

SILAS MARNER NOTES

LANTERN YARD

- Fits and herbs
- Drawing of the lots

RAVELOE

- Reduction to weaving
- Sally Oates incident
- Guineas and coins; broken pot; distance from herbs
- Squire + RH; G and D argument
- Selling Wildfire; staking it, stealing SM's gold
- Tavern: Durham, Tookey singing, Lammeters, marriage (meaning v glue), LDN tailor, Cliff's Holiday
- Entry of SM (sitting at hearth not his own)
- Hunt for culprit: Tinder box and earrings
- Godfrey confronting Squire (further prevarication + deceit)
- SM's sadness: Visitations from Crackenthorp, Macey, Dolly (church hymns + singing)
- Nancy in dressing room: Gunns, Osgood, Priscilla
- NYE Party: Charter of Raveloe
- Molly; SM's intrusion into NYE Party
- Dolly and SM, E's upbringing + links to comm
- E asking for garden; SM smoking pipe
- SM and Dolly wrt religion: goodness of God extrapolated from goodness of man
- E talking abt marriage
- Nancy's influence on RH; her own theology
- Thinking abt adoption
- G and draining of pit: Everything comes to light
- Claims over E; G passing for childless
- Return to LY; light enough to trusten by; marriage

Lantern Yard

- Silas' vivid life in LY: A life *'filled with the movement, the mental activity, and the close fellowship'* in a *'narrow religious sect'*, where every member of the community is well regarded and central to it
 - Egalitarian, caring for people in need – besides being religious, also community-minded
- Backward in its system of beliefs
- Extremely religious and literal in their close interpretation of Bible: Confidence in wisdom of religion
- Belief that God is an all-powerful authority, leaving no space for human reason/action/goodness
 - Human law/wisdom perceived as limited and unjust

Herbs and Prayers Episode

'Herbs could have no efficacy without prayer, and that prayer might suffice without herbs'

- Preference for divine healing: Believing that source of all healing and goodness is God, not herbs
- Herbs: Representing human application, progress and knowledge, science and healing, present help in times of need
- Seeking an answer through science is necessarily setting oneself apart from God's will/favour/goodness
 - Silas' *'doubts about the lawfulness of applying this knowledge'*

- In such a system, with no medical explanation for Silas' fits: Sign of God setting him apart
 - Interpreted as *'a brother thus singled out for special dealings'*
 - *'To have sought a medical explanation for this phenomenon would [mean] [...] a willful self-exclusion from the spiritual significance that might lie therein'*
- In the absence of human reason (earthly justice) in such a system, each individual person's actions/choices become magnified because there is no check in place

Silas Marner vs William Dane

- Silas a *'sane and honest'* man *'of exemplary life and ardent faith'*; William a *'shining instance of youthful piety'*, *'so dazzled by his own light as to hold himself wiser than his teachers'*
- On the Assurance of Salvation: William's certainty vs. Silas' humility (*'hope mingled with fear'*)
 - If God's ways are inscrutable and mysterious (William's dreams, Silas' fits), how would you know what His will is?
- If all judgment is based on the interpretation of a necessarily mysterious source, and human reasoning is taken out of the equation (i.e. not a part of what you do), the system is liable to abuse
 - William's unscrupulous interpretations leading to Silas' ejection from LY

Silas' betrayal by his community

- Silas' first experience of betrayal: William's interpretation of Silas' fits *'looked more like a visitation of Satan than a proof of divine favour'*
- Incident of the knife and death of senior deacon:

'God will clear me': Silas awaiting divine intervention (x 3)

- When Church members first interrogate him on matter
- When William accuses him of *'giving Satan an advantage over [him]'*
- When other people in the room accuse him of the same thing

Silas' bruised faith in man, loss of faith in God

- Absolute reliance on close community that meant family, friendship and community severely bruised
- In a community where God's actions are seen in every small action of peoples' lives (e.g. expectation for God to intervene in herbs incident, lots incident), the only logical explanation behind failure to do so is an unjust God
 - Silas asserting that there is no such thing as justice served to those who do wrong because there is no God, only a *'God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent'*
- At the same time: Use of *'divine interference'* in describing lots incident
- Almost saying that if God had acted in the lots, it would defy logic, because it would have been impossible to defy the odds of chance

Silas a pillar of support for religious community in LY vs. Silas the miser weaver in the rest of the novel

Silas' work and vocation

- Working as a sense of continuity, bridging the gap between the life he once knew in LY and the life that is strange to him in Raveloe – one thing he does that is purposeful and remains constant
- Muted from all things human and spiritual: Reduced to the life of a spinning insect
- Comparison to a spider: Weaving with a lack of independence and volition
- Working becoming his own purpose and work in itself became satisfactory, fulfilling an immediate need, where it once was a means for something larger (e.g. saving up for marriage)

- With no hopes to strive for, money became an immediate object of toil, a symbol of earthly good
 - Money symbolizing goodness (hard work and reward in itself) that Silas works for
 - Stripped of its purpose, Silas develops habit of looking to money and grasping a sense of fulfillment
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Context of Silas Marner

- Introduction: Fable-like picture of English village life
- Beginning with phrases like *'in the days when'*, *'in the far off time where'*, *'in the early years of this century'*, *'Merry England'*: Revealing the sanctity of tradition, harking back to the way life used to be
 - A life that has not changed for a long time suddenly subject to a shattering of the status quo
 - An examination of the changes that are underway in a society
 - Eliot looking back and treasuring/valuing continuity of life, seen in romantic language associated with fable, fairytale, and a sense of longing

Raveloe

- An insular society with no connections with the outside world: Where nothing outside people's own sensory experience could be comprehended, a sense of insularity that people are incapable of moving away from
- Mr Macey: Clerk of the parish, the person who holds community memory
 - Tells stories about his life as a young person, referencing the parson before the current one
 - These attitudes inform the way people of Raveloe see themselves and community tradition
- A race of people all born and bred in the same place, with a strong sense of family lineage
- Traditional village life prizing historical continuity

Raveloe vs Lantern Yard

- Raveloe: Static, sheltered descriptions depicting the richness and seclusion, self-indulgence of Raveloe
- Place of timeless significance and rooted in history/tradition
 - Nancy leaving old tankards when cleaning the Red House
 - Silas not wanting to replace his stove and hearth, though given money to do so
 - Cyclical work of Raveleans, whose wisdoms are dependent on seasons and weather (against repetitive work of Silas)

Introduction of linen weavers

- Introduced first through difference *'pallid, undersized'* mean against the norm
- Separated by visual differences/unwonted skill outside not just people's perception, but all human perception
- Silas: An exemplar of folk marked first by insularity, believed to be mysterious because his origins are unknown
- *'All cleverness [...] was in itself suspicious'*: Silas' proficiency and capability extending beyond that of a normal man

Raveloe and its distortion of relative welfare

- Later, Silas' money seen as indicative of an unwarranted level of skill
- When Silas loses his money: Villagers comforting him by saying that he was now no better than any one of them (and even if he were, we would be given money by parish)
- Comparison against: Those whose origins were known, *'honest folks, born and bred in a visible manner, were mostly not overwise or clever'*
- Shepard's dog barking fiercely, Shepard's suspicions of weavers' connections to the *'Evil One'*

- Comparison between 'questionable sound of Silas' loom' and 'bent, treadmill attitude of its weaver'
- vs 'natural cheerful trotting' of winnowing machine (a simple, straightforward application of physical strength – farming being associated with openness, comprehensible and in tune with the cyclical nature of everything. Primitive)

Silas and his fits

- Fit: Describing and explaining the incredible, his 'soul leaving his body'
- Everything Silas is characterized by comes to represent his distance from Raveloe community

The Casses in Raveloe

- Casses introduced with same element of nostalgia Raveloe is, Squire 'the greatest man in Raveloe' who owned land and whose family lineage was of timeless origin
- Foundations of Casses' greatness: A large house, a tenant, and a long history in Raveloe (- Compare to Blanche Ingram in JE: Both having attendant qualities of greatness. In JE: the movement towards a more capitalist POV dependent not on one's natural endowments, but each individual's capacity and potential to succeed)
- Raveloe: A feudal system heavily dependent on greatness, hierarchy and one's inheritance
 - 'Squire' in itself a medieval term: Squire's position in Raveloe sustained by a system that no longer exists due to a change in times – extravagant habits would combine to bring him down because he fundamentally does not deserve to be great

Hierarchy of the classes

- 'Rich ate and drank freely', while the poor 'thought the rich were entirely in the right of it'
- Eliot reminds us of the system we are harking back to: Where everyone is content with highly stratified society
- Ossified and arrested society resistant to change and difference
 - If Silas is an example of someone ostracized by the system (excluded and isolated), his opposite is Godfrey: Inheritor of the system Squire is benefitting from
 - Shown in the glory of the 'wing-spotted parlour', both with a 'look of gloomy vexation', unsuited for the challenges that are coming his way with his 'natural irresolution and moral cowardice'
 - Godfrey and Silas as separate examples in a time of change against tradition, allegorical of England's past

Allegory, Fable and Realism

- JE: Realistic elements and timely details, but fundamental drive is romantic (almost exaggerated)
- SM: Eliot examines the human motivations that lead to various human circumstances, even if many elements are the stuff of fairy tales

Silas' exclusion from community in LY a product of:

1. Their overly literal interpretations of bible and rigidity in their following of it
2. The necessary inscrutability of God and the foolishness of shutting out human reason

Comparison to Godfrey: An emblem of a self-satisfied, luxurious life in which there is no worth

Realism in Silas Marner vs. Jane Eyre

- Eliot's focus on accuracy + fidelity in telling life as it is, not idealized
- Probing analyses of how things really are, examining the human condition
- Jane: A special individual who is unusually sensitive, moral, and standing up against temptation
 - Ends in joyous fashion where righteousness is rewarded and wrongfulness is punished

- Silas: Ordinary, highly unremarkable person, no glorification whatsoever
 - His almost fantastical adventures/occurrences made available to readers with different intellect and wit by harnessing the power of a 'normal human response'

1. Societal structuring and psychological realism

- '[...] it is difficult to enter the simple, untaught state of mind in which the form and the feeling have never been severed by an act of reflection'
- Difficulty apprehending what it means to have a certain kind of faith:
 - Silas is unaccustomed to undergo a state of reflection (even having been wrongly accused of murder)
 - Silas, brought up to believe in herbs and medicine and his specific branch of faith, does not enter a contemplative state on his religious beliefs
- 'False ideas for which no man is culpable': Eliot's reminder that human experience is as such

2. Realism in Silas' move into Raveloe

- Silas, being ejected from LY, found nothing that seemed to resemble life in Lantern Yard and hence nothing to awaken his old self. Disconcerting experience moving into a new location
 - pg. 13 *'where their mother earth shows another lap, and human life has other forms than those on which their souls have been nourished'*: Presence of different cultural norms/landscapes in other places
 - 'being know nothing of their history, and share none of their ideas'
- Parallel to introduction of novel: Alienation of people who have not grown up in the community
- Lending strangeness to Silas' faith and experience in Raveloe
- A change in physical location makes it difficult to hold on to one's habitual views of life in a place associated with no new memories: *'even people whose lives have been made [...] hard to keep a fast hold on their habitual views of life'* (pg 13)
- Moreover: Silas' most recent memory in LY is one of ejection by his own God, betrayal and loss of faith
- Need for him to reconcile this experience with his need for God to exist
- Dependence on physical location because it felt almost like God had left the territory over which Silas presided
 - *'Power in which he had vainly trusted [...] was very far away'*
 - *'There were no lips in Raveloe from which a word could fall that would stir Silas' benumbed faith into a sense of pain'*

- Silas' experiences of love and nurture vastly different from understanding the concepts that underlie it
 - A deeply religious man, but without the skills to understand abstractions
 - pg 14: The sound of hymns and tone of voices were all 'channels of religious faith' to him
 - Silas' faith, though real, was based upon these tangible manifestations of religion
 - Feelings like those of 'primitive men' beyond the reach of God

Raveloe: An image of abundance

- Jarring against Silas' conscious, devout beliefs: Does not recognize the God there
- 'men lived in careless abundance, knowing and needing nothing of that trust'
- 'the little light he possessed spread its beams so narrowly, that frustrated belief was a curtain broad enough to create for him the blackness of the night'
- Nothing in his past/present seeming real to him, his future was *'arrested by utter bewilderment'*

- > But: His uncommon condition was not because he was an uncommon man
- His responses are entirely understandable

Sally Oates incident

- Significance: Connection, an opportunity for Silas to re-assimilate with the community

- Ability to provide present help in a time of need, '*possibility of fellowship*'
- Silas' rush of pity: Sally's state reminding him of his own mother, beginning to feel a '*sense of unity between his past and present life*' > desire to ease Sally's suffering in the same way he wanted to ease his mother's
- Silas' use of herbs: Herb knowledge inherited from his mother
- If the past is unreal to Silas, his movement of helping Sally Oates brings him a link not only to community, but to his own past which he loved
- A '*rescue from the insect-like existence*' he lived
- But owing to peculiar temperament in Raveloe where any excessive knowledge/skill was seen with suspicion (superstition and close-mindedness), Silas is viewed with wariness: Associated with the Evil One/Wise Woman
 - However, Silas' character does not allow him to make a profit out of falsity – drives others away and they continue to shun him, making Silas' isolation even more complete

Silas' solitude

- 'narrowing and hardening' of Silas' life
- His 'face and figure shrank and bent themselves into a constant mechanical relation to the objects of his life', having 'no meaning standing apart' from the loom: No independent life/thoughts
- Silas' sight/visions of future and community turning inward to his own life, almost as if he's a machine
- pg 18: 'Do we not wile away [...] until the repetition has bred a want, and which is incipient habit?'
- Silas' work invested into loom returns as money, which satisfies his desires
- Whereas people, God and love have not remained, money has
- 'Would on no account have exchanged those coins [...] for [others] which has unknown faces'
- It is not money that Silas wants, but companionship
- Seeing guineas as 'unborn children' and the extensive use of words of affection
- Silas' desires and capacity for affection and connection contrasted against image of spider/machine
- A man whose spirituality and affection has been thwarted and rechanneled to gold: In this we see his capacity for and to love

Silas' pot getting broken:

- Though a '*withering*' plant, '*the sap of affection was not all gone*'
- Saw pot as '*his companion for twelve years*', picked up the pieces '*with grief in his heart*', '*stuck the bits together and propped the ruin in its old place for a memorial*'
- Through Silas' '*livelong*', '*monotonous*' day: At night came his revelry
- '*Thoughts were still with his loom and money when he made his journeys*': Does not go in search of the herbs

Significance of herbs

- Standing for inherited wisdom of mother and love (vs previous representation of human reason + application)
- Silas' movement through countryside now inaccessible to him, his past no longer calls out to him
- '*His life had shrunk away, like a rivulet [...] into a shivering thread*' (pg 21)

Godfrey Cass

Rochester in Jane Eyre: Talking of his circumstances and destiny

- We are sympathetic towards him, and so to are we with Godfrey: Sense that some things contrived to bring him to his current state
 - A greedy, malicious brother tricking him into a marriage for his own self-gain

- Poor parents who did not bring him up with the loving care Dolly Winthrop gives Aaron, or Silas eventually showers on Eppie
- An absent mother, a family devoid of domesticity ('Red House was without that presence of the wife and mother which is the fountain of wholesome love and fear in parlour (i.e. public sphere) and kitchen (i.e. domestic sphere)')
- An Squire, who, feeling domestic discomfort, would rather spend time at the Rainbow than at home

- Red House's empty hearth a source of great regret – comparison with Silas' stone cottage (both womanless households, but vastly different environments)

Rochester: More actively pursuing Jane

- But as Godfrey looks to the future, longing for Nancy to fill in these absences to 'make home lovely to him', but is largely passive about it: '*facit patient worship*', thinking with her near it would be easier to '*shake off those foolish habits that were no pleasures*'
- Desire to abandon his current life of vice and make the good he wishes to pursue easier to achieve
 - Nancy as a '*strong silken rope*' drawing him safely to '*green banks*'
 - Godfrey knowing it was his '*own vicious folly*' that landed him in such a situation, is hence self-loathing

Godfrey's limited choices: Results of confession are certain, whereas result of betrayal is less so

- Knows the right thing to do and the right course of action to undertake, but will not do it: Moral quandary

- Seems that doing the right thing would mean breaking all ties but the one he wants to rid himself of, hence has no motive to recover better self
- Would rather '*trust to casualties than to his own resolve*': Placing trust in chance
- '*But perhaps it'll rain cats and dogs tomorrow, and you can't go [sell Wildfire]*'
- Resignation in 31: He '*might as well*' go to the Rainbow, '*what else was there to be done?*'

Silas Marner vs Godfrey Cass

Godfrey Cass: the 'disinherited son of a squire, equally disinclined to dig and to beg'

- Any sort of personal effort of supporting himself seems equally disagreeable
- Holds a relatively agreeable position in society because he was 'an uprooted tree, which, by the favour of earth and sky, has grown to a handsome bulk'
- Godfrey's successes by favour of the earth and sky: Cannot see any possible action and is disinclined to act, has consequences '*press[ed] equally on all sides*' (adding onto his '*natural irresolution and moral cowardice*')

Silas Marner: Up to this point, an active one in spite of the lots incident

- Comes to Raveloe, works and weaves, makes an effort to build connection with neighbours, prays
- Inert movements, but an essentially active effort

Dunstan Cass

- 'Lucky in my weather', 'warranted to fall on my legs'
- Sees the world in a warped way, in which he seeks to preserve his own welfare
- Process of selling Wildfire: Though starting out in a degraded position, having '*to ride to cover on his hunter*'
 - Brainwave when passing by Silas' cottage, considering borrowing from him
 - Meets Bryce and Keating
 - Sells Wildfire almost instantaneously
 - No one sees him when he takes the spill
- Idea of luck drawing parallels with William Dane (i.e. was lucky the money was there, that Silas had fits, etc. so he could conspire against him) – both with self-interested ways of grabbing opportunities around them

- Dunsey careful not to put himself in danger by ensuring he's never in a vulnerable situation
- Always with the whip in hand during physical confrontation with Godfrey (pg 25 – 28), knowing Godfrey has a 'big muscular frame' against his own scrawny one
- Dunsey's selling of Wildfire: Using of terms of high finance, 'lending the money on the excellent security of the young squire's prospects' – money seems unreal to him because he is not the heir
- Spending and squandering money that was never/will never be his
- 'As for security, he regarded it vaguely as a means of cheating a man, by making him believe that he would be paid'
- Chapter 4 ending (38) with Dunsey stepping into the darkness and rain, shutting off the light
- Comparison against Silas Marner: To whom money is the immediate object of toil – effortful, productive, a matter of love and worship

Godfrey: An essentially passive man

Dunsey: Thinking of nothing but his own luck and interest

The Tavern Scene

- Creation of atmospheric scene not just adding local colour (rusticity) but also showing differences in class
- Organisation of arguments and interactions show Eliot's perceptions of society
- Informs reader on how people of Raveloe are going to respond to Silas' missing money

Silas' perceptions of Rainbow: Center of all village life, where all the discourse is

- Servants in the kitchen drinking beer, higher classes in the parlour drinking spirits
- Clear stratification of society seen

Traditional hierarchical society of Raveloe as seen in opening scene of novel

- Notion of 'knowing your place' well-observed in society
- Important line drawn between belonging and not, however arbitrary it is
- Consider Raveloe's various immigrants:

1. *Silas Marner* (and weavers): Reference to introduction of novel

2. *London tailor* who 'wanted to make a gentleman on him'

- 'Nobody o' the gentle-folks hereabout could abide him'
- 'God made me such, I'm proud on it'

3. *Lammeters*: Fitting in well because he knew 'the rights and customs o' things, and kep a good house, and was well looked on by everybody'

- Came in with a 'fine breed o' sheep' > 'so there must be pastures there, and everything reasonable'
- Though remembered as an immigrant, is well-assimilated into Raveloe

Idea not just of routine, but of every person knowing his place and what to expect

- Group of voices not speaking *in concert*

- Mr Dowlas: 'the negative spirit of the company, and was proud of his position' (quarrelsome)

- Mr Snell: 'man of neutral disposition, accustomed to stand aloof'

- Butcher: 'not disposed to answer rashly'

- Mr Macey only speaking when someone asks his opinion [...]

Argument 1: The Red Durham

- Farrier (vet, John Dowlas): Seeing animals when they are sick and doctors them
 - 'It's the cow as I drenched, whatever it is [...]' and it was Mr Lammeter's cow'
 - Knowing where the cow came from

- Butcher (Bob): Seeing animals when they are dead
 - 'All I say is, it's a lovely carkiss'
- Butcher and farrier both seeing animals at different stages: Different perspectives
- As matter of argument develops, it doesn't go anywhere (as do disagreements about social context)

Resolution: Snell says they're both right and wrong

- Democratic and egalitarian stance because to him, they were all human beings 'all alike in need of liquor'
- 'You're both right and both wrong': Repetition of this throughout chapter

> *Revealing that in this hierarchical society, there is a tendency to converge in opinion*

Argument 2: Macey and Tookey

- Macey: The tailor and parish clerk
- Tookey: Deputy-clerk (an unpopular newcomer)
- Ben Winthrop: Leader of the choir
- Tookey cannot sing, but feels it 'one of the rights thereof to sing in the choir'
- The parish clerk has always sung (because Macey is a good singer): Suggestion of a codified, traditional society
- Extremely rigid way society seems to conduct self appears a source of conflict

Resolution:

- Snell steps in to say 'they're both right' and only have to 'split the difference and make themselves even'
- Tookey put back in his place, potentially uglier conflict resolved

Argument 3: Macey and the glue

Macey: It is agreed that his is the most important opinion in the novel

- Providing villagers with a collective memory, telling them who they are and what their history is
 - NYE Party at Casses: Macey comments on others dancing, talking about important figures
 - Visits Silas to comfort him after he loses his money
 - His voice we hear at end of novel, pronouncing final blessing on Silas
 - Highly revered; has same opinion of himself
 - 'Always gave his narrative in installments, expecting to be questioned according to precedent'

The meaning and the glue

- Saying the wrong words at Lammeter's marriage
- 'Is't the meanin' (i.e. intention) or the words (i.e. form of ceremony) as makes folks fast i' wedlock?'
 - Macey's resolution: 'It's neither rthe meaning nor the words-it's the regester does it-that's the glue'
- > The law binds two individuals fast in wedlock

In context of the story: When Eppie finally decides who her father is

- Godfrey's claim to Eppie: Intends to be her father, says so, and is her father by law
- But all this is still insufficient
- What connects two people? Meaning, words, or the register? Or something else – kinship?

Argument 4: "Cliff's Holiday"

- Debate on whether the ghost exists
- Snell talking about his wife and the cheese: That some people 'haven't the smell' for ghosts
 - Dowlas the rationalist: Seeing things through channel of senses
 - Offering to stand in Cliff's Holiday and see if there are ghosts

- Butcher says no one who believed in Cliff's Holiday would know if Dowlas actually did it since they wouldn't check in on him

> Wider debate about spirituality and God

- Similar issue of drawing of lots: Knowing results are due to the action/intention/hand of God because society of LY believes it so; if one doesn't believe in God, there is no proving of the lots
- Inability to use rationality to prove the spiritual and otherworldly

- Egalitarian, mixed philosophy of Raveloe: Attitude towards religion is to each his own
- As with all arguments, this one doesn't come to a real solution
- vs. Jane Eyre: Society very clear in moral philosophy

Silas and his missing money

Villagers' initial response to Silas:

- 'Let's have no accusing of the innocent'
 - In response to Silas' accusation directed at Jem Rodney, who responds angrily with 'I'll pitch this can at your eye if you talk o' my stealing your money'
 - Compare against Silas' response, 'listen[ing] in silence' when he was declared guilty
- 'If you've got any information to lay, speak it out sensible', telling Rodney to 'hold [his] tongue'
 - Ensuring that the wrong person may not be accused
 - Compare against Lantern Yard: No recall to external secular law because of its focus on God's will; methods led to the capture of the wrong person
- While Macey and a few others question the validity of the 'finder-box' view, when Tookey asks whether there should be an investigation at all > admonished by Macey for questioning the system and rituals of justice

Raveloe: A divergent, individual community with clear assumptions and prejudices that they will not fall out of

- Ensures everyone has their own say, no one gets wrongly accused
- Clamour, though kindly meant and helping to absolve Rodney of guilt, does not solve mystery of what Dunstan has done, or who stole Silas' money

- Compare against red Durham argument: No one knowing what's going on
- Attempts to give everyone's opinions weight resulting in nothing being found out
- Society ending up blinded by own prejudices – taking off with evidence of finder box and earrings, trying to find peddler to accuse him of theft > eventual inability to act due to inability to agree
 - Also telling of blinding prejudices held against outsiders

Bizarre theories of the 'finder-box-and-peddler' view:

- Because 'everybody had a right to their own opinions'
- Taking off with evidence of the 'finder box', claiming the peddler had a 'look in his eye' and a 'swarthy foreignness of complexion, which boded little honesty'

- Corroborated by the lady 'whose house was among the cleanest in the village' that he wore earrings and an 'imaginative' girl – a cause for even greater suspicions

> The two people who don't believe in this are Godfrey (who is relatively expansive in his views) and Silas (a sane, honest man)

- In the end: Nothing is found out, it was 'quite away from the track of everyone's thought' to connect Dunsey's disappearance with that of Silas' money
 - No one dared entertain the prospect of Dunsey's culpability

- Though diverse in opinions, are talked into reaching the same conclusion:
- Rational explanation and theory of impenetrable mystery similar to argument on 'Cliff's Holiday'
 - Controversy helping in 'eliciting some true opinions of collateral importance'

Lantern Yard: Homogeneous opinions because personal volition is submerged, all waiting for God to speak

> Eliot not setting up one system (Raveloe vs LY) against another:

- Though justice is a social impulse (as it is in Raveloe), it is as good as a person of justice (i.e. God in LY)
- Though reliant on law in Raveloe, Eliot gives us as much faith in the action of law as in the action of God in LY

- Abiding by letter of law, while sound in principle, in Raveloe: Seeing constables fight, making cause of investigation ridiculous. Earrings and tinder boxes examples
- Similar to how obeying God's will, though sound in theory, manifests in questionable ways such as the drawing of lots

> Process of law is as muddled as the process of God

- Failure in LY, where the wrong man is accused; in Raveloe, failure in that no man is accused

Silas' second big crisis: Being compelled to ask for help

- For the first time, Silas and community of Raveloe are forced to meet
 - Initial impressions of him, a 'pale thin figure' with 'strange unearthly eyes' looking like an 'apparition', in a 'strange trance': Confirm's society's opinion of him
 - To Silas, Rainbow is a place of abundance: Both sides frozen in opinions of each other
- Suspicion 'melt[ing] away' as Silas proceeds to tell his tale
- Whereas his fits, supernatural ability to cure, use of herbs and cleverness/skill in weaving, absence at church and unknown origins have corroborated that Silas is of the devil in the past, in Silas' moment of human vulnerability, all these perceptions are lost

- Silas 'sitting in the warmth of a hearth not his own'

- Significance of hearths in novel: Eliot gathering families around them prior to this
 - Silas' cottage: Where he roasts meat and takes out his gold (Silas' hearth never going out throughout novel, though it may be low)
 - Cass family: 'fading grey light' of the 'half-choked fire' in 'dark wainscoted parlour'

> Hearths serving as comprehensible reasons that compel Dunsey to steal from Silas, and Eppie to later turn up in Silas' cottage. Serves as a place where Silas experiences emotion (Initially, counting his gold each night, then moaning, then dressing Eppie). Symbolic of literal warmth

- Raveloe neighbours his 'nearest promise of help': Human connection established
- Whereas money was a tangible source of earthly good for Silas, concern from Raveloe neighbours in the tavern was earthly good

- 'Beginning of a growth' in Silas, where '*many circulations of the sap before we detect the smallest sign of the bud*'. Compare against previous metaphors for Silas: A spider, machine
- Though it might have seemed that '*so withered and shrunken a life as his could hardly be susceptible of a bruise*', dramatic impact of Silas' loss must be understood

Significance of Silas' money

- Villagers: A miser's hold
- Casses: Means to pay of debts
- Silas: Focus of his 'eager life' filled with 'immediate purpose' that 'satisfied the need for clinging'

- Though tendrils of neighbours are reaching out to him and all elements of his life are still there, Silas is still unable to cope: 'filled up the blank with grief', 'moaned low'

- 'Bright treasure, prospect, phantasm'

- New fence and object around which Silas will cling seems to be beauty of community
 - Well-to-do villagers reaching out (though in different worlds): E.g. Mrs Osgood, Mr Crackenthorp with his 'pigs' pettitoes'
 - 'Fair proportion of kindness' in Raveloe, but, though genuine, 'our goodwill gets adulterated'
 - Silas' loss first movement to neighbours the start of his transformation process
- However, Silas' physical inability to respond to these acts of kindness
- Silas an 'empty' 'locked casket', with 'the lock broken', 'groping in darkness'
 - Mr Macey's visit: Absolving him of being a part of the devil 'Old Harry', asking him to go to church
 - Unlike other villagers who actively seek Macey's opinion on matters, Silas 'remained silent' even as Macey waited 'in expectation of some appreciatory reply'
 - 'Kindness fell on him as sunshine falls on the wretched', as something Silas could not reciprocate
 - Dolly and Aaron's visit:
 - 'Thank you kindly' showing once more Silas' inability to respond
 - Telling Silas to go to church to benefit from God's protection, to 'put [his] trust i' Them as knows better nor we do' [refer to next section for more]
- Ultimately: None of the citizens' words could touch him: Neither divine nor human love could access Silas
 - *'The fountains of human love and divine daith had not yet been unlocked, and his soul was still the shrunken rivulet, with only this difference, that its little groove of sand was blocked up, and it wandered confusedly against dark obstruction'*
 - *Even the 'dreary outlook' of the outside world is 'curtained' from him, 'shutting him close up with his narrow grief'*: Silas sees only desolation when he looks out

Ecumenical religion in Raveloe

- Examining way people relate to various institutions: In most of these **faith is mediated by human nature**

Religion in Lantern Yard

- Where attendance in church informs every part of peoples' lives: Democratic community where 'the poorest layman has the chance of distinguishing himself' and religion informs the 'movement, mental activity and close fellowship' of its citizens
- Informs ideas of themselves but also of one's social standing as religious plays such a central role in community
- Social interactions guided by religion
- Where community and spirituality are closely intertwined
 - William Dane and the assurance of salvation, seeing words 'calling and election sure' in a dream
 - Sarah and Silas: Engagement 'known to church', hence being unable to call it off on basis of any reason 'that would be sanctioned by the feeling of the community'
- God and church dispenses all that is good and individuals are dependent on church for all happiness in their earthly life (companionship, affection and community) and is itself a manifestation of all earthly good

Religion in Raveloe

- In far less need of God: A society where 'men lived in careless abundance' and is characterized by plenty
- No need to go to church: 'Large church' which men 'gazed at' from their own doors in service time

Macey's discursive address

- Reveal ecumenical way in which he understands power: Listing out various sources of power in speech of devil (Old Harry) and Wise Woman), each holding their own validity
- Blessing of God falling equally on children in same way children the Wise Woman cured did, they 'took the water just as well'

- (76) 'There's no cussing o' folks as have a mind to be cured without a doctor, let Kimble say what he will'

- No power is superior
- Macey the individual serves as the ultimate arbiter: Holding a healthy dose of independence and autonomy in deriving his understanding of religion
- But as much as religion in Raveloe is ecumenical, is it cryptic? Since Dolly's blind faith in God seems to be grounded in a very specific, personal experience

- While religion is homogeneous in Lantern Yard, Raveleans' understanding of God's grace and power is not diluted by their dabbling into country practices – and they too are good Christians

Silas Marner and Church

- People asking him to go to church following his loss of money. Basis of their coercions:

- Mr Crackenthorp (Pastor): Thinks it good because Silas clings too much to earthly good and is obsessed with money, having 'thought too much of it'
- Mr Macey: To be more well-accepted by community, and 'to be a bit neighbourly'
- Dolly Winthrop: For the trust and faith that she has reposed her troubles ('gev [herself] up to them') in the right hands of God who knows better than we do; promise of a better world to come

- Against our common understanding of what Church means to humanity (to feed the mind and soul), religion in Raveloe isn't about learning about God or seeking salvation but individual benefit:

- Raveleans 'not severely regular' in their church-going, for doing so would have shown a 'greedy desire to stand well with Heaven, nd get undue advantage over their neighbours'
- Meant 'being better than the 'common run'', conferring one an advantage and an additional degree of blessing/holiness that sets one apart

- Mr Crackenthorp (pastor) being talked about in relation to the other social greats (e.g. Squire Cass)
- Living a reasonably comfortable life, 'takes tithe in kind'

Dolly Winthrop's visit

- Bringing Silas blessings and good meaning in the form of IHS-stamped lard cakes
- 'I can't read [the words on the stamp] myself', but 'they've a good meaning for they're the same as is on the pulpit-cloth at church' – no doctrinal basis for what she believes, only knowing good is associated with Church
- Associating the blessings of God with something ambiguously positive
 - Lard cakes: Indicative of Dolly's community love, but also her lack of understanding of religion
 - Distinction between her human and (lack of) theoretical understanding of morality
- When Aaron sings the Christmas carol, it falls on Silas ears 'as strange music, quite unlike a hymn' that Silas was accustomed to hear

- To Dolly, going to Church is associated with the physical experience of it all (e.g. the Christmas bells)
> 'No word in [Dolly's exposition of her simple Raveloe theology] could rouse a memory of what 'Silas' had known as religion'

- Church's uplifting effect on Dolly aids her in understanding religious eternity that transcends mortality, even in spite of human wisdom's limitations ('we may always be in the dark, but doesn't mean God doesn't know what he's doing')

- Dolly's inability to articulate her spiritual faith: 'they're mostly what comes i' the day's work'/'it comes into my head, because they have a heart and a lot tenderer'

- Belief that the goodness of God is the goodness of humanity perfected > because even humans understand goodness and justice, and humans cannot be better than God
> Guides self and Silas towards fundamental religious truths that go beyond theology

Silas and Dolly Winthrop's views on religion:

- Silas the '*young man of exemplary life and ardent faith*' in Lantern Yard, and Dolly the '*good, wholesome*' woman '*of unscrupulous conscience*' unable to understand each other's religion - respective views of Church and religion grounded in specific, personal experience

Silas: 'white-washed walls', 'alter-place', 'swell of voices in song', etc
Dolly: 'Holly and the yew', the 'anthim', the 'sacramen''

- Though both Silas and Dolly are devout (and we see the most genuine expression of religion in both of them), their respective religions remain completely inaccessible to each other because they each have a narrow interpretation of their religion, and their spiritual understanding cannot be expressed in words

- Though going to Church in Raveloe has positive benefits that the people of Raveloe recognise, Silas has nothing to do with such benefits

More on Godfrey Cass

* As his familial situation and human nature makes him out to be

- While we have come to understand that Silas' predicament is understandable, it requires an element of imagination to understand his position, which is contingent on his particular character and specific circumstance

- However, Godfrey could very well be anyone

- Like a tree, Godfrey induces awe but is effectively useless when taken out of his original environment: 'an uprooted tree which, by the favour of earth and sky, has grown to a handsome bulk'

- A handsome son of a *Squire who happened to grow in favourable conditions*: A backstory similar to Rochester's, but though he has the story of a romantic hero, he does not have the stature of one

- Magnificence of Godfrey's character not by his own doing but by wealth and circumstance

- Once he is removed from this circumstances, is meaningless

- Physically impressive, imposing and powerful but as 'mastered by another sort of fear'

- 'Instead of trying to still his fears, he encouraged them, with that superstitious impression [...] that if we expect evil very strongly it is the less likely to come; and when he heard a horse

approaching at a trot, he felt as if his conjuration had succeeded' – self-deception and self-denial

- Whereas Rochester attempts suicide, goes off in search for happiness and seeks his purification, albeit being wrong and sinful, at least he acts

Godfrey's scene of confession

- Godfrey's actions being contingent on someone else; is always responding to external motivations
- Tells Squire not because he makes a moral choice to, but because he is fuelled by more terrifying alternatives if he does not (i.e. fear of Molly/Dunsey telling Squire themselves)

Godfrey and Dunsey

- Godfrey 'could not bend himself' to take Dunsey's blame: 'I don't pretend to be a good fellow [...] but I'm not a scoundrel (i.e. Dunsey, for taking both Squire's and Silas' money and being a proponent of active, malicious evil)'
- But is Godfrey any less evil or culpable?
 - Has not acted in an evil way, but his sin is his passivity: Errors of admission, not commission
 - Not actively doing bad, but not doing the right choice despite an awareness of what it is
 - Setting Godfrey up on path that leads him to abandoning his orphan child
- Godfrey's vacillations (pg 64): Obsessive worrying
- His one concept of salvation is the prospect that the Squire won't react in such a way
- Rather than compartmentalizing characters based on absolute measures (e.g good/bad), or revealing institutional flaws or weaknesses, Eliot offering psychological underpinning of characters: Characters' underpinnings of human nature are made clear to us
 - Godfrey's character examined with relation to human nature
- At scene of confession: Has prepared no 'vocal falsehoods', and 'was not fond of lying'
- Claims he 'never meant to embezzle the money' and tells no lies
 - However, does not confess to the circumstances under which he lent Dunsey the money, or the story of Molly Farren, even though the opportunity to do so arises twice:
 - Dismissing it as a 'little affair between [him] and Dunsey when Squire suggests that Godfrey's 'been up to some trick', and was 'bribing [Dunsey] not to tell'
 - Saying 'there's no other woman [he] want[ed] to marry' 'evasively' when Squire asks 'what's the thing' with Godfrey and Nancy
- > 'Sudden alarm pushed him on to take the next step – a very slight impulse [...] on a downward road'
- Godfrey always meaning well and not actively doing wrong – hence thinking himself a good man:
- But has embroiled himself further in deceit by not confessing
- Intention vs action, meaning vs glue: Does this suffice to make Godfrey good?

Godfrey and the Cass family

- 'Without the presence of the wife and mother which is the fountain of wholesome love and fear in parlour and kitchen'
- Incredible wealth (and high social position that comes with that): Breakfasting at different hours
- Squire being 'an implacable man', leading a life 'quite as idle as his sons'
- Is fierce with his tenants not because he sees any moral transgressions, but because they inconvenience him and he needs the money

- Similar to Godfrey in that he does not act and 'allowed evils to grow under favour of his own heedlessness, till they pressed upon him with exasperating force'
- Other farmers in the vicinity openly acknowledge the presence of the Casses as their 'betters'
- Revealing a very real social situation: Where villagers are content with adhering to the social class. Recognition that he has no superiors and that he is the best fuels Squire's self-absorption and authoritativeness
 - Cannot think of a viewpoint other than his own: Wants war to continue because peace meant 'prices 'ud run down like a jack'
 - Later threatening Godfrey with disinheritance

Cass' social status

- People no longer call Godfrey the Squire in Part II, when Squire passes away, because he is no longer as wealthy as the squire once was
- Reference to Squire's father and his 'stables full o' horses', contrasted against current state of Cass family appearing to have past its prime – Godfrey having 'a sense that his father's indulgence had not been kindness,' looking for some discipline that would have 'checked his [Squire's] own errant weakness'
- Compare to Squire calling his son 'a shilly-shally fellow'
 - > End of confrontation where both seem to sense each other's wrongdoing
 - Godfrey leaving the room no better than when he entered it

Godfrey and Favourable Chance

- Always a sense of disappointment with Godfrey following buildup of action because he never acts, and we never see and change in his position > has only succeeded in further 'entangling himself in prevarication and deceit'
- Ignoring law and always fleeing to 'some unforeseen turn of hope, some favourable chance'
- Being at a position he is ashamed of, Godfrey turns from calculable results to chance
- Worships God of favourable chance vs Silas who believes God directs everything
 - Reliance on chance prays against/desperately trying to avert core principle that 'the seed brings forth a crop after its kind' and that you reap what you sow
 - Turning to diversions in the face of pressing issues: E.g. Thinking he '*might as well*' go to the Rainbow, for '*what else was there to be done?*' after quarrel with Dunsey, comforting self with prospect of being with Nancy at the Casses' NYE Party, etc.
 - Molly Farren the opium addict is first introduced by pointing out that Godfrey too drowns himself in draughts of intoxicating forgetfulness
 - As we condemn Molly, Eliot prompts readers to look more closely at human weakness and failing

Molly Farren: The Fallen Woman

- Fallen from strict path of morality; tricked Godfrey into marriage
- Introduction of Molly in conjunction with description of Godfrey ('draughts of forgetfulness')
 - Irony, bitterness: Though Molly is portrayed with a great deal of weakness, Godfrey too is portrayed in the same way. Reader is inclined to blame Molly and condemn her weakness
 - Blames Godfrey for situation, which is a function of her own decisions

- Molly is not culpable even as she does wrong and wrestles with temptation, for 'just and self-reproving thoughts donot come to us too thickly, even in the purest air, and with the best lessons of heaven and earth; how should [they] make their way to Molly's poisoned chamber?'

- Inclined to respect someone who has gone through impossible odds and demonstrated exceptional virtue in literature, but everyone else is not condemnable for not having done so

Molly and Godfrey

- Molly's waiting and inaction: 'set out at an early hour, but had lingered on the road, inclined by her indolence to believe that if she waited under a warm shed the snow would cease to fall'

- 'Hesitated a moment' before taking opium, where her 'mother's love pleaded for painful consciousness rather than oblivion': Moment of struggle between good virtue vs desire, need and temptation

- Both Molly does not win this struggle

- When child falls away because of mother's weakness: Mirrors how Godfrey is going to do the same for substantially similar reasons (i.e. his desire to cling onto Nancy)

Divine hand of God vs Individual action

- The culmination of several intentions that come together, of different occurrences precipitating next part of story. Here, on NYE:

- Molly: A day where Cass family shows off wealth, allowing for maximum humiliation

- Villagers of Raveloe: A NYE tradition (the Casses' party)

> Aggregate of human choices (Molly's anger, Godfrey's abandonment, Casses' tradition) coming together to allow this to happen. Creation of universe where everything is comprehensible and logical when individuals in story don't need ot believe in God

- Silas' fate not defined by divine will: Each time it seems like God has touched his life; it was really the hand of someone else's actions. Aggregate of human intervention in Raveloe makes it seem like the hand of God has acted

NYE Party at Casses'

- Sense of tradition carried on + fulfilled

- Similar to tavern, almost clichéd typing of characters: Villagers introduced with regard to their social position. A clear sense that everyone has a place and adheres to it

- Squire: Dispenser of hospitality 'noisily jovial and patronising'

- Mr Lammeter: Having proved himself acceptable to the Raveleans, but thinks himself better – 'breed is stronger than pasture', a 'spare but healthy person' (compare against Squire's physical build)

- Dr Kimble: A doctor by hereditary right, 'a man of substance'

- Mr Crackenthorp: 'A reasonably faulty man' [...]

- Reinforces notion that people are categorisable, belonging to a certain position

- Challenged by Tookey in Tavern previously > Pokes fun at this 'time out of mind the Raveloe doctor had been a Kimble' – people would rather employ Dr Blick of Flitton as it was less unnatural than employing another guy of 'incongruous name' of Taylor/Johnson

Party at the Red House

- Solomon Macey starting off with Squire's favourite song ('flaxen-headed ploughboy' – Squire being a farmer)

- Bows to Squire and Rector, most important individuals in terms of wealth/social class and spirituality

- Followed by Mr Lammeter, also of high social class (his favourite song being 'over the hills an far away' – Lammeter being a settler)

- Dance: a 'gay procession', atmospheric with 'tallow candles' and 'berried holly-boughs'

- Quaint procession giving a flavor of ritual/festival to party, music luring everyone in

> 'That was as it should be – that was what everybody had been used to – and the charter of Raveloe seemed to be renewed by the ceremony': Casses throwing party not to show off, but because it's a part of their lives

- Community identity and memory shaped by certain things that mark aspects of the year
 - Charter of Raveloe: Collection of procedures that make up society as everyone takes their place
 - Tune, music and structure to dance
 - 'Mr. Macey and a few other privileged villagers, who were allowed to be spectators on these great occasions, were seated on benches placed for them near the door' while others danced
 - Villagers not acknowledging inferiority in not being able to dance, but just knowing that dancing was not something they did as a social custom (no resentment whatsoever)
 - Villagers criticizing Squire and Winthrop as they would to their 'fallible fellow-men'

Entrance of Silas

- Godfrey seeing Silas as an 'apparition', with child that is a visible reminder of the shame he has been struggling against. Reminder of hidden and dark façade shielded from rest of world
- Fear that Molly may not be dead, wishing she was: 'no disposition is a security from evil wishes to a man whose happiness hangs on duplicity' – Godfrey's next step on downward path leading him to do what he eventually does

- Everyone in village steps into play, doing their individual work and fulfilling their roles
- Dr Kimble stepping forward, fetching Dolly for assistance (being 'the best woman to get')

Silas and Godfrey's initial reactions to Eppie

- Silas: 'I can't part with it, I can't let it go', 'under a strong impulse', 'almost like a revelation to himself'
- Godfrey: Hopes he doesn't know, tries to convince himself that he doesn't know the child

> Godfrey's instinctual rejection of Eppie later in light of his biological claim on her

Eventual significance of Eppie

Causal determinism:

- Allowing Silas' consciousness to awaken
- Reminding him of his sister
- Bridging Silas with community that ultimately helps him rehabilitate

Allegory/symbolic:

- Reinforcing nothing of 'man helping man': Power of a small child to reach out and help Silas
- Connecting him with memories of his family

Godfrey's kindly disposition

- Beyond his goodly, ornamental façade where he appears to have 'a tender heart', internally is also undergoing same struggle and temptation as Molly

- Knowledge of what he must do to be right: 'Deeper down, and half-smothered by passionate desire and dread, there was the sense that he ought not to be waiting on these alternatives; that he ought to accept the consequences of his deeds, own the miserable wife, and fulfil the claims of the helpless child'

- Rochester: Knowing he is right after much deliberation
- Godfrey: Knows he ought to accept consequences of his deeds, is conscious of better choice, understands and recognizes moral choice but does not challenge it because he had not the moral courage to 'contemplate that active renunciation of Nancy'

- Godfrey's moment of choice: Has the chance to do the right thing
- 'She may live, and then it's all up with me' – shows once more how his decisions are contingent on someone else and on external factors: If chance/fate is kind to him, he will be good again; but if it is not, he will be miserable
 - Fate being favourable to him, always seeming like the right choice is being made on his behalf – and Godfrey loses his chance to do right
 - 'He remembered that last look at his unhappy hated wife so well, that at the end of sixteen years every line in the worn face was present to him when he told the full story of this night'
 - 'Child could make no visible audible claim on its father': Foreshadowing future
- Duplicity that seemed to Godfrey so terrible is gone: Godfrey now firmly on downward slope to ruin
 - Though he now thinks he can do good and is relieved from painful thoughts
 - Continues to mean well, justifying to self that child will be happier in his absence
- Renewed confidence in his salvation: Unobstructed from Nancy, ability for Nancy to now make the good he prefers easy and be the '*strong silken rope*' drawing him safely to '*green banks*'

16 Years on (later)

- Godfrey looking to his partial redemption (partial because of Macey's earlier claims on intention vs action) – intends to make amends, but does not act on them
- Thinks he can make direct monetary reparations to resolve problems, but what he feels he can make in interest payment is not possible because like a tree, Eppie and Silas' relationship has been growing (being organic situation and not static)
- > Ways in which gold metaphor applies to Godfrey as much as it does to Silas: The inadequacies of gold in comparison to human connection and in replacing it (Eppie replacing gold as Silas' object of affection, Godfrey's failed attempts at claiming Eppie leaving him only able to support her financially)

Eppie's arrival and role in novel

- 'There's the, as took care of it, and brought [Eppie] to [Silas'] door': Eppie as an almost spiritual salvation
- Eppie's arrival a miracle, taking the place of gold in Silas' life
- Dolly seeing it as God's blessing (God rescuing her and placing her in Silas' hearth)
 - Reference to epigraph: Child's potential to bring 'hope' and 'forward-looking thoughts'
 - Eppie's freshness and renewal, sense of guidance and a bigger power leading Silas to his salvation
 - 'The child was come instead of the gold' His initial treasures removed from him, but something equally precious placed on his lap
- To villagers, given great comfort to think that such was God's doing because they have limited worldview and do not see full story
- Eliot more interested in looking at an intersection of interests: Eppie was guided to Silas to by divine intervention, but by 'bright glancing light' of his hearth

Preceding Eppie's arrival

- Silas in same state of emptiness and desolation, moaning and weaving
- Staying up waiting for the bells to be rung on NYE, which were associated with vague recognition

that God is good and watching over its people

- Sense of him waiting for something: 'looked out', 'listening and gazing, not with hope, but with mere yearning and unrest' – key metaphors of a closed door, fences and isolation

vs Jane Eyre: Where the natural world around her was her source of inspiration

- Moment of real inspiration and closeness from God

- Here Silas moves out of confinement of home (dependence on loom and gold), but glories of nature are shrouded from him: Sees only falling twilight

- 'Stillness' and 'wide trackless snow' only emphasizing him being closed off from community

- Silas being 'arrested' 'by the invisible wand of catalepsy': A metaphor for his relation to the world – human helplessness, receptiveness, unawareness

- Almost mystical scene where ringing of bells + natural imagery (neither traditional nor natural sources of inspiration were made available to Silas)

- Series of mystical events where salvation is expected through divine/natural means (based on romantic notions), instead Silas is given Eppie

All Silas has been bereft of (sense of belonging, connection) comes flooding back: Crowding memories of family – reminding him of the time he loved and was loved

- Reminder of family and community, his 'hurrying influx of memories'

-Mystical and symbolic effect on Silas: Restoration of lost connections to family, community and God, not divine intervention > with coming of Eppie, past is achieved

- Silas once more becoming an object of interest for his neighbours

- People coming to his with common interest and 'active sympathy' for Silas

- Silas now able to access to what he previously could not

- Silas with a different set of concerns: Wants to do the right thing out of care for the child > still does not understand the meaning (of religious rituals), but is inducted to its forms

- 'But I want to do everything as can be done for the child': Silas' induction into religion, being baptized with Eppie, though he still cannot access comfort made available to him and realize that he is experiencing the same religion he had in LY

- Only thing that can cure him is sympathy from Raveleans, which he receives after arrival of Eppie

Transfer of Silas' obsession from gold to Eppie

- *Gold*: Does not need to depend on community for it, shrinks Silas into narrower isolation, demanded that Silas be deaf to the world around him, kept thoughts in an ever-repeating circle

- *Eppie*: Allows Silas to grow outwards, being an object of ever-changing nature

- Prior to Eppie's arrival: Pauses in Silas' work seen as an evil that would make gold he yearned for harder to obtain > but now sees breaks as holidays

- Eppie allows Silas to recognize that there is more than one type of gold > Moment of Silas' reckoning. Silas now recognizes healing power of the world around him, his story once more in synchrony with the seasons (Before: Silas' monotonous weaving through all occasions of significance/seasons which meant nothing to him; Now: Becomes a part of the community around him)

> Silas' salvation would not have been possible if not for Eppie: Actions of care for Eppie instrumental for Silas' salvation by her + community

- Herbs: Representing neglected archaic knowledge that separated him, passed on from his mother

- Remains unchanged as something he can hold on to: Silas gradually awakens to maturity and consciousness

- As Eppie grows, so too does Silas' memory and sense of self ('gather[ing] force with every

new year')

Silas and the community of Raveloe

- Now understood as a person 'whose satisfactions and difficulties could be understood'
- Silas registers that community is like him and wants to find out more; community now recognizes that he too is like them > With Silas' new obsession with Eppie, he seeks to find out more about community

> Eppie linking Silas to rest of the world, linking him with natural, spiritual and real world

- Silas' disposition to hoard also cut off, as is his obsessive weaving – both factors that previously isolated him now, through Eppie, have become things of the past > Eppie as an angel/spiritual guide

- In moment of trouble, not waiting for angels to come and take men by the hand and lead them away from 'threatening destruction' – in Silas case, not one of spiritual abstraction. Rather, community is important + crucial in healing process because they are the nearest source of help

Silas' salvation vs Godfrey's

(Why do we condemn Godfrey's desire for Nancy to save him?)

- Looking at role of Eppie + Nancy in both characters' respective salvations

Godfrey: Wanting something to part him from mire and lead him to path of goodness

- In his attitudes towards Eppie (in later context of claims to her): 'felt a strange mixture of feelings, a conflict of regret and joy' that Eppie 'could make no visible audible claim on its father'

Silas: Eppie comes to Silas because he can't part with her – actively clings to child

- Active care and love for Eppie from very beginning (chasing her around, giving Eppie food before bringing her to Red House)

- 'She'll be my little 'un, no one else's', which Dolly reaffirms by saying that 'he'll have a right to her'

Eppie runs away

- Silas' act of fastening Eppie to his loom as he works: Silas tied metaphorically to it, and Eppie physically

- As Eppie cuts herself free of loom: Precipitates beginning of Silas' escape from obsession of work (bent towards sole purpose of getting more gold, now having anticipated having to change his work habits because of Eppie)

- Moment of Silas' reckoning that something is more important than his absorption in weaving and loom

- Gold and weaving having given Silas a source of protection and meaning in his transition to Raveloe

- Money marking off weaving into periods, but monotony was the effect of his obsessions

> Leaves Silas in withering desolation in the absence of either of these. But Eppie's cutting free of the rope frees Silas from this monotony

Silas' provisions for Eppie

- Whereas in Red House the Squire punishes not to correct, but when his own lack of guidance results in inconveniences to him, vs the Lammeter household, characterized by 'neatness, purity and liberal orderliness'

- For Silas and Eppie: Eppie is raised without punishment (because Eppie finds the coal room treatment fun, and Silas can't find it within himself to hurt Eppie) > burden of Eppie's misdeeds falling on Silas, Eppie grows up in soft nest of love and patience (characteristic of Silas' love)

Mrs Nancy Cass

- Godfrey's only yearning is for Nancy to rescue him, being a 'far-off, bright-winged prize', because of his reliance on favourable chance: Godfrey's decisions being contingent upon external circumstances against Nancy's belief that good must be done in each circumstance

Nancy/Godfrey vs Jane/Rochester

- Rochester's sin is in deciding that he knows what his salvation is (i.e. Jane) instead of turning to God and delving further into human fallibility on what should be left to divine powers

- Godfrey's sin is that, in trying to escape consequences and to prevent active renunciation of Nancy, mires self further in wrongdoing by lying and later sees himself longing for evil to befall on others, thereby falling into further wrongdoing and deceit > to which Nancy says 'I was not worth doing wrong for'

> Similar plot circumstances, but different relationships

Godfrey's choices thus far:

- Though bad, out of fear for losing Nancy; but after years of marriage, finds something else to worry about:

- Because of her personality + honour, is the one who refuses to adopt Eppie

- Even as Godfrey wishes to retrieve his error, awareness of doing something wrong and his desire to do something about it, his plans are thwarted by Nancy

- Everyone acknowledges that Godfrey and Nancy would go well together

- But Godfrey's role in courtship: A largely passive one

- Arguing that if he didn't admit to his mistake, 'the more chance there was of deliverance from [...] hateful consequences', but if he did, loss of Nancy would be certain

> Godfrey's understanding of consequences and retribution

Mrs Nancy Cass: Most beautiful, desirous woman in Raveloe

- Similar to Godfrey in that she fits image of heroine – forms part of central love story in novel

- But unlike Godfrey, Nancy is good + is characterized as the perfect woman

- Propriety and moderation of thoughts + actions in her actions

- Associations with cleanliness, purity, precision and neatness seen in smallest detail/in all her possessions: Will allow nothing to deviate from her standards of rightness (e.g. even in matters of dress)

- Feminine in terms of beauty, virtue, desirability and domesticity

- Addressing Nancy with regard to other female characters in novel, testing ideas of femininity and virtue:

- Presentation of different ideals of femininity, challenging each of them

1. Mrs Osgood: Similar to Nancy

- Dresses as she thinks is right, but appears ridiculous

- Behaves and thinks in similar ways to Nancy, both acting out of equal sincerity and affection for each other, with devoted attachment

- Propriety in conducting self – allowing Nancy to have hereditary ornaments, even though she did not marry Gilbert (on Nancy's part: rejection of Gilbert on grounds that he was her cousin)

2. Gunns sisters

- Looking at them wearing their low cut dresses: Commenting that if they had looked pretty, such decisions could be 'attributed to vanity' but since they did not look good, their decision must have been attributed to 'some obligation not inconsistent with sense and modesty'

- Nancy does not allow thoughts to vary from what she thinks is right

- Gunns sisters examine Nancy: A member of Raveloe, sheltered from the currents of modernity
- New conceptions of beauty: Because of Nancy's beauty, the sisters excuse her poor fashion
- Nancy's coarse hands: Proof of her being brought up in ignorance and vulgarity: Only knowing the bible, not being educated in the way a lady should be

3. Priscilla Lammeter (sister – same upbringing, same social expectations)

- Is practical, open and honest: Complains about dresses
- Against beautiful, but not fashionable Nancy and fashionable, but not beautiful Gunns, Priscilla is neither fashionable nor beautiful
- Is a good housekeeper, and though she does the same things that Nancy does, is known more widely for her utility (i.e. her pork pies)

- Is not aware of how she has offended Ms Gunns (asking them if they minded being ugly): Though as feminine and domestic as Nancy, has a clear sense of what men are for (i.e. to make sure that the business of running the farm can continue)

- Nancy is not ashamed of her domesticity, even if it means coarse hands
- Nancy still possessing 'essential attributes of a lady', reaching the same end goal as education ought to

- Sense of perfection based upon system through which she understands gentility and femininity, and how she conducted her life
- Her personal refinement is not worth any less due to her lack of education: 'Proud and exacting, showing 'constant affection towards a baseless opinion as towards an erring lover'

> Why to an erring lover? Because she talks herself into thinking that what she is doing is right?

The Dress Incident

- Way dresses are described a clear instance of morals and principles upon which Nancy bases her life
- A reflection of how Nancy feels a life should be conducted and how she views the world
 - Priscilla's practicality comes up against Nancy's conceptions of right and wrong
 - Nancy talking about conceptions of kinship, which she wants to make clear through same dress
 - > Way in which Nancy's principles act out is illogical: Questionable ideas springing from actual principle key in informing Nancy's later view on adoption

Nancy and the erring lover

- Godfrey's **lack of logic** (belief in favourable chance) somewhat matched with Nancy's own
- Nancy is no more perfect or honourable than the average person: She too is filled with her own lapses and flaws, and her commitment to be good in her thoughts and actions is challenged by her love for Godfrey

- Nancy's puzzlement at Godfrey's inconsistent love

- Determination in believing that the immoral aspect of his actions always come first, **but is aware that she is giving up a great deal (wishing Godfrey were more constant in his affections for her)**
- Nancy's unwavering allegiance to rightness is subject to personal human weaknesses that seek to qualify, justify and blend into Nancy's conception of why she acts in a certain way: Allowing certain prejudices to be blended with her conceptions of right and wrong

> Keeping the dried flowers presented to her by Godfrey: On basis of extrapolating another principle of 'love once, love always', against her other belief that she should stay away from a 'bad', immoral man

> Human ways people convince themselves that they are doing right/wrong blending in with personal prejudices

- Nancy's final commitment not to adopt appears to be based on a defensible spiritual principle on the surface, but after examining it closer: We see her personal inconsistencies in her mind in spite of her strong consistency in manners and actions (e.g. feeling agitated, but demonstrating only 'the slightest discernible difference of tone')

Nancy and Godfrey Cass: 16 Years Later

- Examination of physical appearance: Beyond that for Godfrey and the fact that he has claimed his prize (the angel that will make good easy to him), nothing else has changed

- Nancy: Is less beautiful physically, but her soul has grown increasingly so
- 'A nature that has been tried and tested': Highest points of Nancy's character have been tested, revealing her ability to adhere to stern moral principles, even in times of adversity
- This has not changed, even in small details of her outward appearance: E.g. Grooming herself with the same care

> Nancy holding a consistency different from Godfrey's (starting out with high standards and a desire to adhere to them, which has not been lost)

- Nancy's restoration of the Red House to a place where all is purity and order
- Habit of filial reverence: Retained but purified recollections of Squire), entrance of new presiding spirit in house which shows positive qualities Nancy can bring to Godfrey's life

Godfrey: Consequences and retribution

- Godfrey seeing things in terms of externally imposed retribution, but Eliot is more concerned with the real world of consequences – looking at different ways in which Nancy and Godfrey react

- Both facing same trial of being unable to have a child
- Nancy: Her defence of Godfrey her best defence against solution, determined to be 'contented with the blessings we have', not wanting to 'cherish a longing for what was not given'
 - Convincing herself not only to abandon baby clothes, but to comfort her husband and play the role of a loving wife insisting on the blamelessness of her husband
 - In spite of her difficult resistance to her husband's wish, rejects idea of adoption on grounds that she regulates her life upon certain unwavering principles, opinions and unalterable codes of beliefs on adoption as a strange idea
 - Believing that going to seek Eppie would be wrong because she should not go against the will of providence; even though she yearns for Eppie and to adopt, will not concede to her moral principles > a decision over which Nancy battles with both Godfrey and herself

Nancy reading the bible

- An image of a devoted, kind and virtuous woman
- But her thoughts do not follow the course of the bible and instead wander
- Though this is not a cause for condemnation: Nancy's unbiblical thoughts do not make her unholy
 - Bible does not inform Nancy, because she does not see that principles and stories of bible should instruct her and she looks at it 'without method'
 - However: 'spirit of rectitude, and the sense of responsibility for the effect of her conduct on others' point towards her habit of self-scrutiny, constant self-questioning and ceaseless self-reflection which is presented as an equally effective guide as the bible because it prompts Nancy to constantly question to see that she has done well

- Nancy's stance on adoption: Not wanting to go against the will of God > Eliot tests this principle by

giving a more trivial example and showing that Nancy's principles follow the same rule

- Eg of Nancy wanting to make a purchase but it rains on all 3 occasions in which she intends to do so
- Feels that if she persists, she would be defying a heavenly signal
- Showing that even though Nancy's beliefs are pieced out of the trivial, they have allowed her to reach a system of belief similar to that of devout individuals following an abstract heavenly principle
- Going against own inclinations to grieve over lost children and adopt Eppie
 - > Nancy's beliefs not abiding by systems – her natural growth of beliefs closely resemble what is abstractly true (which does not make her beliefs any less of moral principles), acting in accordance to moral principles over spiritual ones

Nancy and Godfrey:

- While Nancy does the right thing in front of her, Godfrey knows the right thing, but is pressed in by all other consequences > However **both are subject to the same flaws (in reasoning, lack of logic – both in delaying, and justifying actions with individual biases/prejudices) and questioning**
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Clear distinction between parts 1 and 2

- Part 1: Silas has been isolated from Raveloe community for 16 years
- Part 2: Godfrey has abandoned Eppie for 16 years, Godfrey reacts to having attained Nancy
 - People thinking that Godfrey has gotten away with everything, with all obstacles out of his path (shadow of Dunsey removed from him) and no longer hindering him from being a good man: Godfrey is undivided in his aims, appearing like a man of unwavering virtue
 - Direct path lies towards achievement of promised land and certain happiness in the future
- In spite of all this, compels us to remember Eppie: Symbol of ring asking readers when our consciences prick: At moment of error, when we first err or only long after we have erred (/)
 - Notion of meaning, action and intent: Godfrey still loves his child, but convinces himself that the time will come where he can do the right thing to better the welfare of Eppie
 - Telling himself not to forget Eppie, for it was a father's duty
- Whereas Nancy is in a constant state of self-questioning, after 16 years, Godfrey still cannot take Eppie in, because he finds it impossible to break the truth to Nancy and is caught up in the same problem, fearing that it would be a shock to Nancy's pride > After all this while, Godfrey has not changed but for the fact that years have passed, cannot make irreparable breach to wife
 - Godfrey not fully understanding what it means to be happy: Something else always seems more appealing to make him satisfied, and he continues on in his blind pursuits
 - Nebulous sense of untried good
 - Godfrey's conscience and retribution: Imagines that there exists a greater intelligence that will punish him, but he cannot make reparations because Nancy can never know, and will never let him adopt
 - Meanwhile Nancy: Tested to highest virtues of character, lives a life of grief because she cannot make Godfrey happy

Drying of stone pit

- Result of comprehensible world of cause and effect, drying of stone pit after 16 years symbolizing everything coming to light > Godfrey sees everything in light of divine intervention ('Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later [...]'), takes this as a lesson to himself and he now pledges to do the right thing and admits to his secret

- Godfrey acknowledging his faults but not bearing to give up Nancy
- His error in lying to Nancy in the first place intended to seal his prospects of her, but now realizes that if he had done the right thing, he would have attained what he wanted
 - Seeing it all in terms of pride and punishment, asking for forgiveness from Nancy
- Nancy: Reinforcing that she wasn't worth doing wrong for, because nothing is
- Is clear-sighted that adoption would be wrong, and that she must do the right thing in front of her
- Godfrey no longer has to barter Nancy for Eppie: Why for a long time Godfrey could not have both

Restoration of gold to Silas

- Idea of an exchange and restoration of money with Casses' visit
- But Silas claiming that 'money takes no hold of [him]', though if he lost Eppie, 'he might come to think he was forsaken again, and lose the feeling that God was Good to him'
- Acknowledgement that gold and Eppie are Silas' needs and what he clings to
- At first, periodically wishing Eppie would turn back into the gold, but progressively, would think it a curse if Eppie were exchanged for gold
- Gold no longer serves as the object of Silas' affections, even though it has regained its original proportions > Now serves purpose as a dowry for Eppie
 - Both Silas and Godfrey initially falling into error of viewing Eppie as merely a replacement for gold, but Silas quickly gets out of it

Basis of claims: Rational, legal and personal

- Casses: Equal claims to Eppie, Godfrey's claim grounded in his wish to correct wrong that has corrupted all his life, and as a performance of duty
- Falls into fallacy of thinking reclaiming Eppie would be easy 'because he had private motives for desiring it' > Difficulty approaching proposition that seemed so easy to him in the distance
- Unable to understand why Silas was so attached to Eppie. Key claims:
 - a. 'I owe you' – a need for reparations
 - b. Appeal to sense – it would be sensible to allow him to help (being rich and wealthy)
 - c. Appeal to Eppie's welfare – Godfrey's ability to offer Eppie a better environment

- Silas: Because Eppie to him is family and love, responding uneasily to Godfrey's claims

Eppie's reactions

- First claim is an emotional one: Responds to violent trembling of father – saying she could not leave her father, responding to her father's distress
- Soon followed with a familial, emotional claim in response to the rational and logical claim of Godfrey
 - Godfrey: Possessed with irritation at an unexpected obstacle, having come with the resolution to right all his wrongs > an unacknowledged attempt to be good
 - Initiation a movement **beyond rational and positive claim** to the natural one of the register
 - Silas is now moved to answer, with a response heightened by parental fierceness ('God gave her to me')
- Movement beyond law and natural claim to a 'God-given' one: Justifying his keeping of Eppie on conceptions of fatherhood, vs Godfrey's natural claim:
 - 'We eat o' the same bit, and drink o' the same cup, and think o' the same things from one day's end to another', laying down the definition of kinship: Sharing the same experiences (central to our understanding of the glue)

- Silas saying that though Godfrey says he is apologetic and has repented for his wrongdoings, that does not change what has gone on for 16 years

- At the centre of Eppie's reactions is her love for Silas

- In making her decision: Considering her past with conjectures / pre-visions that swing her to one option: Makes decision in a telling position (clasping Silas' hand), giving a response that is a statement of the glue, based on:

1. Personal feelings of love and familiarity

2. Her conception of what is appropriate

- Being brought up in a manner that is very different from the life that she is being offered; 'what would I care for then?', referencing the life that Godfrey is offering as one that is vastly different

Nancy's claims: Introduces the dimension of 'duty'

- Being herself a person who, at great costs, does good and performs her duty well

- > Introduces definition of duty and moral choice, thinking it is the duty of Eppie to go with Godfrey + that of Silas to give Eppie up (**a duty bound by blood ties which she believes should come before any other**)

- Nancy's own power of sacrifice and duty seen in her support for Godfrey in entire matter

- Arguing for him on his behalf, even if doing so is an acknowledgement/proof of the shame and history associated with Godfrey

- Godfrey being unable to see what else he can do: His real moment of realization that 'there's debts we can't pay like money debts', not being allowed to compensate for the greatest demerit of his life

- Realisation that he's been using the wrong metaphor: Believing all this while that we could put back and replenish what he took away, but things in reality are always changing

- Reaches an almost spiritual understanding of situations and decisions, fully comprehending the consequences of his choices: now passing for childless against his wish

Silas' return to Lantern Yard

- With his understanding that God is good (apprehending that God has not betrayed him, but that there must have been a mistake), a desire to find out more about the drawing of the lots

- Silas' last point of resolution: To figure out how lots came out wrong, if it was God's will

- Principle that undergirds religion is to seek God's will: The theological explanation Dolly first contemplates – whose faith in God's benign will is in humanity's benevolence

- Dolly cannot provide theological justification of what happened to Silas in LY, but her ideas of God's goodness are instinctual (belief that it is not possible for any wrong to be done by God): Basis of her claim is her own kindness to the people around her

- Her own religious understanding does not lie in extractions/explanations

- Conception of divinity: **God's goodness as human goodness** perfected

- 'Them above has got a deal tenderer heart nor what I've got—for I can't be anyways better nor Them as made me'

- Dolly's belief that if she and everyone around her knows the right thing, then God must know it as well

- God's goodness not based on Bible: theological abstractions, but human goodness: Knowing our own goodness allows us to trust that things better than us know what to do

- 'There's dealings with us' – Acknowledgement that God is a part of Silas' life, because he was endowed with Eppie, even though lots incident confuses him and doesn't make sense

> Inability to truly discern God's will, but understanding and faith that God is good

Lantern Yard and Raveloe

- Raveloe, while static and unchanging, is also constant
- Comparison to disorientation of Silas in his return to LY: Absence of familiar places and people
 - Lantern Yard is physically not there: Graveyards (symbolising connection and intimacy with past generations) are all gone
- Silas' intent to ask Mr Paston about the drawing of the lots: Useless because even if he had been able to, Mr Paston himself would have been unable to give Silas an answer > Answer to the failure of the lots does not live in theological debate, or figures of spiritual faith (parson/squire)

> Does Silas still acknowledge the validity of the lots as a means of determining God's will? So his return to Lantern Yard was more concern with understanding why God's will acted in the way it did, as opposed to a fundamental understanding of the failures of the lots system?

- Imagery of dark and light: Images of enlightenment and faith
- Asserting that it may not be necessary to understand what the will of God was through the lots: Since Eppie was sent to him, has had enough faith in his life (i.e. Eppie's presence is Silas' source of trust that God is good)

Old cycles and patterns

- Silas is fully assimilated into Raveloe community: Smokes a pipe though he doesn't like it, as recommended by villagers (application of human reason and science – smoking pipe is known by community to cure fits)
- A humble sort of acquiescence on what it means to be good
 - Though it might not have an intrinsic (scientific) value, Silas life is too moulded by meaning, traditions, place, identity and rituals of Raveloe
 - Eppie too becomes a part of the society

Luck of the Lammeters: Wishing Nancy the luck to have a similar child

- Mantel is clearly being passed onto Aaron and Eppie (following the closure of Godfrey/Silas' stories)

- Mr Macey: As voice of Raveloe, continues to fulfill his function to the last
- Though old, villagers still turn to him for Amens: His words having weight of a community blessing

- Villagers thinking it 'nothing but right' that Silas was benefitted, because he deserved his luck
- Pronouncement and blessing of people: 'when a man had deserved his good luck, it was the part of his neighbours to wish him joy'

Eppie's Garden

- Holding elements of Eppie's family:
 - Aaron building the fence for Eppie (though Silas offers to)
 - Godfrey paying for garden
 - Presence of furze bush (Symbol of mother Eppie never knew but was willing to love)

> A tableau symbolizing an acknowledgement of the past, Godfrey's performance of his duty, the father (Silas) whom Eppie loves, and Aaron, the man whom Eppie will later marry