Chapter Two
The Cultural Politics of Inoculation:
Revisiting George Eliot’s *Silas Marner*

I. *Silas Marner* and Inoculation Episode

Published in 1861, George Eliot’s *Silas Marner* begins with the entrance of the namesake character, a country weaver on his way to Raveloe after he was exiled from his hometown, Lantern Yard, for a falsely alleged theft plotted by his best friend, William Dane. Since then, Marner lives an isolated life, indulged in his machine-like weaving work and habitual gold-hoarding for the following fifteen years until the coming of Eppie. She creeps to Marner’s Raveloe residence on a snowy night and ushers in a total change to his life. Assuming the role of a father to her, Marner begins to be recognized as a member of the Raveloe community.

Eliot’s *Silas Marner* is conventionally credited with its moral beauty. Henry James, for example, asserts that *Silas Marner* “holds a higher place than any of the author’s works” because “never was a group of honest, garrulous village simpletons more kindly and humanely handled” (468). And among the critics with moralized interpretation of *Silas Marner*, F. R. Leavis notably canonizes George Eliot’s *Silas Marner* with his statement that this novel “has in it, in its solid way, something of the fairy-tale […] in which the moral fable is realized in terms of a substantial real world” (46).

Nevertheless, in such a novel that is considered “in the good days” as one of the “classic literary texts” that is “central to any English syllabus” (Newton 110), I notice that a specific medical term is re-appropriated to generate some cultural implications.

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34 References to *Silas Marner* and quotations of the text come from Hancock’s 1919 edition of George Eliot’s *Silas Marner*, and would be parenthesized accordingly.
In the following discussion, I would like to argue that “inoculation,” as used by Eliot in *Silas Marner*, could also be an indirect reference to interpersonal relationships and a shared vocabulary to articulate the Victorian people’s imaginaries of their daily life. What we learn from the translated sense of inoculation in *Silas Marner* I would argue is a rural imaginary of a healthy and stable world in face of various social problems that arise in a rapidly metropolitizing Britain.

The rich cultural implications of such a medical term like “inoculation” in *Silas Marner* should deserve a scrutiny; however, it never appears to be so among literary critics. While George Eliot’s masterpiece *Middlemarch* captures the academic circle by the Victorian medical context reflected in its novel narrative, her *Silas Marner*, published 11 years earlier, never receives attention for such a theme.\(^{35}\) If recent critics recognize any theme close to that of medicine in *Silas Marner*, it is likely to be the subtext of psychoanalysis. Sandra Gilbert, for example, gives a Lacanian reading of *Silas Marner* and examines women’s fate expressed in this literary work. She comes to the conclusion that Silas’s stolen pack of gold symbolizes the emptiness and meaninglessness of Victorian women’s “daughterhood.”\(^{36}\) David Carroll approaches *Silas Marner* by resorting to such Freudian terms as “child,” “Oedipus Complex,” “super-ego vs. id,” “father figure,” “anal desire,” “primal needs,” and the “uncanny.” Terence Dawson, among others, examines the narrative structure of *Silas Marner* and maintains that it expresses George Eliot’s own psychological concerns: Nancy Lammeter, a Raveloe infertile woman, is the “archetypal figure” that reflects Eliot’s unconscious need for a strong “other” to trust and take the burden for her.

\(^{35}\) We will have a more specific chapter dealing with the medical context reflected in *Middlemarch* immediately afterwards.

\(^{36}\) Quite interestingly, another critic F. B. Pinion asserts that Silas Marner’s desire for fatherhood is relevant to George Eliot’s “yearnings for motherhood” (132-3).
And in some ways, the moral interpretations of *Silas Marner* made by some critics, such as Henry James and F. R. Leavis, are related to the theme of medicine because it can be argued that such interpretations address moral issues in a “diagnostic manner,” if you will. As can be expected, the reading of *Silas Marner* as a “moral fable” pits the novel against the social problems of the time and encourages a moral purification by the reading of novelistic works. Above all, we are to see how Marner’s isolation as a vice gradually transforms into a moral beauty as he accepts Eppie, an illegitimate child to Godfrey Cass, another Raveloe inhabitant that belongs to the gentry class. A moralized way of reading *Silas Marner* would suggest that, by showing moral corruption as sort of a “disease,” Eliot intricately reflects her awareness of the socio-pathological implication that moral beauty lies within the overcoming of the moral disease.

Either the psychoanalytic reading or the moral fable interpretation makes great sense; however, they are insufficient in dealing with what is equally important in *Silas Marner*, i.e. the extended sense of inoculation particularly its richness of cultural complexities. More specifically, I will show later that what George Eliot tries to articulate in *Silas Marner* elaborately corresponds to a translated model of inoculation—a kind of inoculation that imaginatively protects one against moral corruptions and ensures one’s moral integrity. Hence George Eliot’s inoculation episode in *Silas Marner* should be read not only as a reflection of the medical context, but also a “text” illuminating the public and generating effective persuasive powers.

My project attempts to show how the presence of “inoculation” in *Silas Marner* strikes the Victorian people as more than a transplant of either smallpox pustule or cowpox pustule: I would like to focus on the cultural principles that empower “inoculation” to become an effective metaphor in addressing the Victorians’ imaginaries of daily life. As Raymond Williams argues, “it is the formula, not the
mass,” that should be scrutinized (Culture and Society 300). With a re-reading of George Eliot’s Silas Marner, specifically on its inoculation subtext, I would try to approach the ideological momentum at work in the cultural significance generated by inoculation.

A clarification on some of the key ideas employed in my research is required here, particularly my expositions of the “translation” and the “pedagogy” of inoculation. First of all, I will distinguish the actual practice of inoculation from the translated sense of inoculation. For instance, we see in Eliot’s Silas Marner how inoculation refers to a pure medical practice, as one of Marner’s neighbors reiterates: “[T]here’s the ’noculation to be seen to” (212). Significantly, we notice that inoculation may also grow out of its professional significations and extend into a wider realm: inoculation can also be approached as a word that formulates specific modes of “knowing” the Victorian people’s everyday life, hence “[e]verywhere [Marner] must sit a little and talk about [taking Eppie to inoculation], and words of interest [from the Raveloe neighbors are] always ready for him” (220). More specifically, by sharing with his neighbors the experience of taking Eppie to inoculation, Marner is no longer an enigmatic figure to his Raveloe neighbors, but becomes “a person whose satisfaction and difficulties could be understood” (220, emphasis mine). Therefore, by identifying the “translation” of inoculation, I would like to foreground how this medical terminology is removed from its professional significations and relocated on the terrains of everyday life to address certain social and moral issues.

In addition, I want to specify the “pedagogy” that comes along with such a translation of inoculation. The word “pedagogy,” when affixed to “inoculation,” brings to the fore how the translation of inoculation assumes an instructive role in shaping the Victorians’ daily life imaginaries and providing them with moral
standards. At the same time, however, I perceive Eliot’s inoculation pedagogy not as an “urban” message, but as pedagogy of the provincial England. In other words, the imaginaries Eliot provides her readers are based on her provincial outlook of the life world, which accentuates genuine sense of community in the rural neighborhood.

I believe that George Eliot’s figuration of inoculation, when contextualized in the Victorian medical culture, might possibly bring us back to the cradle stage in which the permeating medical knowledge nurtures an efficient way to formulate the Victorians’ schemes of understanding their lived experiences. With a reading of George Eliot’s *Silas Marner* in light of the metaphor of “inoculation,” we would become aware of the cultural translation taking place between the interface of inoculation and the author’s “description” of the Victorian everyday life experiences. I’d try first of all to map out the possible transformative elements in inoculation. In addition, I’ll use George Eliot’s *Silas Marner* as a key text to account for the complexities in the cultural translation of inoculation. I would then evaluate George Eliot’s *Silas Marner* in the Victorian medical context, and thus try to foreground the cultural politics at work.

II. Inoculation and Its Cultural Extensions

Before an inquiry into the extended sense of inoculation manifested in George Eliot’s *Silas Marner*, it would be instructive to recall the original techniques of inoculation. Inoculation, later replaced by Edward Jenner’s usage of “vaccination,” means the injection of a weak form of disease into a non-infested host in order to generate an immune effect afterwards. The Chinese is said to have devised the earliest, crudest form of inoculation. They collect smallpox pustules

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from the patients, ground them to power, and blew them into the nostrils of the person to be protected against smallpox infections. In Europe, a similar procedure was invented as late as the late 17th century. The Europeans found that a purposeful contact with a mildly affected smallpox patient would grant the healthy an acquired immunity, and it became a folk cure to remove the matter from the pustule and rub it into a small scratch on the person being inoculated (Cartwright 80).

An early form of inoculation is “variolation”—the transposition of smallpox matter into a healthy subject against any later visit of that disease. Documented practices of variolation in England started in the 18th century, introduced by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu during 1721 after observing the practice in Constantinople. It soon won the aristocratic approval and royal support. Yet it was Edward Jenner of England who brought a monumental advancement in smallpox inoculation in the late 18th century. Fascinated by the folk observation that the milkmaids were rarely inflicted by smallpox, Jenner hypothesized that cowpox infection can be an artificial immune practice against human smallpox. Jenner then carried out the famous experiments on James Phipps and consequently published *Variolae Vaccinae*, which introduced the measure of large-scale, systematic immunization against smallpox by person-to-person inoculation with cowpox virus.

Jenner referred to his procedure as “vaccination” (from *vacca*, Latin for cow) to distinguish it from older practices of inoculation such as variolation, although the only difference was the nature of the matter being implanted (Bynum 84). Thus the word “inoculation” was originally applied, after 1700, to the intentional injection smallpox virus in order to induce a mild and local attack of the disease, and render the subject

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39 See Bloom and Lambert 3 for a brief account of the introduction of variolation technique into Britain in the early 18th century.
immune from future contagion. In 1799, it was gradually mixed up with and finally being replaced by Jenner’s usage of “vaccination” (OED).

Edward Jenner’s innovation reinvigorated the practice of inoculation among British populace and boosted the public movement of vaccination. In fact, projects of inoculating the urban poor were already implemented in England as early as the 18th century, but inoculation was not yet made on a national scale. However, under Edwin Chadwick’s “Public Health” Movement, initiated in 1838, Jenner’s technique became tinged with a tone of “social revolution,” and vaccination was to become a government action. Beginning with the Vaccination Act in 1841, England witnessed for decades how vaccination made its way into a state-sponsored institution and a compulsory one through a series of legal acts, including one in 1853 that made vaccination compulsory for all infants in the first three months of life and made defaulting parents liable to a fine or imprisonment, and another in 1867 that extended the compulsory vaccination requirement to age 14, with cumulative penalties for non-compliance (Bynum 85-6).

Undoubtedly, Edward Jenner’s innovation brought huge impact on human society and civilization. The impact was, of course, multi-layered. The most immediate and obvious effect was the extensive geographical span in which vaccination was practiced. Take Britain for instance. By the end of 1801, about 100,000 people were vaccinated. The implementation of compulsory vaccination was never restricted to England alone; the method was rapidly coming into worldwide use. In 1803, the King of Spain decided to introduce vaccination into American colonies, and in 1801, vaccination was introduced to India (Cartwright 87). More importantly, another effect of Jenner’s invention lay in the growing recognition of

\[^{40}\text{For the models of controlling smallpox by inoculation in the 18}^{th}\text{-century England, see Maisie May’s “Inoculating the Urban Poor in the Late Eighteenth Century.”}\]
\[^{41}\text{For details about the Public Health Movement, please see Bynum 83-4.}\]
vaccination as a measure for maintaining universal rights of human beings. It did not take long for Jenner’s vaccines to assume a diplomatic role since “vaccine diplomacy [was] nearly as old as vaccines themselves” (Hotez 68). Because of vaccine’s remarkable ability to halt great plagues and eliminate disease, it soon became, in a time of almost continuous war between England and France, a powerful agent of international conflict solution. By 1800, Jenner’s smallpox vaccine was used widely in England and shipped across the channel to France. Within a decade, Napoleon decreed that vaccine departments should be established in all of the major cities of the French empire. And in 1811, Jenner was elected as a foreign member of the Institute of France (Hotez 68). Even though Jenner’s service in the diplomatic field occurred during a time of British-Franco hostility, “the sciences,” as Jenner himself observed in a letter to the National Institute of France, “[were] never at war” (Hotez 68).

Jenner himself may cling to a simplified nature of medical science, but in an era when the European countries were fiercely competing with one another politically and economically, vaccination evolved into a term of great cultural complexities. It is interesting to note that Jenner himself played a decisive role in politicizing his vaccination. Tim Fulford and Debbie Lee indicate in their essay “The Jenneration of Disease: Vaccination, Romanticism, and Revolution,” that Jenner “launched a propaganda campaign designed to convince the socially powerful that Britain would benefit from the healing power” (140). It would not be an up-hill campaign at all because the causal relationship between inoculation and social control of the population was obvious. Consider, for example, John Simon, the Chief Medical Officer to the Board of Health at that time, examined “smallpox and vaccination in its European context,” and found a statistic pattern between vaccination and fatality in Franco-Prussian War 1870-1: “300 German soldiers died of smallpox as compared to
more than 20,000 French troops” since “[v]accination was compulsory among German soldiers, but not French, and, moreover, not among German civilians, where nearly 130,000 died in Prussia alone” (Bynum 86). Simon was then convinced that “the States had a moral responsibility to control supplies of vaccine, to ensure that vaccinators were properly trained, and to require its citizens to participate in the program, which was for the common good” (Bynum 86). Henceforth the word “vaccination” began to, in addition to its reference to the technical operation, become a metaphorical index to how “civilized” a nation is. In England, vaccination was even regarded as “evidence of the value of the British civilization which was currently being menaced by the French” (“Jenneration” 158). If we try to contextualize British vaccination in the 19th-century Europe cultural milieu, the multiplication of political denotations of vaccines would never be surprising to us at all, since “portraying vaccination as a holy war ensured that Jenner’s medicine appear to the public as a cause for national pride” (“Jenneration 158).

The politicization of vaccination is but one among many cases to account for how “vaccination” is translated into a “civilized” image, as well as why Edward Jenner becomes a household name in England even to this day. But what is more important, it puts “vaccination” into perspective of the rapidly growing industrialization and urbanization in Victorian Britain, so that we can see the interconnectedness between medical science and the Victorian social context.

First of all, to the Victorians, inoculation constituted a very tangible aspect in their daily life: Inoculation, or Jenner’s vaccination, was never an abstract idea, but a tactile experience. As early as the mid-18th century, inoculation began reaching the Victorian people via parishioners in certain parts of England, and in 1746, the London

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42 See, for example, Ludmilla Jordanova’s “Remembrance of Science Past” for a discussion of how Edward Jenner becomes a cultural icon remembered till the modern times via biographies, portrait, monuments, exhibitions, and other ways of cultural representations.
Smallpox and Inoculation Hospital was founded, and the establishment of such a professional hospital profoundly influenced later developments of inoculation.

More importantly, inoculation was never something that was available only to the privileged. Quite oppositely, it was a social movement with a momentum acutely felt by the Victorian people as a shared experience. As Cartwright speculates, “right at the end of its history, variolation—the inoculation of the actual matter of smallpox under the layer of fat beneath human skin—must have been used extensively and by no means only for the wealthier class” (83). Soon after Jenner’s makeover of inoculation, about half of the children born in British towns were vaccinated against smallpox between 1800 and 1870 (Cartwright 90). It can be inferred that inoculation allows the Victorians to feel that they are in one with the masses, since it’s a “movement” accessible to each citizen in Britain.

Meanwhile, we should take into account the ideological factor at work to encourage the acceptance of inoculation. On the surface, the physical smallpox that arose out of the congregation of the crowd in rapidly urbanizing Britain was truly unnerving to the Victorians. Yet in a profound sense, the fear of a revolution surging from the disgruntled crowd was probably more disturbing to the English populace. At the time when French Revolution loomed large in Europe, the British administration, as well as the nation’s elite, was extremely wary of a latent revolution, which, if happened, could disastrously revolutionize the interpersonal relationships among different classes—a possible revolution that no one was able to predict to what extent it would wreak havoc on everyday life. However, inoculation, as a metaphor, came in and intricately assuaged the alarm of revolution felt by the British elites, and gave an air of scientific certainty to people’s hopes that revolution would be put down and under control. The immunization of the “body politic” suggested that the
possibilities of overwhelmingly destructive social changed could be contained.43

One example of such ideological mobilization is the romanticization of inoculation, in which this medical technique is represented in such a way that it appeals to readers’ imagination rather than their experience of everyday life. Indeed, an experiment conducted by a rural doctor in a pastoral area is full of elements that serve the Romanticist writers’ needs—the dairymaid, the cow herds, the little boy, the doctor’s passion, the love toward mankind—each awaits the Romanticists poets’ thematization. Under the cultural protocol provided by the Romanticism, Jenner’s medical enterprise is easily transposed into a cultural code, with shaping forces to make people imagine the “real” as such.

Exceptionally, Raymond Williams’s remarks in “The Romantic Artist” are illuminating to understand the romanticization of inoculation here. Williams identifies a close affiliation between Romanticist spirit and the idea of an elevated “culture” (Culture and Society 30-48). In light of Williams’s observation, once turned into a metaphor, inoculation may suggest a rural way of conceiving this world as a “society” that can be known and recognized, or a “community” in which people can be safe and secure, beckoning them to the pastoral ideal, re-energizing them with social momentum, inviting them with tactile experiences, making them forget that it is actually a scientific product.

In a sense, we can probably say that “quintessential” inoculation, or “inoculation-as-metaphor,” epitomizes the Victorians’ yearning for self-protection and self-improvement so that they are not only seeking protection against smallpox from inoculation but also imaginative protection against moral corruption from the translated sense of inoculation. Therefore, this metaphor of inoculation seems to

43 See “Jenneration” 159. Tim Fulford and Debbie Lee indicate that “[i]f revolution is an infectious disease, the immunization of the ‘body politic’ (i.e. the enfranchised, gentlemanly classes) suggests that it can be contained.”
have the power to make cohesive what people has experienced, is experiencing, and will experience. Moreover, it provides them with a sure strategy in dealing with realities in life, though it is never created by them, but merely assigned to them. Still, we want to ask, what does such an innovation have in itself to transcribe itself as a language to describe the Victorian life patterns?

One of the important features that associate inoculation with the description of experiences in everyday life, I would argue, is the idea of a precautionary measure against a disease that is embedded in “inoculation.” The practice of inoculation, which takes a minute amount of any trouble source to ward off further damage, is in a sense tinged with a pre-emptive mentality: to learn how to cope with a virus by means of a pre-emptive maneuver in men’s bodies—not in a destructive sense, but constructively instills the key to defeat the virus. Significantly, we would see in Edward Jenner’s *Variolae Vaccine* that what Jenner wants to instill is more than a smallpox vaccine, but a cultural vaccine against moral degeneration. As Fulford and Lee indicate, “Jenner’s literalization of the pastoral ideal played to contemporary fears that the ruling classes had become corrupted by the wealth” (“Jenneration” 143).

Furthermore, we should identify in this pre-emptive mentality an overtone of both “exemption” and “social control.” As we see, inoculation is intended for smallpox immunity so that the inoculated can be *exempted* from such a disease. Here the idea of “exemption” is closely related to immunity, for “the word ‘immunity’ and its Latin roots originally carried the legal connotation of exemption, for example, from military service or taxation” (Bynum 159). Perhaps we can assume that Jenner is writing his *Variolae Vaccine* with “exemption” in mind, advocating that the English populace be exempt from luxury and a degenerated lifestyle, summoning the

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44 Bynum even stresses that the medical use of “inoculation” as exemption or freedom from a particular disease was an obvious extension, though not one commonly adopted until the 1880s (159).
British to pastoral simplicity (“Jenneration” 143). And arguably, such an “exemption” may operate in the fashion of “social control” that instructs how one feels or acts. More specifically, such a “social control” would be implemented in all the forms of the Durkheimian conscience collective that constrain the individual—forms such as public opinion, law, belief systems, education, custom, or religion—fulfilling a social function by establishing a set of cultural standards that the individuals in the society would adhere to (Kuper 765).

Thus far our discussions have shown how inoculation as a medical technique is empowered as a social metaphor in the Victorian England, particularly in its preventive rationality in a rapidly changing world, and how inoculation goes beyond the purely scientific dimension to generate different discourses that transcend its original demarcation. In the following section, I would suggest that we see inoculation as a keyword that bears vital expressiveness in Silas Marner and in essence echoes much Edward Jenner’s romanticization of medical inoculation. I would venture to see what the cultural impact of inoculation has been registered in Silas Marner in the form of a subtle and intricate inoculation pedagogy that resists urbanization. I will begin by repositioning Marner’s story in the framework of inoculation, and thus see how Marner’s transformation emulates a “moral inoculation.” Then I will investigate specifically the interaction between two characters Eppie and Marner to highlight the social significance of inoculation in teaching Marner an important lesson about interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, I will try to elucidate the lesson Eliot wants to impart to her readers via her inoculation pedagogy. Finally, I would like to show what kind of tastes Eliot’s inoculation pedagogy would foster through our reading of Silas Marner.
III. Inoculation in *Silas Marner*

In *Silas Marner*, we see that by assuming the role of a father to Eppie, Marner begins to be recognized as a member of the Raveloe community. Moreover, Marner turns from a man who never socializes with his Raveloe neighbors to someone who comes to appreciate his neighbor Dolly Winthrop’s wisdom: “[I]f the child ever went anyway wrong, and you hadn’t done your part by it, Master Marner— *‘inoculation*, and everything to save it from harm—it ’ud be a thorn i’ your bed for ever o’ this side the grave” (210, emphasis mine).

In this glimpse of Marner’s interaction with Dolly Winthrop, we witness how the representations given in Eliot’s novel narrative prompt us to consent to, and even participate in the inoculation pedagogy. And judging from Marner’s growing intimacy with his Raveloe neighbors via sharing of babysitting experiences, specifically the lesson of inoculation, it is hard for us not to believe that inoculation is a widely known medical technique in the Victorian period, and its cultural significance is embraced by most Victorian people.

In the episode between Marner and Winthrop, inoculation is referred to as a purely medical practice. Here I would like to argue that there is also a translated sense of inoculation embedded in *Silas Marner*. Such a translation of “inoculation,” I want to add, features a moralized tone and provincial outlook. Indeed, as an outcast who eventually becomes Raveloe’s exemplary citizen, Silas serves as a study in the dynamic relationship between the individual and the community. His loss and subsequent rediscovery of communal ties with the villagers in Raveloe in a sense emulate the process of inoculation. From this reading of Marner’s story, we see that in the process of Marner’s transformation, inoculation becomes a key metaphor to formulate the narratives of *Silas Marner*, and inoculation as a metaphor might suggest something more significant. By focusing on the interaction between Marner and his
Raveloe neighbors, and between Marner and Eppie, I will try to foreground the social implications of inoculation in teaching Marner a much important lesson about interpersonal relationships.

Set in a distant rural past, and inspired by Eliot’s “recollection of having once, in early childhood, seen a linen-weaver with a bag on his back,” it is not surprising that *Silas Marner* includes all the romantic elements expected in what George Eliot referred to as a “legendary tale” (*Letters* 258). However, it seems strange for a pastoral romance of Eliot’s to incorporate such a scientific technique like inoculation. As the word “inoculation” is no longer mentioned in the rest of the story, the incongruity between romance and medical science seems to fade away. However, this brief discussion between Marner and Mrs. Winthrop about “inoculation” actually paves the way for a turning point for Marner’s relationship with her neighbors, since after the inoculation episode between Marner and Mrs. Dolly Winthrop, Marner gradually participates into the life pattern of Raveloe and finally becomes integrated into this community.

Additionally, in reading this inoculation episode in “The Lifted Veil,” one should also be reminded of a broader historical context in which inoculation develops. As a matter of fact, “inoculation” in *Silas Marner* is a term that aroused mixed feelings of admiration and aversion to the Victorian readers. On one hand, Marner’s reverence of “inoculation” reminded the Victorian readers of a then well known practice of “vaccination”—a modified version of the ancient “inoculation.” The writing of *Silas Marner* coincided with a government-initiated compulsory vaccination project, an important landmark in the state-sponsored public health movement. We might recall that vaccination became one of the key issues in Simon’s public health programs during the 1860s (Bynum 85-6). But on the other hand, this compulsory “vaccination” project triggered a counter movement, challenging it as a “violation of
civil liberty” immediately after the passage of the 1853 compulsory law (Wolfe and Sharp 430; Bynum 85). Outright antagonism to Jenner’s innovation was evident in various social movements under the banner of anti-vaccination movement. In 1853, five years before *Silas Marner* was first published, the “Anti-Vaccination League” was founded in London. Another similar organization called “Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League” was founded in 1867—five years after *Silas Marner*’s first publication.

Interestingly, few British readers of *Silas Marner* in the 1860-70s, except a handful of medical scientists, could really distinguish “inoculation” from “vaccination.” While the British readers recognized their government’s pledge to assume the “moral responsibility to control supplies of vaccine” (Bynum 85-6), most of them had no idea that “vaccination” no longer uses human pustule as “inoculation” had done; instead, it utilized cowpox pustule as the antidote. In fact, “vaccination,” the modern method of taking cowpox from animals to generate preventive effects on human bodies against human pox, is derived from the ancient practice of “inoculation,” which takes human pustule from a human body.

Despite the lack of an accurate knowledge of “inoculation,” the Victorian readers in 1861, caught in the tug of war between state-sponsored vaccination programs and anti-vaccination social movements, probably had no difficulty appreciating Marner’s acceptance of “inoculation,” since they were experiencing the official “vaccination” project themselves like Marner. Therefore, it may not be too rash to infer that this magical term “inoculation,” when presented in the context of this novel, goes beyond its technological landscape, so that, when the maid talks to Marner about child-rearing, she reveals more than a knowledge of inoculation—her remarks might attempt to

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involve Marner in a broader social context. In this sense, we could probably say that “inoculation” is no longer confined to its normal usage as a medical term. Instead, it is redeployed as a “metaphor” to suggest social implications as well as make connections with the Victorians’ imaginaries of everyday life.

Typically, we may sense a kind of “inoculation” takes place in Marner’s story: the main plot of the novel, the description of Marner’s earlier rejection by his neighbors and his later integration into them, in a significant sense analogizes the rationale of inoculation. Though such a translated, culturally extended inoculation is not spelled out in the text, we can view Marner’s miserable exile from Lantern Yard, or later his self-imposed isolation in Raveloe, as a sort of “social symptom,” if you will, or in Lawrence Guy Brown’s theorization, as an ideologically “social disorganization.” Yet his early infection of this social “disease,” so to speak, in a significant way immunizes him from later isolation in the neighborhood.

We find that prior to Marner’s moving to Raveloe, he lives in Lantern Yard as a man at “an inexperienced age,” with an “expression of trusting simplicity in [his] face, heightened by that absence of special observation, that defenseless, deer-like gaze” (41-2). Marner remains a healthy figure “believed to be a young man of exemplary life and ardent faith” (40) at this time, but before long a strange disease takes hold of him. Marner begins to occasionally suffer inexplicable cataleptic fits—a pathological trance during which his whole body becomes rigid and a suspension of consciousness occurs (40). This enigmatic disease is but a prelude to a series of events that follows. One day when Marner is tending a dying deacon, the catalepsy mysteriously seizes him again. However, William Dane, his best friend in Lantern

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46 See Chapter 23 of Lawrence Guy Brown’s *Social Pathology*, in which Brown lists several “ideologies in social disorganization.” Isolationism, one among these ideologies, is defined as one’s being “indifferent to communication and trying to shut out as much reality as possible” (379). The person diagnosed as having “isolationism,” as Brown describes, might “ignore so far as he can, through mental and social adjustments, his social, mental, and biological relationship to others” (379).
Yard, takes advantage of Marner’s trance and steals a bag of gold from the deacon and cunningly accuses Marner of the theft. Unable to give a reasonable account for the missing gold, Marner fails to convince the Lantern Yard inhabitants of his innocence, and therefore he has no choice but to leave.

Marner’s maladjustment to the Lantern Yard community frustrates him, and after Marner moves to Raveloe, such frustration worsens into an anti-social temperament. Marner becomes emotionally isolated from the rest of the Raveloes for the following fifteen years. Coincidentally, his physical appearance mirrors how such a detached life in Raveloe affects him. The impression that the Raveloe dwellers had toward Marner at the initial fifteen years was: that

[s]trangely Marner’s face and figure shrank and bent themselves into a constant mechanical relation to the objects of his life, so that he produced the same sort of impression as a handle or a crooked tube, which has no meaning stand apart. [...] [A]nd he was so withered and yellow, that, though he was not yet forty, the children always called him “Old Master Marner” (57).

But in the course of a “moral inoculation,” which arguably takes effect in Marner’s “secret chambers of heart” (45), Marner’s fifteen-year isolation is but half of the injected dosage. It is after the adoption of Eppie that Marner’s moral immunity is acquired in full. The entrance of Eppie into Marner’s life “stir[s] fibres that [has] never been moved [since Marner lived] in Raveloe,” a stirring that sounds exactly like an activation of the moral immune system (191). Thereafter, Marner experiences a metamorphosis by obtaining moral maturity and sternness. Marner’s countenance, miraculously, mirrors such a metamorphosis, as we see that “[h]is large brown eyes seem to have gather a longer vision [...] and they have a less vague, a more answering gaze” (225), and Marner finds himself “with the mild passive happiness of
love-crowned age in his face” (229). What’s more, after he assumes the role of a “surrogate father,” Silas begins to show his concern for the people around him, and he is urged to “look for images […] that bound together the families of his neighbors” (213).

But right before Eppie climbs into Marner’s door, a catastrophic incident is conducive to the “moral inoculation” on Marner. One evening when Marner is out, Dustan Cass, brother to Godfrey Cass, sneaks into Marner’s place and steals away all the gold Marner preserves over his Raveloe years. With his hard-won property gone, Silas Marner, stigmatized for his greed for gold, is supposed to feel that he is on the edge of abyss. However, after this incident, it turns out that Marner’s catastrophic experience unexpectedly triggers his neighbors’ sympathy for him, to the effect that “[t]he repulsion Marner […] always created in his neighbors [is] partly dissipated by the new light in which this misfortune [shows] him” (140). From that time on, the detached weaver one sees since the beginning of the novel begins to show some signs of resisting reclusiveness.

We can thus see that Marner’s loss of gold functions as an antidote consisted of the moral lesson that money is never all that counts, for “love” is more precious than gold. In fact, Marner’s Lantern Yard misery and Raveloe seclusion can be said to have educated him in the first place—giving him a lesson, introducing to him a changed view on the importance of interpersonal relationships, and unwittingly inculcating him with an appreciation of the social connections in Raveloe community. This lesson learned from misery and seclusion is so valuable that when he later finds his gold stolen, he does not just “[go] home, and for a whole day [sit] alone, stunned by despair, without any impulse,” as he used to do during his Lantern Yard accusation (48). Instead, he inadvertently walks into the Rainbow Tavern, where dozens of Raveloe folks congregate, to stand “in the warm light” (107) among the tavern guests
appealing to them for “Justice” (108).

Our reading of Marner’s story has laid bare how inoculation becomes a key metaphor to formulate the moral transformation of this protagonist in *Silas Marner*. I want to further indicate that what is also embedded in this metaphor of inoculation is a rearticulation of Marner’s conformity to “domesticity,” characterized by Dolly Winthrop’s guidance on child-nursing, as well as a sense of “duty” necessitated by his role as a foster parent to Eppie. Marner’s conformity to these two values is a crucial step to alter his relationships with the Raveloe community: it qualifies him to be received by the Raveloe residents as a “genuine” Raveloe member, who shares and holds such values like “domesticity” and “duty” as the Raveloes do. By focusing on the interaction between Marner and his neighbor Dolly Winthrop, and between Marner and Eppie, I will then try to show how “inoculation” can be reworked to create an atmosphere of domesticity and foster the sense of duty for the reader.

To begin with, the willingness to accept inoculation, along with the aestheticization of inoculation, is conveyed to the reader via a female character—Mrs. Winthrop—who speaks up for domestic virtues like tenderness and patience. We notice that the issue of inoculation is initiated by a “spokeswoman”—a neighborhood figure like Winthrop—rather than a “spokesman.” And in the story, it is Dolly Winthrop, a household woman, who keeps reminding Marner that “there’s the ’noculation to be seen to” (212, emphasis mine). We hear Dolly Winthrop’s argument: “The men are awk’ard and contrary mostly, God help ‘em [since] they’re bad for leeching and bandaging—so fiery and unpatient” (208). Here the agenda of inoculation is raised via child rearing, a topic packed with a domestic image, to drive home the point that inoculation is never something “foreign,” but an affair that should be familiarized and interiorized.

It turns out that Winthrop’s kindly reminder of inoculation involves Marner in a
communal activity shared by most of the Raveloe housewives. Specifically, when Marner follows Winthrop’s conceptualization of inoculation as a domestic responsibility and puts Winthrop’s knowledge of nursery into practice, he concurrently gets more opportunities to interact with his Raveloe neighbors. By engaging Marner in inoculation, a communal activity, Winthrop makes Marner open up to this important realm of the Raveloe domestic life. We can see in the following descriptions how Marner’s experience of nursery and child-rearing plays a decisive role in earning him his neighbors’ sympathetic feelings:

That softening of feeling towards [Marner] which dated from his misfortune, that merging of suspicion and dislike in a rather contemptuous pity for him as one and crazy, [is] now accompanied with a more active sympathy, especially amongst the women [, notably] mothers, who know what it [is] to keep children (205).

Here we see that when Mrs. Winthrop reveals to Marner the importance of inoculation, she is also implanting in Marner the willingness to participate in public activities like inoculation. But the gist of Winthrop’s speech on inoculation, I would argue, is an idea imbued with cultural complexities: not only does it refer to inoculating the child, but it also designates an intricate inoculation taking place on Marner—not physically inoculated by the smallpox vaccine, but rather emotionally inoculated by Winthrop’s wisdom about social interaction, and morally inoculated against further isolation in Raveloe. After this event of metaphorical inoculation, Marner begins to be greeted by “open smiling faces and cheerful questioning, as a person whose satisfaction and difficulties could be understood” (220).

Apparently, Marner’s willingness to handle the “domestic affair,” i.e. taking the child to inoculation, makes him categorized as a “domestic” member, so to speak, whose life is no longer separated from the Raveloe households, but inter-connected to
them. And such a feeling of “domesticity,” or the familial bonds between Marner and his neighbors, intensifies especially when Marner’s neighbors talk to him about the importance of inoculation: “Everywhere [Marner] must sit a little and talk about the child, and words of interest [from the Raveloe neighbors are] always ready for him: ‘Ah, Master Marner, you’ll be lucky if [Eppie] takes the measles soon and easy!’” (220, emphasis mine) In fact, in receiving the information of inoculation from his neighbors, Marner too may feel “lucky” because the indifference his neighbors used to display to him strikingly vaporizes—his participation into the discussions about inoculation allows him to interact with his neighbors, generating a domestic atmosphere in which he feels at home to speak his mind to the Raveloe community. Such a feature of “domesticity” embedded in inoculation, I will further indicate, is synonymous with the paternal “duty” to take care of a child, so that when Marner takes on the responsibility of inoculating Eppie, he is acting as a “surrogate father” to foster the child and participate into her life.

By contrasting Marner, the foster father to Eppie, with Godfrey Cass, the “biological” father to Eppie, we would better appreciate how inoculation implies a sense of duty that transforms Marner into a humane and thus accessible figure to his Raveloe neighbors. Indeed, Marner is doing more than what Eppie’s “biological” father, Godfrey, does to her: Godfrey’s desertion of Eppie exempts him from parental responsibility, but it also deprives him of any shared life with her. As the story unfolds, Godfrey is disavowed by Eppie as her genuine father. The outcome of the battle over Eppie proves once again how inoculation actually means more than a

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47 Commenting on George Eliot’s conceptualization of “duty,” Albert E. Hancock, editor of Silas Marner, accentuates in the introductory passages that “[d]uty, duty to one’s neighbor, to future generations, this [is] the heart of her creed, the first principle of her philosophy of humanism, and her watchword in life” (22). Hancock cites an anonymous writer and generalizes that Eliot’s obsession toward “duty” symbolizes Eliot connection to Christian faith (something Eliot renounces in her early twenties), so that “[f]or the orthodox Christian [Eliot] is a priestess without an altar, a prophetess without a shrine” (22).
simple injection in the “body”: The contrast Eliot shows here between Marner and Godfrey seems to imply that Marner is entitled to be Eppie’s father because he executes the “love” toward Eppie by performing the real “duty” of a parent, i.e., taking Eppie to inoculation—an important part of life experience Godfrey never shares with Eppie.

Relying on ideas like domesticity and duty, one sees how the characterization of Silas Marne could intricately emulate inoculation. By taking Eppie to inoculation, Marner inadvertently complies with both the value of domesticity and the sense of duty that are embedded in inoculation. Arguably, domesticity and duty become two important elements in inoculation to formulate some kind of “pedagogy,” one that shapes how Marner perceives his relationship with her fellow Raveloes. The framework of inoculation pedagogy allows us to appreciate that “[b]y seeking what [is] needful for Eppie, by sharing the effect that everything produce[s] on her, he [Marner has] himself come to appropriate the forms of custom and belief which [are] the mould of Raveloe life” (233). Moreover, we are more apt to recognize how the inoculation of Eppie is accompanied by the inoculation of Marner’s mental constitution and hence acclimates himself to the world.48 In this regard, perhaps F. R. Leavis is right to see Silas Marner as a “moralized fable” since Marner’s case inspires the Victorian readers to follow Marner’s example and willingly adjust themselves to the moral challenges in the Victorian society.

Equally significant in informing the inoculation pedagogy in Silas Marner is George Eliot’s awareness of the “the remedial influences of pure, natural human relations” (Letters 258)—an influence exerted via the “information”49 transmitted in

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48 Compare, for instance, George Eliot’s assertion in Silas Marner that: “The gold had kept [Marner’s] thoughts in an ever-repeated circle, leading to nothing beyond itself; but Eppie was an object compacted of changes and hopes that forced his thoughts onward” (213).
49 See Joseph W. Slade 5. “Whatever else the terms literature and science may mean, they also refer to rough categories of information. The kind of information we call literary is the stuff of human
her novelistic representations. First of all, Eliot’s narratives intend to exercise a
“remedial power” (Letters 258) over the reader. Eliot’s preaching to her readers can
be appreciated in a medical sense understood as some kind of vaccine. The didactic
parts in Silas Marner are like doses of medicine, unpleasant, perhaps, but they make
the reader better and stronger, in addition to deepening the reader’s reflective powers
and their insights into human nature.50

More importantly, such “remedial power,” one that is specifically analogous to
inoculation’s preemptive mechanism, justifies the distressful feelings felt in the course
of social interaction. As George Eliot analogizes, “[t]he Nemesis is a very mild one”
(Letters 258). Even though a tragic experience like Marner’s may sound
“unhealthy” at first sight, one would benefit greatly thereafter just like Marner does.
As Eliot rightly claims, “[p]erfect love has a breath of poetry which can exalt the
relations of the least-instructed human being” (238). Perhaps Eliot’s novel writing
can be viewed as an enterprise to disseminate some minor moral defects to the reading
community to generate an inoculation-like effect so as to make the reader immune to
moral corruption.

Thus, with the conflation of medical practices and social relationships in her
Silas Marner, Eliot manages to address social problems in a medical style, a style that
not only examines the pathology of social maladjustment, but also proposes an
“antidote” to this social disease. The effect of such inoculation pedagogy, it should
be remarked, is more of a preventive mechanism against later wrongdoings. Such a
preventive mechanism can be understood as Eliot’s will to provide her readers with
counsel and solutions in a rapidly changing society, teaching them how to handle the
moral problems in life, in an attempt to protect them against the so-called moral virus.

experience, data qualified by inner states of mood, imagination, and emotion.”
50 See Hancock 30 for the parallel between Eliot’s didacticism in Silas Marner and the “doses of
medicine.”
Still, we need to ask what kind of feelings and taste can be perceived as we evaluate the Victorian readers’ cultural responses to this pedagogy. At issue here is what kind of conscience collective is reinforced through Victorian readers’ acceptance to such inoculation pedagogy.

An important aspect that underpins Eliot’s translation of inoculation, I would venture to argue, is a provincial outlook about a healthy and virtuous society—an ideal society that no longer seems to be available in the highly urbanized cities but only to be found in rural areas. Consequently, the countryside is depicted in Eliot’s *Silas Marner* as the fountain of “virtue” and “harmony,” so that after one reads the novel, one is expected to be, in a metaphorical sense, injected the cultural vaccines of “virtue” and “harmony” against moral corruption in the degenerating society.

Such a rural ideal is typically evoked in the last chapter of *Silas Marner* during which Marner returns to Lantern Yard. Accompanied by Eppie to his hometown, Marner is shocked to learn that “[the] old place is all swep’ away, […] the little graveyard and everything” (283). The agricultural village of Lantern Yard, with which Marner used to familiarize himself, becomes an industrialized town in outlook. As Marner lingers in the Lantern Yard streets, he sadly finds out a “big factory” erected at the site where a church used to stand (283). Overpowered by a strong feeling of melancholy, he could not help but murmur: “It’s all gone—chapel and all” (283). Apparently, the disappearance of the old church makes Marner mourn over the lost peace and tranquility that used to pervade this rural town of Lantern Yard.

The kind of melancholy over the loss of the landscape that sustains the rural gentry is more explicitly articulated by Eppie, whose provincial outlook on the industrialized Lantern Yard leads her to a distinct aversion to this urbanized town. A short trip in the Lantern Yard streets makes Eppie declare, “O, what a dark, ugly place! […] It’s worse than the Workhouse” (282). Eppie’s complaint exemplifies the true
concern about the urbanizing process of rural areas in the Victorian period. Eppie “couldn’t ha’ thought as any folks lived i’ this way, so close together,” and she feels like she is “stifled” (282). In this case, the closeness, or the overcrowded-ness of inhabitants, is disturbing to the rural gentrified classes, since they certainly do not want the rural land to become “a dark, ugly place” like Lantern Yard.

What is also worth noting, in formulating a provincial outlook on the Victorian life, Eliot relies on rural figures to show her moral concern. In *Silas Marner*, the rural figures, such as Marner the rural weaver and Mrs. Winthrop the next-to-door housewife, are employed to package Eliot’s pedagogical intention. Again, the use of rural figures by Eliot in *Silas Marner* to convey moral senses seems to hark back to Edward Jenner’s *Variolae Vaccine*—a book about an experiment conducted by a rural doctor in a pastoral area, and a medical thesis in which we see dairymaids, the cow herds, the little boy, the doctor’s passion, the love toward mankind, beckoning the British to pastoral simplicity instead of luxury and a degenerated lifestyle (“Jenneration” 143). Judging from the provincial outlook presented in both Jenner’s *Variolae Vaccine* and Eliot’s *Silas Marner*, it seems that Eliot knows, as well as Jenner does, how to forge the pastoral idea into a discourse that can reach out to the increasingly metropolitan populace in order to teach them how to deal with moral problems attendant upon rapid urbanization and unregulated industrialization.

Equally significant, Marner’s experience at Raveloe inoculates him against the “low” civilization at Lantern Yard: Marner’s good relationship with the Raveloes, as well as emotional ties with the Raveloe community, becomes an emotional inoculation against the corrupted culture of Lantern Yard industrialism. On the night of Marner’s return to Raveloe, Marner tells Dolly Winthrop assuredly that emotionally for him, “Lantern Yard’s gone” (283). He genuinely tells Winthrop that “[t]he old home’s gone,” and he has “no home but this [one in Raveloe] now” (283).
Marner’s aversion to the industrialized Lantern Yard is expressed by him: “‘[Lantern Yard] looks comical to me, child, now—and smells bad. I can’t think as it usened [sic] to smell so’” (282, emphasis original). Marner’s disavowal of a Lantern Yard identity expresses his preference for Raveloe identity—a rural identity to which he finds himself belongs; an identity whose emphasis on domesticity and duty he finds himself befitting.

As discussed so far, inoculation pedagogy works in *Silas Marner* as a powerful metaphor to address the problems of interpersonal relationships that are instigated by the urbanization of rural areas in the Victorian period. However, with a critical reading of some passages in *Silas Marner*, we see that such pedagogy is entangled with simplification of the complexities in real life circumstances. In the paragraphs that ensue, I will offer my own critique of Eliot’s inoculation pedagogy. I’ll manage to show how Eliot’s inoculation pedagogy in *Silas Marner* encompasses a series of simplification, including a simplified “cause” of social disease, a simplified “cure” of social maladjustment, and finally, a simplified “representation” of the social interaction among most Victorian people.

To begin with, the pedagogy of inoculation, when applied to the Victorians’ understanding of personal relationships, could become a simplified cultural etiology in determining the cause of a social disease. For example, Marner’s initial isolation from the Raveloe community is mostly interpreted as a result of his lack of love. This might appear like a sound explanation, since later Marner’s love and affection for Eppie wins him the ticket into the community. Yet we can never ignore the fact that Marner is not allowed a “citizenship,” or the right to the “relationship” to the townsfolk until Eppie becomes part of his “possessions.”

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51 On Eppie as the “assets” to Marner, see Berger, Courtney. “When Bad Things Happened to Bad People: Liability and Individual Consciousness in *Adam Bede* and *Silas Marner*.”
When Marner talks to Eppie about how he valuates his lost gold, he tells Eppie: “‘It takes no hold of me now,’ he said, ponderingly—‘the money doesn’t’” (265). Here Marner’s love toward Eppie seems to ease him of his pain over the stolen money. Significantly, this formula of love appears effective to dispel Marner’s greed for gold, but we still wonder if Marner will remain capable of “loving” Eppie if Marner does not have any money at all. We do know that in real life circumstances, rearing child absolutely costs money, the inoculation shot must definitely be paid for, and the vaccination dosage unmistakably will not be for free. It can argued that this simplified cure provided in the novel narratives sounds unrealistic, and more of a pacifier to the reader. For instance, when Godfrey Cass soothes his wife Nancy Lammeter of her sterility, he does it in a pacifying note, saying: “[T]here’s debts we can’t pay like money debts” (277). Upon first hearing, Godfrey’s statement sounds alleviating to most Victorian readers (some of them could be out there mired in poverty), since they might acquiesce to moral blessings’ superiority over money. However, such a rationale is likely to make them forget that there are still money debts that need to be paid not in morality, but in cash.

Moreover, in Marner and Godfrey’s battle over Eppie, we may also sense a simplified “representation” of the social interaction among most Victorians. Toward the end of the story, Godfrey, Eppie’s “biological” father, and his wife Nancy come into Marner’s cottage to ask Eppie back, maintaining that Eppie “does’nt [sic] look like a strapping girl come [sic] of working parents” (268). However, Eppie immediately disapproves of Godfrey’s proposal by telling Godfrey: “I can’t think o’ no other home. I wasn’t brought up to be a lady, and I can’t turn my mind to it. I like the working-folks, and their victuals, and their ways” (276). Eppie’s emphasis on “their way,” in this case, notifies us that it is not kinship nor blood, but rather a “way of living,” or “culture” that formulates a person’s cultural identity.
Nonetheless, we should also note that what is valorized in such a presentation is a romanticized picture, having Eppie say that she is truly fascinated by, and will be devoted to, the hardship and misery that belong to the British working class. Eppie’s perception of the lower class as a group of people with “open smiling faces and cheerful questioning,” and as a group of people whose hardship “could be understood,” (220, emphasis mine) appears unpersuasive because it seems inconsistent with the commonly recognized lived experience that the Victorian working class have.

IV. Conclusion

As we read Eliot’s translation of inoculation, a medical technique, into a moral discourse of social acceptance, we have to bear in mind her stance as a writer. Situated in a world quickly shifting from a gentry community to an industrialized society, the Victorian writers, Eliot among them, find that the crowd around them gradually becomes unsubstantial and out of reach. Therefore, one response would be managing to integrate the “something new” into “something old,” as we see how George Eliot implicitly relates a pioneering medical technique like inoculation to some familiar ideas like “community,” “love,” and “brotherhood.” In this respect, inoculation is appropriated as a “discourse” to influence the reader for it reshapes their understanding of inoculation from a “technique” into a cultural “vocabulary” (Keyword 15).

To conclude, the word “inoculation,” even though mentioned only twice in *Silas Marner*, transmits to its readers loaded cultural connotations that resonate throughout the novel. Inoculation as a metaphor provides an affective framework within which George Eliot structurates her moral lessons, conveying moral values of maintaining communal bonds to her readers, with an eye on the didactic purpose of how to deal
with the moral problems in everyday life. Moreover, Eliot’s configuration of inoculation encompasses a provincial outlook, an outlook that begins to crystallize in the middle stage of her writing career following the moralized metaphor of transfusion in “The Lifted Veil,” on the Victorians’ social relationships, reflecting on how to restore in a highly gentrified rural society the social equilibrium that deteriorates due to the radical changes resulted by rapid industrialization and urbanization.

Thus far we have read two of Eliot’s works; in addition, we see how transfusion and inoculation become imbued with cultural complexities in Eliot’s novel narratives. Significantly, as we look back in history, we notice that developments in both blood transfusion and inoculation were predicated on the progress in microscopic innovation: the blood became a much-studied bodily fluid only after the improvements in microscope technologies (Bynum 163), and the relevance of vaccination to serum’s immunizing effect had not been specified until the technique of microscopy became capable of investigating pathological changes at a cellular level after the 1880s (Walter and Israel 1, Bynum 159). More significantly, before microscopic observation emerged as a mature medical theorization, Eliot had incorporated this medical technique in her Middlemarch. In this masterpiece, Eliot does not stop at Latimer’s desire for cultural transfusion in “The Lifted Veil,” nor does she reposes at Marner’s emotional inoculation in Silas Marner. And in the next chapter on Middlemarch, we will discuss how the medical technique of microscope inspires Eliot in articulating complex interpersonal relationships in the little township of Middlemarch.