The impact of materialistic view of life on american middle class as reflected in Sinclair Lewis’ *arrowsmith*

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Choosing the Subject

“Materialism” in the philosophical term means a belief that only material things exist. Further stated in *The World Book of Encyclopedia* that materialism is a philosophy based on the ideas that matter is the only thing in the universe that has reality and that matter is the basic of all that exists (*The World Book of Encyclopedia*, 1987, p. 273). But related to values the word of “materialism” is used quite differently. We often hear people blame the World’s shortcomings on “materialism”. In this context of meaning, the word has a derogatory flavor; a materialist is one who attaches undue importance to money, property, power, and the like (Brennan, 1967, p. 253). In other words it means that materialism is a human obsession with material possession, bodily comfort, etc. In the world of materialism everything is measured on the basis of material values while neglecting spiritual and moral values. Though the philosophical purpose of materialism was to help people lead happy lives,
without a religious or ethical context, it often degenerated into “crass materialism”, which is the greedy accumulation of goods or wealth for the sake of selfish possession or power, to the sacrifice of emotional, moral, spiritual or cultural values (Schur, 1993, p. 16). Generally, materialism as it developed in the modern western world will be defined as the placing of importance on material achievement and material well-being and not on emotional or spiritual concern. (Schur, 1993, p. 16)

In the early 20th century America raised wealth by development of its industry, the increase of American income affect the power to buy and create the consumptive life style. The values of materialism were symbolized by appearance of this life style. In the early 20th century materialistic social context such as America money becomes society’s new gospel.

Materialistic view of life has been a part of American’s life since long time ago and after the industrial revolution this view of life was blooming and spread rapidly in the early 20th century. The economic progress and giant manufactures influenced American welfare and prosperity of its people. There is no doubt that the high level of production led a high level of material comfort and that American were mighty fond of having things that were new, shiny, softly padded, conveniently arranged, efficient and so far may be effortless. American people came to enjoy a large measure of prosperity and a higher and better standard of living than they previously had known. That phenomenon forced American people to
be consumptive. Materialistic view of life appeared as a new religion in America. People tended to put a high value upon material values. All sides of their life were determined by material values. The materialism that strikes a visitor to America is not that of loving and hoarding wealth; it is a love of making and consuming wealth. It is a middle class rather than a distinctively American phenomenon, for most American are middle class. (Smith in Cury, 1984, p. 90)

Historically, the United States has less rigid class lines than most European nations. Nevertheless there have been very rich and very poor people in the United States. The nineteenth century industrialization increased the concentration of wealth at the top and poverty at the bottom. Thus it seems meaningful to speak of the middle class as those-in-between- neither extremely rich nor extremely poor. (Sellers, 1975, p. 558)

Due to the materialistic view of life on, Americans never cared anymore to descent manners and morals. The rise of new values had made social norms become distantly spaced. People paid less attention to old social values and they even neglected their own ideals. They chose to pursue material comfort rather than pursuing their ideal.

Sinclair Lewis is the first American writer who accepted Nobel Prize in literature. Through his work he dared and honestly present and criticize the American way of life. Sinclair Lewis was the leading satirist of his generation. He “reported” American life, always on the lookout for a “good

The middle class way of life with its hypocrisy, materialism, bigotry, vulgarity, and anti-intellectualism always become the major issues in Lewis’ works. Almost all of his works satirize the American middle-class life. It happens because Sinclair Lewis was born in a small middle-western town and grew among the middle class of American society. He retained many middle class elements in his own character. Sinclair Lewis was a rebel against the advertised ideals of the nineteenth century. It was a decadence of spirit and hypocrisy of moral in the midst of abounding energy, which provoked him to distress and anger. The energy itself and the things, the gadgets, which it had created, fascinated him, and he was furious because they had been captured by a predatory materialism, where money and it’s size were the only standard of success (Spiller, 1974, p. 1223). Like in *Arrowsmith*, one of his famous novels that received Nobel Prize for distinction in literature he satirized the middle class way of life with its gross materialism. *Arrowsmith*, the best if not the first novel of science, where materialism versus idealism supplies the theme. It is also satirical, frequently unfair, but packed, like the best social history, with authentic information. (Spiller, 1974, p. 1222)

*Arrowsmith* depicts a life of a middle class doctor named Dr. Martin Arrowsmith who was caught between his idealism and materialism. On one side he wanted to dedicate his knowledge to pure science and on the
other side his surrounding forced him to be materialistic by commercializing his knowledge. At first he compromised with his surrounding to commercialize his knowledge but finally he won the war inside him and decided to follow his ideal to devote his knowledge for pure science and humanity.

American middle class in the early 20th century adored wealth. They considered wealth as everything. They used all their ability to pursue wealth as much as possible, in order to raise their social class. This phenomenon made Lewis very concerns of his society. In *Arrowsmith* Lewis present a more positive idealism than any other of his work. (Blair, 1949, p. 60)

The phenomena of American middle class materialistic view of life in the early 20th century will be the focus of the discussion. For this Purpose, the researcher will have a research based on American Studies point of view. Social-cultural condition of America in the early 20th century and the novel itself will be used to understand the materialistic view of life that spreads among the American middle class.

**B. Scope of the Study**

To achieve the aim, it is necessary to limit this study in order to avoid a deviation and rambling analysis. That is why the scope of the study in this research will be focused on the impact of materialistic view of
life on American middle class in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. This thesis is also to analyze Sinclair Lewis’ idealism, which he offered to the readers as his response to the spreading of materialistic view of life among the American middle class society as reflected in the novel.

\textbf{C. Problem Statement}

1. How far does the materialistic view of life give impact on American middle class life in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century as reflected in \textit{Arrowsmith}?

2. What kind of idealism does Lewis offer to respond to the spreading of materialistic view of life?

\textbf{D. Objective of the Study}

Since this research is under the scope of American Studies, the major purpose is to see and understand American society and culture. The research in this thesis has some purposes presented as follows:

1. To know how far the materialistic view of life gives impact on American middle class life.

2. To know Lewis’ idealism that he offers to respond to the spreading of materialistic view of life.
E. Benefit

Through the study of this subject, this thesis is expected to be able to provide:

a. Additional reference of the reflection of American middle class social condition in the early 20th century.

b. A better understanding about the spreading of materialistic view of life among American middle class in the early 20th century with its impact. Further information about the idealism that Lewis’ offers as a historian and philosopher.

F. Research Methodology

This American Studies research applies library research and descriptive method for it deals with cultural documents, thus most of the activities are done by library orientation. Meanwhile the data of this research consists of two kinds of data namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data includes the narration, dialogues, characters description, setting and interpreted phenomena related to the problem. They are taken from a novel by Sinclair Lewis entitled *Arrowsmith*, published by Arrangement with Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc in 1933. While the secondary data are taken from articles, essays, critical
commentaries, and some books, either fiction or nonfiction related to the topic.

In doing this research, the writer applies a research procedure. First step is reading the novel comprehensively in order to get a full understanding of the main issues. The second step is reading books of American history to get as much as information about American condition at the time when the novel was written. The third step is reading biography of Sinclair Lewis to get much information about the author’s life and background. The fourth step is finding essays, literary criticisms and articles on the novel since a literary work is multi-interpretable. The last step, the researcher has an analysis on the novel.

G. Theoretical Approaches

This research is conducted within the boundaries of American Studies. This means that interdisciplinary approach is going to be applied in this study. American Studies attempts to analyze the problem through interdisciplinary study as Joseph J. Kwiat and Mary C. Turpie state in *Studies in American Culture* “the defining characteristic of American studies is not the size of the problem but to view any given subjects of investigation from many perspectives, to take into account as many aspects as possible.” (Kwiat and Turpie, 1980, p. 3)
Furthermore, in relation to this idea of interdisciplinary, Tremaine McDowell in his book *American Studies* underlines in following statement:

For such it is useful to separate the academic disciplines into three great divisions. The social sciences are the disciplines that deals with both facts and values, the humanities are concerned chiefly but not wholly with facts. In such a clarification, history when it deals with values falls among the humanities and among the social sciences when it deals with facts. (McDowell, 1948, p. 7)

According to the above quotations, to see the historical phenomenon in America, American Studies attempts to view the subject being analyzed from many different perspectives. It becomes like this since the subject contains any different possibilities to see and explore based on any kind of point of view. By reviewing the subject from the social and humanity perspective, the phenomenon of historical events can be found and scrutinized.

To come to the subject that can be caught up through many aspects and perspectives, American Studies sees a literary work as a piece of documentary evidence that reveals the social expression of the American society. It sees a literary work as a reliable source of information about culture since it is assumed that the manifest content of life reflects important characteristics of culture.

Based on the explanation above, it can be assumed that American studies is study that attempts to apply some studies to view a literary work,
as the starting points to reveal the cultural context, from many different perspectives. Since a literary work is a piece of documentary evidence and reliable source of cultural information, it is considered reflecting important characteristic of culture. Accordingly, this thesis tries to put a piece of literary work to reveal the larger phenomenon that is the American middle class’ materialistic view of life in the early 20th century.

Meanwhile, related to the American Studies which applies interdisciplinary studies to view a literary work many different perspectives, this study attempts to employ some approaches which are considered appropriate to the focus of the research. The approaches applied in the research are literary, biographical and sociological including philosophical approaches. The philosophical approach in this thesis is applied to dig out about philosophy that expanded in the era when the novel was published.

Since the primary source of this study is a work of literature this study applies literary approach. In relation to this approach, this study applies structural approach as the aid to comprehend the literary work and to go to the deep interpretation. The biographical approach is useful to examine the background of the author’s life which cannot be separated from his experience, his view of life, his problem, his surrounding, his environment, etc. As Leary says, “Since all literature need not be problematic, biographic materials can be used to intensify the effect of a literary works by explaining the context of its creation and the forces impinging on the author’s life which promoted or obstructed its
completion…”(Leary, 1976, p. 50). This biographical approach helps to uncover problematic aspect in the novel related to the author’s life point of view that emerges in the completion of the creative process of the writer. With this approach, researcher directly and indirectly shows in Sinclair Lewis’ vision and thought.

The last approach used in this thesis is sociological approach. As Guerin states that, “sociological approach can be used to analyze literary work in order to know the social effect on individual,'(Guerin, 1970, p. 55). The study of literary work from sociological point of view can show us the society condition through the media of language.

Through sociological point of view, the researcher can relate the characters in literary work with the reality as the background of the work. Michel Zeraffa reasserts that,”…novels often seem bound up with particular moments in the history of society and concerned with the nature of situation with history”(Zeraffa, 1973, p. 35).

The application of sociological approach in this thesis is intended to describe the reality of American life in the early 20th century, which directly or indirectly has formed the background of the setting of Arrowsmith. By combining the approaches, this research tries to analyze Sinclair Lewis’ novel Arrowsmith deeply.
H. Thesis Organization

This thesis is arranged into four chapters and each of them is subdivided into subsequent divisions.

Chapter I consists of introduction which covers the background of choosing the subject, scope of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, benefit, research methodology, theoretical approach, and thesis organization.

Chapter II consists of Sinclair Lewis’ biographical notes and literary career. This section explores also the American middle class social condition and American Middle Class’ values in the early 20th century.

Chapter III deals with the analysis of the impact of materialistic view of life on American middle class in the early 20th century, and also Lewis’ idealism that he offers to respond to the spreading of materialistic view of life.

Chapter IV consists of conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER II

THE AUTHOR AND SOCIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A. Biography and Literary Career of Sinclair Lewis.
Harry Sinclair Lewis was born on February 7, 1885, in the Minnesota village of Sauk Centre. He was the youngest of three sons of a country doctor, Edwin J. Lewis. No one now knows where the name Harry came from, but the name Sinclair, which was to become famous, was the surname of a Wisconsin dentist who was Dr. Lewis’ good friend.

When he was seventeen, his father whose forebears had lived near New Haven, Connecticut, allowed him to enroll in Yale college after six months of necessary preparation in the Overlain Academy. The college experience dashed his hopes for a happier life. A number of professors from his college, recognizing his lively intelligence and supported him to write more. He had written occasional verse in high school and now at Yale he began to write more regularly. For him writing is not merely to get social amenities but it is more than that, he wants to show that he can win the recognition and the respect from his fellows.

Almost all of his early verses and prose were imitative, occasionally of Killing but generally of Tenysson and Swinger. In 1904, his poem entitled “Lancelot” appeared in the Yale Literary Magazine. Even though the poem is an imitative but it shows the progress of his literary persona. This poem is accepted well and makes him accepted as a Literature’s editorial staff.

During two of his summers he made trips to England and on these trips he began to take systematic notes for fiction. Later on one summer Lewis returned to Sauk Centre and wrote a story called “The Village Virus.” Lately this story was written again and became a novel called Main Street. In spite of his literary success at college he studied with Upton Sinclair and all at once became his junior and general handyman at Helicon Hall near Englewood, New Jersey.

Since that period, Lewis’ father did not give him any money at all. He went to New York trying to live with his own money. He hoped to find work in the Canal then under
construction but after several months of wasting time he decided to return to New Haven and finish his education at Yale. He was readmitted to the college and he was graduated in June of 1908, a year behind his class.

He roamed over the United States for a few years where he tried to be a newspaperman without success, and continued to try to publish without much success. For a brief period he lived in a newly established bohemian colony in Carmel, California, where his associates were such writers as George Sterling and Jack London. Failing to sell his own stories, Lewis sold a number of plot (from the enormous plot file that he had put together) to London for five to fifteen dollars. This was one of the generosities from the older writer to support and to help the younger and inventive writer. From the end of 1910 until the end of 1915 he worked in publishing houses. During his vacation in one summer he wrote a boy's book, *Hike and the Aeroplane*. He published it under the pseudonym of Tom Graham.

The most important thing about Lewis was that he never gave up to write although his friends in publishing circles discouraged him to be a serious novelist he continued to work until he had what he thought as a publishable manuscript. After being rejected by several publishers, finally it was accepted by the firm of Harper and published in February of 1914. Two months later, on April 15, Lewis married to his first wife named Grace Livingstone Hegger. His first novel *Our Mr. Wren* was not successful in the market and his second novel *The Trail of the Hawk* published in 1915, met the same fate.

At work on a third novel, he found that his fate changed when the Saturday Evening Post accepted his story called "*Nature, Inc*". This acceptance was quickly followed by three more stories, and Lewis was being paid $1000 for each story. Since he had lots of money now, he resigned his position at the *Doran* publishing house. In December 1915 he had his honeymoon trip with his wife while writing literally scores of stories and books. The first of these, called *The Innocents* was in fact planned as a magazine
serial and is one of the worst books he ever wrote. In 1917 he wrote The Job which is one of the best of his early books. The fifth of his novels, called Free Air, is a sentimental fictionalization of the Lewis’ trip across the continent in a ford (car), and was published in 1919. At the same time that he was finishing Free Air, Lewis was working at what would be Main Street, finished in Washington early in the summer of 1920 and published in the fall of that year, and since then Lewis became a very famous writer. Main Street is a study of idealism and reality in a narrow-minded small-town. Main Street is the continuation of Main Streets everywhere it shattered an old American myth about the friendly small town. It means cheap shops, ugly public buildings, and citizen who are bound by rigid conventions. The protagonist, Carol Kennicott is an emancipated woman who is caught in a stultifying environment. She is ostracized from Gopher Prairie, a town that is far from the romantic picture of open and democratic American community. She tries to rebel and escape but fails, finally she is forced to compromise with it. The book parallels with Lewis’ own early life and gained controversial success.

Two years later Lewis published another controversial novel called Babbit. Why is it said so, because in this novel Lewis satirized the conformist commercialism of the middle class American businessman who adores wealth. Babbit (1922) was a devastatingly perceptive portrait of mid-western businessmen. George F. Babbitt yearns for freedom but after a brief period of rebellious behavior, he returns to fold of his clan of good fellows. In 1925 published his new novel titled Arrowsmith. In Arrowsmith Lewis presents a more positive idealism than any other of his works. Lewis’ father, grandfather, uncle, and his brother were all doctors, so he viewed medicine as one of the few fields that needs true devotion and sincerity. In this novel Lewis portrays a hero who embodies his personal ideal more than any of his other characters. Arrowsmith, depicts the life of a doctor caught between his idealism and materialism. This novel was awarded the "Pulitzer Prize", which Lewis declined. He
explained that because the award was meant for books that celebrate American wholesomeness, his novels, which are critical should not be awarded the prize.

Lewis was born and grew up among the American middle class society. He loved his country and accepted all the American way of life but he was pained by the weakness he saw in the structure of American society and the blindness of the average American to its values. Together with other writers in “Lost Generation” like Dressier’ Sinclair, Hemingway and Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis criticized his national weaknesses in his novels. In novel after novel he satirize the American character and way of life. In most of the novels Lewis tries to uncover the self-delusion and realization that were trying to represent a materialistic, confuse, and hypocrisy. As Spiller commented on Lewis in his book *Late Harvest*: “Only an enraged moralist could have satirized so effectively the materialism and conformity he felt stifling the best in human nature. (*Late Harvest*, 1981, p.137)

Sinclair Lewis was always carrying around the works of Thoreau. When he claimed him as the major influence on his work, it could have been only the basic element on his own thought, the Thoreauvian ideal of individual freedom and native integrity, that he had in mind (Schorer in O’Connor,1968, p. 77). Thoreau’s works such as *Walden* give much influence of Lewis career and thought. Lewis called *Walden* as the most searching contemporary account of the desire for a new kind of life with such idealism and diluted optimism. Almost all of Lewis’ works are satirical attack on the manners of the American middle class in the Middle West. It happened because Lewis grew up among them. With his other fellows in the Lost Generation Such as Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner and others he continues criticizing American life.

In 1926 Lewis published *Mantrap* and in 1927 he wrote *Elmer Gantry*, which was an attack on the hypocritical ministers. This was his broadest and most uncompromising satire and hardly prepared his readers for the last of his major novels, *Dodsworth* (1929), a mildly sentimental treatment of a wealthy American manufacturer. He
interrupted the writing of *Dodsworth* to write a short story “*The Man Who Knew Coolidge*” the monologue of an idiotic, sub-Babbit type named Lowell Scmaltz. Then in 1929 he finished writing Dodsworth.

At the end of 1930, Sinclair Lewis became the first American writer who accepted Nobel Prize in literature. This award was given to him with a consideration that he is a type of a writer who dared in criticizing American culture and values. Through his work he dared and honestly presents and criticizes the American way of life. The middle class way of life with its hypocrisy, materialism, bigotry, vulgarity, and anti-intellectualism always become the major issues in Lewis’ works. Sinclair Lewis was a rebel against the advertised ideals of the nineteenth century. It was a decadence of spirit and hypocrisy of moral in the midst of abounding energy, which provoked him to distress and anger. In his famous address delivered in Stockholm on December 12, 1930, and known now under the title “*The American Fear of Literature*”, his criticism brought to its climax. He attacked the atrophied tradition of gentility and academicism in American critical values, he said that the American literature is clear, cold, pure, and very dead. He praised Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson and other young writers who also disagreed with the behavior of American society. He also praised European society who appreciated writers without care about who they are and where they come from. According to Lewis, European appreciation toward literature is better than American. There are fallacies in his address, but it was composed in an authoritative spirit of that made Lewis, on that day, in that year, the spokesman what Walt Whitman had called the “*literatus*” for the literary culture of the United States of America. In December 1930 Sinclair Lewis was bigger than American knew and he was bigger than even he himself knew.

In Berlin, in early 1931, Lewis wrote to his publisher, Alfred Harcourt, of *Harcourt, Brace, and Company in New York*, to tell him that he felt that the firm had lost real interest in his books. He warned them that there was a jump in his books’ price and it
would destroy his good reputation. Another thing that makes him disappointed was the arrogance of the publisher and that they had done nothing to counteract the supercilious and denigrating remarks about Lewis in the American press. He might very well have felt that the separation was the logical way out, and their relation was over in that year.

Throughout that decade Lewis had promulgated his version of the American reality and his effort had been brought to a climax with great honor. But the decade was over, Lewis’ sense of reality was no longer central to American history. He would never be able to change that sense, but history had already changed and left him behind. His own discomforted sense of the change and of his inability to cope with the current history as confidently as he had coped with the past may have been the major reason for his dissatisfaction with his publisher.

When he was forty-six years old, he was the author of twelve published novels. There were to be twenty more years and ten more novels. The beguilements of alcohol, which had been a problem some time for him, would become a serious problem as these twenty years passed. In 1942 he was divorced from his second wife. Two years later his older son was killed in World War II combat in France. Lewis, an increasingly restless man, would move from one establishment to another, from one city to another, all over the world. He experienced a great financial loss. And then in the end of 30’s until 40’s he wrote for the stage. At the same time he found a young actress who was willing to try to comfort him, but finally the young woman abandoned him to marry a young man of her own age. Lewis began a series of restless wanderings in Europe. And there, finally, in 1951, he was to die alone, among strangers, in Roman ostentation. His corpse was sent back and buried in Sauk Centre.

Through his years of decline around 30s and 40s Lewis still continued to produce novels. Among these are, Ann Vickers (1933), a satire about an American career woman, both in a professional and, personal matters. Work of Art (1934), a novel

**B. The Early 20th Century American Middle Class Society’s Social Condition**

To find out the social background of the novel *Arrowsmith*, which was published in the year of 1925, the study has to be connected to the development of American middle class’ social condition in early 20th century, to see how far it is reflected through the work. In a sociological perspective, a literary product is regarded as its documentary aspect; it is a mirror of its age. So it is important to dig out the social condition that forms the background of the work making process.

In the early 20th century America entered a period of unprecedented technological expansion. In this period American people experience a rapid industrial progress. This progress happened because American people started to accept the machinery invention that has been invented before World War I (1914-1918). In order to reach the high efficiency of power, time and expense the machinery invention was largely expanded. The new invention with its miracles does not surprise American people as it surprised them in the previous time. American people were already accustomed and started to accept the new things that in the previous time were considered impossible by their ancestor. Although they were worried to lose their job, American people started from the intellectual to the ordinary people began to accept machine power’s presence that replaced the human power.
In the early twentieth century, science grew rapidly as continuation of the earlier scientific inventions. The progress happened because American people are very interested in science and they always try to make it expand, as Jay Martin in his book *Harvest of Change, American Literature* stated that, “American had committed themselves to science and were ready to follow where it led…” (Martin, 1967, p. 8).

Many inventors created bigger and better machinery such as textile, iron, and steel. In this period, steel was at the center of the growing industrial development. The significant fact to be mentioned was that American steel industry equal with Great Britain and German products’ combined. The longest rail way network in the world, electric railway, electric power and light have arose enthusiasm of financiers and manufacturers. In addition, manufacturing became vastly more efficient. The growing railroad trains and steamboats were larger and speedier. In communication the telephone and telegram were largely used and improved.

The improved transportation and communication strengthened the United States. The industrial revolution also carried an immense increase in the volume of production. Factories grew and employed thousands of workers. The factories competed to increase many products, so the companies needed much more employment or labors. It meant that the factories were beginning to lure people away from farms. The requirement of large number of employment stimulated rural citizens to move to urban area.

Immigration of new comers from Europe to the American urban area also gave the same impact on the development of cities in America. The wave of great urbanization and the flood of migration influenced population in cities. The population in the cities rose into high level. Population density extensively altered the social conditions. Many social problems rose as the impact of population density, such as health, housing and security.
In realm of science, one of the most popular ideologies that gave much influence and altered American mind is the theory of organic evolution. It was Charles Darwin with his most famous theory; "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection" who invented the theory in the first place. The theory means that there is a continuous struggle in every sector of life for the fittest species. In order to keep survive, the fittest species must be able to adapt in the environment and capable to compete with others. This theory inspired Americans to face every challenges and changes of life. It became casual effect of the expanding science and technology. This theory encourages individuals to be strong people in facing the hard times. In their minds they had faith that whatever hard times, they would survive if they tried hard and used any way even sometimes in vulgar ways. The theory was fitted with American condition at the time when industrials reach its peak. The upper-middle class who at the time controlled the industrialization was the strongest people. For anyone who loves power and wealth this theory is a valuable and powerful weapon to practice every way to get any thing they want.

When industrial revolution reached its peak in the twenties, American farmer still suffered. They could not enjoy the prosperity yet. Farmers were not able to organize the production and settling price because more than a third of the American agriculture productions were exported. And as the consequences, the price production depended on the condition of world market demands. The new technologies such as, new kind of fertilizers, seeds, superior cattle varieties, and new methods in preventing plant diseases apparently did not help in raising the farmer’s life prosperity. The production cost was still high and on the contrary the price of agricultural production was under standard. Similar to farmers, were labors who experience the same fate. They must struggle to get a better salary and better work schedule.

It was very clear that industrial revolution created a contrast of situation. The upper middle class who consists of businessman, contractor, and people who have
important power in industrialization such as manager, engineer, and bureaucrat became more prosperous than ever. In contrast with that fact farmers and labors still lived under the poverty line. The nation was enjoying a period of unequaled prosperity, with two vital exceptions, the farmer and the workingman (Brunger, 1970, p. 159). In that period American people especially the upper middle class experienced the greatest boom in American history. The people prosperity increased along with the rise of industrial progress.

American middle class based on their income and position divided into three groups; the upper middle class, the middle-middle class, and the lower middle class. The upper middle class consists of the well-to-do and the respected people who usually are the people behind the development of an urban city. They keep their social prestige by being members of prestigious organizations and churches. Doctors, lawyers, contractors, presidents of corporations and real estate businessman also belong to the upper middle class. The upper middle class also consists of the factory owners, well-to-do farmers, and merchants.

The middle-middle class consists of accountants, assurance employees, school teachers, and white-collar workers. They have their own houses and afford to send their children to private school. The lower middle class consists of small farmers, small shop owners, and people who give their service to the society. They have social prestige a little higher than white-collar workers do.

The ways elite class spent their time were part of the city lures. Within the changing spirit, Capitalism and Industrialization brought prosperity to the financiers and manufactures. This achievement brought complacency and self pride among them. This feeling flew to the embracing luxurious life style, hedonic, snobbish, and self-ostentation of things, money and position. Their activities were not merely basic and secondary need fulfillment but more as effort to show up their richness and social
prestige. It was understandable when those bourgeois and their families built many mansions and bungalows in remote and comfortable places far from city crowd.

As stated in the Declaration of Independence that each person are free to pursue his or her happiness. This statement was rooted in the heart of American people. When the city offered its glitter, they took this opportunity to pursue their own happiness. It was in this age that people believed that money would buy for pleasure or happiness. To have such a pleasure, one must have money, so he or she can get any kind of pleasure they want. This is known as hedonism, a doctrine believed by people who are looking for pleasure. By giving a sum of money, someone is able to get something. This fact proved that money has power. The hedonism and complacency sometimes revealed in parties and glamour which joins friends, relatives, and guests. As part of them, automobile has transformed as well new life style of upper middle class Americans. Hunting and fishing, automobile trips, horse riding, and sporting were exclusive activities they could afford. Beside automobile, clothes have run changing philosophy. It was not used for their basic functions, but more as identity recognition and social prestige. The wealthy persons became public figures and none of their steps was left unreported publicly by mass workers, especially those from pop magazines. The hedonistic spirit was absorbed inside the blood of American middle class, especially the upper-middle class.

In this period America was undergoing social and intellectual fermentation, marked by the change in social standard and the growth of self-confidence, and new thought among the intellectual. The Lost Generation, a group of intellectuals and writers was born as the result of the new thought. They were shocked by the carnage of World War I and dissatisfied with what they perceived to be the materialism and spiritual emptiness of life in the United States. They rejected the middle class values and conventional literary forms.
The changes of moral standard in United States were proven by the rise of young revolt especially colleges against traditional manner in sexual relationship. They even started to practice free sex in relationship with their couple. "When prostitution declined dramatically during the Twenties, it was partly because of the efforts of anti-vice pressure groups, but it was also the case that a young man’s regular girlfriend might well agree to pre-marital sex (Jacqueline Fear and Helen McNeil in Bradbury, 1994, p. 250).

The petting party was one of the shapes of new young habits. As quoted from Fitzgerald’s This Side of Paradise “Amory Blaine is behindhand when, already a sophomore at Princeton, he goes to ‘that great current American phenomenon, the petting party”. (Bradbury, 1994, p. 250)

The most important aspect in social standard changes was the change of woman’s role. In public area, women started to break the custom in contributing their participation in public space by entering factories and office as workers. Compared with men, women were considered more obedient, effective, cheaper-waged, and less potential in creating riots and violence. At first, women area was restricted within administrative jobs. Soon, they rushed to almost all places of works. In this period women had the same opportunity in politic, stimulated by the government admission upon women’s election right in 1920. This strengthened female lifting up their position equal with men.

C. The Early 20th century American Middle Class’ Values

Values, according to Ralph Gabriel in “American Values, Continuity and Changes” is an ideal, a paradigm setting forth desired and esteemed possible social reality, concurring that they are by definition criteria that is ideals, goals, norms, and standards." (Gabriel, 1984, p. 144)
The early 20th century introduced a new era of material expansion, with increasing wealth, leisure, and cosmopolitan people. Polite societies have forgotten all about their early Puritan suspicious of material luxury. In this period some basic values appeared as the new ideal for American people. There is some New World basic values that resulted from the development of America in the early 20th century, they are:

1. Individual Freedom

Turning to some arguments dealing with American values, under the effect of inherited spirit such as individualism and self-reliance, individual freedom has been a part of American life. It is probably the most basic of all Americans’ beliefs. The desire for freedom was what motivated their ancestors to risk their lives to come to the virgin land of America. This also is one of main reasons why immigrants have continuously come to this country. Their optimism raises as they turn toward the Statue of Liberty, which has been the symbol of American nation’s dedication to liberty and freedom. By freedom, Americans mean the desire and the ability of all individuals to control their own destiny without any external interference such as from government, ruling noble class, church, or any other organized authority.

2. Rugged Individualism

As stated in the Declaration of Independence, America indulges in glorification of individual freedom. Life, Liberty, and Pursuing of Happiness are inalienable rights that are endowed by their Creator, so that they hold these truths to be self-evident. In America, people are free to say and write about almost everything. At that time, they are also very proud to conduct, as they like to do. The developing creed of rugged individualism where people are free to use their rights is abounding in the period of booming business. They hold its creed ruggedly, that support them to be selfish and
pursue their own happiness without having to care to other’s rights. Freedom is so much a part of American life that it is often taken for granted. The belief of rugged individualism in the American free society in the early 20th century is probably the most basic and most strongly held of all Americans. Rugged individualism was the most basic value developed both in American social life and business life during the early 20th century.

3. **Self Reliance**

Self-reliance is a prize to be paid for individual freedom of which American mean as desire and the ability of all individuals to control their own destiny without outside interference from the government, a ruling noble class, the church or any other organized authority. Americans believe that individuals must learn to rely on themselves or risk losing freedom. Self-reliance means that Americans believe they should take care of themselves, solve their own problems, and stand on their own feet. They believe that success can be gained through their own effort.

4. **Equality of Opportunity**

Equality of opportunity is the belief that everyone has equal chance to succeed in the United States. This remains as the other important reason for foreigners of all around the world to become immigrants. They are encouraged to confidently enter the ‘race’ and win their fortunes with the hard competition as the rule. What Americans mean when they say that they believe in equality of opportunity do not mean that everyone is or should be equal. They do mean that each individual should have an equal chance for success. For them equality means that everybody should have equal chance to enter the race and win. Equality of opportunity in other words may be thought of as an
ethical rule. It helps ensure that the race for success is a fair one that a person does not win just because he or she was born into a wealthy or respectable family.

5. **Competition**

Americans match their energy and intelligence against that of their neighbor in a competitive contest of success. In the world of competition people who like to compete and are more successful than other are honored by being called winners. On the other hand, those who do not like to compete are not successful. When they try they are often dishonored by called losers. If every man has an equal chance to succeed in America, then it is every person’s duty to try.

6. **Material Wealth**

The reason for immigrants to come to America is to have a better life and to raise their social status. But to get success in America is hard. They must have courage to try and to suffer terribly. Finally the majority of them are even able to improve their standard of living. The phrase “going from rags to riches” becomes a slogan for the great American dream. The need to achieve material success as the way to happiness makes the American citizens very much attached to material things and rushed in harder and harder competitions. The quality and quantity of an individual’s material possession become the accepted measure of success and social status. Since people’s status in society is frequently measured by how much they own, Americans often feel pressured to spend their money on useless things and buy more than they need.

7. **Hard Work**

Hard work has been both necessary and rewarding for most Americans throughout their history. Because of this, they have to see material possession as the natural
reward for their hard work. But in some ways, material possession is seen not only as tangible evidence of people’s work, but also their abilities. Most Americans believe that if a person works hard, it is possible to have good standard of living.

8. Materialism

“Materialism” in the philoshopical term is a belief that only material things exist. Further stated in *The World Book of Encyclopedia* that materialism is a philosophy based on the ideas that matter is the only thing in the universe that has reality and that matter is the basis of all that exists (*The World Book of Encyclopedia*, 1987, p. 237). But related to values the word of “materialism” is used quite differently. We often hear people blame the world’s shortcomings on “materialism”. In this context of meaning, the word has a derogatory flavor; a materialist is one who attaches undue importance to money, property, power, and the like. In other words it means that materialism is a human obsession with material possession, bodily comforts, etc. In the world of materialism everything is measured on the basis of material values while neglecting spiritual and moral values. Though the philosophical purpose of materialism was to help people lead happy lives, without a religious or ethical context, it often degenerated into “crass materialism”, which is the greedy accumulation of goods or wealth for the sake of selfish possession or power, to the sacrifice of emotional, moral, spiritual or cultural values. Generally, materialism as it developed in the modern western world will be defined as the placing of importance on material achievement and material well-being and not on emotional or spiritual concern (Schur, 1993, p. 16). In the early 20th century America raised wealth by development of its industry. The increasing of American income affected on the power to buy and created the consumptive life style. The values of materialism were symbolized by appearance of this life style.
In the early 20th century materialistic social context such as America, money becomes society’s new gospel. Yet, wealth, or money, power, or gold in its early social context seems anti-social to be connected with some values which are socially preserved such as generosity, cooperation, charity, and selflessness. Therefore, the ability to acquire wealth- and thus power and prestige which it brings- may depend on astuteness, competitiveness, ruthlessness, as well as on egotism and even success in law breaking. (Watts, 1990, p. 193)

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

This chapter focuses on analyzing the problem formulation of this thesis to explore the American middle class materialistic view of life in the novel of Arrowsmith. The discussion of this analysis is divided into two divisions. The first part of this analysis discusses about the impact of materialistic view of life on American middle class life in the early 20th century as reflected in Lewis’ novel. Then the second, the last part of this analysis is about Sinclair Lewis’ idealism, which is offered to respond toward the spreading of materialistic view of life in the early 20th century.

A. The impact of the Materialistic View of Life on American Middle Class in the Early 20th Century
Since the end of the Civil War in 1865, American people had faced major shift in their life. The rise of Industrial Revolution had succeeded in creating changes in many phases of American life. American people used to be agrarian but the agrarian society slowly changed into industrial one. In the world of industrialization there were many new inventions in technology, which made the abounded products overflow the markets. Furthermore, people used this progress to improve life and gain prosperity. American people came to enjoy a large measure of prosperity and a higher and better standard of living than they previously had known before. The result of this prosperity is the rise of their obsession with material possession and bodily comfort such as, luxurious houses, jewelry, expensive cars, fancy clothes, etc. Furthermore, the materialistic view of life spreads very easily into the blood of American life.

The materialistic view of life has been part of American’s life since along time ago and after the Industrial Revolution this view of life was blooming and spread rapidly in the early 20th century. Materialism, according to Dictionary of Current English means, human obsession with material possession and bodily comfort, etc while neglecting spiritual and moral values (DCE, 1989, p.768). The person who takes and applies this principle is called a materialist. Yet, materialism does not only happen to a person, but it can also happen to a society. The American middle class, who at the time was the majority of the population, is easily infected by this view of life.

In accordance to its spreading, materialistic view of life brought impacts to American life. In the era of great prosperity where comforts are available everywhere people tend to spend their money for unimportant things such as buying lots of goods without thinking about the necessity of them. This habit makes them more consumptive than ever. Consumerism dashed American people in the early 20th century. The other impact of materialistic view of life in this era is the decrease of spiritual and moral standard. In the materialistic society people no longer pay attention to
descent manners and moral. Some of them even lost their spiritual belief that has been preserved by their ancestor since along time ago.

In the world of materialism wealth and money are considered the most important and valuable things. In order to achieve it people may do something immoral such as cheating, stealing, being commercial, etc. Since wealth and money are considered important, some people chose to pursue material comfort rather than pursuing their ideal. They throw away their idealism and become materialist. This phenomenon happened in all of the professions starting from businessmen, farmers, scientist, doctors, etc, and it is implicitly portrayed in the novel Arrowsmith, which tells about the life around the medical profession. By presenting the American middle class life in the early 20th century, Sinclair Lewis tries to show us in Arrowsmith how they struggle and survive in the world of materialism. Furthermore, how far the materialistic view of life gives impact on American middle class life will be explained in the following points of analysis: money became priority, people became consumptive, people became commercial, social status became significant, and the moral and spiritual decadence.

1. Money Became the Priority

Before going further the researcher feels necessary to give a brief explanation about the power of money since money is the core of materialistic view of life. According to “Dictionary of Current English” money means, payment, especially coins and banknote, given and accepted in buying and selling. (DCE, 1989, p.800). But money also means the total values of wealth and property. By giving a sum of money, someone is able to get something as the substitutes.

In the early 20th century the power of money represents the symbol of wealth, social status, and authority. This means that for some people money is the symbol representing their wealth and extravagances. In social hierarchy, money (tends to) represents one’s social status; the more money one gets, the higher social status he gets. Moreover, a very rich man is capable of using the money for getting authority or taking control over others.

The above phenomenon can be traced back in the life of American people particularly during the early 20th century. At that period of time, people treated money in such a way that becomes powerful. All this happens because the materialistic view of life is taking place and reaching its high peak. As a consequence, people become more materialistic than ever.

Actually the rise of the materialistic view of life during the early 20th century cannot be separated from the role of the Industrial Revolution in the United States of America. There is no doubt that the industrialization has successfully brought progress and prosperity to the nation and opened more opportunities for all the citizens of America to earn money. It also became the magnet that drew the immigrants from all over the world to come to search for a better life and prosperity. Since America is blessed with rich raw material, it is no doubt that the immigrants come and try to conquer it.

The result of the industrial progress can be seen in machine innovation, which finally results in the invention of automobile. This invention, of course, brings a benefit for society. It helps people save time. Indeed, this invention brings benefit but it also brings consequences. American people were so exhilarated by the comfort and pride that they became more consumptive than before.

Arrowsmith, which takes place around the early 20th century era, tells much about this power of money and the consequences it brought. The more people worshipping the money the greedier they become in earning money. This condition is reflected through the story of Arrowsmith. Their thirst for money gives a good reason for them to be called what Sinclair Lewis called as “the money grinner”. The figures who are represented this phenomenon are some of Martin Arrowsmith (the main character) fellow doctor such as, Almus Pickerbaugh, and Angus Duer. Both of them think that money and power are the most important thing in the world. As a
doctor they supposed to dedicate their knowledge and ability for humanism but unfortunately, they are using it to gain wealth, fame and power.

In the world of materialism money has great power upon men’s life. For some people money is “a badge” representing their success, prestige, social status, and wealth. In the early 20th century money became the goal and proof of success. Money is regarded as the symbol of material success and used to get prestige in society. Since men were judging based on how much they own, American people especially the middle class (tends to) consider that it will be easier if they have much money and power. In Arrowsmith this phenomenon is implicitly portrayed. It is shown in the conversation between Martin Arrowsmith (the main character of the story) with his first girl friend Madelaine Fox when he was in the first year of medical school at University of Winnemac:

“At the same time Martin, one does have to be practical, doesn’t one! Think how much more money---no, I mean how much more social position and power for doing good a successful doctor has than one of these scientists that just putter and don’t know what’s going on in the world. Look at a surgeon like Dr. Loizeau, riding up to the hospital in a lovely car with a chauffeur in uniform, and all his patients simply worshiping him, and then your Max Gottlieb---somebody pointed him out to me the other day, and he had on dreadful old suit, and I certainly thought he could stand a hair-cut.” (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.28)

Madelaine thought that money could bring good social position and power. That is why she persuaded Arrowsmith to become a materialistic doctor. She is comparing Dr. Loizeau and all the glory of being a successful surgeon with a pure scientist like Dr. Max Gottlieb who dedicated his knowledge for science but look poor and sloppy.

Madelaine was the upper middle class university student, who preparing to teach English. She has a strong desire to set a husband, but she wanted one whom she can mold into her own taste.

“Few women can for long periods keep from trying to improve their men, and to improve means to change a person from what he is, whatever that may be, into something else.

Girls like Madeline Fox cannot be restrained from improving for more than a day at a time. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.51)

Madelaine was engaged with Arrowsmith. She expected Arrowsmith as his future husband. She has strong desire to change Arrowsmith and kept him away from his ideal to be a pure scientist. Madelaine hoped that Arrowsmith would become a successful doctor, so that he can provide her with wealth and fame she always dream on.

From the above quotation we can conclude that in the materialistic society social context such as America, people are scrutinized by the amount of their money. As Arrowsmith remembered his lecture Dr. Roscoe Geake once told him that a man is appreciated by the amount of money he can achieved:

” …Yet he never forgets that unfortunately the world judges a man by the amount of good hard cash he can lay away. The graduates of the University of Hard Knocks judge a physician as they judge a businessman, not merely by his alleged ‘high ideals’ but by the
horse power he puts into carrying them out and making them pay!” (Arrowsmith, 1949, p. 92)

For a man like Dr. Roscoe Geake, it is important to have money and power as much as ones can get. He believed that money and the power brought with it could make people put respect on him. That is why he lectured his medical students that people will be judged based on their wealth and power. The power of money has influenced Geake view of life.

2. People Became Consumptive

In the early 20th century, American people enjoyed many comfort produced by new invention in technology. Since American ideal is to make a good comfortable life, they spoiled their life with luxurious life style. It is obvious that as a consumptive society, American middle class love to spend their money for pleasure fulfilment. They love to entertain themselves by attending an opera in very luxurious theatre, as done by Leora and Nelly Byers when they were invited by Dr. Angus Duer to accompany him:

In the slightly Midwestern city of Zenith, the appearance of a play “with the original New York cast” was an event. (What play it was did not much matter.) The Dodsworth Theatre was splendid with the aristocracy from the big houses of Royal Ridge. Leaora and Nelly Byers admired the bloods---graduates of Yale and Harvard and Princenton, Lawyers and bankers, motor manufacturers and inheritors of real estate, virtuosi of golf, familiars of New York---who with their shrill and glistening women occupied the front rows. Miss Byers pointed out the Dodsworth, who were often mentioned in Town Topics. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p. 85)

The American capitalist economic system has produced the American bourgeois class. In the world of prosperity the bourgeois people live in extravagant life and they love to use their money for great pleasure. Socially, they often hold luxurious parties in order to celebrate something or just for having fun and also to show up their prestige. This phenomenon was symbolized in the habits of Madelaine Fox, who loves organized parties:

Fudge parties, skating parties, sleighing parties, a literary party with the guest of honor a lady journalist who did the social page for the Zenith Advocate-Times-Madelaine leaped into an orgy of jocund but extraordinarily tiring entertainments. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p. 50)

Madelaine often organized parties in her luxurious apartment to increase her social status. She enjoyed party very much, which symbolizes her materialistic view of life. Madelaine character is a representative of the other Madelaines in the real world, which Lewis wants to show to the reader.

In the world of materialism, it is common for many Americans from high social status to spend their money to fulfil their useless desire on things. It is also common in the early 20th century for the American upper-middle class people to live in extravagant house:
The members of the Group were very rich, and one of them, Montgomery Mugford, knew something about his great-grand father. They lived in Tudor manor houses and Italian villas so new that he scarred lawns had only begun to grow. They had large cars and large cellars, though the cellars contained nothing but gin, whiskey, vermouth, and few sacred bottles of rather sweet champagne. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p. 269)

Besides using their money to build luxurious houses they also spent it to buy expensive cars such as the Rolls Royce. Arrowsmith rich second wife has a set of Rolls Royce with chauffeur that always ready to escort her to her husband’s laboratory:

The Rolls Royce section of Joyce’s set the rumor panted that there was a new diversion in an exhausted world going out to Martin’s laboratory and watching him work. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p. 48)

Since one of the shapes from materialistic view of life is to wear stylish clothes American enjoyed shopping very much. It is portrayed in Arrowsmith that every member of the country club in Nautilus where Arrowsmith and his wife once invited, is great shopper:

Every one in the Group was familiar with New York-they stayed at the St. Regies or the plaza and went about buying clothes and discovering small smart restaurant- and five of the twelve couples had been in Europe; had spent a week in Paris, intending to go to art galleries and actually going to the more expensive fool-traps of Montmartre. (Arrowsmith, 1949, pp.269-270)

Besides shopping, travelling especially to Europe is one of the middle class favorite activities. It is portrayed in the character of Joyce Lanyon, Arrowsmith’s second wife. Joyce loved to travel over Europe, she also introduced it to Arrowsmith by taking him to Europe. They wandered along Europe for three months. In the early 20th century travelling to Europe became the way to raise prestige and social status.

The way elite class spent their time is part of the city lures. Within the changing spirit, capitalism and industrialization brought prosperity to the financiers and manufactures. This achievement brought complacency and self pride among them. The feeling flew to the embracing luxurious life style, such as party including hedonic, snobbish, and exaggerate display of wealth, money and position. Since “predatory materialism” captured them the activities are not merely basic and secondary need fulfilment but more as effort to show up their richness and social prestige.

In a materialistic society the bourgeois and their families built many houses, mansions and bungalows in remote and comfortable places far from the city as their status symbols in society. The Tredgold family is one of the families who built their house far from the city:

The Tredgold house was on the highest knoll (fully twenty feet above the general level of the plain) in Ashford Grove, which is the Back Bay of Nautilus. It was a Colonial Structure, with a sun-parlor, a white-paneled hall, and a blue and silver drawing-room. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p. 266)
Building their houses far from the city is not merely looking for comfort but also to show up their wealth and power as a rich family.

The most important result caused by the technological inventions is the invention of automobile. It was Henry Ford, who firstly introduced it to the American people. The Ford motor company produced products with interchangeable parts.

It is an old frame mansion comfortable with maples, and a line of Fords and a lumber-wagon in which the overalled farmers have come to town…Iowa has the richest land, the lowest illiteracy rate, the largest percentages native-born whites and motor-car owners. (*Arrowsmith*, 1949, p. 213)

At any rate, most people during the early 20th century were preoccupied with acquiring the newest model automobile to express their personality.

America has been blessed with a rich supply of raw materials. It learned during the depression that even rich country can impoverish if it fails to use its wealth to benefit the majority. A sizeable portion of what it produces goes overseas; agricultural and industrial machinery have been sent with the hope that standards of production and consumption can be raised in other parts of the world too. There is no denying the fact that the high level of production does lead to a high level of material comfort. It is clear that Americans are mighty fond of having things that are new, shiny, softly padded, conveniently arranged, efficient, and so far may be effortless. The bread comes already sliced so that the housewife did not need to exert herself to slice it and food comes ready-cooked and frozen. With all the facilities they have the consumerism life style dashed American mind as the consequences of the materialistic view of life which the achievement of material comfort stands as one of the foundations.

3. People Became Commercial

As mentioned above that in the early 20th century American people consider money as the most valuable thing in the world. In the world of materialism where money and the sizes are the only things that matter, American people rise its commercialism ethos. Since money is used to symbolize their prestige, power, extravaganzas, social status, American people used all their ability to earn it as much as they can. Based on the perception above American people are capable to do immoral thing, and to be commercial is one of their efforts to increase their material wealth. Commercialism did not only happen in a business competition it also happened in the scientific competition field. The commercialism in science is depicted in *Arrowsmith* when one of Martin’s professors, Dr: Roscoe Geake lectured his students about how to get a suitable fees for a doctor:

“Knowledge is the greatest thing in the medical world but it’s no good whatever unless you can sell it, and to do this you must first impress your personality on the people who have the dollars. Whether a patient is a new or an old friend, you must always use *salesmanship* on him.” (*Arrowsmith*, 1949, p. 91)

For a materialistic doctor like Geake it is important to use salesmanship in the medical profession and the desirability of accumulating good hard cash. Explicitly he suggested his student to be commercial doctors.
In *Arrowsmith*, Lewis further implicitly portrayed the commercialism in science through the events surrounding the character of Dr. Max Gottlieb when he decided to join with Hunziker Pharmaceutical Company, of Pittsburg. After the first six months in working for the company, Gottlieb realized that most of the young technical experts to whom he worked were all commercialist experts:

In the enormous staff dining-room Gottlieb found scores of competent young chemists and biologists who treated him with reverence. He liked them. If they talked too much of money---of how much this new tincture of cinchona ought to sell and how soon their salaries would be increased---yet they were free of careful pomposities of college instructors. (*Arrowsmith*, 1949, p. 150)

The changes in technology in the early 20th century have been amazing and have had tremendous effect on the U.S. society. The developments brought the widespread use of the media. In the business field, people used the media to advertise their products to the market such as, drugs, foods, cosmetics, etc. Gottlieb discovers that Hunziker Company is producing, advertising and selling products without firstly check whether the product is safe to be consumed or not. They sold cancer remedy and a complexion cream guaranteed to turn dark skin white:

He discovered now that the Dawson Hunziker Company was quite all he had asserted in earlier days. They did make excellent antitoxins and ethical preparations, but they were also producing a new “cancer remedy” manufactured from orchid, Pontifically recommended and possessing all the value mud. And to various billboard advertising beauty companies they sold millions of bottles of a complexion-cream guaranteed to turn a Canadian Indian guide as lily-fair as the angels. This treasure cost six cents a bottle to make and a dollar over the counter, and the name of Dawson Hunziker was never connected with it. (*Arrowsmith*, 1949, p.151)

From the above phenomenon we can conclude that in the world of materialism people can be that low. To advertise their product a company ignored whether they have lied to the consumer or not. Based on their commercialism view, the most important thing is how to earn profit as much as they can from selling their product. For most women love to look beautiful, they become the perfect targets of the advertisement.

4. **Social Status Became Significant**

One of the most striking impacts of the American middle class materialistic view of life is that social status became significant. As mentioned before, some people use money and wealth to increase their social status. The wealthy people gain their superiority in the society. They make their own groups, which consist only the rich and respectable people to strengthen their superiority in the society. This phenomenon portrayed in the novel. When Arrowsmith and his wife moved to Nautilius they were invited to a country club which all members were rich and respectable people:
There was in Nautilus a country club which was the axis of what they called Society, but there was also a tribe of perhaps twelve families in the Ashford Grove section who, though they went to country club for golf, condescended to other golfers, kept to themselves, and consider themselves as belonging more Chicago than Nautilus. They assumed that they were all welcome at any party given by any of them, and none of their parties was any outside the Group invited except migrants from larger cities and occasional free lances like Martin. They were a tight little garrison in a heathen town. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p. 269)

The members of the group were very proud of their social status that they do not expect any member and guests from outside of their group for the party. They only invited guests of important people from larger cities. They shared their interests in sport, pleasure and hobby.

The importance of social status also happens in relationship and marriage life. It is portrayed in the character of Angus Duer, Arrowsmith’s friend at the universities who always chose a girl friend from high social status. He thought that it was important to get married and make comrade to someone from the high social status to bring social advancement:

Angus was studying Leora, looking from her to Martin, watching their glances of affection. That keen young man should make comrade of a girl who could not bring him social advancement, that such a thing as the boy and girl passion between Martin and Leora could exist, was probably inconceivable to him. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.85)

For a guy like Duer it was impossible to watch the affection between Martin and Leora. He thought that a girl like Leora could not bring social advancement for a young doctor like Arrowsmith. Duer himself was finally married to an amber, and ambitious rich young woman.

American consider that whoever come from a high social status (wealthy family) can rule the social class and have great influence toward society and that man judged by reputation and family background. Furthermore, the significance of social status becomes part of American middle class life in the early 20th century. Their desire on material wealth is transformed into the desire to improve their social status.

5. Moral and Spiritual Decadence

The influences of view of life on materialism give great impact to American people. In the materialistic terms everything is measured on the basis of material values while neglecting spiritual and moral value. The passion of greed on money encourages them to do any efforts to become rich, such as stealing, gambling and also become prostitutes. In the world of materialism people no longer pay attention to their earlier moral and spiritual concept of life. Furthermore some people develop their dishonest character by stealing. When Gottlieb missed twenty dollars from his desk, he asked his son whether he took the money or not. His son admitted that he stole the money and did not feel sorry for that:

Gottlieb missed twenty dollars from his desk. And than he asked his son “my boy, did you take the money from my desk? And the boy answered; “yes I did! And I’ve got to
have some more! I’ve got to get some clothes and stuff.” It’s your fault. You bring me up to train with lot of fellows that have all the cash in the world, and than you expect me dress like hobo!”

“Stealing—"

“Rats! What”s stealing! You’re always making fun of these preachers that talk about Sin and Truth and Honesty and all those words that”ve been used so much they don’t mean a darn’ thing and—I don’t care!(Arrowsmith, 1949, p.154)

Gottlieb was very disappointed to find that his son did not regret for stealing his father’s money. Now he knew that his son was already captured by a materialistic society life style with its luxurious appearance and performance.

As the consequences of the materialistic view of life prostitution marked the early 20th century. Some people practised on prostitution because they wanted to improve their life with the easiest way. Some of them were even married to an old rich man just to get his heritage. In Arrowsmith this phenomenon is implicitly portrayed in the character of Mrs. McCandels. She did everything to improve her life, even though she must do it in a very low and disgrace thing:

Mrs. McCandless had once been a “hired girl” then nurse, then confidante, then wife to the invalid Mr. McCandelss, wholesale grocer and owner of real estate. When he died she inherited everything. There was a suit, of course, but she had an excelent lawyer.(Arrowsmith, 1949, p.287)

Mrs. McCandless tried and legalized anything in order to become a prosperous person. She did everything started; to become a hired girl until married to an old and invalid rich man. She practiced on prostitution, and it was continued after the death of his invalid husband, and now she was doing this not merely for money but also for fun:

She was a grim, graceless, shady, mean woman, yet a nymphomaniac. She was not invited into Nautilus’ society, but in her unaired parlor, on the mildewed couch, she entertained seedy, belching, oldish married men, a young policeman to whom she often lent money, and the-contractor-politician, F..X. Jordan.(Arrowsmith, 1949, p.287)

Because of her materialistic view of life Mrs. McCandless loses her moral and spiritual values. She is so eager in pursuing wealth that she forgets about her traditional concept of life such as, courteous manner, honesty, and faith.

Turning some arguments dealing with American values, under the effect of inherited spirit such as individualism and self-reliance, individual freedom has been a part of American life. It is probably the most basic of all Americans’ beliefs. Under the Freudian influence, in the early 20th century American men and women experienced abrupt shifts in sexual behavior. Both American men and women try to equate their sexual availability with personal freedom. Free sex is no longer considered taboo. Many marriages ruin because both wife and husband are having affair:
Besides motoring, drinking, and dancing to the Victrola, the chief diversion of the group was cards. Curiously, in this completely unmoral set, there were no flirtations; they talked with considerable freedom about “sex”, but they all seemed monogamic, all happily married or afraid to appear unhappily married. But when Martin knew them better he heard murmurs of husbands having “times” in Chicago. Of wives picking up young men in New York hotels, and he scented furious restlessness beneath their superior sexual calm. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.270)

Martin found that many respectable citizens of Nautilus, both husbands and wives were cheated their couples. From the outside their marriage life seemed happy but inside they were not happy.

The materialistic view of life give much impact in changing the American moral and spiritual standard of life. In order to get material achievement and comfort people forget about their moral and spiritual belief. Some people even use the religious institution such as church as the place to gain business partner. This phenomenon can be seen in the character of Dr. Couglin who considered church and priest as a mediator for business:

“ And a fellow from down there was telling me Arrowsmith is great on books and study but he’s a freethinker- never goes to church. “Is that a fact! It is great mistake for any doctor to not identify himself with some good solid religious denomination, whether he believes the stuff or not. I tell you a priest or a preacher can send you an awful lot of business. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.196)

Through the novel of Arrowsmith Sinclair Lewis criticized the American middle class life in the early 20th century which was dominated by their materialistic view of life. By presenting it with satires, he is very concerned with his people manners that had been influenced by the materialistic ethos. Through the novel, he does not only expose the materialism side but he also offers his positive idealism to the reader. In addition to this matter, in the next subchapter, the researcher presents the idealism, which Lewis offers to respond the spreading of the materialistic view of life.

B. Lewis’ Idealism to Respond to the Spreading of Materialistic View of Life.

Arrowsmith is one of the best novels Sinclair Lewis ever wrote that he won the Pulitzer Prize in Literature for it in 1926. The novel basically reveals the life of medical professions. It is not surprising because Lewis grew up among it. His father and brothers were all doctors. In Arrowsmith Lewis depicts the life of a doctor who is caught between materialism from his surrounding and his own idealism. Besides revealing the American middle class materialistic view of life, in this novel Lewis presents a more positive idealism than any other of his works. For his career life Lewis was influenced by the work of Henry David Thoreou. Thoreou’s works such as Walden gives much influence on Lewis career and thought. Lewis called Walden the most searching contemporary account of the desire for a new kind of life with such
idealism and diluted optimism. Through the character of Martin Arrowsmith, Sinclair Lewis presents his positive idealism to respond to the spreading of the materialistic view of life.

The novel of Sinclair Lewis, *Arrowsmith* depicts a story of a young doctor named Martin Arrowsmith. From the time he was fourteen years old, Martin Arrowsmith was preparing for his career as a scientist in the field of medicine. While his contemporaries were engaged in money grabbing, status seeking and worldly diversions, he remained faithful to his ideals of honesty and the search for truth. Because of this uncompromising attitude, he lost several opportunities for promotion and increased popularity as a doctor.

Arrowsmith is a son of the owner of New York Clothing Bazar, he grew up in a small town of Elk Milk, in the state of Winnemac. The story begins when the fourteen years old Martin Arrowsmith became the unpaid assistant of Doc. Vickerson, the first of numerous medical men who had influenced the life of Martin Arrowsmith. In this novel Lewis characterized Doc Vickerson as a fat old man, dirty and a drunkard. One day when he was drunk of Jamaica rum he was garrulous. He commands his young assistant to read book about anatomy and advises him to “get training” in basic science in order to become a leading-physician and earn five thousand dollars a year:


Though perhaps Doc Vic was drunk and did not realize what he was talking about yet his advise was able to fire the ambition of young Arrowsmith. Doc Vickerson also advise Arrowsmith to plan his future.

The story continues when Martin Arrowsmith entered the University of Winnemac in 1904. At that time he was twenty-one years old. Sinclair Lewis portrays Winnemac University as a snobbish rich-man’s college and as the property of the people of the state. Moreover, he describes that whoever graduates from the University, both men and women, are expected to lead moral lives, play bridge and drive good cars. He also describes that the students are also expected to be enterprising in business, occasionally to mention books, though they are not expected to have read them. In the university Arrowsmith found that his fellow students were concerned only in the value of money. Surrounded by his materialistic fellow students he began to distress:

> “Well these darn’ studes, they aren’t trying to learn science; they’re simply learning a trade. They just want to get the knowledge that’ll enable them to cash in. They don’t talk about saving lives but about ‘losing cases ’losing dollars! And they wouldn’t even mind losing cases if it was a sensational operation that’d advertise ‘em! They make me sick!” *Arrowsmith*, 1949, pp.26-27

Despite his materialistic fellow students, Arrowsmith found a friend and a lecturer who had the same ideal with him. They are Cliff Clawson and Dr. Max Gottlieb. He considered Clif Clawson as his best friend, while he considered Dr. Gottlieb as an idol, and a true seeker scientist. Clif Clawson is the safest companion Arrowsmith had ever had. No matter how much
bad beer he drank, Clif was never much intoxicated than in his normal state. Martin and Clif are best friends, with Martin’s speculativeness and Clif’s buoyancy the two of them fit each other. As they sat in a back-room, at a table glistening with beer-glass rings, Clif shook his finger and babbled:

“You’re only one ‘at gets me, Mart. You know with all the hell-raising, and all the talk about bein’ c’mercinal that I pull on these high boys like Ira Stinkey, I’m jus’ sick o’ c’mercinalism an’ bunk as you are. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.24)

The friendship between Martin and Clif is based on their same ideal of how to be a good doctor. But it is a pity that Clif had to leave the university and developed his career in business as an automobile salesman.

Besides Martin Arrowsmith, Lewis uses the character of Dr. Max Gottlieb to represent his positive idealism. Against the background of graft and social climbing and insincerity, the figure of Dr. Max Gottlieb stands out as a pure scientist and a seeker of truth:

“…Gottlieb! Ideal of research! Never bein’ content with what seems true! Alone, not carin’ a damn, Square-toed as a captain on the bridge, working allnight, getting to the bottom of things!” (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.25)

In the dissecting room of the university Max Gottlieb was about to assassinate a guinea pig with anthrax germs in front of the students. Through the process of assassinating the guinea pig, Lewis portrays Gottlieb as a brilliant surgeon whom his students impressed by. He might have been a first-rate surgeon and made fifty thousand dollars a year but he chose to be a laboratory man with four thousand dollars salary a year:

“Gottlieb is an old laboratory plug; he hasn’t got any imagination; he sticks here instead of getting out into the world and enjoying the fight. But he certainly is handy. Awfully good technique. He might have been a first rate surgeon, and made fifty thousand dollars a year. As it is, I don’t suppose he gets a cent over four thousand!” (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.39)

In the world of materialism where money and power were the only thing that matter makes Lewis concerns of his society. The idealism that Lewis built inside the character of Max Gottlieb as pure scientist and honest man who give priority to humanism, shows Lewis’ intentions to share his thoughts and positive idealism to the readers.

Lewis shows in the novel that the effect of Gottlieb’s teaching, experiments, and confidence has deepened Arrowsmith’s admiration of the man. It encourages Martin to follow Gottlieb’s path as a pure scientist and a truth-seeker. Gottlieb sees Arrowsmith talent and spirit to become pure scientist. Soon Gottlieb promoted Arrowsmith as his assistant.

Gottlieb sent his new assistant to the hospital in Zenith. In this hospital Martin knew a girl named Leora Tozer, a probationer nurse who finally became his wife. When Martin was engaged with Leora he had already engaged with another girl who he met few years ago. She is Madelaine Fox, a stylist, materialistic upper middle class university student who tried to change Arrowsmith. Arrowsmith chose Leora rather than Madelaine, because, Leora never wanted to change him. Eventually she supported Arrowsmith’s ideal. Sinclair Lewis creates Madelaine Fox character after his own wife, Grace Hegger Lewis. Evidently, Lewis prefers the
permissive type of woman, exemplified by Leora Tozer, especially for the wife of a character like Arrowsmith, whose first love is science with everything else in the world secondary.

Leora Tozer is the daughter of a bank owner of Whatsylvania, North Dacota. Although, she belongs to the well-to-do family for rural people Leora is different with Madelaine. Leora is rather casual, she is also feminine but undemanding.

Martin’s student days are over, and his internship is beginning. His marriage has had a wonderful effect on him. Yet the thought of Gottlieb and scientific research will occasionally intrude, and he still dreams of a small laboratory of his own. The idealism in him is not entirely subdued. Again Sinclair Lewis tries to present his positive idealism. In the world of materialism when bribery becomes common, Lewis creates the honest character on the personality of Arrowsmith. One night while Arrowsmith was on duty, he helped a bank president out from a dive. Since Arrowsmith had helped him, the bank-president’s family tried to give him a sum of money to keep their good reputation. : “He took a bank-president out of a dive: he helped the family conceal the disgrace: he irritably refused their bribe” (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.130). Arrowsmith was offended by their intention and refused the money, he did it because he is a honest man.

Lewis portrays in Arrowsmith, that in the era of booming business, scientists are valued almost as highly in Great Britain as distillers, cigarette manufacturers, and owners of obscene newspapers, and that catching microbe is no work for man at a time when heroes are building bridges and selling cigars.

In the world of materialism where commercialism dashed the scientific field, Sinclair Lewis presents the character of Max Gottlieb as a scientific hero. Lewis depicts the idealism of a true scientific in Gottlieb’s personality. When Gottlieb decided to join a large Pharmaceutical Company, the “Hunziker Pharmaceutical Company”, he was persuaded to market his invention in a large quantity. Moreover the company would like to patent his discoveries that no one else could produce it. The company was going to reward him with big salaries and commission if he agreed to market it:

"I lay awake half the night thinking about your discovery, Dr. Gottlieb. I’ve been talking to the technical director and sales manager and we feel it’s time to strike. We’ll patent your method of synthesizing antibodies and immediately put them on the market in large quantities, with a great big advertising campaign you know not circus it, of course, strictly high-class ethical advertising. We’ll start with anti diphtheria serum. By the way, when you receive your next check you’ll find we’ve raise your honorarium to seven thousand a year. “Hunziker was a large puss, now, and Gottlieb death still. “Need I say, my dear fellow, that if there’s the demand I anticipate, you will have exceedingly large commissions coming!"

Hunziker leaned back with a manner of "How’s that for glory, my boy?" (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.152)

Even though the Company offered him much money, Gottlieb disagreed to market his invention in premature production. He demanded that his invention should not be patented and must be opened to all laboratories. As a true scientist he would not let money and fame destroy his ideal. He never intended to give up his ideals in pure science:

Gottkief spoke nervously: “I do not approve of patenting serological processes. They should be open to all laboratories. And I am strongly against premature production or
even announcement. I think I am right, but I must check my technique, perhaps improve it be sure. Then, I should think there should be no objection to market production, But in very small quantities and in fair competition with others, not under patents, as if this was a dinglebat toy for Christmas tradings!" (*Arrowsmith*, 1949, p.152)

As soon as Gottlieb realized that the Hunziker Pharmaceutical Company would keep him away from his ideal he decided to leave the company. He decided to join the McGurk Institute, which he considered as the soundest and freest organization for pure scientific research. He had pictured a Heavenly laboratory in which good scientists might spend eternity in happy and thoroughly impractical research of McGurk Institute.

After finishing his internship in Zenith, Martin Arrowsmith decided to establish his own practice in Wheatsylvania, the hometown of his wife Leora Tozer Arrowsmith. Again Sinclair Lewis presents his positive idealism in the narrative struggle of Arrowsmith when he found the dullness of the citizen of Wheatsylvania. As soon as he opened his office and began his actual practice of medicine, he realized that he was being forced by circumstance to do things beyond his specialized abilities. As he remembered once his lecturer, Dr. Silva had warned him that a country doctor must be capable to do anything for the patients even though it is beyond his ability:

> “Don’t forget the country doctor often has to be not only physician but dentist, yes, and priest, divorce lawyer, black-smith, chauffeur, and road engineer, and if you are to lily – handed for those trades, don’t get out of a trolley line and beauty parlor.” (*Arrowsmith*, 1949, p.171)

In Wheatsylvania, Arrowsmith did his best to serve his society as a good doctor. He even helped the farmers by inventing a vaccine to control blackleg in cattle. But apparently, the veterinarian of the country denounced him for intruding and influenced farmers not to use the vaccine. After trying hard dedicating his knowledge to the people, Arrowsmith gave up because the people of Wheatsylvania are too snobbish to accept changes. He and Leora decided to move to a larger place called “Nautilus”, a town with seventy thousand citizens, which a few score of people are wealthy and the rest mostly are industrial workers.

In Nautilus, Arrowsmith and his wife were courted by a society where social and professional climbing and temporary fame were the most important things in life. Soon the young doctor and his wife became members of an exclusive country club, whose members were very rich. The rapid rise of the Arrowsmiths world was paralleled with Martin’s rise to the directorship of the Department of Health. Dr. Almus Pickerbaugh, the former director was nominated for congress by the Republican Party and left Arrowsmith in charge of the Department while the candidate was out for campaign. As soon as Pickerbaugh’s victory, Arrowsmith replaced Pickerbaugh’s position as director of the Department. One of Arrowsmith acts as director was providing free clinical facilities. This act invited many complaints from the other doctors who were only concerned with money and fame:

> Now you see here, Mart. As you know, Mrs. Watters and I have done everything in our power to make you and Leora welcome. Glad to do anything I can for a fellow alumnus of old Winnemac. But at the same time, there are limits, you know! Not that I’ve got any objection to your providing free clinical facilities. Don’t know but what it’s a good thing to treat the damn’ lazy, lousy-pauper class free, and keep the D.B.’s off the books of the
regular physicians. But same time, when you begin to make a practice of encouraging a lot of folks, that can afford to pay, to go and get free treatment, and practically you attack the integrity of the physicians of this city that have been giving God knows how much of their time to charity. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p. 284)

The fact that Arrowsmith providing free clinical facilities for the poor people make some reactions from other doctors. They disagreed with Arrowsmith’s policy to open free clinical facilities. They were too greedy to share their ability for humanism and to shallow understand Arrowsmith. Arrowsmith even lost some of friends because of it.

Sinclair Lewis uses the character of Martin Arrowsmith as a seeker of truth to share his idealism against the American materialistic society. Lewis depicts that Arrowsmith chose to spend his time in laboratory rather than to attend party and sort of thing:

…the Group had a monopoly of all Freedom and Amusingness, and they expected the Arrowsmiths to appear for cocktails and poker every Saturday and Sunday evening. They could not understand why Martin should desire to spend his time in a laboratory, drudging over something called “streptolysin”, which had nothing to do with cocktails, motors, steel windmills, or insurance. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p. 288)

The people of Nautilus expected Arrowsmith and his wife to attend their social activities and parties. They did not understand why Arrowsmith was so dedicated to his job and spent times in laboratory instead of joining the country activities.

Many oppositions did not approve what Arrowsmith did to the country. They tried anything to prevent Arrowsmith from obtaining all that he deserved. They cut his salary to the points that he was practically forced to resign or starve. Meanwhile, Arrowsmith kept in touch with his former friend from the universities, he was Angus Duer who became a highly successful surgeon with Rouncefield Clinic in Chicago. Duer offered a job to Arrowsmith with a salary of twenty-five hundred dollars a year. Arrowsmith was very disappointed with the people of Nautilus and with his own life. Arrowsmith vowed that he gave up with pure science and that he gave up his ideal as a dedicated scientist and tried to make money from now on: “I never knew that I could be so badly licked. I never want to see a laboratory or public health again. I’m done with everything but making money.” (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.297)

Arrowsmith was so desperate, that he chose to join the ROUNCEFIELD CLINIC. He knew that he would work with other commercial doctors in the Clinic and he wished that he could become one of them:

“I suppose this Rouncefield Clinic is probably nothing but a gilded boob-trap scare the poor millionaire into having all the fancy kinds of examinations and treatments the traffic will bear. I hope it is! I expect to be a commercial-group doctors the rest of my life. I hope I have the sense. (Arrowsmith, 1949, p.297)

Arrowsmith forced himself into something beyond his nature as a pure scientist in the ROUNCEFIELD CLINIC. Eventhough he already vowed that he would become a commercial doctor, Arrowsmith could not just throw away his idealism as a seeker of truth. After working for a few years in the clinic he gave up, he could not be a commercialist and denied his fate as pure
scientist. He decided to take Leora to New York and joined Max Gottlieb in the McGurk Company. He enjoyed working with his idol, Max Gottlieb. He dedicated all his abilities to science.

Sinclair Lewis depicts that after America entered World War I in 1917 there were bubonic plague cases that dazzled the West Indies. The bubonic plague was brought to West Indies, through Marseilles and other European ports. Rats from the infected Castle escape in St. Hubert, and the first victim died of plague. This small tropical city of a hundred thousand inhabitants was a British possession. Arrowsmith was signed by the Institute to eradicate the plague. Leora insisted on joining his husband eventhough Arrowsmith insisted her not to go. Arrowsmith succeeded in controlling the plague but he lost Leora for that. While he was on duty helping people from the plague, he left Leora alone in the hotel. It is to bad that Leora was infected by the plague and died when her husband was not there to give her the vaccine that can save her life. He returned to New York and mourned for Leora. He was lonely in New York. He found a companion in Joyce Lanyon, widower of a rich man whom he met earlier in St. Hubert. They were married later in the next January in St George’s Church. The wealthy and socially important Joyce Lanyon was different from the simple and careless Leora Tozer. Joyce Lanyon lived in an extravagant life. She was surrounded by luxury and as well as wealthy friends. She provided Arrowsmith with luxurious life. She bought him a Rolls Royce and opened two bank accounts for him. She even built a big laboratory near her big house for Arrowsmith so that she could always be near him. Joyce forced Arrowsmith to get fitted with her luxurious way of life. She often took Arrowsmith to Europe for travelling. Now Arrowsmith was no longer free, he was torn between devotion to his work and loyalty to his wife. After their son was born, Joyce was more controlling than ever. She insisted Martin on exploiting his knowledge for the sake of money and fame. He loved his family but he loved his ideal too much. One day with tears he left his family to pursue his idealism in pure science. Joyce Lanyon finally divorced him and married Latham Ireland a successful and wealthy lawyer. After his wife divorced him, Arrowsmith continued his dream to share his knowledge and ability for humanism.

Sinclair Lewis depicts Arrowsmith’s refusal to compromise his idealism for the sake of wealth and popularity consistently through the novel, giving him the rare attributes of the true scientist. Lewis tries to share his positive idealism in this novel through the character of Arrowsmith and Gottlieb. He is very concerned with his materialistic society that he feels necessary to warn them and share his thought by writing *Arrowsmith*. The novel itself is divided into forty chapters that every chapter contains Lewis idealism and satires on his materialistic society who think their money-grabbing is a system.

**CHAPTER IV**

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**Conclusion**

Considering the discussion in chapter III, it can be said that Sinclair Lewis’ novel *Arrowsmith* is a reflection of the historical evidence of
American social condition in the early 20th century. The result of this study shows that the novel records the impact of the American middle class’ materialistic view of life. This discussion also digs out Lewis’ idealism, which he offers to respond to the materialistic view of life that dazzled American life at that period. The findings of this study are wrapped up as these following points:

The novel obviously shows Lewis’ observation toward American middle class life in the early 20th century. The novel describes American middle class’ materialistic view of life and the impact brought with it. The temptation of money and fame has influenced people to practise their materialistic view of life. The materialistic view of life has brought great impact to the American People particularly the middle class. Lewis reveals that in order to reach personal goal people are capable to do anything. Becoming commercialized is one of the American efforts to gain money and power. Through the scene around the characters of Arrowsmith and Gottlieb, Lewis points out that in the world of commercialism people have to compete each other and to follow the system or otherwise they will be removed. Arrowsmith and Gottlieb uncompromising attitude toward commercialism makes both of the removed from their position and lost some promotions in their career life.

In the early 20th century where comforts are available everywhere the consumerism dazzled American mind. The American consumerism as depicted in Arrowsmith seems to represent the description of American
character that has been influenced by materialism ethics. Lewis reveals that the consumerism has made American people spend their money on unimportant thing. Comfort and luxurious life styles make them apart from their social life surround them. The significance of social status appears as one of the consequences of their luxurious life. People are no longer judged by their honesty and kindness, but they are judge based on their wealth and social position.

Lewis conveys his viewpoints that most Americans have begun to leave the values of American tradition and religion that teach them moral virtues. The materialistic view of life has made people ignore their spiritual and moral standard. Lewis seems to give solution to the individuals in American society of that era to improve their life to get better future without ignoring the value of moral virtues. It is best if people get prosperity and accumulate material wealth without doing something evil or harmful. Lewis approves the desire to accumulate wealth by saving the surplus earning and living in frugal and honest way, which represented in the novel through the character of Arrowsmith and Gottlieb. Both Arrowsmith and Gottlieb always keep their honesty eventhough they were surrounded by many temptations such as money, fame and power.

Through the character of Arrowsmith and Gottlieb, Lewis offers his ideal way of life to respond with the spreading of materialistic view of life. Lewis shows that money, power and such thing do not always bring success or happiness to one’s life, sometimes it brings pain and sorrow. Lewis tries to convey that to be successful or live happily is not merely measured by the amount of money and power. True success and happiness can only be gained with hard work, honesty and the desire to help mankind. Lewis suggests the American to pursue their ideal and to maintain moral virtues, which has been planted in very early time of their ancestor’s religion. Lewis expects that his people will be aware of their materialistic view of life and start to pursue their ideals in every field they choose.

**Recommendation**

*Arrowsmith* is a novel that provides phenomena of American middle class materialistic view of life in the early 20th century. Since this study is conducted in American studies field, the discussion does not only interpret the novel itself, but it also explores American social culture at that era.
Thus after reading the analysis of the preceding chapter, the readers are expected to get deeper understanding on *Arrowsmith*.

There are many American literatures that reveal the phenomena of the materialistic view of life in the United States. For this reason, this study can be used to complete American studies reference for the students who want to compare Sinclair Lewis’ work to the other American writers’ works who have similar idea in order to dig out American national character. In this novel, Lewis use dialogues sparingly and good verbs, with figures of speech which make his sentences more distinct. Therefore, the researcher also suggests the students of English Department to discuss this novel in socio-linguistic study.

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