royall in Nettleton. He has stepped down from his class and has been drinking on a steamboat excursion with a "band of disreputable girls and bar-room loafers" (152), including the Whore Julia Haws, whose fate as an unwed mother is emblematic of what could befall Charity with Harney. On seeing Charity in the crowd waiting to board, the boat, with Harney's "arm ... still about her" (152), Royall draws "himself up with the tremulous majesty of drunkenness" and addresses her as "you whore, you damn bare-headed whore" (151). Her response to this spectacle of public drunkenness is ironically representative of the middle class virtues that he has taught her. It also echoes his charitable rescue of her from the debauchees of the Mountain and presages his final

rescue of her from such associates: “You come home with me? You come right home with me”(152). Indeed, one could interpret Royall’s second proposal, a few months after his first, as an attempt to save Charity from the fate of Julia Haws:

I’ve always acted straight with you but that once. And you’ve always known I loved you the way a man loves a decent woman. I’m a good many years older than you, but I’m head and shoulders above this place and everybody in it, and you know that too. If you’ll marry me we’ll leave here and settle in some big town, where there are men, and business, and things doing. (116)

Mr. Royall's these words even shows his boasted nature as an agent of his society. He thinks himself as a leading and ruling man who always shows his superiority. But unlike Harney’s language in his ” Dear Jane letter”, Royall’s words are truthful; he is straight and therefore deserving of trust; because he loves Charity as a few woman, he is honorable. He is older, and as the respect of the denizens of North Dormer indicates at their old home day, superior to his peers and capable of creating for Charity the life that she would like in a more active, cosmopolitan place. But Charity, though she is enamored of Harney, recognizes Royall’s truthfulness and Charity by giving him a more charitable reply than she had to initial proposal. She lacks the will to “wound and wither” her suitor, who seems “suddenly tall and strong”, and she refuses him by merely saying, “on, what’s the use of all this? When I leave here it won’t be with you” (117).

On the other hand, Royall is a gracious and charitable loser. In fact, Royall has knowingly provided the context in which Charity can see Harney regularly by allowing Harney to board at his house, by renting him a horse, and by engaging Charity to drive him about the country ride. With dignity and empathy, Royall

accedes to Charity's preference for Harney:

I don't blame you. You picked out the best when you seen it. Despite misgiving about the outcome of a match so socially disparate, Royall would have forced Harney to marry Charity, has she so wished to sustain her compromised reputation in North Dormer in this way. (117-18)

Months later, Royall, whose loyalty and love have never wavered, travels "steadily" through the cold, snowy night to the Mountain once again to rescue the pregnant Charity. She feels "softness" as he enacts the Christian invitation in Matthew (28), "come to me all ye who are tired and heavy laden and I will give you rest". Heavily laden with her impending maternity and weeping "tears of weariness and weakness", Charity acknowledges her "return of life" by partaking of communion: She has bread and hot coffee with Royall in a towns woman's "decent kitchen with a fire crackling in the stove", foreshadowing the comforts of mutually consider at married love (266). Royall proposes again, with charitable gravity, "I'll never feel anyway but one about you; and if you say so we'll go straight to the minister's house; and when you come back home you'll come as Mrs. Royall" (270)

Mr. Royall, though, shows his sympathy towards Charity but he has his own selfish nature too. He helps Charity not because of her pitiable condition but to marry with her. When Harney deceives her Mr. Royall takes it as an opportunity and he time and again persuades her to have sexual relationship. Whenever Charity rejects his purpose he even calls her "whore". It clarifies that his attitude towards Charity was not pure rather seducible. He only becomes happy when Charity becomes ready to accept his purpose. She at last is compelled to accept Mr. Royall's wife not intuitively but forcibly. Here comes a question why Charity is presented as a submissive and

passive character that always depends on other rather than on her. She clearly knows that in patriarchal capitalistic society women are always taken as a part of machine which is always used to produce something. They do not have any right and opportunity for their own carrier and progress of life.

Thus, the women, it has been argued, are part of the overall process of development of the forces of production that, in changing the biological conditions of intergeneration and also reproduction, have established the material basis for the structural separation between the mode of procreation and the mode of social and physical reproduction. As feminist have abundantly documented, the relations of procreation are not only oppressive for women, especially for working-class and minority women, but are open to public scrutiny, medical manipulation and intervention, and state supervision.

Summer, presents the wholesome atmosphere of American life as also the highest standards of American morals. But a closer look at the novel shows that Charity's innocence is a kind of sealing of her heart against spontaneous experience. Wharton is absorbed in presenting the beauty of rules and norms. She is expected to be the veil of innocence that apparently conceals reality. On the contrary there is a union in which codified existence takes the place of a vital life and everything is fixed into an unalterable routine showing no signs of spontaneity and freshness. In *Summer* one sees the subtle presentation of the unjust treatment meted out to women. But a mere expression of women's unique femininity is made quate to protect them from the kind of exploitation that they experiences.

III. Marxist Feminist Motif in Wharton's *Summer*

Wharton's *Summer* presents a kind of pathetic scene of women of early twentieth American society. In its early decades America was making its progress towards the industrialization following the capitalistic policy. The present novel is an example that shows how in patriarchal capitalistic society women have been exploited in the name of capitalism. They are not only exploited in one sense and one sector rather in several ways. Women like Charity are exploited by socially, economically, politically, culturally, sexually and many other ways. The representation of women in that sense is not more than the exploitation of male in capitalistic society. So, the Marxist feminist approach here supports to explore such unequal justice of women by male.

There is no gender inequality in general; gender inequality has causes and structural supports specific to each mode of production and is intrinsically related to other historical forms of inequality as the writer finds to bring the tragedy, in a way at once natural and picture making, to the knowledge of its narrator. Charity might have sat down before a village gossip who would have poured out the whole affair to her in a breath, but in doing this she should have been false to two essential elements of the picture: first, the deep-rooted reticence and inarticulateness of the people she is trying to draw, and secondly the effect produced by letting this case seen through. The historically specific structural determinants of gender inequality under capitalism are located in the specifically capitalist articulation between production and reproduction, which makes the latter dependent on the former.

In the society where Edith Wharton lived women did not fit into any creative or participant role. They were regarded as a supremely satisfying object of masculine possession. The male automatically became interested in parading the well decked

woman as his proud possession. As Judith H. Montgomery remarks, “Women began to be regarded as decorative playthings, as dolls and idols” (89). As dolls they were sought to be gilded, decorated and displayed, as idols they were treated and “worshipped”.

As mention above, a number of thematic concerns characterize Wharton’s works. A central theme is the repressive nature of genteel society in the United States, especially for women who usually endured diminished roles in courtship rituals and marriage arrangements. *Summer* centers on the conflict between the personal desires and social obligations of representative member of high society, exploring issues of hypocrisy and fidelity. The novel delineates the relationship that develops between Harney and Charity at first and Lawyer Royall and Charity at last which helps to explore women exploitive representation in such a society.

In capitalist society, the optimal combination of the elements of the mode of reproduction, from the standpoint of capital, occurs within the nuclear family, whose oppressive features have been thoroughly examined. Under capitalism, production is for profits, not for the satisfaction of needs; the needs of reproduction, for instance marriage, wage or salary levels. Similarly, Charity is the poorest woman living in the town of North Dormer. She is an almost monolith silent woman; who is incredibly strong-willed as well, but just the same reader gets the sense that the attrition of a hard life has lent itself to perhaps imminent resignation from existence. Just what that attrition was, however, is the great mystery of the story, the answer to which is revealed little by little, bit by bit; the reader notices immediately that the relationship she has with Harney at first and later with Mr. Royall consists almost entirely of brief, curt exchanges, during which the reader can easily sense the sharp bitterness just barley veiled by each side.

Wharton's story of the upper-class of the Old New York and Harney's impossible love for the disgraced Charity is an example of an era when upper-class culture was still in mixture of American and European extracts, and when society had rules as rigid as any in history. Wharton's use of characters as a lens of consciousness through which to see Old New York results much of the criticism of that society. Wharton's writing comes out of experience, sometimes a painful and bitter experience. She writes beautifully and with a real insight about the hypocrisy and double standards of the rich New Yorkers. She delves ever deeper into "polite" society to expose the tension and suppressed emotions that lie just beneath the surface.

In an era before the advent of electric lights, telephones or motor vehicles, there exist a small cluster of aristocratic "Old revolutionary stock" families that rule New York's social life. Under the rules of this society, "being things" is better than "doing things" and reputation and outward appearances come at the exclusion of everything else. In this Gilded Age, when America's expansion and increased industrialism produce a group a newly wealthy robber barons and financiers, and the patient, time-honored values of the old ruling class, and century, are giving way to the expediencies of the new. Caught at this cusp, is the triangle of lovers, who must choose between the expectations of family and society, and the deepest yearnings of the heart.

Summer shows Harney as a wealthy architecture happily engaged to the sweet and innocent Charity, a young woman from a village area. Harney has been raised with proper family values. On the other hand, because the parents of the society have raised their children not to speak of unpleasantness, Charity ignores any unpleasing situation and tends to appreciate superficial relationships with friends and family,

which consist of gossiping about other women, rather than revealing her own feelings and opinions.

Wharton creates an exceptionally realistic picture of New York of 1920s, a time in which aristocrats of inherited wealth found them competing socially with parvenus. Her ability to show the conflict between a person's need for social acceptance and the desire for personal freedom is striking. As the various characters make their decision, either to challenge or yield to social dictates, the novel achieves an unusual dramatic tension. It is subtle because of its lack of direct confrontation and powerful in its effects on individual destinies. This is, in effects on individual destinies. This is in fact; less an "age of summer" rather it is an "age of social manipulation".

Harney, the male protagonist, is a proper New York gentleman, and part of a society which adhere to strict social codes, subordinating all aspects of life to doing what is expected, which is synonymous with doing what is right. Harney meets and makes love to Charity, an unimaginative, shallow young woman whose upbringing has made her the perfect, inoffensive wife and one who knows how to behave and how to adhere to the "rules" of the society in which they live. Harney and Charity are part of the old world, where the "right people" follow the "correct rules" and marry into "acceptable families". Charity is Harney's fiancée and later compels to marry with Royall. She has been raised to be a perfect wife and mother, and she follows all of society's customs perfectly. Most of the time, she seems to be the type of shallow, uninteresting young woman that New York society adores.

Among the owners of capital, reproduction is subordinate to the maintenance and expansion of privately owned wealth. The legal system ensures the orderly intergenerational transmission of wealth, power, privilege, and prestige. The

incidence of sterility and sub-fecundity among the wealthy, on the other hand, may be minimal, as they have access to the best food, health care, and living and working conditions. The reader finds out that Charity does love to Harney and she does marriage to Mr. Royall not because of love but because of compulsion. As she lives in capitalistic society it is her compulsion to follow the path of its customs and practice. She does so because she wants to maintain her position as the society is. At the level of market and social relations, men and women engage in conscious, intentional activities through which, while they make choices and build their lives, they unintentionally reproduce their conditions of existence. And as Charity has not any opportunity of her own she tries her to keep and engage in such activities.

Thus, Wharton's response to her surrounding reality, the plight of women included, was a personal and private and shaped by her world view, inherited values and experiences. *Summer* presents more powerfully the impact of misery and pain when society establishes the false polarities of "good" and "bad" in dealing with its women. Charity Royall, whose story is really viewed by Wharton as a rich blend of a number of restraints and discriminations; either in terms of class or of gender. In such a society, women like Charity, are either exploited or marginalized in different sectors like socio-political, economic, cultural, and many more. Because of male dominated capitalistic society women are exploited and compelled to be passive and submissive as Charity. So, *Summer* is a testimony to the female experience under modern historical and social conditions to the modes of entrapment, betrayal and exclusion devised for women in the first decades of the American and European twentieth century.

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