

Silas Marner Theatrical Presentation

Chapter 5

Key parts of scene:

- Silas returning home
- Silas preparing dinner
- Silas counting money
- Silas looking for the bags
- Silas crying out in anguish
- Silas leaving cottage to look for help

Key players: Silas Marner, Dunstan, Props, Sound Effects

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Chapter 6

Key parts of scene:

- Townspeople fighting about cows
- Make sure someone plays individual townspeople
- Ghost Story
- Silas coming in upset
- Townspeople feeling badly for Silas
- Townspeople fighting over who helps Silas
- Mr. Macey and Constable leaving together
-

Key players: Silas Marner, Townspeople (Upperclass, Mr. Macey, Mr. Lammeter, Mr. Tookey, Ben Winthrop, the Warrens,

Read the passage and respond to the questions using a **SEPARATE** piece of paper.

Use 1 paper per group (make sure everyone's name is on there) and place in folder when done.

Station 1

Women of Victorian England

Two hundred years ago, the barriers of the Victorian class system rigidly defined the role of a woman. Divided into four distinct classes, Nobility and Gentry, Middle Class, "Upper" Working Class, and "Lower" Working class, these women each had their own specific standards and roles. They were expected to adhere to these standards alone, and it was considered a high offense to adopt to the standards of another.

The highest class was the Nobility and Gentry, who inherited their land, titles, and wealth. To the outsider, it might seem as if women of this class did very little--but their work was very important and sometimes very hard, as they were expected to manage the home and the household. As Etty Raverat, who was a young women in the late 1800s, said, "Ladies were ladies in those days; they did not do things themselves, they told others what to do and how to do it" (Harrison and Ford, 226).

However, this lifestyle left ample time for leisure. Social parties and balls were held often. Dancing was a favorite pastime among most upper-class women and men. An evening party often would end with a few sets among the four or five couples present. Unmarried women spent a great deal of time with other unmarried women. However, once a woman was married her role was considered manager of the household, and she had much less time than before to walk and talk with former friends.

Though the life of an upper class woman might seem easier and more secure than that of a lower class woman, it was not always so. Land, titles, and money were inherited by the closest male relative--typically the older son, but if there was no older son then it would go to a more distant relation. Only the small amount of money set aside as a woman's marriage dowry went to an unmarried woman after the death of her father. As a result, many mothers and daughters were left extremely poor after the death of their husband and father (Mitchell, 107).

The next-highest class was the middle class. Women of this class were much like women of the upper class, though their lands were not so extensive nor their way of life so grand as that of the aristocracy and landed gentry. People of the middle class associated with their peers and sometimes with those in the upper class. Women of the middle class depended heavily on marrying "up" into the upper classes, therefore gaining social prestige as well as a great deal more worldly goods.

The middle class itself was a much broader area of people than the upper class. It included everyone between the working classes and the lower gentry. It depended mostly not on how much money one had, but on how this money was obtained (Mitchell, 20). Because of this, the singular roles of middle class women varied greatly from family to family. Some unmarried women might have a place in the family shop, while others might live very much as a genteel woman would, with little work and much leisure.

The third class was the "Upper" working class. This included any who were employed in jobs that took skill or thought, as opposed to physical labor. Women of the "Upper" working class often found positions in shops, as bookkeepers, or teachers. The unique women in this class were the former upper class women, who had fallen into poverty through the death of a father or some other tragedy. A great many of these women became governesses, relaying their own high-class tutoring to upper class children. This

position was a deplorable one, as the governess was found a worthy scapegoat in the eyes of everyone, from the master and mistress to the house-maid (Allingham, 1).

The fourth and last of these classes was the "Lower" working class. This included the desperately poor, typically single women of the Victorian Era. Most women were pronounced "able-bodied" under the New Poor Act and sent to work alongside "Lower" working class men in the factories and other places offering jobs of taxing physical labor. Poor women, like men, were expected to work hard to support themselves (Levine-Clark, p. 1).

Another popular employment for "Lower" working class women was domestic service. Even the lowliest middle class family had at least one or two servants, and several had many more than that. Domestic service, though not as physically draining or demoralizing as factory work, had its own hardships. The life of a domestic servant was very lonely, while factory workers were allowed to socialize as they performed their tasks. Domestic servants worked seven days a week, twelve hours at least each day, while factory workers worked only six days and ten hours (Landow, p. 1).

Because of the restraint placed upon them, most women welcomed the suffrage movement when it came at the end of the Victorian period. Women of today may not realize how much they benefit from living in a time where such a class system no longer exists. The rigid division between classes in the late 18th and early 19th centuries defined a woman's role, giving her no other alternative than what was placed before her. Modern women are fortunate that they are not subject to such restraints and that they may choose whatever occupation they would like.

Bibliography Page

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Questions (use a different sheet of paper)

1. What four classes were women divided into?
2. How do the women in the novel fit into these groups?
3. What do you imagine the life of an upper class woman to be? A lower class woman?
4. Why couldn't a woman stay single?

Center 2: Discussion of
Silas Marner

Materials:

Questions Packet

Silas Marner Textbook

Participation

Station 3 – Class in Victorian Society

- 1.) Read the article
- 2.) Place the terms within the appropriate circle on the Venn Diagram
- 3.) Have teacher check Venn Diagram

Social Class in Victorian England

Class is a complex term, in use since the late eighteenth century, and employed in many different ways. In our context classes are the more or less distinct social groupings which at any given historical period, taken as a whole, constituted British Society. Different social classes can be (and were by the classes themselves) distinguished by inequalities in such areas as power, authority, wealth, working and living conditions, life-styles, life-span, education, religion, and culture.

Early in the nineteenth century the labels "working classes" and "middle classes" were already coming into common usage. The old hereditary aristocracy, reinforced by the new gentry who owed their success to commerce, industry, and the professions, evolved into an "upper class" (its consciousness formed in large part by the Public Schools and Universities) which tenaciously maintained control over the political system, depriving not only the working classes but the middle classes of a voice in the political process. The increasingly powerful (and class conscious) middle classes, however, undertook organized agitation to remedy this situation: the passage of the Reform Act of 1832 and the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846 were intimations of the extent to which they would ultimately be successful.

The working classes, however, remained shut out from the political process, and became increasingly hostile not only to the aristocracy but to the middle classes as well. As the Industrial Revolution progressed there was further social stratification. Capitalists, for example, employed industrial workers who were one component of the working classes (each class included a wide range of occupations of varying status and income; there was a large gap, for example, between skilled and unskilled labor), but beneath the industrial workers was a submerged "under class" — contemporaries referred to them as the "sunken people" — -- which lived in poverty. In mid-century skilled workers had acquired enough power to enable them to establish Trade Unions (Socialism became an increasingly important political force) which they used to further improve their status, while unskilled workers and the underclass beneath them remained much more susceptible to exploitation, and were therefore exploited.

This basic hierarchical structure (presented here in highly oversimplified form), comprising the "upper classes," the "middle classes," the "Working Classes" (with skilled laborers at one extreme and unskilled at the other), and the impoverished "Under Class," remained relatively stable despite periodic (and frequently violent) upheavals, and despite the Marxist view of the inevitability of class conflict, at least until the outbreak of World War I. A modified class structure clearly remains in existence today.

Terms

- Cass Family
- Silas Marner
- Lantern Yard
- Raveloe
- Attended church
- Worked in factories
- “Working Class”
- Owned the land
- Had extravagant parties
- Small Portion of the population
- Large Portion of the population
- Educated
- Low-skills
- Helped by Industrial Revolution
- Politically involved

Station 4 - What do you think will happen in *Silas Marner*?

Instructions: On the paper, write down what your predictions are for the rest of *Silas Marner*, be prepared to defend your predictions if necessary.

Center 5 – Character Traits

Instructions: For each character, write down at least 5 character traits (you may repeat up to 3 per group) that you think best define the specific character.

Silas Marner

1.

2.

3.

4.

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7.

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9.

10.

Nancy Lammeter

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

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10.

Godfrey Cass

1.

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4.

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Dunstan Cass

1.

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