

How is silas changed
by his experiences at
raveloe essay



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Written by George Eliot, is the pen name of Anne Evans, *Silas Marner* is a book about morality and the spiritual journey of a man exiled from his home town for a theft of which he was wrongly accused. Eliot incorporated some of her personal experiences in several of her novels; in *Silas Marner* she was drew on old experiences which has been etched in her memory from her life in Warwickshire where she grew up. Eliot found that she was very much in tune with Romantics style of writing. This was mainly influenced by the writings of William Wordsworth. As the motto for *Silas Marner* she choose three lines from Wordsworth poem *Michael* from *Lyrical Ballads*, which prove how one child can teach a man to love again.

“.....

. a child, more than all other giftsThat earth can offer to a declining man, Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts.” *Silas Marner*, which was written in autumn 1860, can be described as a classic Victorian novel because of moral lessons contained within it. Another reason why it is a classic Victorian novel is because of the harsh reality shown in *lantern yard*, books by Charles Dickens show the reader how hard life could be but have an eventual happy ending, this is what Eliot was trying to achieve.

The novel is mainly set in the early Nineteenth century but briefly goes back in the past to the 1780's to explain the reason as to why Silas has become so detached from society. The main part of the novel is set between 1810 and 1840 when industrialisation had started making in-roads into the English countryside. *Raveloe* village, however, remains untouched by the revolutionary changes taken place outside of the village. *Raveloe* is the town

that Silas now lives in, yet before he had live in the strict Congregational Sect of Lantern Yard, he had left there fifteen years before coming to Raveloe having been exiled from the churches community. The name Lantern Yard is clearly ironic because only a half light is shed on the place thus for the name to Lantern suggests that no enough light is in the live of those who live there. The inhabitants of the yard have extremely narrow views on life, they only believe in the congregational views of the religious sect that they live by, and do not encourage anything which seems pleasurable, such as: drinking, smoking, sexual relationships and having fun in general.

When Silas was banished from the church though the system of justice which the town relied on, the drawing of lots, he lost all faith in God, Humanity and Life. He felt that the church had abandoned him and that God had turned his back. Raveloe is an entirely different from Lantern Yard, not only obvious thing such as appearance and the people who live there, but such things as the community life and how people live there and their beliefs. The views of the residents of Lantern Yard are extremely narrow. Their focus is far to concentrated on the spiritual side of life, so much so that they forget about the natural things that life is all about.

The community is willing to condemn an innocent man, Silas, by the drawing of lots opposed to taking into consideration the evidence that stands before them. However, Silas agreed to it, because they drawing of lots were believed to be the will of God, and Silas truly believed that God would save him. Eliot makes the point that such narrow evangelical views are insufficient in guiding men to reach their full human potential. In Lantern Yard both Silas
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and William Dane are both seen as “ young winged things, fluttering forsaken in the twilight”.

Silas is thought highly of in Lantern Yard and his good nature was taken advantage of as well as his cataleptic fits, the example of this is when William Dane steal the money while Silas in a fit to focus the blame on Silas rather than on himself. In Lantern Yard the people of the community are all for self-preservation, which is, looking after themselves at the expense of others. Eliot then contrasts the strict way of life of Lantern Yard with the more relaxed attitude towards religion and life which is found at Raveloe. In Raveloe the “ fine old church and large church yard” is at the heart of the village. The church is part of village life and the people care for each other.

Their views are much more laid-back and they see going to church as much more of a social gathering than a place to go and worship God, the community is in tune with what everyone else is doing and when a neighbour is in need they will always try to help out. Even though Silas has been living in Raveloe for over fifteen years, he never takes part in any of the community life, such as going to church, because he knows nothing about the church as it is different from his religious experiences that he previously had. He never socialises and if he does so it is only on a purely business based situation. Due to his experiences of being excluded from Lantern Yard because of something he didn't do Silas lost all faith in God, and as that went his faith in man shattered as well. Silas keeps himself in isolation from the rest of the world by staying in his cottage all day, weaving and counting his hoard of money.

Silas accumulates the gold because when he lost his faith it was replaced with the gold; Silas now treats the gold like he once felt about God. The way in which he counts his gold every night is a routine which is new equivalent to praying, because of the fact he has nothing else in his life. Silas' obsession with the gold could be seen as particularly strange because Silas has no objective or goal in mind for his wealth, but it isn't that strange because the gold has replaced his God, thus it's the only thing he can focus on in life. Silas collects the money with the same fervour that once drew him to his old religion; he enjoys the feel and look of it more than the actual value.

Silas keeps his money under a brick in a hole in the floor; this is ironic because the villagers all know each other business so robberies were a rare thing. When Silas's money is stolen by the corrupted Dunsey Cass, Silas is devastated by his loss, this is the second time something he held dearly has been taken away from him; first of all it was his faith in God and mankind and now his 'faith in money' has been taken away from him. Silas's despair precipitates him to seek the help of the town's people by rushing to the Rainbow in a distraught state of mind. However, he is considered an antisocial miser by the people of Raveloe because he barely spends his money not even on himself; it is seen as an irregularity that he should show up at the Rainbow Inn asking for the help of the villagers." Yet the next moment there seemed to be some evidence that ghosts had a more condescending disposition than Mr.

Macey attributed to them; for the pale thin figure of Silas Marner was suddenly seen standing in the warm light, uttering no word, but looking round at the company with his strange unearthly eyes." Silas felt utterly lost, <https://assignbuster.com/how-is-silas-changed-by-his-experiences-at-raveloe-essay/>

confused, distressed and empty inside as though inside of him some of him has died. The theft of Silas's gold is a turning point in his life because it signifies the change in the villagers' behaviour towards Silas. They sympathise with him from the moment he appears in the Rainbow. Due to the confused state that Silas was in and the scruffy features gave the impression that he was "not Silas Marner in the flesh, but an apparition".

Silas discovers the warmth of the village community as they listen with caring concern to his story as their attitudes change towards him because he is half crazed by his genuine distress. In replacement for his gold Silas gained something which exceeded all value, Eppie. Eppie is a little baby whose mother dies outside in the snow when she falls asleep due to taking opium, and this baby is drawn to the light coming from Silas' cottage while he holds the door open in the midst of one of his fits."..

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.. but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered small soft curls". Instead of finding his gold he found another form of gold which he never could have realised would have had such a huge impact on his life.

Eppie's arrival changes Silas's life because she bring shim out of isolation and into the community life, in doing this she brings him into making good friends one such as Dolly Winthrop. Dolly Winthrop had previously tried to befriend Silas Marner yet he had always used to like to keep himself to himself and not get close to anyone because of his how he was betrayed by his friend in the past. When Silas starts caring for Eppie, Dolly advises him on <https://assignbuster.com/how-is-silas-changed-by-his-experiences-at-raveloe-essay/>

how to care for a child. Later on she is Eppie's Godmother and Silas's trusted advisor in religion and life. Silas goes to Dolly to seek her advice whenever he has a problem whether it concerns Eppie's welfare or his past; he will always go to see her. Dolly makes Silas see that he should trust in humanity and God again.

Dolly is kind, patient and devout. She was one of the first people who suggested to Silas that he should get Eppie Christened. As Eppie grew into a young girl then into a woman, Silas became a man who was returning to his faith through the joy of raising a child. Eppie turned his life around and made him a happier man.

She helped connect him with the real world again and helped to be at peace with humanity and God." As the child's mind was growing into knowledge, his mind was growing into memory: as her life unfolded, his soul, long stupefied in a cold narrow prison, was unfolding too, and trembling gradually into full consciousness." Silas Marner finally is accepting past as he discusses it with Dolly Winthrop. It has taken him the best part of sixteen years, since finding Eppie, to come to terms with what actually happened in Lantern Yard. Since Silas had buried his hatred towards Lantern Yard so deep within his heart that after all this time being accepted and loved again made him confront what happened." With reawakening sensibilities, memory had also reawakened, he had begun to ponder over the new elements of his old faith, and blend them with his new impressions, till he recovered a consciousness of unity between his past and present.

“ He began to think about his old faith as he spoke with Dolly, realising that he had been wronged in his faith but still couldn't understand it. Now that he was at one with him and the world it was the right time find out why and what happened. Which he did in by going back to Lantern Yard with Eppie, but when he gets there everything has changed, a big factory has been put in the place of the old church that was once there and the only thing that remained of the old Yard was the, but to top it all off not has any remembrance of the old Lantern Yard which once was. Given that the old Lantern Yard seems to be forgotten it does not seem to matter much anymore to Silas whether or not his name was ever cleared. To conclude throughout the novel Silas has developed and changed, he used to be someone who had no interaction with society to being the accepted in community life, having good friends and a wonderful daughter, Eppie. The turning point in the novel when Silas first properly interacted with the people of Raveloe when his gold coins were stolen, but soon after the theft seem irrelevant because he had began to discover happiness with a new type of gold which found its way into his life, Eppie.

Through Eppie, Silas was brought back to society and gained some life-long friends and happiness. The novel can be described as a didactic one because there are many things which Eliot focuses on, not the least being a life which is with the noblest of intentions and in turn is rewarded by God. Eliot believed that by living a truly moral life is mankind's ultimate goal on earth. Eliot felt that it was important to get a contrast between the two different social classes, rich and poor, she felt that the poor people who worked for a living were modest and morally good people and that the rich who never had

to work to survive were not. Silas Marner progresses through the story and realizes that when he lets go of the materialistic things that dominated his life, and learned to love another human and trust in them again he became a better human being because of it.