

How does the
community of raveloe
respond to silas at
key moments in the
novel es...



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The community of Raveloe responds to Silas differently at key moments during the novel. The community Silas moves into evolved from centuries of interdependence. The villagers depended on each other for everything. Raveloe is a remote village where everyone is suspicious of newcomers. The village community is proven to be dependent upon each other. The class structure in Raveloe consists of the working class and the upper class. Class divisions are very important, The villagers consider Squire Cass to be a bad father.

The squires' sons also have problems, Godfrey loves Nancy Lammeter however his marriage to Molly, to whom he once had been attracted is a secret. Molly's lower social class would make her unacceptable to the proud Squire. The structure is shown through village custom, leisure, travel, dress and housing. The working class of Raveloe would often meet in the Rainbow the local pub for a drink and they did not often socialize with the upper class. At Christmas the working class would spend time with the family, whereas the upper class went to a ball at Squire Casses house.

In addition the Upper class rode everywhere on horseback. When Dunstons horse dies and he has to walk he hoped that none of the villagers saw him because they would know that something was wrong. Some members of the upper class see themselves as superior, because others who were "every bit as refined as he," but had "slouched" their way through life with a consciousness of being in the vanity of their "betters", wanted the authoritativeness, which the squire had. The Upper class felt superior because they did not work with their hands.

Silas decided that God could not exist, and, after his move to Raveloe, he lives only for his work and the money it brings. His earlier trusting and generous personality is contrasted with his present character. Silas's continued his unfriendliness and his refusal to help others with herbal cures, apart from Sally Oates, combine to keep the superstitious villagers continually distant and afraid, despite Silas's growing wealth. The villagers' old fashioned, superstitious villagers continually distant and afraid, despite Silas's growing wealth. The villagers avoid of fear Silas for various reasons.

Some of these are not of Silas's making, but result from Raveloe's isolated position. Silas appears like the ghosts the villagers have been discussing in the rainbow the night he was robbed. The discussion of ghosts shows that the villagers are superstitious. Silas moves into a community whose suspicions and fears he increases by inviting "no comers to step across his door-sill". He also never "drinks a pint at the Rainbow" nor enjoys "gossip at the wheelwright's". The villagers of Raveloe are superstitious because of the children because of his look view Silas, as evil.

He is thought to have an "evil eye" which could harm them if Silas looked at them. People in Raveloe are cautious around the unexplainable because they do not know about it. If it does not show goodness or kindness towards it they fear it. When Silas arrived because the villagers could not explain his fits they believed him to be in league with the devil and they thought of him as being a "dead man come to life again", because of his trances. They thought that Silas's trances were his soul leaving his body for a while, this medical condition made the villagers wary of Silas.

In addition Silas's knowledge of herbs scared the villagers. When Silas healed Sally Oates the villagers started to talk nicely about him. They did this because they feared that he would put a curse on them if they were horrible to him. Silas drove the villagers even further away when they asked him to cure imperfections or colds and he refused. The villagers superstition is also shown when the villagers tell Silas to stay awake and welcome in the new year, as it may help him acquire good fortune, and may help him in getting his gold back.

Losing his spiritual life is a disaster to Silas who copes by spending hours weaving. Alone for over fifteen years Silas had become obsessed with his work and is a miser. He looks and behaves in an increasingly strange manner. His gold becomes his hobby and has replaced his friends. To avoid his painful memories Silas works at his household chores and at his weaving "like a spinning insect." The weaving changes Silas' personality his aim is now the acquisition of gold itself, instead of what the money can buy. He now needs little money, as he no longer gives it to the church.

He loves the touch of the money as shown "He spread them out in heaps and bathed his hands in them." He increasingly enjoys seeing and touching his gold. He hoards them first in leather bags under the floor. The robbery is a turning point in Silas's life. Silas has only wanted his gold, now he discovers the warmth of the village community as they listen to his story. In turn, because he is half-crazed by his genuine distress, their attitude changes and they react with caring concern. Silas was somewhat forced to interact with the community (for the curing of Sally Oates had been done out of choice not force).

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Silas' first instinct was to sit at his loom and weave; this was his "strongest assurance of reality". When Silas did not know what else to do to find his gold, his decision to tell the people of Raveloe let them know that Silas was not the callous man they had pictured him to be. The community was reassured when they realized that "folks as had the devil to back 'em were not likely to be so mushed". The fact that he was completely distraught at the thought of his gold never returning to him caused people to sympathize with him and believe he was neither inhumane nor possessed by the devil.

Unconsciously there was a growth occurring within Marner; due to the loss of his gold he had made contact with people to whom he had never before spoken and had given them reason to believe he was not the unfeeling man they had thought him to be. When the villagers begin to help Silas it shows that they believe in doing the right thing. By helping Silas, even though he has not helped them in any way, this proved that the villagers are kind, considerate people. The villagers all try to help Silas find the culprit and get Silas' money returned to him.

After the robbery people's views begin to change. They no longer consider Silas to be evil or in league with the devil. They treat him more like a friend and frequently visit him with gifts to cheer him up. People's views of Silas began to change for the better. The villagers used to avoid Silas and they would not associate with him, whereas after the robbery Mr. Macey and Dolly Winthrop frequently visited him bearing gifts. This is suggested by "this change to a kindlier feeling was shown in various ways."

People felt more sympathy for Silas after the robbery for they know he has not the wit to protect his own possessions. The community of Lantern Yard wrongly accused Silas of theft and expelled him from the church. Silas when he arrives in Raveloe no longer went to church or the pub where the community met, and he refused through his unfriendly behavior to become part of the village. In turn the villagers' primitive sense of community makes them suspect and fear villagers like Silas especially because he is so different from them in so many ways.

Silas starts to become integrated into the community at first when there is a second theft. The loss of his gold, makes Silas seek the help of the community and the villagers support him. Silas is finally accepted though when he insists on keeping Eppie. Silas decides that because Eppie came to him he had the right to keep her, and none of the villagers argued with him. Eppie leads Silas into the church and community. We know Silas is accepted by " a rather contemptuous pity for him as lone and crazy, was now accompanied with a more active sympathy.

When Silas adopts Eppie all of the villagers offer their help. Through bringing Eppie to church Silas comes into contact with the villagers who " Silas met with smiling faces and cheerful questioning. " The villagers and their children welcome Silas because of Eppie. Children are also no longer afraid of Silas. Silas accepts the villagers help and advice and he is accepted and approved long before his adopted daughter marries into the community. The villagers of Raveloe offer to help out with Eppie and are interested in seeing how Silas will cope.

Through Eppie, he gains the friendship of Dolly Winthrop “ it grew more and more easy for him to open his mind to Dolly Winthrop, he gradually communicated to her all he could describe of his early life”. Dolly offers Silas some of Aaron’s old baby clothes, and Godfrey helps by giving some money to Silas, for Eppie. In Dolly’s wisdom and religious faith he finds peace over false accusation of long ago and regains his own faith in God. Through what he does for Eppie and the change she brings to his personality, he becomes an admired and respected member of the village community.

Silas begins to take part in the community by taking villagers advice and by taking Eppie to church. Also the sentences “ That softening of feeling towards him which dated from his misfortune. ” and “ A rather contemptuous pity for him as lone and crazy, was now accompanied with a more active sympathy. ” These suggest that Silas is becoming more involved in the community and that before people were sympathetic before but they did not do anything about it now they were genuinely sympathetic and wanted to help Silas.

The villagers of Raveloe offer to help out with Eppie and are interested in seeing how Silas will cope. The village is isolated from the rest of the world because in the 19th Century very few people traveled or communicated with people outside their community. People were uneducated so tried to explain things they knew nothing about by saying it was supernatural. It meant people were superstitious and thought that this was a reasonable explanation. The century was ending when ‘ Silas Marner’ was written which brought enormous changes in every area of life.

A topical cause of unrest, urban social conditions, is mentioned when Silas and Eppie try to visit Lantern Yard. The vast changes brought by the industrial revolution caused hardship, which is hinted in the description of the “ great manufacturing town” and a “ dark ugly place”. Indeed Eppie can hardly believe “ any folks lived i’ this way, so close together”. Silas had worked in town which he was unable to recognize thirty years later so he stops “ several people in succession” to check its name.

The contrast with the pleasantly situated and “ important looking” village of Raveloe, with its closely-knit and co-operative community, is shown by Eppie’s “ distress” when she visits Lantern Yard. She is “ ill at ease” with the “ multitude of strange indifferent faces”. The people are not interested in strangers. Unlike Raveloe, there is little curiosity in people or in events. In the book at three key events the community of Raveloe respond to Silas differently. These events show a progression from Silas being a miserly outsider when he first arrived, to a valued member of the community after adopting Eppie.