

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

Having read and analyzed the novel, I conclude that the novel is talking about ethics in the society. The theme of the novel is '*one will be valued according to one's attitude and good deeds not because of one's wealth and status*', which is clearly revealed through the protagonist's action, reaction and speech.

Choosing Boston as the setting of place and connecting the novel with the background of American society in the late 19th century, the author William Dean Howells, as a realist, wants to convey the influence of the society toward the people living in it.

After analyzing the action, reaction and speech of the protagonist, I can clearly see that the protagonist's characteristics are influenced by the society around him, which puts money as the most important thing in life. Silas, who lives in that particular society, cannot resist such massive influence in his life; moreover, his work as a businessman who always seeks chance to get fortune and profit in his business makes it easier for him to be influenced. Silas's greediness, self-centeredness, arrogance and money-oriented characteristics have

made him completely unaware of his mistakes. The author William Dean Howells smartly uses these four characteristics to hamper Silas from doing the right thing in the society.

I think that happiness is what everyone pursues in life, however, it will be achieved if one does the right thing to achieve it. Wealth and status will only give one false happiness, moreover valuing wealth and status above other things in life will result in bad relationship with others. What makes one well-valued by others is his ethics reflected through his attitude and good deeds.

Howells always wants to educate people's morality through his novel. In this novel, he uses the protagonist, Silas Lapham as a means to convey his message to the reader about how to behave in a society. Besides, Howells also wants to criticize the capitalist system in American society which emphasizes on individual freedom in business to get as much profit as possible. Howells uses the protagonist as an example of the product of the capitalist society to send his message to the reader about the failure of the society at that time. Howells smartly inserts the cause and effect that will happen due to someone's decision. In the beginning the author makes the protagonist lose the precious thing in his life because of his bad characteristics. However, after the protagonist realizes his mistakes and makes a decision to follow moral code, he finally finds true happiness and does not seek material happiness any more.

It is obvious that Howells really focuses on the morality rise of the protagonist from what he has been through. Even through the title, The Rise of Silas Lapham, Howells emphasizes his preference for Silas's morality rise

compared to his wealth, which makes the issue of moral or ethics not only the major issue of the novel, but also the central message of the author.