

Silas Marner was completed by George Eliot and printed in 1861. This was about fifty years into the Industrial Revolution, a time when intellectuals, including novelists, were stepping back to assess its effects on their society. These effects were not just on manufacturing and economics but radiated out to social, philosophical, religious and communal mores. Dickens, who had initially been attracted by many of the advances that came along with this revolution, had by this time turned against its effects in novels like Hard Times, Bleak House, and Little Dorrit. George Eliot addressed many of these themes as well, though in a quieter, more considered and less dogmatic way. Though Silas Marner appears to be a simple tale about the power of love, set in another time and another place from the London she knew, it subtly reflects Eliot's attitudes toward the recent changes in English culture. In fact, Eliot's choice of setting, mostly before the Industrial Revolution, may be a key to help discover this social critique.

Write a five paragraph essay in which you explain George Eliot's attitude toward Victorian culture as formed by the Industrial Revolution based on your reading of Silas Marner. Your analysis should discuss at least **three** of the following issues in detail: money, living space, nature, religion, morality/ethics, the supernatural, manners, sense of community, goals/values, relationships. Your analysis of Eliot's views of the three need not be uniformly "for" or "against" the recent changes in Victorian society.

Utilize the following scheme:

* **Introduce** George Eliot, the novel and the issues you'll be discussing. This is the place to provide background about both "George" (you should read the section from Parallel Lives about her) and the novel. By providing this and background about the recent changes in English society, lead up to and introduce the topic of the essay in clear thesis statement.

* In each of the three body paragraphs, choose one of the issues listed above and discuss it in detail. **Be sure to provide examples and/or quotations to back up your points about what George Eliot thought.** Use parenthetical notes to show where quotes and specific facts come from. Because you are assessing the author's attitudes, be sure to consider each character's place in the book before citing him/her as evidence of Eliot's opinions, as authors often include characters with whom they don't agree.

* Based on what you have said already, use the final paragraph to summarize Eliot's attitudes about the issues you have chosen and explain how (or if) they fit together into a unified vision. Explain which, if any, changes in English society Eliot would want to continue and which, if any, she would be likely to resist.

Due: Thursday, January 26 by 9 a.m.

Revision Deadline: Monday, February 6 by 9 a.m.