APPENDICES

BIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE ELIOT

Mary Ann Evans (22 November 1819 – 22 December 1880; alternatively "Mary Anne" or "Marian"), known by her pen name George Eliot, was an English novelist, journalist, translator and one of the leading writers of the Victorian era. She is the author of seven novels, including Adam Bede (1859), The Mill on the Floss (1860), Silas Marner (1861), Middlemarch (1871–72), and Daniel Deronda (1876), most of them set in provincial England and known for their realism and psychological insight.

She used a male pen name, she said, to ensure her works would be taken seriously. Female authors were published under their own names during Eliot's life, but she wanted to escape the stereotype of women only writing lighthearted romances. An additional factor in her use of a pen name may have been a desire to shield her private life from public scrutiny and to prevent scandals attending her relationship with the married George Henry Lewes, with whom she lived for over 20 years.

Mary Ann Evans was the third child of Robert Evans (1773–1849) and Christiana Evans (née Pearson, 1788–1836), the daughter of a local farmer. Mary Ann's name was sometimes shortened to Marian. Her full siblings were Christiana, known as Chrissey (1814–59), Isaac (1816–1890), and twin brothers who survived a few days in March 1821. She also had a half-brother, Robert (1802–64), and half-sister, Fanny (1805–82), from her father's previous marriage to Harriet Poynton (?1780–1809). Robert Evans, of Welsh ancestry, was the manager of the Arbury Hall Estate for the Newdigate family in Warwickshire, and Mary Anne was born on the
estate at South Farm. In early 1820 the family moved to a house named Griff, between Nuneaton and Bedworth.

The young Evans was obviously intelligent and a voracious reader. Because she was not considered physically beautiful, and thus not thought to have much chance of marriage, and because of her intelligence, her father invested in an education not often afforded women. From ages five to nine, she boarded with her sister Chrissey at Miss Latham's school in Attleborough, from ages nine to thirteen at Mrs. Wallington's school in Nuneaton, and from ages thirteen to sixteen at Miss Franklin's school in Coventry. At Mrs. Wallington's school, she was taught by the evangelical Maria Lewis—to whom her earliest surviving letters are addressed. In the religious atmosphere of the Miss Franklin's school, Evans was exposed to a quiet, disciplined belief opposed to evangelicalism.

After age sixteen, Eliot had little formal education. Thanks to her father's important role on the estate, she was allowed access to the library of Arbury Hall, which greatly aided her self-education and breadth of learning. Her classical education left its mark; Christopher Stray has observed that "George Eliot's novels draw heavily on Greek literature (only one of her books can be printed correctly without the use of a Greek typeface), and her themes are often influenced by Greek tragedy". Her frequent visits to the estate also allowed her to contrast the wealth in which the local landowner lived with the lives of the often much poorer people on the estate, and different lives lived in parallel would reappear in many of her works. The other important early influence in her life was religion. She was brought up within a low church Anglican family, but at that time the Midlands was an area with a growing number of religious dissenters.
On her return to England the following year (1850), she moved to London with the intent of becoming a writer and calling herself Marian Evans. She stayed at the house of John Chapman, the radical publisher whom she had met at Rosehill (near Coventry) and who had printed her translation. Chapman had recently bought the campaigning, left-wing journal The Westminster Review, and Evans became its assistant editor in 1851. Although Chapman was the named editor, it was Evans who did most of the work in running the journal, contributing many essays and reviews, from the January 1852 number until the dissolution of her arrangement with Chapman in the first half of 1854.

Women writers were not uncommon at the time, but Evans's role at the head of a literary enterprise was. She was considered to have an ill-favoured appearance, and she formed a number of embarrassing, unreciprocated emotional attachments, including that to her employer, the married Chapman, and Herbert Spencer.

In 1857, when she was 37, "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton", the first of the Scenes of Clerical Life, was published in Blackwood's Magazine and, along with the other Scenes, was well received (it was published in book form early in 1858). Her first complete novel, published in 1859, was Adam Bede; it was an instant success, but it prompted intense interest in who this new author might be. Scenes of Clerical Life was widely believed to have been written by a country parson or perhaps the wife of a parson. With the release of the incredibly popular Adam Bede, speculation increased markedly, and there was even a pretender to the authorship, one Joseph Liggins. In the end, the real George Eliot stepped forward: Marian Evans Lewes admitted she was the author. The revelations about Eliot's private life surprised and shocked many of her admiring readers, but this apparently did not affect her popularity as a novelist. Eliot's relationship with Lewes
afforded her the encouragement and stability she so badly needed to write fiction, and to ease her self-doubt, but it would be some time before they were accepted into polite society. Acceptance was finally confirmed in 1877 when they were introduced to Princess Louise, the daughter of Queen Victoria. The queen herself was an avid reader of all of George Eliot's novels and was so impressed with Adam Bede that she commissioned the artist Edward Henry Corbould to paint scenes from the book.

After the success of Adam Bede, Eliot continued to write popular novels for the next fifteen years. Within a year of completing Adam Bede, she finished The Mill on the Floss, inscribing the manuscript: "To my beloved husband, George Henry Lewes, I give this MS. of my third book, written in the sixth year of our life together, at Holly Lodge, South Field, Wandsworth, and finished 21 March 1860."

Her last novel was Daniel Deronda, published in 1876, whereafter she and Lewes moved to Witley, Surrey; but by this time Lewes's health was failing and he died two years later on 30 November 1878. Eliot spent the next two years editing Lewes's final work, Life and Mind, for publication, and she found solace with John Walter Cross, a Scottish commission agent whose mother had recently died.
SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe is the third novel by George Eliot, published in 1861. An outwardly simple tale of a linen weaver, it is notable for its strong realism and its sophisticated treatment of a variety of issues ranging from religion to industrialization to community.

The novel is set in the early years of the 19th century. Silas Marner, a weaver, is a member of a small Calvinist congregation in Lantern Yard, a slum street in an unnamed city in Northern England. He is falsely accused of stealing the congregation's funds while watching over the very ill deacon. Two clues are given against Silas: a pocket-knife and the discovery in his own house of the bag formerly containing the money. There is the strong suggestion that Silas' best friend, William Dane, has framed him, since Silas had lent his pocket-knife to William shortly before the crime was committed. Silas is proclaimed guilty. The woman he was to marry casts him off, and later marries William Dane. With his life shattered and his heart broken, Silas leaves Lantern Yard and the city.

Marner heads south to the Midlands and settles near the village of Raveloe, where he lives as a recluse, lapsing into bouts of catalepsy, and existing only for work and the gold he has hoarded from his earnings. The gold is stolen by Dunstan ('Dunsey') Cass, the dissolute younger son of Squire Cass, the town's leading landowner. Silas sinks into a deep gloom, despite the villagers' attempts to aid him. Dunsey disappears, but little is made of this not unusual behaviour, and no association is made between him and the theft.

Godfrey Cass, Dunsey's elder brother, also harbours a secret. He is married to, but estranged from, Molly Farren, an opium-addicted woman of low birth. This secret threatens to destroy Godfrey's blooming relationship with Nancy, a young
woman of higher social and moral standing. On a winter's night, Molly tries to make her way into town with her two-year-old child, to prove that she is Godfrey's wife and ruin him. On the way she takes opium, becomes disoriented and sits down to rest in the snow, child in arm. The child wanders from her mother's still body into Silas' house. Upon discovering the child, Silas follows her tracks in the snow and discovers the woman dead. Godfrey also arrives at the scene, but resolves to tell no one that she was his wife.

Silas decides to keep the child and names her Eppie, after his deceased mother and his sister, Hephzibah. Eppie changes Silas' life completely. Silas has been robbed of his material gold, but has it returned to him symbolically in the form of golden-haired Eppie. Godfrey Cass is now free to marry Nancy, but continues to conceal the existence of his first marriage and child from her. However, he aids Marner in caring for Eppie with occasional financial gifts. More practical help and support in bringing up the child is given by Dolly Winthrop, a kindly neighbor of Marner's. Dolly's help and advice help Marner not only to bring up Eppie but also to integrate her into village society. Sixteen years pass, and Eppie grows up to be the pride of the town. She has a strong bond with Silas, who through her has found inclusion and purpose in life. Meanwhile, Godfrey and Nancy mourn their own childless state. Eventually, the skeleton of Dunstan Cass—still clutching Silas' gold—is found at the bottom of the stone quarry near Silas' home, and the money is duly returned to Silas. Shocked by this revelation, and coming to the realization of his own conscience, Godfrey confesses to Nancy that Molly was his first wife and that Eppie is his child. They hope to raise her as a gentleman's daughter, which for Eppie would mean forsaking Silas. Eppie politely refuses, saying, "I can't think o' no happiness without him."
Silas is never able to clear up the details of the robbery that caused his exile from Lantern Yard, as his old neighborhood has been "swept away" and replaced by a large factory. No one seems to know what happened to Lantern Yard's inhabitants. However, Silas contentedly resigns himself to the fact that he now leads a happier existence among his family and friends. In the end, Eppie marries a local boy, Aaron, son of Marner's helpful neighbor Dolly. Aaron and Eppie move into Silas' new house, courtesy of Godfrey. Silas' actions through the years in caring for Eppie have provided joy for everyone and the extended family celebrates its happiness.