

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Everyone must have good ethic to socialize with others. It will make him easier to be accepted in society. The Rise of Silas Lapham shows how the protagonist, Silas Lapham, struggles to get a good social status rather than to get a financial success. In the novel, I can clearly see the protagonist's action, reaction, and speech because they provide a lot of details, which make the author's message become more explicit, and thus, give the readers better understanding of the story. According to Literary Terms & Criticism, 'Novel is a long work with a great amount of detail on every page. They thus present all the complicating facts that need to be taken into account before we can reach any sort of judgement'. (Peck and Coyle, 1984 : 103).

A novel also deals with 'ordinary people and their problem in the society in which they find themselves.' (Peck and Coyle, 1984: 102). A novel is easy to understand and interesting, because it portrays a condition which is close to its reader.

The novel which I have chosen deals with characters and a society which influences the characteristics of the characters. In the novel, the author William Dean Howells ‘explores a number of significant cultural issues in [The Rise of] "Silas Lapham": isolationism, social adaptability, economic solvency among all classes, personal integrity and familial ties, and the relationship between literature and life’.

([http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0140390308/ref=cm\\_aya\\_asin.title/103-4636963-3652631?%5Fencoding=UTF8&v=glance&n=283155](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0140390308/ref=cm_aya_asin.title/103-4636963-3652631?%5Fencoding=UTF8&v=glance&n=283155)).

In this novel, William Dean Howells writes according to real events that occur in the American society. Howells assumes that the society is very capitalistic. As one of the people who live in that particular society, Howells wants to make a breakthrough or change. Thus by writing this novel, Howells inserts some criticism toward the American society. That is why this novel is unique and interesting to analyze.

After reading the novel, I feel interested in exploring the theme as it is one of the most prominent elements in the novel. According to Shaw, “theme is the central idea and dominating idea in a literary work’. (Shaw, 1972: 378). Therefore, I decide to analyze the theme through the protagonist of this novel.

For additional reference, I add another source from Merriam Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature, which says that character is “a representative human which usually is made to stand for the trait, quality, or type” (Webster, 1995: 229). So in conclusion I shall learn the way an author presents his idea through the protagonist Silas Lapham and analyze how the protagonist's action, reaction and speech in the novel contribute to the discussion of the theme of the novel.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

1. What is the theme of The Rise of Silas Lapham?
2. How does the protagonist help to reveal the theme of The Rise of Silas Lapham?

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

1. To show the theme of The Rise of Silas Lapham
2. To show how the protagonist helps to reveal the theme

## **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

Before deciding which genre and work that I shall analyze, I read several references on literature. I decide to choose The Rise of Silas Lapham by William Dean Howells. I use library research to gather information about the author, the work, and some theories related in analyzing the topic chosen. Moreover, to support the information, I also gather more information from the Internet. I try to analyze the novel by using an intrinsic approach. Finally, I draw a conclusion of what I have analyzed.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis consists of three chapters. It begins with the Introduction in Chapter One, consisting of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of

the Thesis. In Chapter Two, I shall analyze the theme of the novel. The last chapter is Chapter Three, which contains the Conclusion. It is followed by the Bibliography and the Appendices which include The Synopsis of the literary work and the Biography of the author.