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**Arguing In Utopia: Edward Bellamy, Nineteenth Century Utopian
Fiction, and American Rhetorical Culture**

Committee:

Jeffrey Walker, Supervisor

Mark Longaker

Martin Kevorkian

Trish Roberts-Miller

Janet Davis

Gregory Clark

**Arguing In Utopia: Edward Bellamy, Nineteenth Century Utopian
Fiction, and American Rhetorical Culture**

by

Ivan Angus Wolfe, A.A.S.; B.A.; M.A.

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Dedication

To Alexandra

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Arguing In Utopia: Edward Bellamy, Nineteenth Century Utopian Fiction, and American Rhetorical Culture

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Ivan Angus Wolfe, Ph.D.

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As Aristotle wrote, rhetoric is an art or faculty of finding the available means of persuasion in a given circumstance, and the late nineteenth century was a time in American history when many authors used utopian fiction as the best available means of persuasion. For a few years, the utopian novel became a widespread, versatile and common rhetorical trope. Edward Bellamy was the most popular of these writers. Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward* was not only the third best-selling book of nineteenth century America, it inspired over a hundred other utopian novels and helped create a mass movement of "Bellamy clubs" along with a political party (Nationalism).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, American public discourse underwent a general shift from a focus on communal values to a focus on individuals as the source of truth. Utopian fiction of the era helps illuminate why and how this shift occurred. In nineteenth century America, literature was generally not considered to be rhetorical. At most, critics treated fiction as a form of epideictic rhetoric, aiming only to

delight, educate, or create discussion. When fiction was used to promote legislative agendas and thus entered into the realm of deliberative rhetoric, critics argued that its transgression of rhetorical boundaries supposedly ruined its appeal. Utopian literature came the closest to breaking down the barriers between literature and rhetoric, as hundreds of utopian novels were published, most of them in response to Edward Bellamy.

A close rhetorical reading of *Looking Backward* details its rhetorical nature and helps account for its rhetorical success. I treat each of the novels as participants in the larger cultural conversation, and detail the ways in which they address Bellamy, each other, and issues such as the temperance movement and the decline of classical languages in higher education. In modern times, though Bellamy has faded from the public memory, he has proven useful in a variety of contexts, from a political punching bag to a way to lend an air of erudition to various types of popular fiction.

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Introduction

Rhetoric is, as Aristotle said, “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion,” and while that definition is subject to clarification (Kenneth Burke’s claim that rhetoric also includes “identification,” for example), I find this to be the best available definition of rhetoric. This dissertation deals with a time when one of the best “available means of persuasion” came in the form of utopian novels. Thus, I have two primary audiences in mind. And when one has more than one audience to address, the “available means” of presenting your case in order to persuade that audience can become complex. In your attempts to appeal to one audience, you may bore or offend another.

The first audience I aim to address are rhetoricians, and more specifically those who study the history of rhetoric. In the history of rhetoric, literature (including utopian literature) receives scant attention. At most, poetry receives some attention because of the historical connection between the two disciplines (along with shared material in historical handbooks that teach rhetoric and poetry). Literature sometimes receives consideration as a form of epideictic rhetoric, but rhetorical historians often pass it over in favor of the other two major branches of rhetoric, judicial and deliberative, usually with a focus on pedagogy. Reading through George Kennedy’s *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, Thomas M. Conley’s *Rhetoric in the European Tradition*, Thomas P. Miller’s *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Cultural Provinces*, or any other standard history of rhetoric makes this point quite clear. All of the aforementioned works mostly skip over literature, often relegating it to the realm of *belles lettres* or leaving it

out of the picture. Even more focused discussions of the history of rhetoric, such as Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran's *Oratorical Culture in Nineteenth-Century America: Transformations in the Theory and Practice of Rhetoric* and Thomas W. Benson's *Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century American* may mention literature in passing, but they mostly focus on speeches and writing outside the realm of literature.

There are, of course, many academic attempts to look at literature from a rhetorical perspective, or in the context of rhetorical practices of the time. Janet Gabler-Hover's *Truth in American Fiction: The Legacy of Rhetorical Idealism* uses ideas of rhetorical truth in nineteenth-century America as a way to understand the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, and others. However, even there a wall separates rhetoric and literature, and they are treated as two separate entities. Steven Mailloux's excellent books *Rhetorical Power* and *Reception Histories*, which introduce his idea of "rhetorical hermeneutics" or "us[ing] rhetoric to practice theory by doing history" (*Reception Histories* ix), allow for valuable insights into the way that literary (and other) texts were received by American culture – but he still does not place literature into the history of rhetoric. For Mailloux, rhetoric is a way to analyze history, but he does not treat literature as part of the history of the practice of rhetoric. Even Wayne Booth's justifiably celebrated *The Rhetoric of Fiction* only treats rhetoric as one way to discuss literature – Booth approaches literature *through* rhetoric, rather than *as* rhetoric. In the end, we are left with rhetoric and literature as separate domains that only occasionally cross over. However, there are some works that do help detail the ways rhetoric and literature are not completely separate. Jeffrey Walker's *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*

details the relationships between the two and helps show the boundaries are not as clear cut as they often seem. This dissertation is done with much the same aim.

Literature can not only do rhetorical work, it can function as the type of rhetoric histories of rhetoric tend to discuss. Utopian fiction explicitly functions as both literature and rhetoric, as it attempts to argue for (or against) various political and social ideas. It aims for many of the same goals and aims as the speeches of Abraham Lincoln, Edward Everett Hale, and Daniel Webster – but it does so in a fictional form. In this case, and for scholars of rhetoric, I hope to make the case that literature (or at the very least, utopian literature) deserves a more prominent place in the history of rhetoric.

For the field of rhetoric, I hope to expand the understanding of the history of rhetoric, especially its practice. Most studies of the history of rhetoric focus on rhetorical theory and instruction, and when they focus on its practice, oratory and political writings are usually at the forefront (with only occasional glances at poetry and other literature). One major trend in the study of the history of rhetoric focuses on “alternative” rhetorics, especially in rhetorical instruction. In the field of nineteenth century rhetoric, for example, two recent books – Jean Ferguson Carr, Stephen L. Carr, and Lucille M. Schultz’s *Archives of Instruction* and Patricia Donahue and Gretchen Flesher Moon’s *Local Histories: Reading the Archives of Composition* both focus on rhetorical instruction outside what is usually considered the mainstream in rhetorical history. As Gretchen Fletcher Moon says, the aims of these more recent studies are to “extend, challenge, complicate, and thereby enrich the narrative” of rhetorical history (3). I aim to do something similar in regards to the practice of rhetoric. This study intends to show how utopian literature can complicate the often seemingly impenetrable barriers between

popular literature and deliberative rhetoric – to show how literature does not always (or even usually) have a discrete and separate sphere, but can often serve the same function as political oratory or editorializing. As said above, there are times when literature is the best available means of persuasion in a given situation, and this dissertation discusses one period in American literary history where utopian fiction was widely recognized as one of the best available means of persuasion.

However, since my topic is utopian fiction in general and Edward Bellamy in specific, I also realize that this study will appeal to scholars in utopian studies. I want to show utopian scholars two things: that they have largely overlooked the role of nineteenth century rhetorical culture and its influence on Bellamy and on other utopian writers, and that treating utopian works as rhetoric yields beneficial insights that add to the scholarship that has already been done. Utopian scholars have done an excellent job placing Bellamy within the utopian tradition (both in American history and worldwide) as well as detailing the ways audiences both then and now have responded to his writings. But Bellamy was also the product of the rhetorical culture in America at the time, and I have yet to find a scholar who has drawn any solid connection between the two. By showing connections between Bellamy and the rhetorical culture that he worked within, I hope to help broaden the picture of Bellamy by providing a fresh way of looking at him and his impact. Bellamy and the movements and literary explosions he inspired are too complex for any one perspective to do him justice. Because of these two audiences, I will have to spend some time discussing concepts (usually in footnotes) that rhetoric or utopian scholars should already be familiar with, so that neither set of readers gets lost in potentially unusual terminology or unfamiliar academic jargon.

But while I have two primary audiences (utopian and rhetoric scholars), I also recognize that American literature and American studies scholars (especially those focused on late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature) may also find something of value here. As discussed above, looking at American literature from a rhetorical standpoint is becoming increasingly common; given the increasingly inter-disciplinary nature of American studies and the field of American literature, this rhetorical viewpoint can help add one more aspect that any scholar studying this area can use to create a fuller picture of Bellamy and this era of American history (whether one calls it the Progressive Era, the Gilded Age, or Victorian America).

To this end, my first chapter presents Bellamy's life and work in a rhetorical context, detailing how he was not just surrounded by a rhetorical culture, but that even outside his utopian writings, he was an active participant in it. I also discuss what other scholars have said about Bellamy, outline the main academic controversies surrounding him, and detail the theories of Clark, Halloran, Mailloux, Burke, Booth and others that will influence my readings of Bellamy and the other utopian novels I discuss.

In chapter two, I investigate the seeming divide between epideictic and deliberative rhetoric and how Bellamy's work transgressed these supposedly solid boundaries. I then do something few critics have done before: a close reading of *Looking Backward* that helps detail how the text works as rhetoric and thus helps account for the novel's tremendous success.

Chapter three details the "utopian conversation" that occurred between Bellamy and the various fictional responses to his book. By using the theories of Kenneth Burke and Wayne Booth, this chapter analyzes how these "fictional dialogues" engaged

Bellamy, each other, and the larger culture. Close readings of several books written as sequels to *Looking Backward* reveal the paths of the conversation as well as how Bellamy ultimately shaped the conversation, even when he was being attacked. Many of the works that attack Bellamy also demonstrate why Burke argued that debunking often fails, but they all show how cultural conversations develop and grow. The conversation was not always one about political or economic ideas; in many cases, it was about literary ideals. But even those works that viciously attacked him, due to the nature of the conversation, owed more to Bellamy than they apparently realized. I then detail how these texts dealt with the issues of temperance and classical languages in education as examples of how they engaged with larger cultural debates in ways that exceeded Bellamy's primary intentions.

For chapter four, I investigate why Bellamy's ideas did not last long beyond his death. Though he was very successful during his lifetime, Nationalism and Bellamy clubs were fading as his life ended, and he was almost forgotten (except by academics and except for a brief resurgence during the Great Depression). Though many scholars have proposed various reasons for Bellamy's quick fade from glory, I investigate another reason that deals with the rhetorical climate of the time. Using Burke's dramatic pentad and the arguments of Clark and Halloran regarding the changes in rhetorical culture in late nineteenth century America, I argue that Bellamy was still operating in the older, neoclassical mode of rhetoric, whereas his followers saw him in more romantic terms. Bellamy operated out of an assumption that the entire culture was the center of rhetorical authority, but Bellamyites saw him as a singular prophet who proposed new ideas. I argue that this rhetorical disconnect helped hasten the demise of the Bellamy ideal.

Chapter five details how Bellamy has been used in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. For example, conservative polemicist Jonah Goldberg uses Bellamy as an illustration of how (as he argues) progressive politics were corrupted by the taint of fascism. Though Bellamy faded from the public memory, he has proven useful in a variety of contexts, from a political punching bag to a way to lend an air of erudition to semi-erotic utopian fiction. By moving beyond the time frame of Bellamy's life and the decade immediately after his death, I argue that Bellamy has become a rhetorical trope that lends authority, ethos, and a sense of history to various arguments. The most prominent of these uses comes from popular science fiction author Mack Reynolds, who wrote several Bellamy-inspired utopian novels, including two literary "remakes" of *Looking Backward* and *Equality*. I explore in detail how Reynolds used Bellamy, and argue that Reynolds uses Bellamy as a way to help his readers identify with various possible utopias rather than argue for a specific utopian future as Bellamy did.

Chapter One

Setting the Stage: Edward Bellamy in a Rhetorical Context.

In the October 1889 issue of *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Nicholas P. Gilman discussed a trend that he felt deserved more attention:

The novel, in these latest days, is often made the vehicle of the most earnest purpose of the reformer . . . Political economists, perhaps, would have done well, had they paid more attention than they have to the essayists and poets. At the present day, they make a mistake if they slight the function of the novelist in the formation of public opinion, or look with prejudice upon the scheme of society because it is propounded by a man devoted to pure literature. (“Nationalism” 50 – 51)

His message was clear: fiction mattered. One could discuss theory and public policy, but if you wanted to see what was truly affecting the public’s opinion, you needed to read novels. Novels convinced people and influenced policy – they were not merely art or only entertainment. These books were doing the work of rhetoric – making arguments and, in some small part, determining the direction of public policy and debate.¹

The main subject of Gilman’s article was Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist movement that grew up around Bellamy’s most famous work, the utopian² novel *Looking*

¹ Similar arguments are made today by scholars interested in utopian studies. Laurence Davis, in his article “Isaiah Berlin, William Morris, and the Politics of Utopia” discusses how many see “philosophy and literature [as] naturally separate worlds” (78). However, he argues that without some engagement with literature, political philosophers will likely “find . . . [them]sel[ves] without a public audience” making “no impression on the popular imagination” (79). Davis’s main point is that we should ignore “the age-old quarrel between philosophy and poetry” and realize that utopian fiction has a “unique potential to narrow the gap between normative political theory and democratic political practice” (78).

² Many scholars have slightly different nomenclatures in the field of utopian studies. Some differentiate between *utopia* (either an ideal society or any imaginary society meant to be compared and contrasted with

Backward. As an example of a text that did significant and (at the time) influential, rhetorical work, there are few better candidates – especially in late nineteenth/early twentieth century America.

As an extremely popular and influential author of a wildly popular and influential text, Bellamy provides a window into how fictional texts functioned as epideictic rhetoric in the late nineteenth century. From this view, Bellamy was and is more than just one of the many socialist reformers and utopian thinkers of his day. His work and the responses to that work give us a chance to investigate how fiction engaged in and influenced public discourse. As Charles Calhoun said,

Every period of history is characterized by change. This is true because of the nature of human existence and also because of the way historians define periods of the past. But some eras exhibit greater change than others and that certainly was true of the nineteenth century in the United States . . . the last third of the century . . . saw a rapid acceleration in the country's transformation. (xi)

One of those many changes was a change in public discourse from one based in communal values to one based around individual values. According to historians of rhetoric Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran, during the nineteenth century America underwent a transition from a rhetorical culture that initially focused on community

the present), *eutopia* (ideal imaginary societies), *outopia* (a non-existent society), *euchronia* (an imaginary ideal society located somewhere else in time, usually the future – thus the “good time” as opposed to the “good place”), *dystopia* (a much less than ideal imaginary society), *anti-utopia* (an attack on a utopian work or utopianism in general) and so on. In this study I will use the general term *utopia* to refer to any ideal society, whether in fiction or an experimental community. *Dystopia* and *anti-utopia* will also occasionally be used – any other terms will be glossed as needed.

building and public consensus to a focus on the individual as the center of authority and autonomy. As they say,

American politics and society during [the early nineteenth century] were informed by a discourse self-consciously drawn on the model of classical Roman rhetoric . . . In principle, this discourse enacted the neoclassical assumption that moral authority in a community is located in the public consensus of its members, rather than their individual private convictions . . . Its consistent purpose was to form and sustain a public consensus, intellectual and moral, as the basis of civic action. (1 – 2)

However, as the century progressed through the Civil War and the Romantic, transcendentalist and women’s suffrage movements (among other things),

th[e] culture was transformed by an emerging individualistic spirit that, in diverse social and institutional forms, challenged the traditional principle of collective moral authority by establishing as a new principle the moral authority of the individual. (3)

This same trend was mirrored in other areas as well, such as education and the study of classical languages. According to Caroline Winterer,

Where once classicism had once tethered the individual to the state in the ideology of republicanism, by the late nineteenth century classicism stood as an individualized ideal of self-perfection quite unlinked from the fate of the nation as a whole. (Winterer 142 - 143)

Rhetorical theorist Richard M. Weaver (in “The Spaciousness of Old Rhetoric”) makes a similar argument by claiming that before the late nineteenth century, “the orator

felt that he was speaking for corporate humanity . . . the individual orator was not, except perhaps in certain postures, offering an individual testimonial. He was the mouthpiece for a collective brand of wisdom which was not to be delivered in individual accounts” (182). However, Weaver declares, in the late nineteenth century, a cultural change occurred and “it [became] a duty to ‘think for one’s self’” (172).

This larger cultural change was mirrored in one of the most hotly debated topics of the nineteenth century in America: the quest for utopia, especially as it was reflected through the works of Bellamy and other utopian writers, thinkers, and communities.

Bellamy and the utopian literary explosion that followed him (as well as the utopian works and experiments that preceded him) provide an excellent venue in which to explore this change (and either confirm and/or problematize it as well), as well as many of the numerous other changes that occurred in American society. Utopian novels and thought engaged nearly every major debate of the day, from religion to public education to industrialization to the nature of war to the place of classical languages in the curriculum.

But above all, looking at Bellamy and the response to him will give us a good picture of rhetoric in action. In addition to theories of public discourse, courses in oratory and writing, or discussions over the proper way to engage in debate, utopian novels of the late nineteenth century provide a picture of how people engaged in and responded to public discourse. And, as seems clear, the epideictic realm of utopian worlds was an important and expected venue for engaging in debate during this time frame. For a few years and during a period of great change in America, utopia became a widespread, versatile and expected rhetorical trope.

Before proceeding, a brief look at Bellamy's life, education, and place within nineteenth century America will hopefully establish that Bellamy was clearly engaged in the rhetorical culture of his age. Rhetoric is not just another lens with which to view Bellamy, but instead something he was deeply involved in.

Edward Bellamy was born on the 26th of March, 1850 near Springfield, Massachusetts (in Chicopee Falls) to Maria Putnam Bellamy and the Reverend Rufus King Bellamy. His father was a fairly liberal Baptist minister who publicly doubted the existence of hell and was widely admired for his style of preaching. As a child, Bellamy was classically trained, learning to read and write Greek and Latin. Some of his writing exercises from this period survive, many showing a frame of mind aimed at a military career.

However, in 1867 he failed the physical exam for West Point and instead entered Union College in Schenectady, New York as an independent reader. What he studied there is not completely known, but we do know that he did not take the standard courses and instead (according to his brother) prevailed upon a professor to give him a course of study in English literature. In an essay he wrote on self-education "he declared his intention of studying thoroughly . . . logical demonstration [and] public speaking and writing" (Bowman, 2000, 19 – 21). This, combined with what little we know of his few years of study in Germany (from 1868-1869), indicates that he was interested in a generally rhetorical education, and that is the type of education he pursued. At the time, this course of study was not as common as it would have been a few decades earlier, making Bellamy the product of a slightly earlier age. His life continued to follow what would have been the typical trajectory for someone born just a few years earlier.

Bellamy's education reflected a dying ideal, but it was still somewhat common among the upper classes (and among those of the middle class who aspired to an upward change in social status).

Instead of completing a college education, Bellamy studied law. He passed the bar in 1871 but quit after only one case.³ From there he spent many years as a writer for several newspapers, publishing reviews and editorials. Though "few [modern critics] have considered his journalism worth a look" (Widdicombe and Preiser 136), Bellamy's writings for papers such as the *Springfield Daily Union* show a careful writer able to craft competent arguments on a wide variety of subjects.

During this time, he also participated in the lyceum movement, where he first articulated his interests in socialism. His participation in the lyceum movement is noteworthy, as Clark and Halloran use it as an example to illustrate their concept of changing rhetorical practices in 19th century America:

The lyceum movement [founded in 1826] . . . was an expression of an individualistic idealism that envisioned every American (at least every white male American) able to prosper in private affairs and participate fully in public affairs by virtue of a general moral and intellectual improvement . . . the lyceum movement was inexorably transformed into something quite different . . . [it became] a medium of entertainment. (9)

Robert F. Reid's essay in Clark and Halloran's book helps clarify how this movement changed over time by focusing on Edward Everett - "the American Cicero"- and one of

the lyceum movement's most prominent orators. Reid shows that Everett focused on "epideictic speeches" that emphasized an "American consensus: Our 'great past,' our indebtedness to the great Revolutionary heroes, and our mission to serve as a model of freedom" (33). However, as the movement progressed, it became more and more focused on the skills of the individual orator, eventually focusing on entertainment over education. Bellamy participated in the lyceum movement while it was still primarily focused on orators who were less interested in showing off their skill and more interested in living the Ciceronian ideal.

As he continued his career as a journalist, Bellamy also began to write fiction, publishing several short stories and novels. His work impressed William Dean Howells, who, in his introduction to a collection of Bellamy short stories, declared that "Edward Bellamy [had a] romantic imagination surpassed only by that of Hawthorne" (Howells, "Edward Bellamy" xiii; Bowman, 2000 43). However, it was his entry into the utopian realm of nineteenth century America that ensured his popularity and persistence as a subject of academic inquiry.

During the early part of the nineteenth century – the "golden age of community experiments" in America (Holloway 18) – many experimental utopian communities were formed, several based on the ideas of French socialist Charles Fourier (such as Brook Farm and the North American Phalanx). These communes often emphasized the community over the individual and attempted to serve as models for the rest of America (and eventually, the world) to follow. Yet, by the end of the century, most communal

³ "The youth who had dreamed of protecting widows and orphans had as his first case the eviction of a widow for non-payment of rent. His reaction to this experience was so profound that he became disgusted

utopian experiments had failed or were dying out. Though they never truly vanished, utopian experiments became much less common, much less likely to succeed, and much less popular than in their pre-Civil War heyday.

Instead, the last few decades saw an explosion of literary utopias. Numbering in the hundreds⁴, they gave the author's views on the ideal society and how to fix society's ills – emphasizing the individual author's vision. The single author, rather than the experimental community, became the moral center. Though previous experiments, such as those based on the ideas of Charles Fourier or Robert Owen, often centered themselves around a particular person's vision, the rhetorical focus and practical emphasis was always on the community rather than the individual. Charles Henry Dana in "A Lecture on Association, in its Connection with Religion," for example, made it clear that while Brook Farm took its inspiration from Fourier, "Fourierism" was only a convenient label. Fourier had discovered principles that applied to the entire human family, but they were not Fourier's ideas any more than any natural law could be said to belong to the one who first recognized it. Utopian authors, on the other hand, often received accolades as "prophets" with a unique vision that belonged to them alone.

Edward Bellamy was the most prominent and popular of these authors, and he was also the author mostly responsible for starting the flood of utopian fiction in the last few years of the nineteenth century. Born when only two Fourierist phalanxes were still

with being a 'public blood hound' and forthwith took down his shingle" (Bowman, 2000, 37).

⁴ The exact number depends on the criteria determined in doing the counting. Many utopian scholars use widely varying criteria. Bellamy biographer Sylvia Bowman focuses on "economic fiction" as her main criteria, whereas scholar Kenneth Roemer includes non-fiction essays in his totals. But whatever definitions and criteria are used, the number of works dedicated to utopian themes or ideas easily number in the hundreds.

in operation,⁵ Bellamy wrote perhaps the most popular American utopian novel ever, *Looking Backward, 2000 – 1887*.

Critic Kenneth Roemer notes that “within the first year 60,000 copies were sold. After another year, the figures rose to 213,988; sometimes over 1000 copies were bought on a single day” (*Obsolete* 2). Beyond that, “it became the second American work of fiction with sales to surpass the one million mark” (Wegner 63). However, Bellamy’s popularity went beyond just the number of books that his utopian work sold.

The first serious indicator of the extent of Bellamy’s popularity was the formation of “Bellamy clubs” devoted to furthering Bellamy’s ideas. At the suggestion of Sylvester Baxter, Bellamy gave the name “Nationalism” to this movement and even started two newspapers (*The Nationalist* and *The New Nation*) to help further his ideas. “At its peak [the Nationalist movement] consisted of a loose federation of 165 clubs with five or six thousand members” (Lipow 19 – 20). Bellamy also inspired a few utopian communal experiments, including Equality Colony in Washington.⁶

But by far the most obvious response was literary. As one of Bellamy’s biographers noted, “from 1870 to 1891, two hundred and fifty volumes of economic fiction were published. Of this number, only thirty appeared before *Looking Backward*” (Bowman, 2000, 107). Bellamy started what seemed to be an unstoppable deluge of utopian fiction. Kenneth Roemer’s valuable study, *The Obsolete Necessity*, focuses on 160 utopian works written in American between 1888 (the year of the publication of

⁵ Based on the chart in Carl J. Guarneri’s *The Utopian Alternative* (407 – 409).

⁶ The colonists, looking for a name, contacted Bellamy and asked him for one. He suggested the name “Equality” – the title to his own upcoming sequel to *Looking Backward* (Scontras 39).

Looking Backward) and 1900, but he also writes that after Bellamy there were “at least two hundred” utopias written in America in the immediate decades after *Looking Backward* was published – more utopias were produced “than in any other period of American (or possibly any other country’s) history” (Roemer, *Audiences* 9).

Many of these works were direct responses, either in the form of parodies (such as *My Afterdream*, which was written under the pseudonym of *Looking Backward*’s protagonist Julian West and takes many of Bellamy’s ideas to absurd logical extremes), sequels (such as Solomon Schindler’s *Young West*, which follows the twenty-first century adventures of Julian West’s son), or apologetic defenses (such as Ludwig Geissler’s *Looking Beyond*, which was an answer to Richard Michaelis’s *Looking Further Forward*, another sequel to and an attack on Bellamy’s original tome).⁷ However, many other utopian works were written as more generalized responses to Bellamy’s ideas and popularity. Other authors like William Dean Howells (who not only knew Bellamy but was instrumental in helping him start up the Nationalist party) and English socialist William Morris (who found himself repulsed by Bellamy’s version of socialism) also decided to write their own utopian novels.

This outpouring of utopian literature was essentially a rhetorical phenomenon, since the intent of the authors was to sway public opinion and policy. Bellamy had started a trend: the creation of political parties, platforms, and legislation around a piece of speculative fiction. Members of the Nationalist party began putting candidates on ballots under the “Nationalist” party and even began pushing for legislation (in

⁷ As can be seen by these examples, sometimes the literary genealogy of Bellamy-based attack and counter-attack, satire and counter-satire can become somewhat complicated.

Massachusetts they helped push through legislation that allowed for municipal ownership of gas and electric plants). The Nationalist party (in California) was also responsible for “the first election in which a socialist [Gaylord Wilshire] ran for the Congress of the United States” (Quint 327). Eventually, Bellamy threw his support behind the Populist party, but he still referred to his political philosophy as Nationalism, and his followers still called themselves Nationalists.

This political success made *Looking Backward* more than a mere piece of utopian fiction; it made the literary responses to Bellamy more than “just fiction” as well. Instead of being entertainment, these novels were intended to join the public discourse over the nature of the ideal society and the best way to handle the economic and social problems of the day. These tales directly and indirectly engaged in conversation with each other on a scale not usually seen in fictional literature. In rhetorical terms, utopian fiction of the late nineteenth century engaged in deliberative rhetoric even though, during this time, literature was generally seen as rhetorical only in the epideictic sense:⁸

What we now call “literature” this [nineteenth century] rhetoric treated as a species of epideictic discourse whose end was to “teach and delight,” to

⁸ This classification comes from the Classical/Aristotelian division of rhetoric into deliberative, judicial, and epideictic. Richard Lanham, in *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, defines them in this way – Deliberative: “legislative; to exhort or dissuade,” Judicial: “forensic; to accuse or defend,” and Epideictic: “ceremonial; to commemorate or blame” (164). Deliberative rhetoric was aimed at making and influencing laws and how leaders executed those laws, judicial rhetoric was for the law courts, and epideictic rhetoric was ceremonial in purpose and was often used to entertain and/or show off the skill of a particular orator. While not necessarily argumentative in character, epideictic rhetoric was still seen as able to influence the audience and their values depending on what the subject of the oration was and what received praise and blame (for example, praising a man for his generosity at his funeral would hopefully influence the audience to be more generous, or attacking a foe for his duplicity might move the audience to be less tolerant towards duplicity in themselves and in others). Over time, as Lanham notes on page 164 of his *Handlist*, epideictic became associated with literature as literature was often written to entertain and/or show off the skill of the writer and was thus seen as fitting within that general framework.

pass on the established values of the culture and thus to sustain the common ground upon which arguments about particular issues could be conducted. (Clark and Halloran, "Introduction" 2)

But *Looking Backward* and the other utopian novels of the day went beyond telling tales that "pass[ed] on the established values of the culture." Instead, they were often intended to do explicitly rhetorical work – to challenge the norms of the day and propose new solutions. If we follow the classic three part division of rhetoric – judicial, deliberative and epideictic – utopian fiction such as *Looking Backward* essentially used an epideictic frame to create deliberative rhetoric. In other words, it used a form primarily considered to be entertainment (or to show off the skills of the writer/rhetor) to push a legislative agenda.

In many ways, this outpouring of utopian fiction resembled Kenneth Burke's idea of the "unending conversation":

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However,

the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (Burke, *Literary Form*, 110 – 111)

Bellamy entered the parlor of late-nineteenth century America, where debates about class, socialism, the identity of the nation and the ideal society were ongoing and paramount. After sampling several of the conversations he started his own, and it caught on, bringing in people who might not otherwise have even been part of any of the conversations going on in the parlor. This conversation then split off into several other conversations that constantly remerged into and emerged from each other. Many authors aligned themselves against or for Bellamy, to his embarrassment or gratification. By the time Bellamy left the parlor the conversation had died down, but he had left a clear impression on those remaining or moving on to other conversations.

Due to his popularity and widespread (if temporary) success, Bellamy has become somewhat of a literary and historical chameleon. He becomes nearly all things to nearly all scholars who must deal with him if they are to deal with this period of American literary and cultural history. David E. Shi says that “although usually considered pure fantasies,” the works of Bellamy and other utopian writers actually “reflected the impact of literary realism” (184). Thus, Bellamy becomes a realist – a view shared by Jean Pfaelzer, who argued that nineteenth century “utopian fiction is also, and unavoidably, realistic” (*Utopian Novel* 15). Yet for Paul K. Alkon, Bellamy’s works serve as a clear example of early science fiction that reflects “America’s infatuation with technology” (107). Arthur Lipow rigorously expends all of his intellectual energy in proving that Bellamy’s vision belongs “in the history of authoritarian socialist ideas” and that it

clearly “antedat[es] the rise of Stalinism” (1). Kenneth Roemer, on the other hand, says that Bellamy was among “the most perceptive authors” of the era, the author of ideas still worth considering today (*Obsolete* 178). Carl J. Guarneri sees Bellamy as the last hurrah for the ideas of French socialist Charles Fourier – an important influence often overlooked by other scholars (401 – 405). Catherine Tumber explores “Bellamy’s gnostic vision” (613), while George E. Conner finds “significant linkage . . . between Bellamy and the Second Great Awakening” (38), and George Mariz sees Bellamy’s work as an example of a “clerical-utopian novel” – utopian novels written by clergy or the children of clergy and therefore reflect the ideas and concerns of the clergy (51).

Another strain of analysis (that also deals with the usefulness to us moderns of these vintage utopias) comes from determining whether Bellamy serves as a good example of socialism. Arthur Lipow feels that Bellamy was too authoritarian, and his main aim is to basically discredit Bellamy by “examin[ing] the authoritarian soul of socialism,” and doing this allows Lipow (in his view) “to better grasp the meaning of a genuinely democratic socialism” (15). Samuel Haber, in a similar vein, discusses the “familiar socialist ideals – social justice, human brotherhood and the elimination of poverty” and how well Bellamy’s vision coincides with those principles (437).

The list of critics and their unique approaches to Bellamy could go on, and every item on that list would be fruitful, worthwhile, and engaging. The one constant that stretches across most studies that deal with Bellamy and utopian writers in general seems to come from variations of these oft-asked questions: “Are Bellamy’s ideas worth anything? Can/Should we use his ideas today? What can we learn from him?” Many scholars seem to discuss him in order to cast him out of or welcome him into various

political camps. This approach can be very valuable and informative, and many of the scholars who do work in this area provide essential insights on Bellamy and his era.

This study, however, aims in a different direction than most previous studies. My main concern is not with whether Bellamy had “an especially vapid aesthetic vocabulary” (Dentith 147), possessed “a haughty sense of exaggerated superiority” (Tumber 613), or was “a deeply troubled and lonely person” who advocated authoritarian socialism because of his own deep “self-hatred” (Lipow 37, 50).

One can claim, as Simon Dentith does, that “as a utopian gesture [Bellamy’s] text is imaginatively stillborn” (48), but in doing so the focus centers in on aesthetics and on whether Bellamy was a good writer or had the right kind of imagination. One can argue that Bellamy failed “to connect universal and individual via the particular” and that his “success . . . was an accident” (Beilharz 603) or that he penned “one of the worst” utopian novels (Gardner 19), but that focus does not deal with why Bellamy was so successful, which is one of the primary concerns of this study.

There are, of course, many more positive readings of Bellamy. The two academic biographies we have of Bellamy (by Arthur Morgan and Sylvia E. Bowman) are full of admiration for Bellamy and his ideals. Sylvia Bowman also seems to have dedicated a significant amount of her career to writing works that serve as both analysis and apologetics for Bellamy. In any case, the main focus tends to be on “whether or not [Bellamy’s] perspectives are as relevant today as they were [at the turn of the century]” (Mullin 51).

Many scholars focus on discussing the merits of Bellamy’s work for those of us who live in the twenty-first century that Bellamy attempted to predict. This view is best

exemplified by Kenneth Roemer's statement on utopian fiction in the nineteenth century: it "may be a relic of a nineteenth century world view. It may also be crucial to our survival . . . some ingredients of utopianism are ridiculously, even cruelly, obsolete; but now, more than ever, discovering utopia is a necessity" (*Obsolete* 180).

Bellamy may have been too authoritarian, a bad writer, an egotistical man, or a good socialist. His vision may have been extremely dangerous, or he may have had true visionary insight that we ignore at our peril. However, none of these subjects are my focus. Regardless, the range of critical opinion shows that whatever his failings or strengths as an author or person may have been, Bellamy still has the power to provoke.

While I also find many valuable and troubling ideas in Bellamy's works and in the works of other utopian writers of the era, I have consciously made the decision to avoid dealing with such issues – not because I think they are useless or pointless; far from it. Rather, I find myself interested in the rhetorical conversation these utopian novels engaged in, how it worked, and why it happened in the late nineteenth century. I find myself interested in what literary and social criticism so far has not fully accounted for: the rhetorical power of Bellamy and the other utopian writers.

I am attempting to refocus the conversation or start a new one related to (and hopefully contributing to) several ongoing ones. I will, of course, be unable to avoid making some judgments of my own – but I will try to make judgments without being judgmental (i.e. – analyze without overt condemnation or praise). I hope to make a clear accounting of the rhetorical impact and power of these works (with the main, initial focus on Bellamy as the instigator), and to detail their successes and failures in rhetorical ways.

Utopianism was on the minds of many Americans all through the nineteenth century, but it took Bellamy, an otherwise semi-accomplished author and newspaperman, to kick start the production of a genre that has never before or since been as popular or important to the national dialogue as it was then. Bellamy “created a popular taste for the utopian novel previously unknown in the United States” (Mariz 61). But he also created a new conversation and a new way to engage in that conversation. Utopian fiction, already explicitly rhetorical, became explicitly part of its own larger utopian conversation.

Carl Sandburg once defended the popularity of motion pictures with the phrase: “The cold, real, upstanding fact holds – The movies are” (vii). In that same spirit I plan to discuss utopian fiction from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in America. Whether well written or not, whether they promoted democratic or authoritarian socialism, the simple fact is: Utopian fiction is (or was). In this era, Bellamy and utopian fiction in general “was” – it existed, it was very popular, it had a widespread appeal and it was influential. Regardless of the personal or aesthetic shortcomings of the authors, these texts did real rhetorical work.

Of course, as Wayne Booth and Kenneth Burke have shown us, all fiction does rhetorical work on some level. As Booth said in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, “The author cannot choose whether to use rhetorical heightening. His only choice is of the kind of rhetoric he will use” (116). These utopian works are more explicitly and intentionally rhetorical than most fiction of the day, often loudly proclaiming their intentions to persuade while (hopefully) delighting. And while many of them (especially Bellamy, as has been shown by many of the scholars cited above) may fail on various aesthetic levels,

when viewed through a rhetorical lens they become more interesting and capable of creating fruitful discussion. Beyond that, when viewed as rhetoric, they challenge the traditional histories of rhetoric that relegate fiction to *belles lettres* or the realm of (the occasionally mentioned but rarely discussed) epideictic rhetoric.

One reason utopian novels work well when viewed rhetorically is that they dealt with many of the most pressing (and some of the least pressing) issues of the day, often in accepted and/or idiosyncratic ways. As Kenneth Roemer states,

In part, the inclusive nature of late nineteenth century American utopias was a result of the tendency to write utopian fiction instead of utopian treatises. Treatise writing permits authors to dwell upon pet proposals. Most of the utopian authors had such pet schemes, often economic programs. But even if an author was certain that the efficient production and just distribution of goods were the keys to an ideal future, the fictional formula forced him to drag his narrator away from economic dialogues and speeches to see utopian cities, schools, churches, factories, and homes. (*Obsolete* 85).

This trend fits within Kenneth Burke's idea of the "poetic process" (the process a writer goes through in creating a literary text, whether poetry or prose), as discussed in *Counter-Statement*. Burke discusses a poet who has an idea and creates a symbol to express that idea in an artistic way (in this case, the symbol would be some sort of utopia). Once the poet creates that symbol, however, and begins "producing furiously" the symbol begins "to be carried down into a myriad details" (57) that often alter (to greater or lesser extents) the originally intended theme.

These “myriad details” make the utopian works written during this time extremely fascinating. Because many of the works attempt to create complete utopian worlds, the works comment upon nearly every aspect of late nineteenth century American life. As Roemer argues, “if a narrator is introduced to a female utopian who is a leading political figure, even though the narrative may not explicitly discuss the role of women in utopia, “the implication is that woman’s role must be changed before utopia becomes a fact” (*Obsolete* 85). Despite any specific author’s preconceptions and hobby horses, their utopian works comment on and engage in a wide variety of cultural debates. In addition to Bellamy’s main preoccupation with obtaining equity among the workers, his utopian books cover a wide range, from the nature of education to the necessity of physical fitness, the rejection of classical learning, and requirements for voting.

By Bellamy’s time, most utopian experiments had failed or were in the process of decline. Despite a small surge of utopian communities late in the century (many inspired by Bellamy), Utopia had mostly ceased being something one participated in and instead became something one wrote about (and perhaps looked forward to). The culture had changed considerably since the early part of the century. Besides the many changes brought about by the Civil War and by various stages of economic boom and bust, literacy was on the rise and education was becoming (though still elite) more widespread and accessible. Because of all of these factors (and several others as well),

it was the golden era of print media and the golden era of the literary eutopia in America . . . True, print media were not the only communication forces available . . . [but] it wasn’t until the twentieth century that silent and talking films, radio, television, videos and the

computer reduced the dominance of the printed page . . . As Lyons proclaims in Cavallo and Chartier's *A History of Reading in the West*, the 1890s "was the 'Golden Age' of the book in the West: the first generation which acceded to mass literacy was also the last to see the book unchallenged as a communication medium." (Roemer, *Audiences* 8 – 9)

Newspapers, other periodicals and traveling orators/lecturers were likely the main alternatives to books. However, books had a more permanent nature than newspapers or other periodicals and could reach a wider audience than any single speaker. Part of the reason for the popularity of the utopian novel as a platform for engaging in public debate likely stems from those factors.

Like Steven Mailloux, I am interested "in reading the cultural practices that constituted [these] novel[s] for many readers" in late nineteenth century America. To do so, I will (as he suggests) "interpret the rhetoric of a text as participating in the cultural debates of a specific historical period and place" and "locate . . . the intersecting dialogues of the cultural conversation within the social practices, institutionalized disciplines, and material circumstances that made up American society at the moment the text[s] w[ere] produced and at the time [they] found an audience" (*Power* 104).

Continuing on this theme, Mailloux stresses the need to "examine how particular tropes, arguments, and narratives contribute to historical acts of interpreting words, texts, traditions and contexts" (*Histories* ix).

In this case, utopian fiction functioned as the main trope of argument. The arguments were varied and covered a range of social issues and problems; the solutions to these problems were argued for in utopian narratives and treatises. The novels of Bellamy

and his fellow utopians constituted a cultural and rhetorical conversation among texts – a conversation that engaged with and commented on many of the most pressing and controversial issues of the day.

To engage these texts rhetorically, I will begin by asking the following question: How did the works of Bellamy and the other utopian writers function rhetorically? During this period, many writers, clergy, scientists, journalists, and others seemed almost compelled to write a utopian novel if they wanted their ideas to be taken seriously in the larger cultural debate over socialism and the future of the nation. By asking this question, I can then continue to ask (and suggest answers to) even more questions: What does Bellamy (and the utopian craze he started) reveal about the changing rhetorical scene in America at the time, and if we look at Bellamy and these long forgotten/overlooked works of utopian fiction through a rhetorical lens, does that somehow “redeem” these works (or give them a prominence that they otherwise wouldn’t have)? Does having a rhetorical lens change our approach to literature overall, and are there works of literature that benefit (or perhaps suffer) from this approach?

As Arthur Lewis stated, “Most studies have emphasized the nonliterary aspects of utopian writings. But most of the significant utopian proposals are presented in a form that purports to be fiction” (“The Utopian Hero” Lewis 133). Here, I aim to emphasize the literary aspects of utopian writings as a way to understand their rhetorical function.

Overall, I hope these rhetorical forays into Bellamy’s literary and rhetorical orbit will help make the case that literature deserves more attention in the study of the history of rhetoric and that rhetoric has valuable insights for the field of utopian studies.

Bellamy is only one example of the rich and varied ways in which rhetoric and fiction can interact and overlap.

Chapter 2

Looking Closely at *Looking Backward*

Bellamy's connection to the rhetorical practices of his day is more direct than previous scholarship would lead one to believe. While Bellamy, by virtue of living in the times he did, clearly partook of what was "in the air" rhetorically speaking, he also had several direct connections and encounters with rhetoric in his era. By discussing Bellamy in the context of late nineteenth century rhetoric, I am not just finding a (somewhat) new and interesting lens through which to view him (though I am doing that). I hope that looking closely at *Looking Backward* will show how Bellamy used, transgressed, and reinvented the rhetorical practices and assumptions of Gilded Age America to create a rhetorically successful utopian novel.

By the time *Looking Backward* made its appearance on the literary scene, Bellamy had already gained a reputation as both a writer of fictional tales and of political arguments. Though a skilled writer in both fiction and advocacy journalism, his decision to present his ideas about an ideal government in a fictional tale rather than a political argument seemed (and still seems) unusual to some critics. However, the brief but amazing success of *Looking Backward* speaks for the appeal of Bellamy's vision and his rhetorical skill, especially at that time in American history. Other utopian novels appeared before and after Bellamy, but few managed to engage nineteenth century public discourse in the way Bellamy did, and none came close to his success.

The Utopian Context

Bellamy's use of utopian fiction as a vehicle for an argument fits well with his focus on the community as a whole rather than on himself (as a lone genius). His use of

the utopian novel appears to have been a conscious attempt to place his ideas within the much larger traditions of American utopianism, both fictional and communal. As Darko Suvin argues,

Bellamy's success can . . . be expressed in terms of a creative fusion of various strands and traditions. These were not only literary but reached back to the hundreds of religious or lay utopian communities in the young United States. (62)

The United States has, in some sense, always been (and still is) seen as a utopian place by various visionaries, thinkers, and true believers. There have been many, many histories written about utopian communities and experiments in America, ranging from the popular to the academic and from advocacy to condemnation. Though many treat these communities as various separate entities, it is important to recognize that, as Robert P. Sutton acknowledges in his histories of utopian communities,

the utopian tradition [in America] is an unbroken motif, not an erratic fragmented experience. There never was an extended period of time when an important experiment, or experiments, was not underway. (*Religious Communities* ix)

Early communities revolved around religious ideals, often viewing America as a type of promised land – a place to prepare people for a holy life away from the cares of the secular and fallen world. These types of communities persist even today alongside more secular communities (Robert Sutton's framework places the first truly secular American utopian community in 1824). By Bellamy's time, many secular communities (founded upon the ideas of thinkers such as Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, and others) had sprung

up. Most were founded upon socialistic principles (these, combined with similar communities in Europe and elsewhere, led Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to make their famous distinction between “utopian” socialism and “scientific” socialism). Bellamy never claimed much familiarity with the ideas of socialism,¹ but as a close look at *Looking Backward* will show, he was clearly aware of his relationship to utopian socialism.

Bellamy was also at least somewhat aware of previous American utopian fiction – what little of it there was. Since most utopian communities presented themselves as progressive in nature, most early utopian fiction attempted to serve as a counterpoint to the progressive ideals of the experimental groups. Joel Nydal, in a study of pre-Bellamy fiction, notes that “it would not be an exaggeration to say that the main thrust of American utopian fiction during most of the first half of the nineteenth century was antiprogressive” (“Early Fictional Futures” 274).

By Bellamy’s time, utopian communities were becoming rarer. As American society continued its progression towards a public discourse centered more on the individual rather than on communal values, this shift made the utopian novel (which would be written by an individual) more attractive than a community based experiment. Though Bellamy saw a story as better able to speak for and to a community than a manifesto, from the audience’s perspective, the usually solitary act of reading a novel

¹ Though he occasionally used past American utopian communities as an argument for Nationalism, claiming a spiritual or intellectual affinity with them. In one article, he wrote: “It would indeed be more accurate to say that in a broad sense of the word the Nationalist movement did arise fifty years ago, for in spirit if not in form it may be said to date back to the forties. Those who are not familiar with the history of the extraordinary wave of socialistic enthusiasm which swept over the United States at that period and led to the Brook Farm Colony and a score of phalansteries for communistic experiments, have missed one of the most picturesque chapters of American history” (*Speaks Again!* 132).

was likely more attractive than joining a utopian community. Bellamy's hope was that reading such a novel would inspire communal participation, but (as I will explore in a later chapter) there was some clear tension between Bellamy's communal aspirations and his audience's perception of him as an individual genius.

Another concern that limited community experiments and made the novel a better venue in which to place utopia was the disappearance of "virgin land." Though land was still available (especially "out west") for utopian communities to use for their experiments, the best land was becoming scarcer and more expensive. Some groups, like the Mormons, moved to the desert (or other inhospitable places) and attempted to subdue the land in order to create their ideal society, but many other communities failed because they could not develop, afford, or find the "virgin land" they needed. In many cases, "the quest for the necessary condition, virgin land, doomed their ultimate goals" (Roemer, *Obsolete Necessity* 52). As the frontier began to shrink, so did the impetus to start a utopian community. While such communities never quite went away (and even enjoyed a mild resurgence because of Bellamy), they never reached the numbers or popularity of early and mid nineteenth century experiments.

Thus, the progressive utopia moved from the land to the book. Bellamy himself was likely aware of (and may even have had a hand in) the most important utopian work previous to his own: *The Diothas*² (originally published in 1883). Written by John Macine (under the pseudonym Ismar Thiusen) it details a "conservative, puritanical

² Though there have been charges of plagiarism leveled at Bellamy due to similarities between the two texts, including the structure and the name of the heroine (Edith), both of Bellamy's biographers have ably defended him against these charges (Arthur E. Morgan's *Plagiarism in Utopia* is the most comprehensive defense), and most modern critics express sentiments similar to those of Charles Rooney: Bellamy's work

ideal” that nevertheless “embod[ies] a certain amount of social protest” (Bleiler 735, 734). Bellamy’s possible involvement comes from two known facts: first, “Macine attributed his inspiration to his friend ‘E’ . . . and the subsequent description . . . fits Edward Bellamy” (Rooney 298); second, “it is known that Bellamy and Macine corresponded before the publication of their works” (Bleiler 734).

However, neither *The Diothas* nor any of the other utopian works that appeared between the Civil War and the publication of *Looking Backward* received much public attention. To further explore why Bellamy was a success when other works failed to achieve much (if any) fame, a closer look at Bellamy’s most famous novel is clearly needed. Bellamy not only published at an advantageous time and brought together several strands of utopian ideals, he also managed to create a text that effectively bridged the gap between two types of rhetorical arguments: epideictic and deliberative.

The Novel as Argument

Tom Towers wrote that many critics often overemphasize *Looking Backward* as a plan for social change, ignoring (or at least passing over) its status as a novel:³

[T]he polemical reputation of *Looking Backward* has apparently caused readers to neglect the more elemental fact that it is a novel. That is, Bellamy’s contemporaries and most later critics have regarded the book as a blueprint for reform, extracting usable ideas and casually dismissing the narrative, characters, setting, and language as irrelevant decoration. (52)

“does bear a close resemblance in some details to Macnie’s. Even so, the matter of initial inspiration or plagiarism brings us down a blind alley – the two works do differ greatly on essential points” (298).

³ Along similar lines, Everett F. Bleiler laments that Bellamy’s “ideological success . . . has obscured the fact that he was a very competent mainstream writer” (49).

To some extent this is true, but in Bellamy's case it sets up a false dichotomy. For Bellamy, the story and the message were interdependent. Bellamy presented his own reasons for proposing a model for social reform through a story in basically rhetorical terms. In an essay titled "How I Wrote *Looking Backward*," he stated:

Nothing outside of the exact sciences has to be so logical as the thread of a story, if it has to be acceptable. There is no such test of a false and absurd idea as trying to fit it into a story. You may make a sermon or an essay of a philosophical treatise as illogical as you please, and no one know the difference, but all the world is a good critic of a story, for it has to conform to the laws of ordinary probability and commonly observed sequence, of which we are all judges. (Bellamy, *Speaks Again!* 223 – 224)⁴

Along similar lines, Sylvia Bowman (one of Bellamy's biographers), reported that Bellamy was once asked about why his book did not detail how utopia was reached:

[He] humorously responded and succinctly replied that one did not persuade a man to marry by showing him all the difficulties marriage entailed; one merely showed him a beautiful woman and let him fall in love. (Bowman, 2000, 298)

⁴ Kenneth Roemer (as well as some other critics) argues that this sentiment, expressed by Bellamy in 1894, conflicts with earlier essays Bellamy wrote on how and why he wrote *Looking Backward*. Roemer refers to this essay as "Bellamy's re-creations of the origins of *Looking Backward*" and says it "seems as if it were written by a different author about another book" ("Author's Views" 18). While not denying that Bellamy's memory may have been colored by his Nationalist successes, it also seems likely that Bellamy's rhetoric changed focus based on his audience as well as the purpose of the essay. Since Bellamy's Postscript to the second edition of *Looking Backward* (originally a letter to the *Boston Transcript* in response to a book review) declares that "[this] fanciful romance, is intended, in all seriousness, as a

These quotes reveal a few aspects of Bellamy's thought process. First, he viewed his narrative as essentially rhetorical. His intent was to "persuade," and he saw the epideictic realm of story as superior as well as more rigorous and demanding – and thus more persuasive – than ordinary sermonizing. According to Bellamy, stories are more persuasive because they are accessible to everyone and thus are open to a generalized, communal critique based on shared values held in common by all. The second implied point is closely related to the first: that Bellamy saw the judgment of everyone ("we are all judges"), based on "commonly observed sequence" as superior to the judgment of individual critics.

Looking Backward then serves as both an argument and a narrative at the same time. Though the argument is perhaps implicit, and it does not map out the entire path, it does have a clear destination in mind. Thus many critics have done, as Tom Towers noted, a slight injustice to Bellamy by only focusing on one aspect of what Bellamy considered to be a total package – narrative as argument and argument as narrative.

However, this idea of making an argument through narrative was something well understood by Bellamy's critics and reviewers, and these writers often focused on what was positive and negative about this approach. The May 17, 1888 edition of *Christian Union* approves of Bellamy's approach by stating: "The plot, as the reader will say, is impossible enough to destroy any sense of reality in the entire book. This would be true were it not that Mr. Bellamy displays the same power as a realistic novelist" (617). Here,

forecast" (242), there is little support for the idea that Bellamy did not initially see his most famous book as a serious attempt to argue for a better world.

Bellamy's adherence to a "realistic" form – or "the laws of ordinary probability" as Bellamy put it – makes his narrative more convincing and more powerful.

Many critics even considered Bellamy's decision to put his political ideas into a narrative form as partly responsible for *Looking Backward*'s popularity. The Reverend R.S. Best, writing in the August 14, 1889 *Zion's Herald*, declared

We are not surprised that it has received so much attention; we predict for it still a wider influence and increasing fame. Our author has given us his teachings in the form of a romance; this may make his book popular with the majority of his readers, though it may retard its diffusion among those who have little interest in the works of fiction. Still, its lessons are so distinct and its mission so important that few can afford to let it pass unheeded. (258)

Best acknowledges that while the narrative form of Bellamy's argument may help it reach a wider audience, the narrative form may also hinder its reception, as those "who have little interest in . . . fiction" may ignore it (though Best clearly wants as many people as possible to pay attention).

While *Looking Backward*'s popularity made it almost impossible for critics, thinkers and writers to ignore it, its status as a narrative did allow them to attack it for other reasons. W.T. Harris, for example, in the October 1889 *Forum*, wrote that while "the educative value of the novel can scarcely be overestimated,"⁵ the narrative form has

⁵ As Kenneth Roemer has noted, nearly all nineteenth century reviewers of Bellamy had the same "fundamental assumption about nineteenth-century reading . . . reading certain types of books . . . could move the reader beyond engagement with particular characters, analogies and episodes to engagement with the 'real' world" (*Audiences* 149).

allowed Bellamy to, “with great artistic skill, cover . . . up the real difficulties of his scheme” (199, 205). Along these same lines, Nicholas P. Gilman, in the October 1889 issue of *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (in an article that semi-apologizes for its mostly literary rather than economic character), considered narratives to be useful only when they promoted discussion but not when they advocated solutions:

As a provocative to thought, as a brilliant dream which forces us to inquire more closely into the justification for existing institutions, the book edifies and entertains. We read it with an eagerness proportionate to our youthfulness of feeling and our respect for the ideal as compared with the actual; we recommend it to our friends, sure that their time will be well spent in its perusal. But when Bellamy assumes . . . the role of prophet, refusing to be accepted simply as an intellectual stimulator through the imagination, he imposes a painful strain upon our respect. (“Nationalism” 68)

The common thread among these responses and among many others like them⁶ is that literature is worthwhile when it stays in the realm of epideictic rhetoric, aiming only to please, delight, or create discussion. But once it begins to promote legislative agendas and enter into the realm of deliberative rhetoric, its transgression of rhetorical boundaries supposedly ruins its appeal. This refrain is repeated throughout Bellamy’s career. In issue 95 (June/Nov. 1897) of *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, the “Editor’s Study” briefly discusses Bellamy’s *Equality* and declares that “Mr. Bellamy has been misled as

⁶ Chapter six of Roemer’s *Utopian Audiences* contains an excellent and thorough overview of early reviews of *Looking Backward*.

to his vocation. He has a gift to amuse” and should have stuck with “writing fairy-stories” (801) rather than getting “carried away by his own dreams” (798). The basic argument in *Harper’s* is that Bellamy was fine when he was “construct[ing] a world to . . . amuse his readers” but that he became lost once he had “convinced himself that they [Bellamy’s ideas] were true and capable of being realized” (798). The message in these reviews is fairly clear: please and delight, but do not advocate; epideictic rhetoric is not supposed to do the work of deliberative rhetoric.

Such views were fairly standard and represented the opinion of many nineteenth century critics. The rise of realism in fiction meant that many authors were attempting to draw the reader’s attention to social problems through stories. However, there was a sharp divide among several authors and critics over how far this should go. David E. Shi notes that there were two extremes: “representation” and “detached aestheticism” (typified by authors such as Henry James) on one side and “didacticism” and “preachy moralism” (from authors such as Rebecca Harding Davis) on the other (123). Most authors and critics, however, tended to take the middle ground espoused by William Dean Howells and others, that literature should inform and “sharpen the reader’s responsibility to make conscious distinctions between vice and virtue,” but it should not openly preach or advocate specific positions (Shi 123). This idea is hardly unprecedented in the history of literature. Wayne Booth states that “almost all writers until [the late twentieth century] have claimed to teach virtue while giving pleasure” (*Company* 211) – a paraphrase of the classical poet Horace’s maxim that poetry should both instruct and delight. The “new rhetoric” of the eighteenth century (which, as Nan Johnson shows, heavily influenced rhetoric in nineteenth century America) emphasized how *belles lettres*

could help develop and refine the “taste” of the audience and thus create greater virtue in the individual and the community: “*Taste* [wa]s the name given [an] internal sense by . . . moralists and critics who treated its refinement in individuals as prerequisite to public virtue” (Clark, “Oratorical Poetic” 61). Literature – *belles lettres* – could in a general sense instruct as well as delight.

However, instead of “teaching virtue” or “refining taste” in a generalized way, Bellamy advocated specific legislative policies through his fiction. His attempt to turn the epideictic toward more specific deliberative aims did not, as seen above, sit well with many of his contemporaries. Refining the tastes of your readers, or teaching them to be kind to their neighbors was all well and good, but when you moved from the general to the specific, from “love one another” to “turn the economy over to the government,” apparently some rhetorical lines are not meant to be crossed.

In Bellamy’s eyes, attacks on his use of narrative likely served to reinforce his idea that the best judgments came from the community rather than from the specific tastes of individuals (such as professional critics/reviewers) – and that if a narrative form allowed him to reach and motivate a larger audience, than that was likely the best form to use. In considering his audience, Bellamy’s explicit justification was simple: “All the world is a good critic of a story.”

To explore how Bellamy develops his argument through a narrative (and vice versa), I will do a close reading of *Looking Backward*.⁷ This reading will also set the

⁷ This reading will focus on the text of the second edition of *Looking Backward*. There are some differences between the two editions, but these have been ably commented on by other critics. The second edition is the one most readers in Bellamy’s time would have been familiar with as it was more widely circulated than the first edition (which had a limited run).

stage for a discussion of how Bellamy engaged specific debates of his day and how other utopian novels engaged Bellamy's narrative. In Bellamy's case, the narrative was not mere veneer, an overlay added after the main description of Utopia had been given (as was the case with Sir Thomas More's genre-naming work), but an integral part of how and why Bellamy's ideas were, for a time, very popular and somewhat successful.

Through his narrative, Bellamy not only argues for his utopian ideas, he also argues for the primacy of the novel as the way to influence readers.

In order to best replicate how Bellamy used *Looking Backward* to create a convincing argument, I will go through the text from beginning to end, just as most readers of the day would have experienced it. Whether intentional on Bellamy's part or not (and with one digression), *Looking Backward* follows the form of a traditional four part classical oration. Because Bellamy's argument is created through his narrative, it seems best to analyze it *as* a narrative from beginning to end rather than to chop up the various bits and analyze them independent of their placement in the overall argument.

Introduction and Narration

The preface to *Looking Backward* immediately thrusts readers into its future world by including them in the "we" of the first sentence and by making immediate reference to the "closing year of the twentieth century" (45). The narrator of the preface (who seems to be a distinct person from the first person narrator of the main story, as he refers to the main character – Julian West – in the third person) writes in a way that assumes the utopian future as a given. Since the conceit of the preface is that this book is for residents of this future world ("the object of this volume is to assist persons . . . to gain a more definite idea of the social contrasts between the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries”), this suggests to Bellamy’s nineteenth century readers that they should view themselves, in some ways, as residents of the future utopia (45). The opening changes the focus of the book: it explicitly declares itself to not be a discussion of why this future world is better (that much is already assumed by the narrator) but instead to show the audience the inferiority of the past. The narrator makes reference to “the ancient industrial system, with all its shocking social consequences” and to how the current “social order” is “so simple and logical that it seems but the triumph of common sense” (45).

This makes it so that no matter their actual chronological position, readers will find themselves “looking backward” as they fill the role of the explicitly defined audience of the preface. Of course, Bellamy was not writing in the year 2000 – he was writing to nineteenth-century Americans (who would have likely found the idea of their industrial system as “ancient” somewhat interesting and potentially amusing). The point of the text was to get Bellamy’s contemporaries to look forward to a potential utopian future. To accomplish this goal, he placed them in a position where they found themselves looking backward at their own time period.

There is one moment of incongruity at the end of the preface, when “the author steps aside and leaves Julian West to speak for himself” (46). This phrasing tacitly declares that the author of the following first person narrative is not really Julian West. This leaves the “in-universe” authenticity of the narrative in some doubt. Most critics

assume that West referring to himself in the third person,⁸ but there is nothing to explicitly indicate that West is the narrator of the preface. Instead, the narrator of the preface talks as though he is not only separate from West, but that this tale is, in the fictional world it posits, a work of fiction.

The narrator addresses the audience as though they are from the twentieth century world that West will soon wake up in, but he also refers to “casting [this story] in the form of a romantic narrative” in order to make it more interesting (46). Combined with the justification for Dr. Leete’s long lectures given earlier (where the readers are asked to forget that they live in the twentieth century and that they should put themselves in West’s place – the exact opposite of what the actual readers of the book are implicitly being asked to do), this suggests that West may or may not actually exist in this future world. For this futuristic “author”, therefore, West is an interesting literary device used to explicate the differences between the bad capitalistic past and the good socialistic future.⁹

This ambiguity serves Bellamy’s intent to use a fictional narrative as an argument. The preface insists that the book be taken as fiction, regardless of whether or not it “actually happened” – what is important is that the utopian world it describes is “real” (within the fictional universe it posits). Readers are meant to approach it as fiction (specifically, a romance) rather than as an argument or a didactic text.

⁸ Darko Suvin is an exception, referring to the narrator as “an anonymous historian” (59), and Lewis Mumford in *The Story of Utopias* says: “In that preface the work is presented as an avowed romance . . . Julian West is a person whom our Shawmut historian invents” (160).

⁹ William Morris, in his utopian response to Bellamy (*News from Nowhere*), makes use of a similar trope. In the first chapter, the narrator briefly discusses his friend’s experience at waking up in the future and then coming back to the past to relate all he has learned. At the end of the first chapter, the narrator declares that, at his friend’s insistence, he will tell the tale in the first person, even though the experience happened to the narrator’s friend and not to the narrator personally. Morris is more explicit about what he is doing

Though the author, in the preface, initially differentiates himself from West, the rest of the book is in West's voice – a voice very similar to that in the preface. Any potential initial confusion is dissipated by the main narrative. In the first few pages of chapter one, Julian West makes many of the same moves as the narrator of the preface. He addresses the future audience as though they are part of his actual audience and attempts to deal with their possible incredulity when reading a tale written by someone born on December 26, 1857 – “one day after Christmas” (47). West then goes on to discuss his place among the upper classes in the nineteenth century and then proceeds to describe “some general impression of the way people lived together in those days” (48) with the often commented on extended metaphor of the carriage. To briefly summarize: society is a great coach, driven by hunger and traveling across roads (some dangerous, some not). The poorer working classes do all the pulling, while the upper class rides comfortably, all the while believing that they are “of finer clay” (50) than those doing the pulling. Occasionally, a bad bit of road causes an upset, and some of those riding in the coach lose their place and must begin pulling. Because of this change in class status, some of the workers can make their way to the comfortable seats, where they immediately forget their past and begin to believe that they are also made from “finer clay.”

In book three, chapter ten of his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle writes that “we all naturally find it agreeable to get hold of new ideas easily . . . it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh” (1410b). The metaphor of the coach here is meant to help

and why and is clearly aiming at a nineteenth century audience. However, Bellamy and Morris both share in the same basic rhetorical move.

the readers “get hold of something fresh” – at least in the case of West’s supposed audience. But here there is a clear difference between the author and the narrator. Julian West is presenting the idea of a society with a clear, unequal division between the rich and the poor to a futuristic, utopian audience. The coach is the vehicle by which he can explain to his explicit audience what things were like in the past.

However, this future audience does not exist and is instead a trope that allows Bellamy to present something to his actual audience that isn’t as “fresh.” Bellamy’s nineteenth century audience was likely aware on various levels of the distinctions between classes and the debates over welfare, socialism, labor unions, and other related issues (West admits he knew little about the debates but was still somewhat aware of them). The metaphor of the coach, in this case, does not present a “fresh” concept, but an old concept presented in a “fresh” way – a way that does not merely explain (as it would for Mr. West’s fictional audience) but instead forces the audience to reexamine their own assumptions. The old has been made new again, the familiar made fresh.

As Kenneth Roemer notes, “the coach analogy further estranges readers by using a familiar image to present an unfamiliar picture of the nineteenth century” (Roemer, “Going ‘Nowhere’ beyond Stasis” 136). This tactic of Bellamy’s closely follows Kenneth Burke’s idea of “perspective by incongruity.” Burke argues that some metaphors help us see things not just in a “fresh” way (as Aristotle would have said), but in such a radically different way as to challenge our most basic assumptions. Burke says that the “perspective by incongruity” is like “the methodic merger of particles that had once been considered mutually exclusive” and that it allows us to view “an object [as] if inspected simultaneously from two quite different positions” (*P&C* lv). Bellamy is

inspecting the object of the coach/society from two different perspectives: the present and the future. This “doubled vision” (Patai 10) allows Bellamy’s readers to see not only their own society in a new way, but it also allows them to see their society from the perspective of the imagined future audience. What may have seemed to be the familiar, expected, and natural order of society has been presented as alien, strange, and unnatural. Thus, Bellamy’s extended metaphor of the coach forces readers to reexamine their most basic assumptions about the order of nineteenth century society.

Bellamy’s metaphor makes several bold moves in its analysis and comparison of nineteenth century society, and perhaps the boldest is its claim that the upper classes of society are fairly useless. On this coach, the only work that gets done is performed by the working class folks that pull it. The upper class riders

could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically discuss the merits of the straining team . . . commiseration was frequently expressed by those who rode for those who had to pull the coach . . . passengers would call down encouragingly to the toilers of the rope, exhorting them to patience, and holding out hopes of possible compensation in another world for the hardness of their lot. (49-50)

As Arthur Lipow notes, in this metaphor, “the ruling class . . . performs no useful function . . . [and thus] the riders are purely parasitical” (73). Considering that many of Bellamy’s readers likely considered themselves to be among the elites of the day (as Bellamy was himself to some extent, coming from a well-educated family and with a cousin who penned the original Pledge of Allegiance), this is a daring move. The discussion of the riders on the coach takes on a sarcastic tone, deriding the riders for

doing no more than shouting out platitudes and occasionally providing bandages. But rather than an attack, this criticism can be seen by the audience as a call to action on Bellamy's part. The riders can escape scorn if they do more than engage in token actions that do little to alleviate the suffering of the workers.

The attack is also partly ameliorated by Julian West's confession that he shared in the same delusion when he lived in the nineteenth century, and that he can only excuse it by pointing out that all people of his class held onto it. This confession allows the reader to also absolve themselves of any guilt that they may be feeling at this point, by sharing in West's confession and acknowledgement that they didn't know any better. However, just as West's trip to the future awakens him to the evil of his previous attitudes, this narrative is also meant to leave the reader with no excuses. The next few paragraphs illustrate this lack of excuses, as Julian West refuses to defend nineteenth century ladies' fashions, mocking them lightly as "deformity of costume" (51). While hardly a high stakes concept such as class warfare or wage slavery, West's refusal to offer excuses for something as integral to class distinctions as fashion shows that he is no longer, at the point he is relating the tale, willing to defend the attitudes and mores of his previous life.

What few excuses he will offer later in the text originate from his earlier conversations with Dr. Leete, at the point where West is still new to the utopian world he has awakened in. At this point in chapter one, however, West is writing from a more experienced and knowledgeable viewpoint and so can no longer offer excuses for a society that he now views as flawed (and which hopefully the reader will eventually view as flawed as well).

After this initial introduction, the narrative goes into West's slightly convoluted, but hardly outrageous (considering the literary conventions of the time), story of how he woke up in the future. However, Bellamy does not allow for Julian's Rip Van Winkle-esque experiences to be a complete disconnect between the nineteenth century (a time of class exploitation) and the twentieth century (a time of veritable utopianism). Before West discusses how he is mesmerized in a sound proof basement in a house that will shortly burn down, he discusses the labor strife that has delayed his marriage. Julian cannot recall the nature of the agitation: "Strikes had become so common at that period that people had ceased to inquire into their particular grounds" (52). West then uses this vague strife to create a direct linkage between his time and the future:

The reader who observes the dates alluded to will of course recognize in these disturbances of industry the first and incoherent phase of the great movement which ended in the establishment of the modern industrial system with all its social consequences. This is all so plain in the retrospect that a child can understand it, but not being prophets, we of that day had no clear idea what was happening to us. (52).

Julian becomes not just a person from the past who wakes up in the future but a person from the first phase of what made the future utopia possible. This creates a linkage between the two time periods not just for the main character of the novel but for the reader as well. In essence, it tells the reader "you, who are reading this in the nineteenth century – you are there at the beginning of the change." It invites the reader to become part of and work towards this "great movement." Rather than completely relegate the future utopian society to only the future, Bellamy invites his readers to realize that the

change can begin to take place in the specific and concrete present instead of just in a vague and abstract future.

This discussion of labor unrest also contains somewhat menacing undertones. Julian West treats the strikes as an unnatural delay; something he hopes and expects will be over soon. His exasperation and expectations were likely mirrored by many of his readers (who were likely cognizant of the ubiquitous strikes in the real world) as well, but West's narrative tells the reader that the strikes will not end. Instead, they will continue to grow: they are a sign of an impending end to the way of life they now take for granted.

Chapter two begins with West relating the events of the day he fell asleep only to wake up in the future. The day he fell asleep was "Decoration Day" (the antecedent of Memorial Day), which West states was meant "for doing honor to the memory of the soldiers of the North who took part in the war for the preservation of the union of the States" (54-55). This holiday immediately brings the Civil War into the narrative, a war that was likely still on the minds of many of Bellamy's readers. Since one of the effects of the war was to emancipate the slaves, this reference could put the reader in a frame of mind to think about freedom, equality and emancipation. Combined with West's virulent complaints about the laziness of the striking workers that have delayed the construction of his new home and the immediately preceding discussion of the "great movement" that created equality and eliminated class distinctions, the placement of West's fateful day seems far from accidental. Bellamy clearly wants his readers to make a connection of some sort between the emancipation of the slaves and the emancipation of those who are driven by hunger to pull the coach of society.

This was not an entirely new idea, and it was an easy connection to make in the minds of any reasonably informed reader, especially since many socialists, Fourierist utopians, and other reformers of the time had already made explicit connections between the old system of slavery in the South and the industrial/capitalistic system of “wage slavery.” This concept was common in the press at the time and was hotly debated: The Oct. 31, 1878 issue of *The Independent* attacks the notion of “wage-slavery” calling it an “untruth” (15), and the Oct. 24, 1886 edition of the *New York Times* reprints an exchange of letters wherein Theodore Roosevelt rather belligerently takes exception to the concept, declaring that “the mass of the American people are most emphatically not in the deplorable condition” of “wage slavery” (1). Because socialists and other progressives frequently compared lower class jobs to slavery, causing many prominent figures and periodicals to try to refute the idea, Bellamy’s readers likely needed only a small nudge to connect the two when both concepts (“Decoration Day” and the discussion of labor strikes) appeared so close together in the narrative.

After Julian West is mesmerized, he falls asleep and wakes up in the future. He has been awakened by a Dr. Leete, who uncovered West’s long buried basement shelter during some excavation on Dr. Leete’s property. Through a series of brief questions and answers, his new host Dr. Leete informs West that he has awakened in the year 2000. West immediately faints. When he next awakens, he is incredulous, believing himself to be the victim of a “preposterous attempt at an imposture” or an “elaborate practical joke” (61, 62). Though this is likely the reaction someone like Julian would have had in such a situation, the entire initial encounter sets up the basic pattern of the rest of the book. Julian is exposed to something new. Dr. Leete explains it to him. Julian is usually

somewhat incredulous and objects to and refuses to accept the new information. Dr. Leete (and sometimes other members of the Leete family) eventually manage to win him over. In his initial encounter with Dr. Leete, Julian is exposed to the fact that he has somehow awakened in the future, and at first he refuses to believe his host. Eventually though he is convinced – with most of the “action” taking place through dialogue (West spends very little time doing any physical exploration).

While the later parts of the book will not be as extreme and while West’s incredulity will not always be as deep, this basic pattern will occur over and over throughout *Looking Backward* with little variation. While some critics have faulted the book for this repetition (and even Bellamy acknowledges this as a possible problem in the preface), this pattern manages to hold the book together despite an overall slim plot. A reader favorable to the book might see it much like a musical symphony that uses the same basic motif, but repeats the motif with variations (some small and some light) throughout the entire work. Other readers might consider it to be a form of *homologia* (tedious and inane repetition). Much depends on whether Bellamy and/or Julian West have gained the reader’s sympathy by this point.

This pattern (along with the love story and Julian’s constant sense of dislocation) gives the story some narrative drive, with mini-dramas – the basic narrative structure of problem, solution, climax, denouement – repeated for several hundred pages. These mini-dramas are often interrupted, and Bellamy plays with their form, in many cases delaying the solutions or answers to West’s concerns and questions – such as at the end of chapter seven, when West asks a question concerning “the most vital difficulty in the way of any settlement of the industrial problem” only to have Dr. Leete “prescribe sleep

for [West]” before the conversation can continue (87). Thus, through his use of amplification and variation, Bellamy is able to keep the reader’s interest in what might otherwise be, as is the case with so many other utopian books of the time, a series of dry lectures.¹⁰

The Thesis: Proofs and Refutations.

Once Julian is convinced that he really is in the future and after Dr. Leete has formally introduced himself, Bellamy returns to the main focus of the novel: criticism of the nineteenth century and praise for the wonderful utopian future. This theme is brought back into the narrative almost innocuously: West marvels that there are no chimney stacks, and Dr. Leete disdains the “crude method of combustion” Bellamy’s contemporaries used to heat their homes (67). From there, Dr. Leete goes on to discuss the “shabby affairs” that composed nineteenth century cities and “the general poverty resulting from your extraordinary industrial system” as well as “the excessive individualism which then prevailed [and] was inconsistent with . . . public spirit” (68). West never replies to these descriptions of his home time period, especially as Dr. Leete immediately changes the subject. Dr. Leete tosses off the criticism casually, as though it were common sense, received wisdom. Julian West does not dispute Leete (likely out of deference to his host and possibly because of the mental shock of waking up over a century in the future), and this silence gives the assertion more strength. In order to

¹⁰ Bellamy’s own sequel *Equality* does suffer from this problem as by this point West has been convinced, and the book is devoted to merely describing the future world. Bellamy tries to keep the readers interest with shifts in time and space but there is not even the minimal conflict of West’s unbelief, misunderstandings, and inability to adjust.

progress further in the narrative, a reader has to at least assent to the possibility that Dr. Leete's claims might be true.

Here we also see the first signs of "Bellamy's ability to create episodes that invited nineteenth-century American readers to see their value system supported even when he is explicitly or implicitly criticizing it" (Roemer, *Audiences*, 80). Dr. Leete is criticizing the nineteenth century, but in a way that would make it difficult for a reader to disagree without seeming to be a valueless person. As noted in the previous chapter, nineteenth century America was in transition from a time of communally shared values to one where individuals and individual values held sway. Many readers would still have the communal ideal in mind, and even those who didn't would likely assent to the idea that individualism can become excessive. In addition, those who were rich like West would hardly argue that poverty was a desirable condition – even the riders on Bellamy's metaphorical coach at least bought bandages for those pulling and paid lip service to the idea of remedying the situation.

In the next conversation between West and Dr. Leete, this duality between supporting while simultaneously criticizing the reader's beliefs is showcased further. Dr. Leete, in his usual offhanded manner, refers to "the singular blindness of [Julian West's] contemporaries to the signs of the time" (72) – a clear attack on the elites and upper classes of the day. Yet Julian goes on to express that he and his contemporaries, to a small degree, did in fact recognize "the widespread industrial and social troubles, and the underlying dissatisfaction of all classes with the inequalities of society, and the general misery of mankind" and that they were "portents of great changes" (72). This both critiques and supports the worldview of nineteenth century readers. The readers are told,

in essence, “of course you recognize, as did Julian West, that something is wrong” thus supporting their view of the world while at the same time critiquing it by telling readers that their view is not far reaching enough; they need to look beyond their present troubles to the possible ultimate end of these troubles. As Julian West states that he would “not have been surprised” had he seen, instead of a magnificent futuristic Boston, “a heap of charred and moss-grown ruins” (73), he sets up two alternatives for any reader’s possible future vision, i.e. “Look to the future, but be careful that what you do now leads to one (utopia) and not the other (moss-grown ruins).”

Then Dr. Leete describes how, through a gradual process of consolidation, the change came about: “Early in the last century the evolution was completed by the final consolidation of the entire capital of the nation” which was run by “a single syndicate representing the people” (76). West expected that this was accompanied by “great bloodshed and terrible convulsions,” but Dr. Leete replies that “there was absolutely no violence” (77). For Bellamy’s readers, this is both a comforting and a radical move. By declaring the process towards this socialistic future to be a peaceful and a gradual one, he reassures his readers that he is not making common cause with the type of socialists who espouse class conflict and believe that change can only occur through violence. This move is radical because it proposes a less violent (in fact, almost violence free) method of achieving the same basic ends that many socialists envisioned. Bellamy’s socialist future evolved along capitalist lines – while the corporations and capitalists of the nineteenth century are not excused for their oppression of the poor, Dr. Leete declares that they were “necess[ary] as a link, a transition phase” (77). Bellamy’s capitalist and conservative readers could now breathe a sigh of relief, as they were now part of the necessary

transition phase, which would be non-violent. Meanwhile, his socialist and progressive audiences could take comfort in an envisioned future that fit in with their ideals. This approach not only appeals to both types of readers, it also places them on a continuum rather than in radical opposition to each other: The socialistic future becomes the natural outgrowth of the capitalistic past/present.

Having introduced his characters and their setting, established his basic pattern for the rest of the book, and dispensed with the necessity of violence to achieve his ends, Bellamy now moves his argument into other fields. While Julian West is discussing the proper role of government with Dr. Leete, he is surprised to discover that there is no military, because there are no more wars. However, when Dr. Leete describes how the nation's industry is organized, West summarizes by saying "you have simply applied the principle of universal military service . . . to the labor question" and then calls it "this industrial army" (80, 81).

Commentators have frequently taken this discussion and pointed at Bellamy's childhood interest in military subjects and at his failed application (for physical reasons) to West Point as the probable source for this idea of an "industrial army." Bellamy's biographer Arthur Morgan argues that such a system "has been a recurring element in utopias from early times until the period just preceding *Looking Backward*," but he also goes on to say that Bellamy's "interest in military affairs doubtless made him unusually quick to see the advantages of a military type of organization in the economic world" and that Bellamy likely included it in his work because before writing *Looking Backward*, "Bellamy's preoccupation with military affairs was an interest without an object" (Morgan, *Bellamy* 318, 319). Arthur Lipow notes that such a model would strike readers

as sensible and workable because “it was a familiar model – especially in the post Civil War years” (85).

This would likely appeal to wide swaths of society in many ways: some Civil War veterans would feel a sense of nostalgia, supporters of the war would admire the military ethic implied here, and even those who were too young to fight in (or even remember) the Civil War would likely have been exposed to many orations and lessons (especially during Demonstration/Memorial day festivities such as those that start out West’s narration) about the glories and importance of militaristic values. Indeed, as Alan Trachtenberg argues, America’s economy in the Gilded Age was becoming more and more militarized, as many “companies organized themselves along strict military lines; indeed, former Civil War generals often served as presidents and directors of operations” (58). All of these factors would have contributed to the appeal of an “industrial army.”

But Bellamy’s use of a military model in *Looking Backward* is not based solely on his own youthful desires for a military career or to capitalize on post Civil War military familiarity. As Carl Guarneri has pointed out, Bellamy is making an allusion to a previously popular and influential French utopian: Fourier (especially as popularized in America by people such as Albert Brisbane). With this allusion, Bellamy is placing his work not merely within the framework of literary utopias, but within the framework of American utopian experiments and communities, especially those inspired by Fourier (such as Brook Farm and the North American Phalanx).

As Guarneri’s book is focused on the history of Fourierism in North America, his description of Bellamy is within that framework, and thus Bellamy becomes the last stand of Fourierism:

As a young man, Bellamy had been quite familiar with Fourierism. For eight months in 1871 and 1872 – the height of the postbellum Fourierist revival – he began a journalistic career in New York City . . . Bellamy was introduced by his brother Frederick to Albert Brisbane, whose theories, according to Frederick, “interested [Bellamy] deeply.” Brisbane’s son reported that the aging Fourierist “closeted himself for long sessions” with [Bellamy] . . . Later, Bellamy . . . called his Nationalist program the heir of “the Brook Farm Colony and a score of phalansteries” that were *Looking Backward*’s “precursors” in spirit if not in exact form. Several material features of Bellamy’s Boston of 2000 were clear adaptations of Fourierist ideas . . . The most obvious was the “industrial army” . . . Other borrowings worked their way down to architectural and technological details, such as Fourier’s glass covered street galleries and Brisbane’s system of transport through pneumatic tubes. (401 – 402)

Guarneri admits that there are significant differences between the two systems, but that Fourier (and his American disciple Brisbane) clearly influenced Bellamy is beyond doubt.¹¹ This facet makes it somewhat surprising that many critics seem to overlook the connection and assume instead that the term “industrial army” came from Bellamy’s youthful fascination with martial matters.

But even if Bellamy had been totally ignorant of all things Fourier, the term would still have had some importance to many of the readers in Bellamy’s audience. The

¹¹ Edward K. Spann, in *Brotherly Tomorrows*, also discusses the connection, writing that “*Looking Backward* was an appropriate successor to Fourier’s works” (142).

term “industrial army” would have almost immediately connected Bellamy to Fourier, Albert Brisbane, or any Fourier inspired community or thinker. As a term used while discussing Fourierism and American Phalanxes,¹² it was in wide use. A few examples will help illustrate this:

1. The 1843 *Hints and Reflections for Railway Travelers and Others, or A Journey to the Phalanx* describes someone by saying that “had he been brought up in a Phalanstery, he would, as a matter of course, been attached to an ‘Industrial Army’” (62).
2. Arnold Brisbane used the term in a letter to William Lloyd Garrison, in the September 5, 1845 issue of *Liberator* (144).
3. The July 10, 1847 issue of *Harbinger* discusses toasts made in honor of Fourier’s birthday. One of the toasts was: “To Industrial Armies!” (77).
4. In *The North British Review* in 1848, James Ward discussed “recent” French social philosophy and the concept of Fourier’s “industrial army” that would “instantly despatch” to the site of a disaster and “repair the damage” (238). This article was reprinted in North America several times, including in the July 1848 issues of *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature* and *Littell's Living Age*.
5. In the November 4, 1854 issue of the religious periodical *The Circular* (under the heading “Bible Game Notes”), there is a brief discussion of the Levites in the Old Testament as a “model industrial army” that may have inspired Fourier’s ideas (575).

¹² Phalanxes – another word borrowed from military terminology – were the basic communal unit in Fourier’s thought. While American utopian communities based on Fourier rarely followed the model with

6. John Humphrey Noyes's 1870 book *History of American Socialisms*, in Chapter 24 on the Ohio Phalanx, quotes the Fourierist periodical *The Phalanx*: "Our object cannot be more intelligibly explained than by stating that it is proposed to organize an industrial army" (356).
7. The 1883 book *Socialism and Communism in Their Practical Application*, written by the Reverend Moritz Kaufmann (and published in both England and America), discusses the industrial army in connection with Fourier on pages 260 and 261, though in this case this is merely a jumping off point to attack American socialists and discuss how Kaufmann's ideas are "superior to those conceptions of Fourier" (260, 261).

The list could go on, though the term was most commonly used in socialist or progressive publications such as *The Phalanx*, *Harbinger* or *The American Socialist*.¹³ Since Julian West uses the term before Dr. Leete does,¹⁴ it may be that Bellamy had Julian West use a term that any reasonably informed gentlemen like West (or Bellamy) of his day would have likely read or heard of even if only in passing.¹⁵ This allusion also ties the

any precision, they still referred to themselves as phalanxes.

¹³ After the 1870s, the term was still widely used, but in many cases it became a general term for any large organized group of industrial workers.

¹⁴ This may also help explain away the "continuity problem" in *Equality* where the term "industrial army" is mentioned only in passing near the very end. Since West used the term first, Dr. Leete may have picked it up as a convenient way to explain things in familiar terms to the awakened sleeper. Once West became more familiar with the future world he no longer needed to rely as much on old terms. Or perhaps not – many critics have noted that Bellamy himself became disenchanted with the term by the time he began writing the sequel.

¹⁵ There are other allusions and borrowings from Fourier in Bellamy's work. In addition to "industrial army" Dr. Leete uses the term "passional attraction" (196) which was also strongly associated with Fourier and the American utopian communities inspired by his ideas (Fourier based his model of society and the phalanx around the idea of several "passional attractions"). For some examples using "passional attraction" (as well as various other combinations of the words passion and attraction) in connection with Fourier, see John S. Dwight's "Lecture on Association, in its Connection with Education" and its companion speech Charles Henry Dana's "A Lecture on Association, in its Connection with Religion" (1844), "Socialism" in

development of Bellamy's utopia into a larger thread of history and adds weight to the argument that this future is inevitable and will occur with minimal violence. Fourier colonies attempted to change society by being examples rather than by inciting class conflict; hopefully, the readers of the book will behave in a similar manner. The only real obstacle to the utopian goal then becomes the ability of the readers to adjust to these (inevitable) changes rather than whether the changes will occur.

Thus, in chapter eight, Bellamy introduces West's initial inability to adjust to the future. As West is proxy for the readers, hopefully as they work through West's adjustment, they too will gain the ability to adjust to utopia. In many early utopian novels, narrators often easily accepted everything and had little difficulty adjusting to the new culture, or else they were merely visitors who do not have to live in the utopian society. Up until this chapter, West has seemingly had an easy time accepting his new life in the future. But after falling asleep and with his latest question unanswered, he wakes only to have the full gravity of his situation become apparent:

The emotional crisis which had awaited the full realization of my actual position, and all that it implied, was upon me, and with set teeth and laboring chest, gripping the bedstead with frenzied strength, I lay there and fought for my sanity. In my mind, all had broken loose, habits of feeling, associations of thought, ideas of persons and things, all had dissolved and lost coherence and were seething together in apparently

the Aug 24, 1855 issue of the *New York Daily Times*, and "Letter from Mr. Brisbane" in the Jul 13, 1858 edition of the *New York Times*.

irretrievable chaos. There were no rallying points, nothing was left stable . . . I knew that I was on the verge of losing my mental balance. (89)

West escapes this by rushing out of the house and into Boston. Since most of the narrative takes place inside the Leete house, this brief escapade should prove insightful and informative, but the reader is given only the briefest description. West mentions that some landmarks are the same, but that overall the city is “complete[ly] . . . changed” (90). West’s jaunt does not help his state of mind, and after somehow making his way back to the Leete household, West is greeted by Edith Leete, who provides some emotional comfort. This brief episode also provides the readers with additional incentive to continue reading beyond the politics of the text: A potential romance as well as the story of how West will be able to adjust to the future.

Since, as Bellamy wrote, “all the world is a good critic of a story,” it seems clear that these elements are there to remind the reader that they are in a story and not just reading a series of lectures about the wonderful nature of the future. The decision to cast his argument as a narrative seems to force Bellamy into occasionally stepping outside the discussions and, even if in a somewhat cursory manner, dealing with the characterization of the protagonist (and others). West’s reaction helps the reader identify with him, as it is likely that very few people would be able to adjust to such a massive change in context without at least some mental distress.

After more discussion with Dr. Leete, West goes “shopping” with Edith. While this allows for a change of scenery (instead of West and Dr. Leete sitting in chairs in the Leete home), the shopping scene also serves as a mild *paramologia* (admission of a weaker point in order to make a stronger point). While the majority of the scene consists

of discussions over how superior the futuristic shopping experience is, Edith does admit that all is not well in paradise in this regard: in “thinly settled rural districts” the distribution system is not fully developed and so there may, occasionally, be a delay of “two or three hours” that is “quite inconvenient” – though a footnote indicates that this will all be remedied soon (106 – 107). This small observation allows Bellamy to concede a weak point (not everything in utopia is perfect; there are still minor problems to be worked out) to make a stronger one (it is still better than the late nineteenth century). It also helps to ameliorate the idea of utopia as static – there are still some things that will always need improvement.

Another way Bellamy makes his points more convincing is through the differing styles of West and Dr. Leete. While West is adjusting to the future, with his many objections to the futuristic society, he is clearly a stand-in for the types of questions the nineteenth century reader of the text might ask. However, West objects in a flat, plain manner, whereas Dr. Leete uses highly eloquent and “rhetorical” language.

For example, in the discussion over how “invalids” (people with physical or mental handicaps) are treated, Dr. Leete tells West that they do what work they can but receive the same salary as the rest of society. West replies with phrases like: “The idea of charity on such a scale . . . would have made our most enthusiastic philanthropists gasp” (122). This remark is fairly flat, despite the use of a few words that would place it in a “higher” style. Its rhythm is irregular, and the action is buried at the end of the sentence, rendering it almost an afterthought. Even when West does try to imitate more obviously “rhetorical” patterns, he seems to trip over his own words, as in his next response to Dr. Leete:

But the cases are not parallel. There is a sense, no doubt, in which all men are brothers; but this general sort of brotherhood is not to be compared, except for rhetorical purposes, to the brotherhood of blood, either as to its sentiment or its obligations. (122)

West's mention of "parallel" and "rhetorical" seems intended to call some attention to his usage of some basic rhetorical figures: alliteration ("brotherhood of blood") and the brief parallelism at the end of the sentence. However, these figures have weak rhetorical force and seem either forced or (perhaps) reflexive. West constantly interrupts the rhythm of his sentences with interjections like "no doubt" or "except for" and buries his main thesis ("this general sort of brotherhood is not to be compared . . . to the brotherhood of blood") in the middle of his statement, rather than at the beginning or end, where it would have more force. None of this is particularly ruinous to West's argument (or character), as it resembles the lower end of a "middle style" of rhetoric that indicates some rhetorical training on the part of West – training almost any educated member of the upper class would have received. However, it fails to reach any rhetorical heights and seems designed merely to express ideas rather than to move an audience or to win an argument.

Dr. Leete, on the other hand, makes use of many rhetorical devices that indicate his high state of intellect and education. As compared to West's somewhat plain "middle style," Dr. Leete engages in an eloquent style that is "higher" than West's, even if it does not quite reach the levels of a true "high style." Dr. Leete's speech is clearly aimed at moving the audience (both West and the readers) while dazzling them with rhetorical brilliance. In his replies to West's concerns, he says:

The worker is not a citizen because he works, but works because he is a citizen. As you recognize the duty of the strong to fight for the weak, we, now that fighting is gone by, recognize his duty to work for him.

A solution which leaves an unaccounted-for residuum is no solution at all; and our solution would have been none at all had it left the lame, the sick, and the blind outside with the beasts, to fare as they might. Better far have left the strong and well unprovided for than those burdened ones, toward whom every heart must yearn, and whom ease of mind and body should be provided, if for no others. Therefore, it is, as I told you this morning, that the title of every man, woman, and child to the means of existence rests on no basis less plain, broad, and simple than the fact that they are fellows of one race – members of one human family. The only coin current is the image of God, and that is good for all we have. (123)

Dr. Leete's remarks sound like age old wisdom dispensed from a wise old man. His argument and description come in the forms that sound like accepted maxims among the citizenry of the year 2000. He starts off with a *chiasmus* (phrase in ABBA form): "is not a citizen because he works, but works because he is a citizen";¹⁶ makes use of *antithesis* (juxtaposing words with opposed meanings): "fight-work/strong-weak"; and fills his argument with several *tricolons* (words or phrases in groups of three): "the lame, the sick, and the blind – man, woman, child – plain, broad, simple". In addition, he uses

¹⁶ Some critics would argue that this is technically an *antimetabole*. Since in current usage, both terms (*chiasmus* and *antimetabole*) are "virtual synonyms" (Lanham 14), I prefer to take Richard Lanham's advice that "reducing the number [of rhetorical terms] even by one helps clarify the muddle" (104).

synonimia (the use of synonyms to amplify a point): “they are fellows of one race – members of one human family” and *conduplicatio* (the repetition of words in close succession): “solution – no solution – our solution.” The entire speech leads up to a climax that ends with a play on “God/good” that functions as a *polyptoton* (repeating different forms of the same word).

This gives Dr. Leete the air of learned authority. While it also provides some characterization (West is still adjusting to this new world, can’t keep his thoughts straight, and is thus unable to muster any serious rhetorical power, while Dr. Leete is clearly at home in this situation and is able to discourse intelligently at the drop of a hat), the main effect is to give West’s objections and concerns weak rhetorical force, whereas Dr. Leete’s explanations carry the force of a well-trained orator. West’s objections and misunderstandings sound feeble, because they are expressed in rhetorically weak(er) ways, but Dr. Leete’s explanations sound strong because his speeches are crafted in rhetorically learned ways. This does change somewhat as the book progresses – as West becomes less skeptical and more accepting, and as his questions turn to the inquisitive instead of the incredulous, his style becomes more balanced and more nuanced, though it never equals the artistry and elegance of Dr. Leete’s supposedly off the cuff answers.

Dr. Leete’s use of a rhetorically eloquent high(er) style fits perfectly with nineteenth century ideas of eloquence and style. Nan Johnson, in *Nineteenth Century Rhetoric in North America*, discusses how rhetorical theorists in the nineteenth century believed that

the eloquent style was considered to have a direct effect on the cultivation of elevated thinking and the higher sentiments. If the orator was to inspire

profound reactions, the eloquent style was a necessity. A measure of the significance awarded to the eloquent style is the fact that analyses of oratorical style were frequently conjoined with discussions of how eloquence can be acquired. These discussions, offered under headings such as "Culture of Eloquence" and "The Forming of Style," subscribed to the belletristic principle that an eloquent style develops only if the orator acquires a high standard of taste, appreciates and imitates model orations, and engages in frequent practice. (147)

Dr. Leete's high style is clearly calculated to "inspire [a] profound reaction" not just in Julian West, but in the reader as well. It also shows that Dr. Leete has "acquire[d] a high standard of taste" – likely because of the excellent education he has received from his utopian school system. And since everyone receives the same education as Dr. Leete, then it is likely that nearly everyone in the future society has high levels of taste and could likely engage in eloquent oratory as easily as Dr. Leete.

Thus, the argument that West is "an inadequate spokesman for industrial capitalism" (Pfaelzer, *Utopian Novel* 30) should not be a critique of Bellamy's characterization, but an acknowledgement of how his characterization affects his readers and illustrates his argument. West is "an inadequate spokesman" because "industrial capitalism" is inadequate, and Dr. Leete is an eloquent orator because utopia is clearly more than merely adequate. Since in the "nineteenth-century . . . eloquence in speaking and writing was the mark of the well-educated and thoughtful citizen" (Johnson, "Popularization" 139) both Dr. Leete and Bellamy gain prestige/ethos in the readers' eyes and minds.

Digression: The Novel as Argument

As the discussions between West and Dr. Leete continue, Bellamy interrupts the lectures with some episodes that seem to be illustrative rather than didactic but still serve Bellamy's purpose in furthering his argument through a narrative. In one, Edith Leete tells West that she will "introduce [him] to some very nice people of [his] own times" and takes West to a library that contains several books from West's (and Bellamy's and the nineteenth century audience's) time (130). Referring to them as his "friends"¹⁷ West basks in their "goodly companionship" and "s[its] down to read . . . a volume of Dickens" (130 – 131).

Ostensibly, the reference to Dickens plays out as a way of contrasting the worst of the previous centuries with the best of the year 2000, and this is how West takes it in his narrative: "I saw now past and present, like contrasting pictures, side by side" (131). But this episode is more than just a passing reference to a novelist many in Bellamy's audience would have read (or at least heard of); this scene also suggests to the reader how they should approach the book they are currently reading: *Looking Backward*.

The narrative says "approach this book as a friend" in the way that West approached the books from his time period (the time period that *Looking Backward* was actually written in). Edith's advice "you must not let old friends make you quite forget new friends" (131) admonishes the reader to consider this book as a new friend, no matter what old "friends" they may have in other books. Beyond that, it suggests to readers that

¹⁷ This idea of books as friends is echoed in Wayne Booth's metaphor of texts as friends in his treatise on ethical criticism, *The Company We Keep*. Booth acknowledges that writers like Bellamy were precursors to his ideas when he lamented: "Even more striking is the decline in talk about books as friends [in modern times]. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the personification was widespread, celebrated overtly in the titles of many books and essays" (*Company* 171).

they should do what Bellamy did with Dickens, only in temporal reverse: Use this book about the future to put “past and present . . . side by side” and compare them (or in this case, future and present).

Then, what Dr. Leete tells Bellamy about Dickens should apply to this book as well:

Judged by our standards, [Dickens] overtops all the writers of his age, not because his literary genius was highest, but because his great heart beat for the poor, because he made the cause of the victims of society his own, and devoted his pen to exposing its cruelties and shams. (133)

In other words, don't judge *Looking Backward* (or any book) solely on its artistic/literary merits – judge it on how well it serves a didactic purpose to expose the faults of and change society. Here Bellamy implicitly and explicitly calls for new criteria in judging a work of literature – and, in this case, they are rhetorical criteria: Does it “ma[k]e the cause of the victims of society [its] own”? How well does it “expose . . . [the] cruelties and shams” of society? How well does it accomplish its arguments and move its readers to change?

This idea continues after West and the Leetes visit the local dining complex. Upon returning to the Leetes' house, they begin discussing how authors and artists earn their money, and this leads into a discussion of newspapers and how they affect popular criticism. In Bellamy's day, newspapers were (despite widespread disgust with sensational reporting)¹⁸ one of the main ways to influence public opinion, and Bellamy

¹⁸ Darrell M. West refers to the nineteenth century media as “The Commercial Media” era (26). Its main features (especially after the Civil War) were “cutthroat commercial competition and tabloid coverage” that

himself was a journalist. But here, he makes the case for the book as a more efficient way to influence the public. Dr. Leete tells West that “your newspapers . . . seem generally to have been crude and flippant, as well as deeply tinctured with prejudice and bitterness” and then goes on to say that in the year 2000, “when a citizen desires to make a serious impression upon the public mind . . . he comes out with a book” (142). Here, Bellamy takes a common criticism of the newspapers in his day and amplifies it in order to build up the virtue of persuasion through books. This has the effect of making *Looking Backward* into an example of this apparently superior method of persuasion.

West then sits down and reads a “romance” written by Berrian, someone the Leetes consider to be one of the better writers of their day. Bellamy declares that

The reading of “Penthesilia” was of more value than almost any amount of explanation would have been in giving me something like a general impression of the social aspect of the twentieth century. The information Dr. Leete had imparted was indeed extensive as to facts, but they had affected my mind as so many separate impressions, which I had as yet succeeded but imperfectly in making cohere. Berrian put them together for me in a picture. (145)

This episode has the effect of justifying Bellamy’s choice to put his utopian argument in the form of a “romantic narrative.” In the prologue, the narrator half-apologizes for using

“combined . . . sensationalism and progressive crusades” (42, 43). However, despite the criticism of “yellow journalism” (a term that would first be used a few years after *Looking Backward* – though the concept had been around decades before the *New York Press* coined the term in 1897), newspapers gained more influence than they had ever had before in American history. West sums it up thus: “Journalists were moving toward a more powerful role in the political system [though] the tabloid coverage and sensationalistic headlines did little to boost their public credibility” (46). Both the growing influence of newspapers and the disgust over their sensationalism can be seen in this exchange in *Looking Backward*.

this form, but in West's world, lectures from Dr. Leete do not explain the beauty of this utopian scheme half as well as a story. These three incidents dealing with books from West's time and from Dr. Leete's time serves as a three part *exergasia* (repeating the same idea in various ways), with each part aimed at building up the idea of a narrative argument as more important than, superior to, and more convincing than other methods of attempting to influence the public. It is therefore telling that, after making this point, Bellamy continues his story with a narrative episode of flirtation between West and Edith, rather than going back into more of Dr. Leete's lectures.

As David E. Shi notes, in the nineteenth century many of the "genteel" class believed "the arts should esteem the beautiful, revere the past, reinforce social stability, and uphold a chaste morality" (16). Bellamy's ideal of the best literature is that it esteems social change, reveres the future, upsets social stability (but not too quickly) and upholds a social morality. Therefore, Bellamy's ideal for the novel becomes a somewhat radical, if not completely original (due to the rise of realism), standard.

Conclusion of the Narrative Argument

As the conversations between West and Dr. Leete continue, West becomes less incredulous, and his surprised objections turn into friendly questions. As his transformation continues, it also becomes apparent that West's insomnia has, through the ministrations of Dr. Leete, been cured or at least lessened. While not stated outright, it does seem clear that the more accepting West becomes of this future world, the more his insomnia disappears. Since "many of the doctor's talks ended with Julian withdrawing to sleep" (Towers 61), Julian's real cure apparently comes from being initiated into this utopia. Tom Towers argues that the insomnia "aptly symbolizes the hero's nineteenth

century agony” (63). In the overall argument of Bellamy’s narrative, this curing of insomnia represents West’s conversion: To somewhat paraphrase the hymn “Amazing Grace,” once Julian was restless, but now he’s cured. Since West, to some degree, is a proxy for the reader (and how they would act in a similar situation), West’s cure is a metaphor for his readers also having their “nineteenth century agon[ies]” erased by this vision of utopia (especially as these agonies have been fully detailed in the narrative).

An element of *Looking Backward* that does not (at first glance) seem to easily fit into the frame of an argument-through-narrative is the love story between Edith Leete and Julian West. As the preface noted, the story was framed “in the form of a romantic narrative” and as courtship and romance were expected parts of the genre of romantic narratives in Bellamy’s time, the love story fulfills the audience’s expectations while providing some narrative interest among the many speeches and lectures.

However, the romance also adds to the argument in subtle ways. Julian and Edith do not fall in love merely because of happenstance or the coincidence of her family being the ones to discover Julian’s resting place. Instead, the entire affair is portrayed as destined and inevitable. Throughout the book, there are hints that Edith is hiding something important from Julian, but when he confronts her, she usually demurs. After they confess their love for each other, she reveals her secret: She is “the great-granddaughter of none other than [Julian’s] lost love, Edith Bartlett” (221). Beyond that, Edith Leete admits she feels that she is the reincarnation of Edith Bartlett, and that while growing up (after being entranced by stories of her great-grandmother’s lover who perished in a fire) she “used to tell her parents . . . that she would never marry till she found a lover like Julian West, and there were none such nowadays” (222).

Rather than just being mere extraordinary coincidence, these details lend an air of inevitable destiny to the love story. Julian was apparently meant for the futuristic Edith, and fate intervened to make the match happen. This fated romance coincides with Dr. Leete's earlier descriptions of how this futuristic utopian society evolved – as if it were destined. Utopia happened, not because of violent revolutions, but (as Dr. Leete explained it) as part of the inevitable workings of society. Just as Julian and Edith's love was meant to happen, so was utopia. This thematically reinforces the argument that rather than fight against the path to utopia, the reader should accept it as a given and become part of what is meant to be.

Just as the narrative seems to have reached its climax, West goes to sleep and awakens in the nineteenth century. Convinced “the twentieth century had been a dream” (226), he wanders around Boston in a daze, comparing everything he sees to his dream of utopia. He sees the storefronts as wasteful when compared to the warehouses of the future and finds himself sickened by the lot of the poor. He attempts to bring about some change by preaching to his acquaintances. After an impassioned outbreak, he “restrained [his] passion, and tried to speak calmly and logically” to them by giving a lecture similar to those he received from Dr. Leete (238). But instead of convincing them, he is rejected:

[T]he ladies showed only aversion and dread, while the men interrupted me with shouts of reprobation and contempt. “Madman!” “Pestilent fellow!” “Fanatic!” “Enemy of society!” were some of their cries, and the one who had before taken his eyeglass to me exclaimed, “He says we are to have no more poor. Ha! ha!”

“Put the fellow out!” exclaimed the father of my betrothed, and at the signal the men sprang from their chairs and advanced upon me. (240)

He attempts to calm them by continuing to lecture at them, but he finds that the more he talks, the more he “became inarticulate” (240). Suddenly, he wakes to find that he is truly in the year 2000, and his return to the past was merely a dream.

This “double twist” ending not only gives Julian West a happy ending, but it also provides some extra interest for the reader, as it violates an expected norm of romances at the time. During Bellamy’s time, the basic “it was all a dream” ending could not truly be considered a twist or surprise ending. It was instead a common literary trope, often used to ameliorate the fantastic nature of the tale.

Everett F. Bleiler says “self-contradicting stories” where “the voyage to Mars turns out to be the claim of a lunatic, or the world catastrophe [or other event] is only a dream or drug delirium” merely “mirror the cultural censorship of the day” and indicates that writers or editors of the day, “fear[ful] of complaints,” might “soften matters by . . . negating what went on before” (viii).¹⁹ Bellamy himself had already made use of this device in *Dr. Heidenhoff’s Process* (where the protagonist, trying to calm the distraught object of his affections, discovers a way to erase painful memories - only to awaken and find he dreamed the process and his beloved has committed suicide), and he would use it again after *Looking Backward* in the short story “With the Eyes Shut” (where the

¹⁹ Bleiler admits in his excellent bibliography, *Science Fiction: The Early Years*, that some may not consider these types of tales as truly fantastic, but he considers them fantastic in nature “because of their central development, despite later contradiction” (viii).

protagonist finds himself in a world obsessed with the use of the phonograph, only to awaken and find himself in the normal world again).

By making the expected “it was all a dream” ending a dream itself, Bellamy not only adds interest to the narrative and shocks his readers out of their (possible) complacency by (mildly) violating the expected conventions of fantastic romances of the day, he also manages to ground his tale in reality. It was not “just a dream” but real. Rather than possibly subvert the idea of this utopia as a possible future and thus “negate . . . what went on before,” Bellamy affirms the “reality” of what went on throughout the entire novel. This is not a dream or a fancy or a pleasant diversion that should fade as a dream does: Bellamy is signaling to the readers to take the entire story as though it were as real as their waking life.

This final dream supports Bellamy’s argument in several other ways. First, it gives the audience one last chance to compare the nineteenth century to the year 2000 but this time from the vantage point of the nineteenth century. Up until now, discussions of the failings of the nineteenth century have been largely academic, abstract, and primarily from the mouth of Dr. Leete. West himself has asked questions about the future, but generally has had little to say about the wrongness of his past life. This leaves a slight hole in the argument, as it remains possible to somewhat refute it by declaring that Dr. Leete overstates/exaggerates his case and that West, unable to return to the past, cannot be totally sure that his era really was as bad as Dr. Leete insists it was. But by returning to the past, Julian and (by proxy) the reader see the nineteenth century through enlightened eyes, and the nineteenth century comes across looking inferior, unequal and immoral. Second, it provides a happy ending for West, since any sympathetic reader

would want Julian to be with the future Edith and obtain happiness. Bellamy's appeal to his readers' pathos helps heighten their desire to see West leave the apparent hell of their century to achieve a happy ending in a heavenly utopia – and this desire for West's happy ending can lead the reader to a desire for a happy ending for themselves as well.

West's ending dream also serves another function – it justifies Bellamy's choice of narrative fiction as the vehicle for presenting his ideas. In and after the dream, West realizes “the limits of his ability to communicate utopian ideas” to his nineteenth century audience (Roemer, *Audiences*, 96). As an orator, he is unable to communicate, becoming “inarticulate” the moment his audience turns hostile. His use of religious metaphors obscures his point rather than revealing it, and overall his oratory fails miserably. This dream, in essence, argues that an oration on the injustices of the rich toward the poor and on how to achieve utopia will not do. Pointing out society's problems and spouting high sounding phrases cannot be successful; especially with an audience that (while it may recognize the problem in vague, general terms the way West admitted he did early in the narrative) cannot understand what needs to be changed. While direct speechmaking did not work during Julian's brief return to the past, perhaps a narrative tale – epideictic rhetoric – can make the difference.

After the dream, West has a brief pang of conscience. Feeling that he has done nothing to deserve this paradise, he wonders: “What right had I . . . to rejoice in a day whose dawning I had mocked?” (241). Then, he hears a voice:

“Better for you, better for you,” a voice within me rang, “had this evil dream been the reality, and this fair reality the dream; better your part pleading for crucified humanity with a scoffing generation, than here,

drinking of wells you digged not, and eating of trees whose husbandmen you stoned”; and my spirit answered, “Better, truly.” (241)

After this inner conversation, he runs to Edith and confesses his unworthiness, but she apparently consoles him, as the last line of the novel reads, “Fortunate is he who, with a case so desperate as mine, finds a judge so merciful” (241).

This parting thought is more than a moment of reflection and tenderness – it seems aimed at provoking the reader to action after finishing the book. West is able to go downstairs and beg forgiveness from his Edith, but the reader is not. Readers are now hopefully aware that they are part of the “scoffing generation” that “drink[s] of wells” that they didn’t dig and “eat[s] of trees” whose caretakers they have stoned. They have no Edith to confess to, and like West, if utopia were to come tomorrow (or they were able to travel to the future to get to it), they would be wholly unworthy of it. The only possible recourse becomes either to ignore the ideas they have just encountered or to become worthy of utopia by mending their ways and working toward making the fictional utopian year 2000 of *Looking Backward* a reality.²⁰

Bellamy’s Rhetoric

Overall, this close reading reveals a rather carefully constructed argument on Bellamy’s part that goes beyond being “just” a narrative or a grab bag of ideas from which to pick and choose. Bellamy’s narrative was meant not just to entertain, but to

²⁰ This way of looking at the ending of *Looking Backward* answers Toby Widdicombe’s question about the “hopelessly unclear” nature of West’s final statements: “Who is the judge and what crime has been committed?” (“Introduction” 20). The answer is that the crimes that have been committed have already been detailed. West, as a representative of the nineteenth century, is an accomplice to them all. The judge then is the utopian future that needs to be realized and of which Edith is the representative. To obtain justice, the reader must realize the utopian future in order to absolve themselves of the numerous crimes Dr. Leete has already detailed.

move and to ultimately convince the reader of either the rightness of his ideas or (at least) of the necessity of giving them serious consideration. As Laurence Davis pointed out, in all utopian fiction, “the literary and rhetorical devices of the utopian text [are] a means by which its author undertakes to engage the reader in imaginative ethical dialogue” (78). Bellamy has engaged his readers in an “imaginative ethical dialogue” – with the conversations between West and Dr. Leete paralleling the ones readers would likely imagine themselves having in a similar situation.

Bellamy’s rhetorical skill and ability to use epideictic rhetoric to promote deliberative ends can partially account for the popularity of his work, especially when considered alongside the many other reasons given by other scholars. Yes, Bellamy’s book appeared at exactly the right time, whereas earlier books apparently appeared a little too early to have much of an impact; marketing, ideology, and dedicated friends willing to start a “Boston Bellamy Club” helped. Yet Bellamy’s rhetorical skill (rather than – or perhaps in addition to – his literary and aesthetic skills) must also be figured into the equation.

Chapter Three

Booth, Burke, and Bellamy: Utopian Conversations

Though many modern readers might find it surprising, Bellamy also inspired a small dance craze. An article in the May 23, 1899 edition of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* discussed “an interesting social novelty known as a ‘Bellamy’ dance . . . The dance is named after Edward Bellamy and is so called from the appearance of the dancers, whose costumes and masks are so arranged that they appear to be looking backward” (15).¹ Though the dance plays more on the title of Bellamy’s novel rather than on its content, the mere existence of a “Bellamy dance” shows that Bellamy had penetrated popular culture in unexpected ways, and that his name was quite familiar even among the party-going crowd. However, as discussed in the first chapter, Bellamy’s largest impact on popular and literary culture was not as the inspiration for a new type of costume dance. The hundreds of utopian novels that followed in the two decades after *Looking Backward*, the creation of the Nationalist movement, and Bellamy’s influence on American culture when taken together, all stand as a monumental testament to Bellamy’s achievements.

The sheer amount of utopias written to rebut, revise, or recommend Bellamy illustrate the reach of Bellamy’s influence. As with any literary genre, a utopia is always, in some manner, addressing the entire genre (and thus all previous and contemporary utopias). But the Gilded Age/Progressive Era utopias are fairly unique in their explicit and implicit engagement with Bellamy and with many of the other utopias being

produced at the time. Utopias in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century weren't just proposing solutions in order to create the ideal society and otherwise reacting to society's problems – they were clearly and (mostly) unambiguously addressing each other.

As stated in chapter one, this scenario fits well with Burke's idea of the parlor conversation:

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (Burke, *Literary Form*, 110 – 111)

¹ This dance was more than a one-time occurrence. It also received passing mention in the Aug 28, 1899 & in the Nov 11, 1900 editions. Also, the Apr 1, 1899 issue of *Harper's Bazaar* discusses this dancing phenomenon in some detail.

By using Burke's metaphor of the conversation,² every utopia from this time period was engaged in the utopian parlor conversation. Even if a given utopian author had not read Bellamy or was only vaguely aware of his writings, that author was still engaging the conversation around Bellamy. Previous to Bellamy, the utopian conversation had begun to die down. By 1888, few utopian communities still existed, and those that did were declining or would soon start declining; Utopian novels were rare and often overlooked. Then Bellamy entered the utopian parlor and joined the conversation. At first, he attracted little attention, but soon, more and more people joined in the conversation. Some attacked, some defended, and others proposed their own ideas. Suddenly, the conversation split into several smaller ones orbiting around the larger conversation about Bellamy. People left and entered the parlor, some moving from conversation to conversation, others only joining one of the smaller ones and then leaving. Some moved from the central conversation outward, and others moved from the satellite conversations inward. Some of the people on the edges of the parlor remained unaware of Bellamy, but joined conversations that could be directly traced to him within only a few steps. The conversation(s) would not have happened without Bellamy, and to greater or lesser extents, he influenced them all. Even those souls unaware of (or pointedly trying to ignore) Bellamy at the center owed something to Bellamy. As Jean Pfaelzer argues, of the "over one hundred and twenty contemporary authors" that wrote utopias in the time period she studied, "*Looking Backward* influenced them all" even if

² Burke's idea of the parlor conversation is compatible with Justin Nordstrom's "plea for utopian scholars to take Bellamy's respondents more seriously" by considering how the various "sequels to *Looking Backward* served as instances of 'fictional dialogues' which brought writers into contact and sometimes into conflict with Bellamy's text" (Nordstrom 194, 195). Nordstrom does not cite or allude to Burke, but his argument follows in the same spirit as Burke.

they did not explicitly agree with, attack, or otherwise directly engage Bellamy (*Utopian Novel* 50).

But there was more to it than just a conversation. The utopian conversation of this era was handled in a way that mirrors (even if it does not fully live up to) Wayne Booth's ideal of coduction. Booth defined "coduction" as:

Coduction will be what we do whenever we say to the world (or prepare ourselves to say): "Of the works of this general kind that I have experienced, *comparing my experience with other more or less qualified observers*, this one seems to me among the better (or weaker) ones, or the best (or worst). Here are my reasons." Each such statement implicitly calls for continuing conversation: "How does my coduction compare with yours?" . . . [Coduction] can never be performed with confidence by one person alone. The validity of our coductions must always be corrected in conversations about the coductions of others whom we trust. (Booth, *Company* 72 – 73).

If I may be allowed to mix Wayne Booth with Kenneth Burke, the various utopian novels were "conducting" about Bellamy. The many utopian novels were not just various proposals, programs, and parodies aimed at influencing wider or smaller audiences (though they were that), they were also (to one degree or another) attempts to deal with and discuss what Bellamy had wrought, often in a manner aimed at promoting more conversation and deeper engagement with the issues. In many cases, they invited disagreement and "call[ed] for continuing conversation."

All of the utopian writers in this era considered themselves to be “qualified observers,” and each new utopian novel was an attempt to compare their experiences and understandings of utopia with each other and with the reading public. As Justin Nordstrom phrases it, “these respondents wanted to engage both Bellamy and his readers in a debate . . . about the merits of state-run economies, the possibility of individualism in a socialistic society, the plausibility of women's work outside the home, international competition, and a host of other issues” (Nordstrom 197). Nordstrom’s description of this process fits well with Booth’s description of coduction: the main interest lies in creating conversations and in engaging in serious discussion. Several of the utopian novels of this period explicitly mentioned (or at least paid lip service to) a similar ideal. Conrad Wilbrandt, while declaring his opposition to Bellamy, wrote that he would welcome other viewpoints (iv). W.W. Satterlee takes time out of his description of a Bellamy-like world gone amok to allow his opposition a full and fair hearing, with a lengthy debate that allows all sides of the issue ample time to defend their views and to attack others. While many of the utopias do not hide their contempt for or worship of Bellamy, even those that do not completely live up to Booth’s ideal of measured, calm, and informed discussion are still engaging in some form of conversational coduction. In the end, they all contribute to the total body of utopian literary conversation, giving reasons why Bellamy is among the best or worst.

To that end, my focus on several late nineteenth and early twentieth century utopias will be to treat them not as autonomous but related texts but as interconnected pieces of an overarching conversation in the mold of Burke and Booth. Neither will I attempt to (necessarily) compare their various ideas to each other in order to create

various schematic labels for what types of governments, reforms, political philosophies, etc. they all espouse. Critics such as Kenneth Roemer (*The Obsolete Necessity* and his edited collection *America as Utopia*), Charles J. Rooney (*Dreams and Visions*), Jean Pfaelzer (*The Utopian Novel in America, 1886 – 1896*), and several others have done excellent and thorough work in that regard.³ My approach will differ in that I will discuss these texts as parts of a rhetorical conversation with and about Bellamy – in essence, how these texts converse and “coduct” in regards to Bellamy and his disciples.⁴ This way, even utopian authors and novels that are far removed from Bellamy can still be regarded as part of the smaller conversations on the outskirts of the utopian parlor because they all contribute to the overall discussion.

Even using this metaphor as a frame, any attempt to deal with every utopian novel written during this time period leads to the same inescapable problem that permeates many of the other books and articles that deal with this era: a sense that many of these books are quite fungible. Breadth allows for a wider picture of the hundreds of utopian novels in turn of the century America, but it also sacrifices depth, as the uniqueness of many of the books becomes lost due to the lack of time or space to devote to serious analysis or close readings.

³ At best, any new attempt at creating a grammar or descriptive frame would amount to quibbling over whether a given utopia “really was” libertarian or socialist or capitalist, or if it “really was” a utopian novel rather than “merely” a piece of speculative fiction. I could also propose a new framework for labeling utopias, but since I have no problems with the current ones created by Roemer, Rooney, Pfaelzer, et al., I see no reason to create a new one.

⁴ Susan M. Matarese’s *American Foreign Policy and the Utopian Imagination* (another book that deals with late nineteenth century utopian novels) can be seen as doing similar work. Matarese’s book does have some aspects one would expect in a “grammar” of utopias, since she breaks them down numerically in various camps based on their ideas about American foreign policy. However, most of the book – even though she does not cite Booth or Burke – can be seen as dealing with how these books engaged in conversation with each other and with the larger cultural conversation over America’s relationship to the world.

Since I aim to outline how these books converse and “coduct” about Bellamy, depth seems preferable to breadth (and also because, as discussed above, there are already several excellent books that provide enough breadth). In order to follow the conversation, I have decided to stay somewhat close to books that, in a metaphorical sense, are clearly engaging in direct conversation with and about Bellamy. Thus, with two exceptions, I have focused on books that use (and/or abuse) the characters and settings of *Looking Backward*. This is because the further one moves from the conversation about Bellamy into the overall utopian conversation, the harder it becomes to determine whether a given piece of coduction is directly traceable to Bellamy or not. For example, the utopian novel *Solaris Farm* (1900) briefly mentions Bellamy in its preface, but it is unclear whether any specific part of its bizarre but intriguing mix of spiritualism, socialism, and social isolationism can be traced to Bellamy or to *Looking Backward*. It seems just as likely that mentioning Bellamy was a “tip of the hat” to the man who helped create the current vogue for utopian literature or that it was a marketing ploy intended to draw in a part of Bellamy’s audience.

With novels that directly borrow from Bellamy, the threads of the conversation can be seen much clearer, allowing for an analysis that relies more on close reading than on guess work about what a specific author might or might not have known about Bellamy. The two exceptions I discuss have obvious and direct connections to Bellamy. W.W. Satterlee’s *Looking Backward and What I Saw* is set in a future where the USA has accepted all of Bellamy’s ideas; *News from Nowhere* is the most popular and well-known of the utopian novels written in response to Bellamy, and while it uses none of Bellamy’s

characters or his setting, the author made no secret that he wrote the novel in response to Bellamy.

While I fully admit that this focus on a small number of texts sacrifices some of the overall picture of the overall utopian conversation of the era, this gives me room to focus on each text more in-depth. As with any choice, there are positive and negative consequences. But since most studies up to this point have sacrificed depth for breadth (always for very good reasons), I hope that my choice will allow for a new way of considering the novels that helped inform and direct the public discourse of the time. First, I plan to introduce each of these participants in the utopian conversation and discuss how they are unique as well as some of the ways in which they interact with Bellamy and with each other. After that, I will consider a few of the topics that each work addresses in order to show how they engaged in conversations; conversations that were not just about Bellamy but also about many of the pressing issues of the day (and how Bellamy dealt – or failed to deal – with those same issues).

The Participants in the Conversation

W.W. Satterlee's *Looking Backward And What I Saw* (1890) combines a critique of *Looking Backward* with a visionary mode that explicitly borrows from *Pilgrim's Progress*. Except for a few sentences at the beginning and end of the book, the entire novel is a dream wherein the narrator visits a lackluster and ramshackle future America that has adopted Bellamy's Nationalism. There are several visionary dreams within this dream frame, including one where the narrator visits Vanity Fair and other places associated with *Pilgrim's Progress*. As much a temperance book as an anti-Bellamy book, the sordid state of this future America comes from an overuse of alcohol combined

with idleness (since everyone is guaranteed the same income regardless of how much work they do, there is no incentive to work).

However, despite Satterlee's clear disdain for Bellamy and his ideas, he does Bellamy one better by allowing for alternative voices and compelling counterarguments. At one point, the narrator sits down to read a transcript of several speeches given for and against adopting Bellamy's Nationalism (or a similar system) in America. All of the speeches are eloquent and well-argued. As Arthur Lewis has said (in his introduction to a facsimile reprint), "Satterlee has performed the good critic's function. He has presented the case for the opposition, shown its deficiencies, and then offered a remedy of his own. He has been honest with the opposition, for everywhere he gives credit for the sincerity of those proposing the schemes he dislikes" (x). Satterlee clearly aims to be more than just another polemicist. Except for his disdain for alcohol, he seems to feel that the public needs open debate about these ideas, not a rush to action.

Not every utopian author was as interested in allowing various sides to engage in sustained debate. Some offered invitations to debate or disagreement, despite not allowing for actual debate within the text itself. Often, the nature of how alternative voices emerged in the text depended on the nature of the narrative itself. In Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, West was the only person who could disagree with the future utopia, and he was (as discussed in the previous chapter) an "inadequate spokesman." Arthur Dudley Vinton's *Looking Further Backward* (1890) did not allow for alternate voices because the format of the novel comes from a series of lectures given by a representative of the government – a representative who will only allow the official viewpoint to be represented. However, this representative is something of an alternative voice, as he is

not from the same government portrayed by Bellamy in *Looking Backward*. In *Looking Further Backward*, the Chinese have conquered most of America, and the narrator is a professor of history, the successor to Julian West's position at Shawmut College.

A main point to consider in interpreting Vinton's *Looking Further Backward* is the name of the narrator. As Bleiler⁵ notes, the pseudo-Chinese name of "Wong Lung Li" is a homonym for "one long lie" (775) – therefore nothing that he says can be trusted. A subtle example of the duplicity that runs through the text comes during a lecture when Professor Li reads from a letter supposedly written by Julian West's son, Leete West. Li, in the lecture, off-handedly mentions that there is some doubt as to the provenance and authenticity of the letter, but a footnote states that since this lecture was given, Leete West has taken credit for the letter.

However, this slight narrative blip poses more questions than it answers. Why had Leete West not admitted that the letter was his before the lecture? Li declares that the purpose of reading the letter is to show that "the Chinese officers, to whom was confided the task of conquering, had tender and sympathetic hearts" (Vinton 176); if Leete West was truly treated as kindly as the letter indicates, it seems as though there would be no reason to question the letter's authenticity. The footnote indicates Leete is a colonel in the Chinese army, yet apparently no one bothered to ask him if the letter was his. The rhetorical effect of Li's offhand statement is to introduce doubt about the letter's

⁵ Although Bleiler gives the title as *Looking Further Forward*, I can find no evidence that the book was ever published under or referred to by that title. Likely, with so many "Looking Backward/Forward/Within/etc." books, he may have confused the book title with Richard Michaelis's utopian answer to Bellamy, which was named *Looking Further Forward*.

authenticity rather than to quell suspicion – there would have been no suspicion at all if the matter had never been raised.

The letter, however, serves a valuable function as Chinese propaganda. The only party with a motivation to equivocate over the ontological status of the letter is the occupying Chinese government – if Leete is a trusted member of the military, there would be no reason to have any doubt about the letter at all. The insistence with which the footnote declares the letter to be “beyond question” (150) smacks of overkill and a need to quell any rumors that the letter might be false. Thus, it seems quite clear that the reader is meant to believe the letter may have been either faked or heavily altered.

While the rest of the novel is more subtle than this example, a feeling of falsity, whitewashing and concealment pervades the text. Thus, while “Vinton suggests . . . the Chinese occupation will be an improvement over the socialist state” (Bleiler 775), that suggestion must be taken lightly. Li’s criticisms of Nationalism read like the standard criticisms most capitalists made of Bellamy’s system: people will lose their individuality and be unable to think for themselves, people will be unprepared for emergencies as they will not learn how to save or be thrifty, and innovation and independence will vanish.

Vinton’s own preface suggests that he might agree with many of Li’s criticisms, but that he also agrees with Bellamy on several points. In the preface, Vinton at first praises Bellamy:

The majority of the thinking portion of the community found in this book an echo of their own thought. In a simple and attractive way it set before the public mind the horrible iniquity of the present organization of society.

The comparison of our social system to a coach . . . has appealed to every honest mind by its truthfulness. (Vinton 5)

Vinton attributes Bellamy's success to the same reasons Bellamy himself attributed his own success – i.e., “this is what everyone was already thinking.”⁶ The first two-thirds of Vinton's Preface could have been written by Bellamy or by any die-hard Nationalist. However, Vinton then goes on to say that he is “heartily in favor of” any attempt “to regenerate mankind or better the chances for life, liberty, and happiness,” but he feels that Bellamy is “a false guide” and thus “worse than no guide” – and that Bellamy provides the “wrong solution” which is “worse than no solution” (6). He then declares that his intention is “to point out wherein the Bellamy Nationalism would prove disastrously weak” (6).

But, wherein would it be weak? Is every criticism Li levels at Nationalism intended to be accurate, or is Vinton merely worried about the lack of national defense? When Li declares that one of the triumphs of the new Chinese government is that “woman, who had been most unduly exalted under the Nationalistic idea, to an equality with man, would sink to the proper state of subordination” (Vinton 180), is Vinton declaring that women's equality is one of the “disastrously weak” points of Nationalism, or is this one of Li's lies?

Vernon Louis Parrington, Jr. argues that Vinton merely used Bellamy as a “framework” in order to “guarantee Vinton an audience” – and that Vinton's real concern was “with the folly of allowing Orientals to settle on the Pacific Coast” (82). Phillip E.

⁶ As will be argued in the next chapter, this idea may also be partially responsible for Bellamy's fading from the public memory so soon after his death.

Wegner takes Vinton's statements at face value, arguing that the female concern permeates the entire text – that in Vinton's eyes the entire nation has, under Nationalism, become “feminiz[ed]” and “emasculated” (85, 86).⁷ Reviewers of Bellamy's time took Li's criticisms as valid as well. *The Nassau Literary Magazine* declared that Vinton “unmistakably shows how loss of individualism and the lack of means for the preparation of self-defence [created a United States] powerless to repel the invaders” (281). While this review does not remark on the gender aspect, it does show that readers were likely to take Li's criticisms at face value, rather than suspect the narrator of telling “one long lie.”

However, Vinton's introduction makes it clear that he intends to attack Bellamy and Nationalism, not defend it or merely tell an interesting tale. Since Vinton's object is “to point out wherein the Bellamy Nationalism would prove disastrously weak” (an object common to nearly all anti-Bellamy writers), then some of the criticisms must be intended. But as the narrator is untrustworthy and clearly twists history to serve the propaganda needs of the Chinese government, exactly which criticisms are valid seems uncertain. However, the narrative itself is rather clear on one point: The Chinese did conquer America, and the future Americans were unprepared and unable to act.

⁷ Eric Hayot, in the most extended reading of Vinton's novel that I have found, never questions whether Li speaks directly for Vinton. Hayot's main concern is over how Vinton portrays the Chinese when compared to other fictional representations of the Chinese army invading America. Hayot ultimately decides that “the novel's avoidance of the stock figures of its genre, no matter how dull that evasion made the novel to its potential audiences, no matter how much it owed to Vinton's membership in the northeastern bourgeoisie, frees the fiction from usual clichés and allows it, finally, to be ideologically interesting” (119). Much of Hayot's focus is on the tension between Li's narrative and West's journal (which Li quotes from extensively) and how this shows that “this novel is ‘about’ not only the Chinese invasion of the United States but also an individual intercultural experience in which a member of the invading culture transforms himself (or is transformed) by narrating the history of the invasion of which he is a member. Rather than a monodirectional tale of invasion and conversion, then, the novel represents the mutual (and largely unconscious) imbrication of the colonizer with the colonized, the Chinese with the American, and the immediate present with the recent past” (112). Such a reading is only possible if the critic starts with the

Arguments over the validity of specific details about the behavior of Julian or his son Leete seem beside the point when considered next to that one fact. Even if we refuse to believe any of Wong Lung Li's self-serving arguments, it remains clear that Nationalism was "disastrously weak" in one area: national defense.

Justin Nordstrom says that Vinton's stance is that "abandoning competitive capitalism would leave the United States vulnerable to foreign invasion" (200) – however, Vinton's introduction indicates he has some sympathy with the Nationalist cause, if not their proposed solution. It would be more accurate to say that Vinton worries that "[adopting Bellamy's specific scheme] would leave the United States vulnerable to foreign invasion." In *Looking Backward*, Leete informs West that in the year 2000, "we have no wars now, and our governments no war powers" and that "we have no army or navy, and no military organization" because utopia needs no military (Bellamy, *Looking Backward* 78, 167). This clearly does leave a nation open to attack from a foreign power, even though *Looking Backward* assumes that the whole world has either embraced this ideology, or will soon follow the example of America.

In Vinton's book, there is little practical demonstration of any of the other areas of critique. While Li says that the new role for women (of submission) is a good thing, the narratives used in the lecture do not deal with this aspect or with many of the others Li mentions throughout the text. The women that do appear in the novel, while somewhat stereotyped (i.e., in a romantic subplot), are not overtly portrayed as inherently weak or unequal. The narrative focuses only on the aspect of how a Bellamy-esque

assumption Li does not lie, and that he accurately represents the journals and other writings that he quotes in his lectures.

society would deal with a foreign invasion. Nearly all other concerns coalesce around that one complaint or else appear as brief, tangential remarks from the mouth of Li. National defense (or the lack thereof) is the one concern that, even if Li is lying about all else, still remains a problem in Bellamy's system (according to Vinton).

But while it may be somewhat hard to tell if Vinton's book is anti-reform or only anti-Bellamy, other novels were fairly unambiguous about their disdain for or agreement with the principles in *Looking Backward*. Though Bellamy avoided the term communism, writers such as Richard Michaelis in *Looking Further Forward* (1890) were bound and determined to make sure that the reading public knew that Bellamy was, in their view, a communist at heart.

In Michaelis's *Looking Further Forward*, Julian West continues to function as proxy for the reader. When, in Michaelis's book, West declares that after "Dr. Leete had explained in his positive and still fascinating manner the new order of things I had hardly noticed that it was based in communistic principles" (28), West represents the many readers that reached the end of Bellamy's book and were inspired by it while "hardly" noticing that it advocated a form of socialism. Some later utopias trumpeted their socialist credentials – a good example is the first American edition of *News from Nowhere*, which features the engraving "Labor's May Day" and the phrase "Solidarity of Labor" on the front cover – but *Looking Backward* can be picked up and read (and likely was read) without a clue as to whether or not it is socialistic or communistic.⁸

⁸ The 1888 cheap paperback edition of *Looking Backward*, which was the edition wherein Bellamy's novel became a best-seller, helped mask the book's socialism as well. The advertisements in the back of this edition (for items such as pianos, perfumes, crackers, and other books) frame *Looking Backward* as part of the overall capitalistic culture of the time.

Michaelis's introduction to *Looking Further Forward* partly attributes this to Bellamy's skill as a writer,⁹ arguing that noticing Bellamy's system "is nothing but communism" becomes easier to see once the book is "stripped of its fine coloring" (iii).

Communism is clearly Michaelis's "devil term" in this work. Once "Mr. Forest" (the janitor who was the disgraced professor of history at Shawmut before West took the job) begins explaining the deficiencies of the twentieth century system to West, the term communism appears repeatedly. Forest proposes several reforms that he claims, if they had been enacted in West's day, "would have done a great deal to save humanity from communism" (110). Michaelis's narrative admits that there were problems with industrial capitalism, but argues that modifying capitalism would work better than adopting "communism" wholesale.

Michaels also borrows the basic form of Bellamy's book, as West gains most of his information through extended dialogues with Forest. Though West does interact a bit more with the social environment of the year 2000 and briefly attempts to engage people on the street in conversation, he does very little investigation on his own. Nearly all of the evidence against the future utopia comes from the mouth of Forest. By the end, West declares "I had changed my mind after becoming familiar with the facts and circumstances" (116), though he has been given very few facts and has little direct experience with the circumstances. This (unintentionally?) creates a picture of West that

⁹ This acknowledgement of Bellamy's skill as a writer may have prompted some reviewers to compare Michaelis's talents to Bellamy's. A review of *Looking Further Forward* in the August 30, 1890 issue of *The Literary World* says that "Mr. Michaelis is, of course, not to be compared with Mr. Bellamy as a brilliant writer; but Mr. Bellamy is just as little to be considered the equal of Mr. Michaelis in practical sagacity" (283).

makes him seem rather gullible. Michaelis likely meant to show that his case was so strong that even West, the devoted convert to Nationalism, could be convinced of the truth. Instead, West appears ready to believe whatever anyone willing to engage in lengthy dialogue with him says.

However, the solutions proposed by Forest unwittingly illustrate one problem with, as Kenneth Burke would say, “debunking.” Burke argued that those who attempt debunking often overlook the problems in their own positions, and when a debunker proposes a solution, they often propose something very much like the “problem” they just attacked: “Since there comes a point at which [the debunker] too must advocate something or other, he *covertly* restores important ingredients of thought that he has overtly annihilated” (Burke, *Literary Form* 171). This happens through “an unintentional ambiguity whereby [the debunker] throws something out by *one* name and brings it back in by *another* name” (Burke, *Literary Form* 174; italics in original).

Forest’s solutions suffer from the same problem. Forced to admit that all was not well in the late nineteenth century and that reforms were needed and after detailing the main problems with Nationalism (there is no incentive to work, greed and corruption still exist among the political caste, etc.), he then proposes a series of reforms that sound very much like Bellamy’s ideas. Regardless, Forest continually emphasizes that these reforms are not communism but merely modified capitalism.

For example, when asked how he would deal with the problems of shortages and excess production, Forest replies: “A national bureau of statistics should have ascertained both the average yearly consumption and the capacity of the different trades and their plants for the production of the necessities of life” (Michaelis 96 – 97). Despite Forest’s

assurances that this is not communism and that competition would remain, this sounds remarkably like Dr. Leete's description of how the future utopian system works:

[T]he figures of consumption for any week, month, or year, in the possession of the department of distribution at the end of that period, are precise. On these figures, allowing for tendencies to increase or decrease and for any special causes likely to affect demand, the estimates, say for a year ahead, are based. These estimates, with a proper margin for security, having been accepted by the general administration, the responsibility of the distributive department ceases until the goods are delivered to it.

(Bellamy, *Looking Backward* 151).

In both cases, the central government determines demand and the ability to fill that demand and then creates specific guidelines for the industry to follow. Forest claims his idea is different because, in his plan, "The National Government should simply have ascertained the amount of the yearly consumption of the various articles, the capacity of the respective trades for furnishing such articles, and should then have left the regulation of production to the members of each trade" (Michaelis 96 – 97). When West asks Forest what to do if the trades form monopolies and overcharge for their goods or over/under produce the amount of goods, Forest replies that they would have "to stand the consequences" (97). After further discussion, it becomes clear what these consequences are: The strong arm of the government would penalize the industries for their malfeasance. Though Forest insists this system still allows for competition, his ideas have the government dictating the amount of goods to be produced as well as the

acceptable price of goods. The workers and producers in this case do not seem free to compete, but they are instead free to obey the plans set down by the government.

Forest goes on to say that he “would have advocated a law ordaining that no farmer should have more than forty acres of land” (101), only allowed people to own one house (107), and would have reduced inheritance considerably through taxation and confiscation: “the surplus [inheritance above \$250,000] should have been considered as an income to humanity” (108) and taken by the government. In Bellamy’s world, the government also limited citizens to one house, and the amount of land used for farming was regulated by the industrial army. In practice, Forest’s ideal world may not have been “communism,” but only because he refused to call itself by that name.¹⁰ Bellamy often refused to directly associate Nationalism with communism or socialism, preferring instead to discuss them only when comparing his system to other forms (in order to show the superiority of his system). Michaelis also refuses to call his system communism, but in practice it resembles Bellamy’s system, with its central planning and direct price controls, redistribution of wealth, and limits on ownership of property. In essence, as Burke says, in “debunking” Bellamy, Michaelis “threw something out by one name (cleverly concealed communism) and brought it back in by another name (heavily regulated capitalism).”

Looking Further Forward is unique among the many novels that borrow from Bellamy because, while Michaelis’s novel was a “sequel by another hand,” his novel also

¹⁰ This was noticed by critics at the time as well. A review of Michaelis’ book in the August 30, 1890 edition of *The Critic* declared that “most of the author’s criticisms . . . are excellent . . . but when he presents his own remedies for the economic evils of the time, he is not equally successful” because “he advocates a vast extension of state interference” (107).

has a “sequel by another hand.” While most of those who supported Bellamy wrote their own sequels, Ludwig A. Geissler decided to defend Bellamy by attacking Michaelis.

Geissler’s *Looking Beyond* (1891) clearly announces its intent with the subtitle, *A Sequel to “Looking Backward,” by Edward Bellamy, and An Answer to “Looking Further Forward,” by Richard Michaelis*. Though Geissler avoids the tricky ending of Michaelis’s novel¹¹ by reverting to the “it was all a dream” trope, he still acknowledges the majority of the narrative, quoting it often (in the same way that Michaelis used direct quotes from Bellamy’s novel). Geissler also gives West more to do than just talk to someone – his West explores the nation and engages in conversation with others. An implicit criticism of the structure of Michaelis’s novel (which Geissler seems unaware could easily apply to Bellamy as well) comes when Edith complains early in the novel that “common decency should teach [Mr. Forest] to give you time to become accustomed to our institutions and to understand them, not from hearsay merely, but from your own observation and experience” (16 - 17). Additionally, Dr. Leete provides what could be considered the thesis for Geissler’s book when he declares to West: “Thus far you have only heard my praise of [the current society], followed by Mr. Forest’s utter condemnation. Now, you shall judge for yourself” (24). During the early part of the book, West does exactly that – he “judges for himself” and finds Forest’s complaints without merit.

¹¹ A violent uprising of several discontented citizens begins with the kidnapping of Edith Leete and a violent assault upon West and the Leete family. West then wakes up in 1887 to discover the future was all a dream.

In addition, to show that life in a Bellamy-esque utopia is far from stagnant or lacking in conflict, the novel contains several small human dramas – one of the Leete’s neighbors marries a man her family does not approve of, and the man her family wanted her to marry winds up marrying her sister instead. There is something of a contradiction in this drama, as both Geissler and Bellamy insist no one is looked down on for their role in the industrial army, and all jobs are considered to be of equal importance. However, Uriah Brown (the unwelcome suitor) is clearly looked down on because he proved unfit for a skilled job and instead became a street cleaner: “The poor girl had to brave the disapproval of her whole family and all her friends, who thought it an outrage that a woman, standing so high in the guild, should marry a man who not only had lost his former high grade, but even his trade, and now belonged to the lowest grade of common labourers” (36). Apparently, despite the claims of Dr. Leete in Bellamy’s book and Professor Yale in Geissler’s novel a “common labourer,” does not share in the same prestige as a scientist or other skilled labor.

Geissler’s novel ends, after a debate where Mr. Forest’s points are supposedly refuted, with Earth establishing contact with intelligent life on Mars. Though at first this ending seems like a *non sequitur* for a novel devoted mostly to defending Bellamy, the incident actually supports Bellamy in a different way than through verbal argumentation. The “contact with Mars” ending is meant to show, through an illustrative episode, that Bellamy’s twentieth century is not stagnant, is able to grow, and can deal with unexpected changes. The society (rather than falling apart, ignoring the new development, or becoming unsure of what to do because they are too bureaucratized to think for themselves) responds with admirable efficiency. Volunteers work on the new

project, others pick up the extra hours, and “the only recompense would be the nation’s thanks and the International Badge of Honour” (90). Thus, Geissler attempts to refute the idea that people need competition and an increase in salary to motivate them (as Mr. Forest claimed). Geissler is saying that Bellamy was right: All that the future society needed to motivate its workers were a few medals and the general desire to serve humanity.

Though many of the other novels explicitly borrow Bellamy’s setting, characters, and ideas, and even some of his literary tropes such as the “it was all a dream” ending or the “question and answer” format, few start off with an introduction that directly parallels the introduction of *Looking Backward*. Usually, the introduction (as with *Looking Further Forward*, *Looking Further Backward*, and *Looking Beyond*) explicitly addresses a late nineteenth century audience. However, J.W. Roberts’s *Looking Within* (1893) starts off with an introduction that seems consciously modeled on Bellamy. In fact, the entire book, as the August 1, 1893 *Congregationalist* noted, “appears to be modeled to some degree” on *Looking Backward* (“Stories” 291). A closer look shows Robert’s degree of modeling to be rather high.

Bellamy’s introduction starts with an exact date (“December 26, 2000”), has the narrator address the twentieth century audience and claims that “the object of this volume is to assist persons who, while desiring to gain a more definite idea of the social contrasts between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are daunted by the formal aspect of the histories which treat the subject” (Bellamy, *Looking Backward* 45). The narrator in Robert’s preface also gives an exact date (“January 1, 2027”), addresses the future audience and then states that “the object of this work is to throw light upon this

enigmatical problem, warn fellow-citizens of the danger that threatens them . . . and prevent any such catastrophe ever from overtaking our beloved country in the future” (Roberts, iii). Although Bellamy’s introduction focuses on providing information while Roberts’s takes the stance of active warning, both use similar phrasing (i.e., “the object of this work is”) and present their works as written in the future, for the future. There are other similarities as well: Roberts’s narrator declares “we hail the dawn of a new era of progress with unspeakable gladness” (Roberts, iii), whereas Bellamy’s narrator also looks forward to “the progress that shall be made, ever onward and upward” (*Looking Backward* 46).

The protagonist of *Looking Within* also mirrors Julian West to some extent, though he functions more as a foil for West (and vice versa). His name, James North, indicates some affinity with West – his first name starts with the same letter (James and Julian), and his last name (North) is, like west, a point on the compass. Though West’s last name is likely meant to conjure up images of new frontiers and undiscovered countries, North’s last name might be calculated to imply freedom and victory, especially to an audience not that far removed from the Civil War. Unlike other books that used characters and situations from *Looking Backward*, Roberts does not immediately jump into the year 2000. Instead, like West, North starts off in the nineteenth century. However, unlike West, North deliberately sets out to educate himself about the labor dispute. West declares that he was only vaguely aware of the debates over labor and held to “the opinions of the people of my class” (Bellamy, *Looking Backward* 53). North, on the other hand, visits laborers, capitalists, socialists, agitators, government workers, and various other interested parties all across the country in order to see how they view the

labor difficulty. He refers to hearing similar sentiments from “hundreds of men hundreds of miles apart” (Roberts 63) and often reports conversations and speeches verbatim. He even discusses reading *Looking Backward* and comments on the metaphor of the coach.¹² North’s active behavior clearly contrasts with that of West, who merely sat at home and cursed the laborers who were on strike. North has a love story that partly mirrors West’s – West’s marriage was delayed because his house was unfinished because of labor strikes, and North’s wedding is delayed because the house of his beloved’s father burns down due to the actions of a drunken socialist agitator. In both cases, this delay in marriage leads somewhat directly to West’s and North’s transport to the future.

Roberts contrives North’s journey to the year 2000 (and beyond) in such a way that the text corrects some of the narrative oversights in Bellamy’s book. North initially travels only thirty five years into the future, witnessing how the change to Nationalism took place. This experience allows the protagonist to have first hand knowledge rather than relying on the words of others. When North and his wife (North manages to bring his Edith analogue – Effie – along with him rather than wooing her reincarnation) arrive in the year 2000, North remarks that “[t]here was not the change I had expected to witness” (138). His surprise at the relative lack of change from his era to the year 2000 could be seen as a comment on how Bellamy’s vision of the twentieth century felt very much like the nineteenth century, only with no poor people. Bellamy somewhat addressed similar critiques in *Equality* with episodes like when Edith reveals that upon finding West, “we reflected that to see mother and me in the modern dress would no

¹² As we shall see with some of the books that follow, it was not uncommon for nineteenth-century travelers to the future to read about Julian West in the past and then meet him in person in the future.

doubt strike you very strangely” and so they dressed in nineteenth style clothing to ease his transition into the twentieth century (*Equality* 46).

After North arrives in the twentieth century, he meets Julian West. The two become fast friends – “Mr. West and I found so much in common to converse about . . . this was the beginning of a delightful acquaintance and friendship” (154, 155) – and like West, North turns to Dr. Leete for information on the future. Though North is clearly a foil for West, he is not hostile, and there is clear admiration for Julian West in his description. Roberts’ book attempts to make the “misleading tendencies” of Bellamy’s novel “manifest,” but the section where North meets West and discourses with Dr. Leete indicates that there is no personal animosity. North’s reaction to Dr. Leete’s rhetoric could easily serve as a description of the author’s reaction to *Looking Backward* as well as a mild attack on West’s rather uncritical nature: “I was highly entertained, but was not converted to his views; I desired to see and know more before reaching settled conclusions” (155). *Looking Backward* entertains, but Roberts means to warn us that it may not inform. North eventually finds another informant, a Mr. Hume. Mr. Hume parallels Dr. Leete in much the same way North parallels West, but Mr. Hume is more world weary than Dr. Leete. Mr. Hume “never suffered himself to be led to conclusions by the superficial appearance of things,” whereas Dr. Leete’s “gaze is so absorbed in the silver lining to the cloud that he does not see the cloud at all” (156).

The similarity in structure even extends to the placement of a sermon. In *Looking Backward*, a Mr. Barton gives a sermon that (using West’s revival as a starting point) summarizes many of the main points of the overall book and compares the future to the past so that the future appears more enlightened and moral. Roberts includes a “Dr.

Butler” who also gives a sermon that summarizes many of the arguments presented in the novel up to this point (Hume even apologizes to North for the repetition, showing Roberts’ awareness of possible drawbacks in adhering so closely to Bellamy’s framework, even if Roberts ultimately decided it was necessary). Butler’s sermon serves as a counterpoint to Barton’s in more than just political content. Of course Barton’s sermon extols the virtues of Bellamy’s ideas while Butler’s damns them, but Butler’s sermons are notable for one other feature: copious quotations from and allusions to the Bible. While, as Kenneth Roemer notes, Barton’s sermon in *Looking Backward* does “mention . . . Jesus” and “biblical styles (the rosebush parable, for example) and references to (the ten commandments) do appear” (*Utopian Audiences* 188),¹³ overall Barton’s sermon is strikingly secular, concerned more with working in the industrial army than qualifying for the world to come. Butler’s sermons, on the other hand, quote the Bible extensively and make explicit references to God and Christ. Here Roberts is clearly attacking Bellamy for his utopia’s apparent lack of any solid religious core, despite Bellamy’s occasional nod to the idea of Nationalism as a true form of Christianity. By providing an alternative, one with more explicit Christian rhetoric, Roberts attempts to outdo Bellamy and his followers and appeal directly to those readers who are Christian.

The ending of *Looking Within* also follows Bellamy’s cues, with the narrator falling asleep and waking up even further in the future – a future that has returned to a

¹³ And even here, Roemer’s analysis shows that this sermon does appear to be more secular than sectarian, as this quote comes from a section where he discusses how an overwhelming number of his students read the sermon as non-religious and otherwise miss the few biblical references contained therein.

modified form of nineteenth century capitalism. But instead of a brief return to a hellish past (as with West), this is a joyous awakening into a heavenly future: “The changes were as radical as those described in stories of fairy-land. Beauty, taste, adornment – these were seen on every side” (276).

Roberts’ attempt to outdo Bellamy at his own game was a calculated risk. By creating a main character so similar to West and by borrowing the framework of Bellamy’s novel, he risked comparison on other levels besides the truthfulness of his utopian ideas. The August 27, 1893 edition of the *New York Times* declared the author of *Looking Within*, J.W. Roberts, had “a sensible mind, and no literary style, good or bad. [However] . . . He has made a mistake, we think, in adopting the Bellamy model for his story, and in planning a plot so similar to that of ‘Looking Backward’ . . . for Mr. Bellamy is a fluent and practiced writer for the press who knows how to tell a story” (19).

While many reviewers and commentators of utopian novels often compared literary quality, most of the time the truth or usefulness of the ideas put forth dominated. Despite using Bellamy’s ideas, only *Looking Within* and *Mr. East’s Experiences in Bellamy’s World* borrowed closely from Bellamy’s framework and basic set-up (interestingly, in both books, *Looking Backward* existed as a text in the nineteenth century at the same time that Julian West existed in the twentieth and twenty-first). Books based directly on Bellamy tended to be sequels to *Looking Backward* rather than parallel novels. Utopias that reacted to Bellamy but did not use his characters often used a structure similar to *Looking Backward*, with a person from the past somehow arriving in the future. However, this trope was not Bellamy’s invention and had been used in several other novels and stories before Bellamy arrived on the scene. Few, however,

mirrored Bellamy as closely as *Looking Within*. The one thing that Roberts' novel did not truly have was a double twist (or even a single twist) ending. Many other utopian novels attempted to add some sort of twist, even if all they did was make everything a dream.

The ending of Rabbi Solomon Schindler's *Young West* (1894) contains a twist, though not one that most readers would expect from an otherwise pro-Bellamy book. Although many writers fell back on the standard twist/trope of "it was all a dream," *Young West* dares to end with a more subtle and daring twist, one that risks undermining everything that went before. At the end of the novel, West's son (who is known – even as an elderly adult – as "Young West" by the general populace, due to his father's notoriety) finds his father's letters, which do not impress him: "they were quaint in style and abounded in sentiments which we could scarcely comprehend . . . he showed unmistakably that he did not fully understand the subjects about which he was writing" (273). He feels as though his father's letters infantilize his mother and otherwise show a weak mind. However, among these papers he finds one labeled "Confession," and discovers in it that his father was a deeply unhappy man, unable to accept the future and unwilling to return to the past: "I yearn for death because I am not fit to live in the present age on account of my early education, and unfit to live again in the past on account of the lessons which the present has taught me" (279). Julian West laments that "there are none who could understand me" (275), because his upbringing and education in the past had not fully prepared him to integrate into the future, and so no one in the 21st century could possibly comprehend his mental state.

Everett Bleiler feels that this ending “pulls the carpet out from under the body of the novel” (654), thus calling into question the entire story. Roemer disagrees by arguing that because the author “Rabbi Solomon Schindler was one of the few non-Protestant utopian authors,” he ended the novel this way because “to him the Protestant concept of conversion was simply not a probable way of explaining how people change” (*Obsolete Necessity* 62). Although West does go through a conversion experience in *Looking Backward*, Rabbi Schindler’s reading is not inconsistent with Bellamy’s version. Even at the end of *Looking Backward*, when West seems apparently converted, he still expresses doubts about his worthiness to live in utopia: “I confessed with tears how little was my worth to breathe the air of this golden century, and how infinitely less to wear upon my breast its consummate flower” (Bellamy, *Looking Backward* 241). Extrapolating from this sentence in the last paragraph of Bellamy’s novel, the ending of *Young West* seems probable and even likely.

But the novel *Young West* itself provides another explanation for this twist at the end. Just as Julian West was proxy for the nineteenth century reader in *Looking Backward*, he still serves that function in *Young West*. Young West’s wife, upon reading Julian West’s confession, gives what could be considered the moral of the tale:

Your father and the people of his time, hope so much from the future, never to expect that they themselves could ever live happy in a commonwealth as they construct it in their thoughts . . . the social reformer must be unselfishness personified. He must never expect to derive any benefit for himself; he must never hope to enter himself the land into which he is leading others; he must never try to hasten the

natural and rational development of conditions. He may show the way; he may prophesy what will happen . . . he may prepare the minds of the people for the coming change, but beyond that he must not go. (282)

In other words, though the people of the nineteenth century (Julian's contemporaries) should work towards utopia, they should never expect to enjoy or benefit from the peace they create. William Morris's *News from Nowhere* ends with a similar sentiment, as the narrator returns to the past: "You belong so entirely to the unhappiness of the past that our happiness even would weary you" (220). The reformer can work for the better future but will be unable to enjoy it.¹⁴ The ending of *Young West* did not seem to affect most reviewers of the day – even those that disagreed with the politics saw it as supportive of Bellamy's ideas.¹⁵ *The Arena* (which was friendly to Nationalism and Bellamy) used the ending to agree with the sentiments of Young West's wife: "We and our children and theirs after them may be able to do something toward bringing about such a state, and uncounted millions may rejoice in the fulfillment of our altruistic hopes, but unless we view it from some higher sphere, we shall not know" (Dawley 175).

¹⁴ While in these works, this idea is portrayed as the virtue of unselfishness, I find myself somewhat set at unease by these sentiments. Mostly, this is due to Joss Whedon's science fiction movie *Serenity*, where the main villain (known only as "The Operative") says that, with the blessing of the government, he is busy creating a "world without sin." He acknowledges there is no place for him in this future sinless utopian world, but because he is doing it for the good of humanity, he is justified in committing horrendous crimes such as murder and wholesale slaughter.

¹⁵ Though some of the reviews leave me questioning whether the reviewer did more than quickly skim the book. C.R. Henderson's review in *The Dial*, while it contains many reasonable criticisms, also makes the bizarre claim that the book contains "no new machine, no new law" (181) – meaning that technology has not improved and the laws have barely changed. While there is a nineteenth century feel to the culture of the society in *Young West*, the presence of "aeroplanes" and advanced sewage systems (among many other incidentally mentioned new technologies), along with the complete restructuring of society along Nationalist lines (and with all the different laws that entails) renders Henderson's criticism incorrect (or at least underdeveloped).

Overall (and despite the ending), *Young West* functions as another defense of Bellamy. Here, the narrator takes us through his life from child in the nursery to his work in the industrial army, from his discovery of a process whereby sewage is made useful to his election as President of the country. Whereas Bellamy and his attackers and defenders for the most part provided us with dialogue and debate about the merits of the year 2000 to the late nineteenth century, Schindler provides readers with what is meant to be a tour through the life cycle of a member of the future industrial army. Though there are occasional moments when the past and the future are compared (and the past comes up wanting), overall the idea of the story is to show that such a future is not merely ideas or a cloud city but instead is a livable place full of people with hopes, dreams, aspirations, and disappointments. Young West himself has a disappointing love affair early on, and one character goes through several failed marriages. It may be utopia, but Schindler aims to show that only the economic and educational system is perfect. Humans will still have to deal with their personal problems.

Schindler is also known for translating *Looking Backward* into German.¹⁶ There were several responses to Bellamy written in Germany, but of those, only *Mr. East's Experiences in Mr. Bellamy's World: Records of the Years 2001 and 2002* (1891) crossed the ocean.¹⁷ The novel is set in Germany, and the character's name "Mr. Ost" (two early footnotes remind the American reader that "ost" translates as "east") helps amplify that distinction (most obviously, "Julian West" lives in the Western hemisphere, whereas

¹⁶ Many of the changes to the second edition of *Looking Backward* came from Bellamy's revisions to the text in order to prepare it for Schindler's translation.

¹⁷ Pages 208 – 217 of Frances Theresa Russell's *Touring Utopia* contains a good overview and summary of several German sequels (and other utopias) written in response to Bellamy.

“Mr. East” lives in the Eastern one). Due to the geographical setting, Ost never encounters any of the characters from *Looking Backward*, though he does encounter someone who has met Dr. Leete (Ost also discovers that Dr. Leete is considered mildly insane and some of Dr. Leete’s beliefs are the result of what appears to be an elaborate practical joke).

As with *Looking Within* (which also has a narrator with a point of the compass – North – as his surname), the protagonist-narrator has read *Looking Backward* as a fictional utopia in the past and has awakened in the future to find that the world it portrays is real. This trope creates an interesting juxtaposition where Bellamy wrote a book in the nineteenth century about the year 2000 that winds up being a historical record in the year 2001. The book exists as both a prophecy of the future and a record of the past. The same thing apparently happens to Ost’s record, as the introduction and epilogue – ostensibly written by “D.H.” (who claims to have correlated and annotated the manuscript) – refers to Ost’s adventures in the future tense, as though they have yet to happen. Ost’s manuscript apparently made the same trip through time as Bellamy’s manuscript.

In the story, Ost was so moved and amazed by *Looking Backward*, which he finished “on the 25th day of November, 1890” (1),¹⁸ that he was sure that the world it discussed would come to pass. When a bet with a friend over the powers of a visiting “Brahmin” (10) goes wrong, Ost finds himself in the year 2001, and he immediately comes to the conclusion that he is in Bellamy’s utopia. Of course he is, but all is not as it

¹⁸ As with *Looking Backward* and *Looking Within*, the novel starts off with an exact date.

seems. People are unhappy, goods are shoddy, the government is corrupt, and families are shrinking.¹⁹

Ost's attack on Bellamy differs from other American and British anti-Bellamy books because he does not treat Bellamy's world as a dystopia, a place where things are so horrible that life is miserable and nearly unbearable. Instead, Ost goes out of his way to praise certain aspects of Bellamy's world. Many of the people Ost encounters, while unhappy with the current government, seem resigned to their lots and work to improve things where they can within whatever spheres they can influence. This constant "compare and contrast" leitmotif gives Ost's narrative (as slight as it is)²⁰ the character of a debate rather than an attack.

The introduction even invites disagreement. Though it states that the book is meant as a corrective to Bellamy's vision, the introduction ends by stating: "This, of course, does not mean to imply that readers of a different opinion would not be cordially welcome" (iv). When Ost finishes reading Bellamy's book, he does not immediately come to a conclusion over which side to support. Instead, he debates back and forth in his head. If Bellamy's plan could be achieved "opposition was insolence, delay a crime. If such favorable conditions could be attained by all, the more favorable condition of the upper classes should offer no obstacle. But was all this within the bounds of possibility? Had our faulty world room for so much unclouded happiness?" (5). A series of questions

¹⁹ Though, as will be noted in the next chapter, the last item in that list appealed to Bellamy and many of his followers. One of the arguments for Nationalism was that, since everyone would be rich, families would be smaller (since the rich have smaller families).

²⁰ Bleiler states Wilbrandt's novel is "well-reasoned, but the fictional vehicle is not strong" (818). I concur, though the second half of that sentence applies to nearly all but a small number of the utopias produced in this era. As I am concerned with how these novels function as both fiction and rhetoric, and

follows, where Ost attempts to refine his reaction to *Looking Backward*: “Will all these millions feel the same love of work when material interests are no longer at stake, and anxiety concerning daily bread, as well as the incentive of profit, are unknown to them?” (5 – 6). Ultimately, given his initial joy upon finding himself in the year 2001, it seems clear that Ost decided that Bellamy’s vision was worthwhile.

Even upon finding himself in a tarnished future that is not as golden as Bellamy made it appear, he still attempts to show that there are benefits. He discusses a “bright spot in the socialistic government” (67), where farming lands are protected from destruction by hunting. Later, while lamenting the poor quality of goods available to the populace, he states that the “equal distribution of property had resulted in making the human race, as a whole, poorer. But, by way of compensation, there were no more poor men; all had more than enough for their daily bread, and no one fell into poverty and want” (127). Other characters express similar sentiments. The fiancée of Sister Martha (the nurse who tends Ost upon his awakening in the future) remarks that “considering the great folly which had seized upon mankind, it could not be denied that the Congress had acted very sensibly. In no other way would it have been possible to establish the socialistic Government” (146). Even when detailing the follies of the future government, as Ost does in a section where he surveys the newspapers and discusses the types of stories and notices found therein, he still manages to work some implicit praise: at the very least, the government is not a brutal dictatorship and allows for complete freedom of

how that plays into their overall conversation, the weak fictional vehicle does not affect my analysis as much as it would if I were doing a purely literary analysis.

the press (otherwise, Ost would have been unable to read, in the newspapers, about the many problems afflicting the society).

However, despite these attempts at balance, the final judgment is against Nationalism. When he is given an assignment by the government to discover why farm production has declined, Ost comes to the conclusion that the fault is the entire Nationalistic/socialistic system. Through various conversations, lectures, and observations, Ost details exactly what is wrong with the society, from an economic point of view. The latter part of the book could be titled "*The Poverty of Nations*" as it resembles an extended treatise on how nations make themselves poor. The focus is, given Ost's assignment, on the economics of farming and agriculture, but he also discusses such things as international trade and industrial production. In the end, his main complaint is that Bellamy did not discuss agriculture in any detail, and this ignorance is a fatal flaw in the Nationalistic program: "Why had Mr. Bellamy skipped over this remarkably important branch of production with such incredible ease? Evidently because he knew nothing about farming and had no idea of the difficulties with which it has to contend" (195). Here, Wilbrandt declares that Bellamy did not consider the entire economy and overlooked important aspects of how to make such a system workable. Unlike other writers, who attack Bellamy as attempting a soft sell of communism or socialism, Wilbrandt takes a more charitable view by acknowledging the power of Bellamy's vision, but ultimately he declares it unworkable because Bellamy does not understand economics or agriculture.

Wilbrandt's approach, like that of Satterlee, allows for more open debate about Bellamy and his ideals. When considering the ideal of coduction, Wilbrandt seems less

concerned with attacking and more concerned with seeing the whole picture, where Bellamy's ideas work, and where they don't. Some authors, however, seem less interested in debating and more interested in using Bellamy merely as a starting point to present their own utopias. *A. D. 2050: Electrical Development at Atlantis* (1890), for example, does not make much use of Bellamy, except at the very beginning.

Rather than being a direct reaction to or borrowing from Bellamy, *A.D. 2050* is its own, independent utopian work. Straddling the gray area between works that directly use the characters and setting of *Looking Backward* (such as *Looking Within*) and works that address Bellamy by providing alternative utopias (such as *News From Nowhere*), *A.D. 2050* starts in the present as the narrator reads Bellamy's book. "After reading Bellamy's 'Looking Backward' it occurred to me that so far as scientific and material development were concerned there had been scarcely any improvement upon the condition of the [19th] century"²¹ (3). After falling asleep the narrator seemingly wills himself to the future, where the government of Bellamy's novel has allowed dissatisfied citizens to create a new nation on a newly discovered island called "Atlantis." However, once the narrator arrives in the future, there is little reference to any of Bellamy's ideas, characters, or settings (other than the initial premise). The connection with Bellamy is slight – a reader could begin near the end of page four and have no idea the book has any connection with *Looking Backward*. Instead, the book would appear to be just another utopia.

²¹ The table of contents, on page 2, contains "errata" that tells the reader to modify all centuries in the book up one, i.e. all references to the 18th century should be read as references to the 19th, the 19th should be read as the 20th, and the 20th as the 21st. To avoid confusion, I have changed any numbered century references as dictated by the errata section.

However, even though explicit connections to Bellamy are absent, there are other implicit connections. The narrator complains that Bellamy's book lacked technological development, but the narrator does make use of the advanced technology that Bellamy discussed. For example, the narrator uses a telephone/radio system very similar to Bellamy's: "The clergy are allowed the free use of the telephone on Sunday, so that one person can address his or her own congregations and as many more as desire to hear in different parts of the city . . . Our popular orators, preachers and lecturers in this way have sometimes immense audiences" (38). This language parallels the language used in *Looking Backward* and indicates that the author saw at least some good in Bellamy's ideas – at least, in his technological vision. Not too surprisingly, however, *A.D. 2050* spends more time discussing social and economic conditions, only mentioning technology in a few limited contexts.

One of those contexts deals with the elimination of an invading Chinese fleet. *A.D. 2050*'s vision of a Chinese invasion is quite different from *Looking Further Backward*, as the Atlanteans of *A.D. 2050* have freedom and superior technology. In *Looking Further Backward*, America lost to the Chinese invasion due to a lack of an army or weapons and because people lacked individual initiative. *A.D. 2050* makes much the same argument, but on the flip side of the same coin: A society that allows for individual initiative and maintains a military need not fear invasion. Julian Nordstorm argued that the different outcome and focus in this book renders it of a different class:

A.D. 2050 thus illustrates the third category of Bellamy sequels: ambiguous works that do not endorse *Looking Backward*, but do not fully contradict its utopian and reform-oriented underpinnings either. Unlike the

primarily critical dystopias of Michaelis, Vinton, and Wilbrandt, *A.D. 2050* suggests that utopia is a possibility and economic reform a necessity, even if the author (possibly John Bachelder) preaches a path – of technocratic supremacy and mitigated capitalism – which differs from Bellamy's own outlook. (201)

However, *A.D. 2050* clearly is critical of Bellamy and not just because of Bellamy's lack of technology (as the first sentence of the book indicates). Susan M. Matarese refers to it as an "anti-Bellamy novel" (42) with good reason. There are critiques of collectivism throughout, and the end of the novel declares that while Bellamy-like collectivism may have briefly "calmed the troubled sea of discontent," overall it "resulted in a dearth of intellect and energy" (*A.D. 2050* 82) and needed to be abandoned for a form of, as Nordstrom put it, "mitigated capitalism." In *A.D. 2050*, Nationalism ultimately fails and the fallen remnants of America follow the example of Atlantis. The critique of Bellamy's basic ideas is quite clear, even if the novel avoids specific criticisms and instead spends more time presenting alternatives than attacks.

However, even here our anonymous utopia falls into the same path as other works that are critical of or provide alternatives to Bellamy's utopia: in their debunking, they create a solution that is often the problem under a different name. The form of "mitigated capitalism" in *A.D. 2050* is rather heavily regulated, with caps on absolute wealth and a host of limitations on civil liberty. Nearly all of the utopian texts from this era (even those that disagree with Bellamy) agree that *something* must be done, but their alternatives nearly always involve giving more power and control of the economy to the government.

Since Bellamy mainly focused on questions of labor and government control of the economy, it's not surprising that even when proposing alternatives to Bellamy, his critics would often propose more government power, not less. Bellamy set the topic for the conversation, and even his critics had to work within that framework. However, occasionally, even one of his supporters would move outside that somewhat narrow frame and attempt to broaden the conversation to other areas of concern to a nineteenth century audience.

In several ways, Donald McMartin's *A Leap into the Future, or How Things Will Be: A Romance of the Year 2000* (1890) is the type of utopia that one would expect from a nineteenth century writer. Whereas *Looking Backward* mostly focuses on the labor question and details how the industrial army of the future would function, it avoids many of the more controversial issues of the day. Bellamy's narrative never directly discusses the temperance movement and avoids any questions about lawyers by eliminating the need for courts except in extreme cases. In McMartin's sequel, West discusses temperance, the problems of sensationalistic journalism (mentioned only in passing by Bellamy), Henry George's ideas, and issues of religion such as "the Romish church [and] the Mormon question" (64).

By tackling these issues, McMartin's text takes on topics most other participants in the utopian conversation often overlooked or ignored. *A Leap into the Future* reads like a conscious effort to make Bellamy's vision apply to more than just the labor question. One example of how this happens is in the novel's rather singular discussion of "the Mormon question." Though scholars have argued that Mormons have been "too often omitted from studies of utopias" even though they (in many ways) clearly were

utopian in outlook and practice (Baker 67), most of the utopian novels of the time overlooked them.

McMartin works Mormons (and many other nineteenth century topics) into his narrative by utilizing one possible implication of Bellamy's double twist ending: McMartin gives West the ability to travel to the past through his dreams. At one point, West travels in his dreams to the year 1892 (five years after West fell into the trance that sent him to the future). There, while observing the past, West rebuffs the advances of a prostitute. This prostitute refuses to leave West alone and instead engages him in a conversation about the evils of nineteenth century society. During this conversation, the topic of Mormonism suddenly appears. The prostitute asks West about a political rally that had been held earlier in the day: "Did you hear that one who was so down on the Mormons?" and West replies, "No; I don't recollect any thing of that kind" (140). The prostitute then gives him a lecture that functions more as a discussion on marriage in general than on Mormonism in particular:

Well, there was one; and he is the worst man in the city; a worse than Mormon. But what I was going to say is, the real question is, not whether Mormonism will destroy civilization by increasing the number of men having more than one wife; for the tendency isn't that way. The question is, will bachelors destroy it through having no wives, but one or no wife, is what should come before the country as a serious question. You have no idea of the utter loneliness of the good and virtuous but poor woman in this city. They live lives of constant temptations; struggle on with the

utmost heroism, year after year, and with no sign of getting their natural rewards for it; for husbands are not forthcoming. (140)

This lecture, while similar to rhetoric used by Brigham Young and other defenders of the faith, is not really about Mormons²² per se. Here McMartin is more interested in engaging the conversation about marriage than one about whether polygamy will prove to be a problem (and which is casually dismissed with the phrase “the tendency isn’t that way”). Bellamy’s utopia assumes that people will get married no matter what, and the only real discussion of marriage has to do with how it has become more equal now that women are financially independent of men. McMartin, however, uses Mormons as a jumping off point to expand the conversation to whether marriage can or will survive as well as the best way to encourage unwilling men to marry.

In addition to the brief discussion of Mormons, McMartin’s sequel to *Looking Backward* also displays more awareness of its place within the larger utopian conversation. Brook Farm and Oneida receive name-checks (178), and the ideas of Henry George receive some discussion and comparison with Nationalism (177 – 178). Though all the utopian novels of the time are clearly grounded in the nineteenth century,

²² Another interesting but loose connection between Bellamy and Mormons can be found in a September 7, 1895 editorial of a small Utah paper (*The Blade*, edited by Josiah Francis Gibbs) that explores Bellamy’s ideas, which the article claims “need not be enlarged upon to the people of Utah” because the Mormons in Utah “have ever held it as a tenet of their faith.” This editorial also suggests that *Looking Backward* was read widely in Utah: “Nearly all of our readers, probably, have read Edgar [*sic*] Bellamy’s ‘Looking Backward’ and are, therefore, somewhat acquainted with the social principles therein set forth and of the ideal condition of society which Mr. Bellamy depicts” (transcription provided by Ardis Parshall, at my request, in an April 23, 2008 e-mail). I have been unable to determine for myself if the claim about Bellamy’s reception in Utah is accurate. There are some mentions of Bellamy in Utah papers, though usually they are versions of articles easily found in the Eastern press (i.e. notices of Bellamy’s illness and death, or advertisements for his book). However, one particular article of interest comes from the Mormon church owned *Deseret News*: The Feb. 29, 1896 edition mentions a failed Bellamy colony, which the newspaper uses to argue that communal experiments must be based on God’s word to succeed (9). A small

regardless of the temporal placement of their setting, *A Leap into the Future* is the most explicitly grounded in the nineteenth century.

In contrast to the novels discussed so far, *One of "Berrian's" Novels* (1890) by C.H. Stone²³ does not read like many of the other utopian novels, mostly because it does not attempt to convince the reader or detail the new society in any significant way. Instead, it aims to be a piece of fiction from Bellamy's world (Berrian is the greatest novelist of the year 2000 in *Looking Backward*). Though Stone takes the setting of *Looking Backward* as a given, and the characters discuss their lives in the industrial army, the novel follows a rather typical trajectory for sentimental novels of the period. A somewhat foolish but otherwise admirable girl (Lys) is torn between two lovers, one who is virtuous and another who is clearly not. In the end, someone close to the heroine dies; this experience forces her to mature and embrace the virtuous lover. In broad strokes, the novel has little to recommend itself. Vernon Louis Parrington, Jr. stated, not without justification, that "the novel is an extremely incompetent piece of writing. If we are to accept Mrs. Stone's fiction, she would prove the opposite of what she intended – not that life would never be dull in the new world, but rather that it would all be dullness" (90). Concurring with that sentiment, David Ketterer (in his study of American science fiction *New Worlds for Old*) called the novel "incredibly dull" (97). Parrington and Ketterer's judgments are harsh but not undeserved. The novel moves slowly and mostly consists of

handful of such articles can be found in the *Deseret News*, usually arguing that Bellamy's ideas are too secular and that the true order of things has already been revealed to the Mormons.

²³ Apparently, the author's real name is Margaret M. Barbour Stone, as revealed by her later book *A Practical Study of the Soul* (which discusses how to gain psychic powers through spiritual advancement, and thus has a direct bearing on the subject matter of *One of "Berrian's" Novels*).

stilted dialogue with only a little action at the end; in addition, the main characters and the narrative voice express several maudlin sentiments.

However, when viewed as a book in conversation with Bellamy and his detractors, it becomes a more interesting book. One of its main interests lies in how it attempts to merge Stone's ideal vision of the world with Bellamy's. While Stone claims to have taken Bellamy's world as the setting for her utopia, she includes several new ideas and a revised history that could potentially modify a reader's view of the events in *Looking Backward*. This novel also provides a fascinating glimpse into how even supporters of Bellamy could differ widely on how they interpreted his ideas.

First, despite Dr. Leete's calm assurances in *Looking Backward* that the transition to utopia was quite peaceful, Stone's characters discuss and live in a history that is more bloody and violent. There is frequent mention of "the terrible revolution of 1927" which ultimately resulted in the modern utopia, and the characters remark that it took a considerable amount of time to recover from that revolt (21 – 22). In addition, the tale is set during a final counter-revolution in 1997. Though the "Berrian" characters are fictional within Bellamy's utopian realm, the initial introduction by "Berrian" (separate from Stone's introduction) and the final few paragraphs of the book make the claim that the "historical" setting is accurate. Apparently, a few of the citizens are not happy with the new utopia and attempt to stage a violent revolt in order to return to their ideal vision of the world – one run by capitalism and with clear divisions between classes. One of the ladies involved with the revolt, a Miss Denham, explains her motivations as those of pure self-interest: "I turn longing eyes to the good old days when all that such women had to do was wait for some amiable man to support her in the delightful idleness, without

which life is a useless burden” (72). Miss Denham does not wish to work, and she feels that her beauty should ensure that all she needs to do was marry a rich husband. But utopia requires her to work even though she does not want to stay in the industrial army. Another revolutionary, Cesco (one of the rivals for the protagonist’s affections) had more opaque motivations, but his actions indicate that he wishes to control others and desires enough power to take whatever he wants (such as the heroine) whenever he wants, with no consequences.

Given that the historical setting of this “Berrian” novel was a mere three years before the setting of *Looking Backward*, it directly contradicts many of Dr. Leete’s claims about the peacefulness of society and the rarity of crime or violent actions. Instead, this tale creates a picture of a society with a largely discontented minority that prefers how things were in the old days. Stone says she wrote this novel because many critics of Bellamy complain “that such conditions would necessitate ‘great monotony of character and incident, and a lack of all incentive to action,’” but she intends to show that “really they would indicate just the opposite” (v). However, her approach – which introduces violent conflict into a setting that, according to Dr. Leete, is almost completely free of such incidents²⁴ – seems to argue almost the opposite: such a world is “just the opposite” of the charges made against it because it has not eliminated greed, lust, and violence.

²⁴ “As for the comparatively small class of violent crimes against persons, unconnected with any idea of gain, they were almost wholly confined, even in your day, to the ignorant and bestial; and in these days, when education and good manners are not the monopoly of a few, but universal, such atrocities are scarcely ever heard of” (Bellamy, *Looking Backward* 163).

This disjunction again highlights the problem of debunking, as discussed above. Stone set out to debunk Bellamy's critics by showing that an interesting tale could be written in a utopia free of class conflict. In *Looking Backward*, West praised Berrian because his novels told powerful stories yet "excluded all effects drawn from the contrasts of wealth and poverty, education and ignorance, coarseness and refinement, high and low, all motives drawn from social pride and ambition, the desire of being richer or the fear of being poorer" (145). Stone, in her attempt to write such a novel, reintroduced every one of the anxieties and conflicts that West claimed were absent. Stone provides an excuse for this by treating the revolt as a last ditch counter-revolution of the few remaining hold-outs, but in the end, her tale supports the critics of Bellamy more than the supporters. Her implicit (even if unintentional) thesis is that even utopia fails some people. Her attempts to make utopia more human have also made it more flawed and thus less attractive. As Kenneth Burke would say, her debunking of the critics reintroduced (under another name) the very elements she wished to eliminate.

Stone's one other addition to Bellamy's setting plays off of an often overlooked and minor theme in *Looking Backward*: the spiritual evolution of humanity. In this one aspect, Stone does make a stronger case for Bellamy's utopia, especially against the charge that human nature would need to undergo a radical change in order for such a scheme to work. Though this criticism was found throughout reviews of and commentary on *Looking Backward* in the nineteenth century (and is the basis for many of the anti-Bellamy books discussed above), David Ketterer's critique of *Looking Backward* summarizes this view (while incidentally discussing how Bellamy and Stone answer those critics):

One possibility is to assume that the inhabitants of Bellamy's ideal city have all been in some sense lobotomized, that they have been brainwashed into believing that they live in utopia. In this case . . . Bellamy's futuristic Boston is actually a dystopia. The alternative possibility, and one that, under certain conditions, might salvage utopia, would be to suppose that a further process of human evolution has taken place, that man has become spiritualized. (140)

Ketterer notes that Bellamy alludes to this idea of humanity's spiritualization in several places, though Bellamy never dwells on it. For example, Mr. Barton, in his sermon, claims that "humanity has entered on a new phase of spiritual development, an evolution of higher faculties, the very existence of which in human nature our ancestors scarcely suspected" (Bellamy, *Looking Backward* 216). Stone has taken this idea and developed it far beyond what Bellamy implied.

When Mr. Barton said "an evolution of higher faculties," the rest of Bellamy's narrative implies that this means the abilities to learn and adapt, as well as a higher moral sense (where even criminals are incapable of lying). Stone turns this "higher moral sense" into the manifestation of psychic powers²⁵ – which those who follow the utopian path are quickly gaining, whereas the counter-revolutionists seem to lack these abilities. Characters in Stone's novel discuss mind to mind communication and the ability to empathetically read other people's emotions. For example, in one scene, some characters discuss why card playing has gone out of fashion: "no one plays cards now because

²⁵ Not surprising, given her interests. See footnote 23 above.

thought transference has become such a common power that really the cards might as well be double-faced” (122). This melding of Stone’s interest in psychic powers and Bellamy’s references to how the spiritual and moral evolution of humanity helped make utopia possible shows how nearly anyone could find something in Bellamy to latch onto and support. Part of Bellamy’s rhetorical genius was his ability to appeal to a wide audience, to be nearly all things for a large number of people.

For these reasons, as well as a few others, Stone’s novel is more interesting than its detractors have allowed. Stone meant to write a novel that supported Bellamy, which it did in one way by taking a minor point (humanity’s moral evolution) and moving it in a radically different direction. In other ways, though, this point may not have quite succeeded. By amplifying Bellamy’s brief claim of an increase in human cognitive powers, she makes Bellamy’s vision seem more distant – something for future supermen, but not for those of Bellamy’s era. Also, her attempt to show that human passions and failings would still exist and thus make life interesting in the future seems to have fallen short, as she could only create tension by bringing back elements of nineteenth century culture that Bellamy and his supporters claimed would have been eliminated by that future era.

There are other interesting items in her narrative, including a mention of Bellamy – “this present condition was very ably prophesied by one of the advanced thinkers of the day, Edward Bellamy” (80) – which functions as a wink at the reader and Bellamy but also makes use of the same motif found in *Mr. East’s Experiences, AD. 2050*, and *Looking Within* (i.e., Bellamy’s book exists in both the future and the past, as both ancient prophecy and contemporary history).

Considering the importance of Berrian to West's conversion, few utopian authors did much with the idea of a Berrian novel. Other than Stone's book, only *My Afterdream* (1900), a satirical take on Bellamy, contained a full (if short) novel by Berrian. Overall, few of the attacks on Bellamy were satirical, though there were satirical elements in some of the novels (such as Satterlee's vision of the "Bell Amy," which is always looking backward and is therefore unable to see where it is going). *My Afterdream*, written under the pseudonym of Julian West,²⁶ presents itself as a fully satirical attack on Bellamy's ideas. Though "Julian West" spends the early introduction praising Bellamy for his handling of West's tale – "for my pen has but little skill, and comparison between Mr. Bellamy's work and mine could be drawn only to the disadvantage of the latter" (2) – this praise could be seen as a rhetorical sleight-of-hand, done in order to fool the reader into thinking that perhaps this book will be sympathetic to Bellamy's ideals. It is clear from the text that the author is not only very familiar with *Looking Backward* (all the references and citations to the earlier work are accurate and detailed), he is also familiar with Bellamy's other tales as evidenced by off handed references (such as "a positive romance" (96), which alludes to the title of a Bellamy short story).

The book, however, quickly descends into satire and takes many of Bellamy's ideas to absurd extremes. Since Bellamy said that pneumatic tubes are used to make direct deliveries to homes from warehouses, the streets are lined with a bizarre labyrinth

²⁶ According to Toby Widdicombe's annotated bibliography, this book is a translation of a German text, and the author's name is Ernst Müller (201). However, Bleiler says this identification is wrong (810). I cannot read German, but the description of Müller's book in Russell's *Touring Utopia* (209 – 213) bears no resemblance to the text of *My Afterdream*. I have not found any other source that identifies the real name of this particular "Julian West."

of tubes, and a uniquely designed helmet combined with acrobatic ability is needed to navigate them. Because Bellamy declared that unenjoyable work would be done by everyone in short shifts, in *My Afterdream* hundreds of people are needed to carry a casket to its grave, as each person only carries the casket for a few minutes. On the other hand, since enjoyable work is to be done for longer periods, government handlers force artists to create art for well over forty hours a week.

The book implicitly criticizes Bellamy in other ways as well. In *Looking Backward*, Edith mostly takes West shopping, shows him some books, and blushes a lot. Though there is the revelation of her fascination with West and the hint that she is the reincarnation of his lost fiancée, the romance is barely in the text. *My Afterdream* attempts to compensate for this lack of romance in *Looking Backward's* love story by including several moments that express Julian and Edith's growing love and attraction. In *My Afterdream*, Julian and Edith both act like they are very much in love with stolen kisses in the dark, knowing glances, coy and suggestive wordplay, and several excursions for some (chaste) physical affection. These passages, though they do not dominate the text, do appear throughout. One example comes from later in the book, where after hearing a sermon, West writes: "After the whole series had been thus touched upon, I had expressed a preference for a sermon from my *fiancée's* own lips, suggesting as a text the apostolic injunction, 'Love one another,' and Edith, with a charming blush, had given her assent" (215 – 216; italics in original).

At the end of the book (and as usual for many critics of Bellamy), West undoes the twist ending of the original by waking up in the past. Unable to distinguish the past from the present, he spends some time in an insane asylum but is eventually released and

marries the original Edith. At this point, it seems as though the book has thoroughly denounced Bellamy's ideals, but it ends on a positive note that actually endorses Bellamy's basic idea. West declares that his dream of the future has opened his eyes to the injustices of the past, and that he will now work toward undoing those injustices: "the grain I am helping to prepare the ground for will be garnered by emancipated mankind" (247). The "vision/dream" of West did change him for the better, though he feels that the world of his dream was impractical in the nineteenth century and that instead he should aim for more realistic reforms. While the "unrealisable" dream of Bellamy (and others) seems "best calculated to strangle such an ideal at its birth" (247), he decides the ideal itself is worthwhile, if pursued realistically. This version of Julian West considers himself a better man for having the problems of his society pointed out, even if he rejects the specific solutions of Bellamy. In essence, this author gives readers who were believers in Bellamy a similar way out: Those who found Bellamy's ideas attractive can come to the same realization. Thus, while they should abandon Bellamy's specific ideas, they should also be grateful that he helped open their eyes to the injustice out there. This approach allows Bellamy's audience to retain a fond affection for Bellamy while rejecting his proposals.

The most well-known (at least in modern times) rebuttal to Bellamy comes from British author, poet, and artist William Morris's counter-utopia *News from Nowhere* (1890). When modern scholars contrast Morris with Bellamy, Morris usually comes across as the better writer or thinker. Harry Ross's 1938 study, *Utopias Old and New*, finds some value in both authors, but Ross feels that Bellamy's work is "awkward" in places (218), whereas Morris's work is "interesting" and "displays . . . a psychological

insight into the realities of the problem of human relationship” that Bellamy’s novel lacks (219, 225). Darko Suvin says that Morris’s work is “much richer” with a “more mature resolution” than Bellamy’s vision (64, 67), and Simon Dentith declares that Morris is “persuasive” while Bellamy’s ideas are “imaginatively stillborn” (146, 148). Martin Spinelli treats the two authors as

offering two different theories of consumption: [Bellamy offers] a theory of acceptance, in which a consumer is told what to think directly; and [Morris offers] a theory of co-production, participation and engagement in which a consumer is at most offered examples of modes of thinking. (7)

Spinelli ultimately comes down on the side of Morris when he claims that Morris’ vision is more useful as well as more positive. Overall, the critical consensus of the last several decades indicates a clear preference for Morris over Bellamy in both artistry and political vision.

But in Morris’s day, even though both *Looking Backward* and *News From Nowhere* “became central texts in the libraries of British and American working class parties during the decades spanning the century’s divide” (Barley 158), Morris never achieved more than a small percentage of Bellamy’s success, especially in America. Morris ascribed his relative lack of success to the differing nature of each text as well as to the differing nature of British and American audiences, and many critics seemed to agree.²⁷ In a letter acknowledging receipt of payment for the book from his American

²⁷ Kilgour says that “the book [*News from Nowhere*] did sell well, but nothing like Bellamy’s . . . which was an essentially American work . . . whereas Morris’ was just as characteristically British” (247). LeMire, in his bibliography of Morris, cites this passage approvingly (141).

publishers, Morris stated, “I am not much surprised at *News from Nowhere* not selling well. People would be apt to think it out of my way” (quoted in LeMire 141).

As noted in chapter two, Morris begins *News from Nowhere* with a narrator who differentiates himself from the person who actually experienced the events in the novel, but the narrator tells the story in the first person because his friend “think[s] it would be better if I told them in the first person, as if it were myself who had gone through them” (6). The narrator, much like Julian West, visits the future by falling asleep and awakening, initially unaware he has travelled through time. So, while *News from Nowhere* does not borrow Bellamy’s characters or locations, the narrative parallels in the first two chapters do signify some thematic and literary connections. As Morris intends to provide a utopia that he sees as clearly superior to Bellamy’s utopia, these parallel motifs allow for an additional sense of contrast between the two works.²⁸ As mentioned above, in Morris’s text, the narrator returns to the past and must stay there with the warning that he could not enjoy the future world as he is too much a part of the culture of the past. Morris allows the dream to be a dream,²⁹ but this ending also critiques Bellamy’s insistence that someone like West could adjust to a future utopia after merely having a few lectures (as seen above, *Young West* also attempts some damage control in

²⁸ Although Krishan Kumar, in her annotations to *News from Nowhere*, argues that the “contorted narrative convention” here is reminiscent of “older utopias, such as More’s *Utopia*” (6), I see no need to go back so far. It seems clear that by the time of Bellamy and Morris that convoluted narrators had become something of a standard trope in utopian novels; likely this helps account for Bellamy’s implied differentiation between the narrator of the preface and Julian West. However, as Morris is clearly reacting to Bellamy, it makes more sense to place the reason for this literary move closer at hand. At the very least, it could be said that both authors drank from the same well of genre conventions.

²⁹ Though he claims that “if others can see it as I have seen it, then it may be called a vision rather than a dream” (220).

this area by arguing that West never did truly adjust and suffered during his sojourn in utopia).

Despite Morris's desire to provide an alternative to Bellamy's utopia, there are a few interesting points of agreement. Beyond the obvious argument that "nineteenth century industrial society is inherently flawed," Morris speaks approvingly of Fourier – "Fourier, whom all men laughed at, understood the matter better" (95) – and Morris, just as Bellamy did, has no patience or love for anarchists (92).

Otherwise, Morris seems to have gone out of his way to make his utopia quite different from Bellamy's. Bellamy's utopia relies on machines and industrial production. Morris's utopia uses machines only when necessary; most of the work is done by hand: "All work which would be irksome to do by hand is done by immensely improved machinery; and in all work which it is a pleasure to do by hand machinery is done without" (100). In Bellamy's vision, the United States served as a model for the rest of the world; in Morris's, the United States is "now very backward in all that makes life pleasant" (101).³⁰

Bellamy felt that the community would be something of an organic entity, constantly adjusting and making changes as needed but with little central direction. There were ranks and layers of management in the industrial army, but as the main principles and practices had been created decades before, there was apparently little need to intervene and force citizens to obey. However, to readers such as William Morris, Bellamy's utopia appeared to be too structured to be able to function without a strong

³⁰ Also, notice the pun on "backward," which seems like an additional insult aimed at Bellamy's *Looking Backward*.

government controlling and directing the flow of workers. To Morris and others, the layers of management and officers in Bellamy's industrial army likely looked less like a maintenance crew and more like a stifling bureaucracy.

Morris's view is almost anarchic,³¹ especially when compared to Bellamy's ideas (and despite his distaste for anarchists). In *News from Nowhere*, people live in decentralized communities where they ply their individual trades. Though they often get together for large projects (such as building roads or bridges), this labor is undirected, voluntary and relatively spontaneous. Work is meant to be fulfilling and artistic rather than just pragmatic; the individual artisan and crafter become more valued than the factory worker. Handicraft becomes more important than machines (which, as noted above, Morris generally does away with or keeps hidden in the background).

Morris also clearly disagrees with Bellamy that a peaceful revolution would occur. While Bellamy glosses over the transition period, Morris spends several pages detailing the exact history of the revolution, including a "massacre at Trafalgar Square" (121) followed by various clashes between the workers and the government (and including a general strike among the press and across various occupations), and a "war, which lasted about two years" (134). As an additional attack on Bellamy, in a passage that was not in the original serialization of the book but was later added to chapter

³¹ However, even though contemporary reviewers called *News from Nowhere* "the 'Looking Backward' of Anarchism" ([Review], *Christian Union* 816), we should keep in mind the directive from the periodical *Liberty (Not the Daughter but the Mother of Order)* that "Morris's book is Communistic throughout" and that "it ought to be easy . . . to distinguish between sentimental Communism and sturdy Individualism" (1). Whether you call Morris anarchic or not depends on your ideas/ideals of anarchy and who (or what) you compare to him. Also, as noted above, in *News from Nowhere*, Morris clearly had no sympathy with or for anarchists.

seventeen (“How the Change Came”) in the first British (and nearly all later) editions,³² Morris describes how the world briefly adopted a Bellamy-like system, which ultimately failed and made the inevitable revolution worse than it otherwise would have been.³³ This move is similar to several other of the utopian attacks on Bellamy, because it acknowledges both that Bellamy’s ideas are powerful and persuasively presented, and that he is right about the problems facing society. Though Bellamy may be a skilled writer and a perceptive critic, the stance is still the same: his solution is dangerous. Morris differs, however, from the other critics who made the same points about Bellamy because Morris comes from the socialist point of view, and nearly every other critic of Bellamy was attempting to defend capitalism.

Equality (1897), Bellamy’s own sequel to *Looking Backward*, takes into account nearly all of these attacks, defenses, and variations on a theme. All throughout the text, Bellamy seems to be responding not just to his critics, but to his supporters as well – and overall, Bellamy reclaims his vision from them by making narrative choices that do not allow for competing visions to inhabit the same universe. Though Bellamy likely did not read each and every utopian book printed in America (and elsewhere) at the time, to continue the metaphor of the conversation, he was still at the center. Through his

³² The first American edition (which followed after the serialization in *The Commonwealth*, but preceded the first British editions) had the phrase “author’s edition” on the verso of the title page, though it was hurried into print without consulting Morris. H. Buxton Forman, author of the first serious bibliography of Morris, wrote “I do not understand the word ‘author’s edition’, nor did Morris, who first showed me the book and told me with an amused air that he had not been consulted about it” (148 – 149). Though records show that Morris received payment for this printing, Morris’s American publishers (Boston publishers Roberts Brothers) rushed the book onto the market in order to capitalize on the success of Bellamy’s work (Kilgour 246 – 247). Thus, the first American edition did not reflect this particular change, though later American editions did. Also, there were two 1891 “first” British editions: One bound in paper and made to look somewhat like a socialist pamphlet and a large paper (though not large type) edition limited to a few hundred copies.

lectures, newspaper articles, and other endeavors, Bellamy maintained a consistent part in the utopian conversation. Through constant communication with his supporters and detractors, Bellamy was aware of all sides of the conversation even if sometimes his knowledge of a specific attack or defense was at two or three removes.

In *Looking Backward*, and as discussed in the previous chapter, Bellamy establishes the basic format early on in the narrative. Dr. Leete introduces Mr. West to some new aspect of the future, West responds with incredulity, Leete calmly explains, and West accepts the superiority and sense of the future order. While this motif hardly makes for exciting, vivid fiction, it did allow for some sense of rising action, climax, and resolution. *Equality* has none of this. By the time it starts, West's concerns have all been resolved, and so now he merely needs to be taught. *Equality* reads like a textbook, as it has no narrative drive, no problems to be resolved, and no incredulity to be expressed.

Equality begins where *Looking Backward* ended, with West relating his dream of returning to the nineteenth century to Edith Leete. While this move was common to many of the sequels written by other authors, Bellamy's choice to start *Equality* with no narrative space between the two works also implicitly invalidates nearly all of the other sequels, whether in support of Bellamy or not. *Young West*, one of the few pro-Bellamy sequels that takes place years after *Looking Backward* ends, does not escape this simple elimination, as Bellamy's discussion of the sewer system in *Equality* does not easily reconcile with *Young West*'s description of how Young West found a way to recycle sewage. Others, such as Vinton's anti-Bellamy *Looking Further Backward*, are

³³ In the later editions, Morris also adds several decades between the nineteenth century and the apparently inevitable rise of utopia, reflecting less confidence than Bellamy that the world was on the verge of change.

contradicted in other ways: *Equality* makes it clear that the entire world is converted to some form of Nationalism, so there could be no Chinese invasion as Vinton envisions. In essence, Bellamy creates something of a “Bellamy canon” and relegates all other sequels, etc. into apocryphal works.

The two most noticeable changes (or clarifications) Bellamy introduces in *Equality* are the almost complete disappearance of the term “industrial army” (which only appears three times, and then only in the penultimate chapter) and the discussion of the revolution and transition period. As noted in the last chapter, “industrial army” was first introduced in the narrative by West, and so it is possible to interpret its use by Leete as a metaphor or allusion intended to help West adjust to his new situation. In *Equality*, now that West has made his conversion to the new way of life, the term “industrial service” becomes Leete’s favored phrase to describe the economic set-up of utopia. This small change from “army” to “service” allows Bellamy to ameliorate criticisms that his future world is rigid and bound by too many regulations like service in the military. Instead, “industrial service” changes the focus from the organization of industry to a focus on its purpose. Images of drills and cadences and uniforms are replaced by ideals of “loving thy neighbor” and “doing unto others.” This focus is emphasized by Bellamy’s constant leitmotif in *Equality* of how this “industrial service” perfectly fulfills the ideals of Christ as taught in the New Testament. This change in focus, along with nearly constant quotations from and allusions to the Bible,³⁴ can be seen as Bellamy’s attempt to deal

³⁴ Occasionally these references cause unintentional associations. The title of Chapter 24 “I am shown all the kingdoms of the earth” seems a clear reference to Matthew 4:8 and Luke 4:5. This places West in the position of Christ (not unsurprising, given his birthday of Dec. 26th and his rising from a tomb of sorts), but it also (likely unintentionally) makes Dr. Leete into Satan!

with criticisms that his utopia was not religious enough and that what little religion it had was too secular.

The revolutionary period also gets something of a makeover. Though Dr. Leete still insists that the revolutionary and transitional periods passed rather peaceably, he now allows for a little violence. This admission is partly a reaction to history. Since Bellamy wrote *Equality* several years after *Looking Backward*, he includes a discussion of events in the early 1890s, including labor riots and strikes and the use of the National Guard in suppressing this unrest. To avoid contradicting his assertions in *Looking Backward* that “there was absolutely no violence” (*Looking Backward* 77) when the revolution came, Bellamy builds on a phrase from *Looking Backward* that otherwise went unexplored in that novel: “the first and incoherent phase of the great movement” (*Looking Backward* 52). In *Equality*, Dr. Leete tells West that historians have “divide[d] the revolutionary epoch . . . into two periods, the incoherent and the rational” (324). The “incoherent” period “was a time of terror and tumult, of confused and purposeless agitation, and a Babel of contradictory clamor” (324), while the “rational” period passed more or less peaceably. Dr. Leete also goes to pains to emphasize that even with the early violence, “there was no war” (345) and the revolution “was more like the trial of a case in court than a revolution of the traditional blood-and-thunder sort” (346) – though he also allows for a several “minor disturbances and collisions” (346) that kept even the rational phase from being completely violence free. This admission helps Bellamy’s argument in several ways. First, it answered the critics who argued that no large scale change in society could occur without some violence. Second, it allowed for Dr. Leete’s claim that the revolution and transition were still relatively peaceful, because Dr. Leete was talking

about the “rational revolution” rather than the “incoherent” one. Finally, it allows Bellamy to paint his critics as part of the “contradictory clamor” that slowed down the inevitable coming of utopia (while those who agreed with Bellamy were clearly part of the soon to happen “rational” phase).

Whether they were critical of Bellamy or defended him, the various sequels to *Looking Backward* found fertile ground in West’s rather confined narrative and vague descriptions. West rarely leaves the Leetes’ home, and when he does he does not talk to anyone else. Bellamy’s descriptions of the Bostonian future lack specific detail, and the one time West finds himself out of doors without any accompaniment, he is clearly not in his right mind. This lack of detail allowed other authors to create any details they wished. Whether it was through a nightmare world of pneumatic tubes that clogged the streets in *My Afterdream* or through a pastoral, middle class housing development in *Looking Beyond*, other authors used Bellamy’s lack of detail to allow themselves greater freedom in engaging his utopian claims.

Dr. Leete’s status as the source of most of West’s information about the future allowed other authors a chance to have West interact with other utopian denizens, though some took more advantage of this opening than others. In Michaelis’s *Looking Further Forward*, West spends a little time interacting with other future Bostonians, but most of the action consists of West learning about the horrible status of this future world from Mr. Forest, the janitor at his college. In this book, West “gets out” a little more and even questions a few people on the street (though little detail of what they said is given), but overall, Michaelis follows the same format as Bellamy, with Forest doing most of the talking, and West merely offering up weak defenses while rarely going out into society to

see whether Forest's claims are true. Geissler, in his sequel to Michaelis's work, defends Bellamy by having West attend artistic events, tour the nation, and otherwise experience the future for himself, rather than merely take someone else's word for it. Geissler attacks Michaelis's approach and defends his own by criticizing Bellamy and arguing for learning about utopia "from your own observation and experience" (16). Rabbi Schindler's *Young West* takes that exact approach, using the story of West's son to show how life was lived in utopia rather than just what people said about it. In Wilbrandt's novel, Mr. East undermines Dr. Leete's ethos by discussing his experiences with West's guide:

This Julian West must be a simpleton who believes white is black and black white, and his Dr. Leete is the most foolish fellow I ever heard of. I met the old gentlemen last year . . . We all laughed at [Leete], for he has a fixed idea that the earth has been changed to heaven . . . Every one makes fun of him. When he buys a new suit of clothes at a store a messenger is sent privately to his house with it, and he is told it is magically delivered by a subterranean pneumatic tube. (93 – 94).

In *Equality*, Bellamy attempts to address this problem by having West get out more, even though he is nearly always in the company of one of the Leetes. But even with these excursions, Bellamy's biggest answer to the attacks on the ethos of Dr. Leete is to ignore them. *Equality* does not spend time (re)establishing Dr. Leete's credentials or sanity – they are merely assumed.

Bellamy's attempt to overcome this critique of "Leete as the sole source of information" did not go over well, even with sympathetic reviewers of the time. Though

West talks with a banker, converses with Mr. Barton (the preacher), listens to a series of lectures from students, and engages in more in-depth discussion with Edith (without her father present), each lecture or conversation has a quality of sameness about it. The July 10, 1897 issue of *Outlook* declared that

[Equality] does not continue . . . as a story with characters, but as a monologue on political economy put, without change of voice or accent, into the mouths of a circle of automata. While the earlier volume was good enough as a novel to make economics attractive to novel-readers, the present volume is bad enough as a novel to make its economics distasteful to economists. (653)

The July 22, 1897 *Congregationalist*, while describing *Equality* as “lucid, reasonably self-consistent and worked out in detail” also declared it as “rather dull reading” and lamented that Bellamy had not written it “in a more lively and engrossing style” (125). The August 7, 1897 *Literary World* praised “Mr. Bellamy’s rhetorical felicity in the construction of smoothly flowing sentences” but overall condemned the book as “fatally dull” partly because “Dr. Leete’s vocabulary and rhetoric are exactly reproduced by all the other natives of Boston of the twentieth century” (252). Nicholas P. Gilman in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* wrote that “whoever talks, the style is the same” (76) and declared that “the monotony of style and reasoning is, indeed, surprising from an author of Mr. Bellamy’s ingenuity” (77).³⁵ In this case, Bellamy’s attempt to add to the

³⁵ As Bellamy wrote *Equality* in a hurry, hoping to finish the novel before he died of tuberculosis, some of his stylistic lapses are understandable, though book reviewers are under no obligation to take this into account since they must judge the finished product that is actually on the market and not how much better it could have been if Bellamy had lived long enough to spend more time revising it.

conversation apparently came across as more of the same and less like a fresh new voice. However, even if his final addition to the utopian conversation did little to inspire or further the conversation, he is still the writer who initially enlivened the conversation beyond a dull murmur.

As Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel argue in *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, during “the first seven decades of the nineteenth century . . . there were few novels of intrinsic worth dealing with a utopian society,” but Bellamy helped bring about a “rebirth of the utopian novel” that “inspired thousands of people” (759 – 760). While I find their judgment too harsh regarding the few works that appeared during the early part of the century, it seems clear that the utopian conversation would not have been reborn without Bellamy.

Two Conversations

In addition to engaging with Bellamy and his basic ideas of industry and economics, several topics came up fairly often, even if they were not explored in detail in Bellamy’s works. To give a sense of how these various utopian novels engaged in conversation with both Bellamy and the larger culture about a wide range of topics, I will discuss two topics, one that Bellamy avoided discussing and one that he clearly addressed: the temperance movement and education (with a specific focus on the place of classical languages in the curriculum).

As the temperance question was one of the many cultural debates that thrived in the late nineteenth century, it seems that it would naturally arise in the utopian conversation despite Bellamy’s silence on the issue of alcohol in his utopian novel. Three of his short stories have a temperance theme (“Extra-Hazardous”, “Taking a Mean

Advantage” and “That Letter”), but Bellamy, interestingly, excluded those tales from the collection *The Blindman’s World and Other Stories* (which was meant to be a compilation of Bellamy’s personal favorites). Toby Widdicombe argues that Bellamy likely consciously excluded these tales because of their implications for temperance and its place in his utopia:

Temperance was becoming an increasingly popular choice when Bellamy wrote these three stories at the end of the 1870’s . . . Indeed, Bellamy may have chosen to focus on the issue in the interests of securing publication for his work. Nationalism and the numerous Bellamy movements also drew support from the temperance movement . . . so that even though Bellamy was at times a hard drinker his utopian vision was noticeably “dry.” By the end of the 1890’s the temperance movement was flourishing . . . It is reasonable to speculate, however, that Bellamy did not wish to be seen as the propagandist for any one group. He may also not have wished to be seen as an advocate for something he did not support in his personal life. (“Introduction” 11).

Bellamy’s utopia may be “noticeably dry,” but mostly because the question is never addressed. In *Looking Backward*, other than a few mentions of wine – Dr. Leete gives West “a glass or two of good wine” (66), for example – West never brings up the subject, and Dr. Leete does not mention it. In *Equality*, Dr. Leete mentions the temperance movement in passing – “the efforts of women in your day to reform men’s drinking habits by law” (134) – but then, Dr. Leete uses it to illustrate the unequal relationships of

men and women in West's day rather than to discuss the merits of temperance itself (though the clear implication is that no one gets drunk in utopia).³⁶

However, the subject of temperance influences many of Bellamy's fellow utopian writers. *Looking Backward and What I Saw* lays most of the blame for the nation's ills and for its embrace of Bellamyism on the overuse of drink and argues that if drink were to be abolished, most of society's problems would go away. *Looking Within* does much the same, discussing how widespread disobedience "over laws prohibiting the sale of intoxicants" (108) gave the anarchists room to agitate for rebellion.

Even Bellamy's defenders felt compelled to address the issue. In Solomon Schindler's *Young West*, the title character muses on the laws relating to intoxicating beverages by discussing their history while adding his own opinions: "Later on, as you know, the privilege was withheld until a person reached his twenty-fifth year and I can see no reason why the manufacture of such beverages should not be discontinued altogether" (127). Donald McMartin's *A Leap into the Future* took more of a middle ground, with Dr. Leete telling West

that [the nineteenth century] had largely created its own demand for intoxicants; that by allowing individuals, for private gain, to have charge of the traffic in liquor, we virtually licensed them, not only to supply the natural demand for these things, which their licenses contemplated, but to

³⁶ Outside the realm of literature, Bellamy walked a middle course on the temperance issue, apparently successfully avoiding any offence to either side. In Everett W. MacNair's history of the Nationalist movement, he details how Bellamy "favored government manufacture and distribution of liquor" in order to remove "the profit and corruption out of a nefarious trade" (59). His refusal to advocate and out right ban "made [Bellamy] that much stronger with the men of the trade unions" whereas his negative attitude towards the trade itself helped "the temperance leader, Frances E. Willard remain . . . his friend" (59). This

use all manner of inducements to get the people to indulge in more than was good for them. (187)

McMartin's vision of the Nationalist future is hardly "dry," though. Liquor is now used only to satisfy the "natural demand," and the inducements to excessive drinking have vanished, so the government supplies it along with everything else. Schindler seemed to feel that the use of alcohol would decline over time until it vanished completely, whereas McMartin claimed a natural demand existed that would always need satisfaction.

Agreeing with both McMartin and Schindler, C.H. Stone's characters say that there will always be some demand, but that it will (over the long term) eventually die out:

As for the whiskey industry, it holds its own solely because of the passion of some brains for gambling with uncertainty; and I do not see how it can stand the strain much longer . . . the industry has long ago given up the effort to claim remuneration from Government for its employees, since in no way can they be considered producers of necessities. (169 – 170).

Interestingly, Stone allows whiskey in Bellamy's utopia, but only if it is produced privately – i.e. as a capitalist commodity.

In all of these cases, these writers show that, while Bellamy initiated and still somewhat controlled the direction of the conversation, various other issues would intrude upon Bellamy's utopia. While Bellamy himself may have wanted to avoid dealing with the temperance issue, his supporters and detractors would or could not leave the issue alone.

approach allowed Bellamy to "g[i]ve increasing attention to temperance in the pages of The New Nation . . . without precipitating any open break with his friends" (59).

Unlike temperance, Bellamy did deal with education, and he did take a stance on one very contentious issue of the day: the role of classical languages. Since the discussion of how classical languages should be used is intimately tied up with Bellamy's overall vision of education, it is important to first establish Bellamy's ideas on education and on the role of the educated elite.

Arthur Lipow argues that Bellamy gives a special place to the intellectual class. Lipow states that Bellamy structured his future society so that the intellectual elite would occupy a special place and privileged position in the new social order . . . the liberal professions and the intellectuals who did not participate directly in the management of the economy were to be excused from service in the industrial army and would not be permitted to occupy the office of the commander-in-chief of the industrial army or state. They could, however, be given the right, unlike those who were consigned to the industrial army, to vote for the president along with the guild of retired workers . . . such a concession is important as an index of Bellamy's special attitude toward these elements. Bellamy's collectivist utopia thus assured the intellectuals that only the ordinary and common workers would be subjected to the discipline of the army of labor. They would enjoy a privileged position.

(135)

This reading, however, does not stand up to what Bellamy wrote and how his society was structured. Lipow seems to assume that the intellectual elites in Bellamy's world live a life of leisure similar to the retired workers and that somehow elites skip the entire process of being inducted into the industrial army.

However, Dr. Leete tells Bellamy that “we hold the period of youth sacred to education” and that education lasts from childhood to age twenty-one (*Looking* 81).

Later, Dr. Leete goes into more depth:

A thorough study of the National industrial system, with the history and rudiments of all the great trades, is an essential part of our educational system. While manual training is not allowed to encroach on the general intellectual culture to which our schools are devoted, it is carried far enough to give our youth, in addition to their theoretical knowledge of the national industries, mechanical and agricultural, a certain familiarity with their tools and methods. Our schools are constantly visiting our workshops, and often are taken on long excursions to inspect particular industrial enterprises. In your day a man was not ashamed to be grossly ignorant of all trades except his own, but such ignorance would not be consistent with our idea of placing every one in a position to select intelligently the occupation for which he has most taste. (*Looking* 82)

This educational program seems dedicated to a mostly pre-professional line of work. Students are taught theory, and what we would term “vocational education” (called “manual training” above) is de-emphasized, though field trips to factories are common. This educational enterprise is designed to acquaint students with a wide variety of fields, eventually enabling them to choose a field to specialize in. Later dialogues reveal that the wide theoretical training is also intended to give students an appreciation for the work others do, as well as to enable them to do a wide variety of work (since the most unpleasant jobs are spread among all citizens equally).

This education continues until age twenty-one, where the ideal is that the youths have then received “what you used to call the education of a gentleman” (*Looking* 151). The educational system of Bellamy’s future focuses on “the national industries, mechanical and agricultural.” This educational system is designed not for a nation of gentlemanly elites – but rather a nation of “farmers, mechanics, and merchants” (Winterer 42). West does inquire about the “liberal” disciplines such as music, literature, and (presumably) the classical languages. He is told that, after a required three year period of “common labor” instead of choosing a profession, a worker can choose to “do better work with his brains than his muscles” (West, *Looking Backward* 85) and, in modern terms, get an advanced degree. However, this is apparently not an easy path, as Dr. Leete tells West that it is just as hard and just as rigorous as being in the industrial army.

When examined closely, this profession does not seem to be a prestigious path to take. Early education is mostly devoted to discussing industry, agriculture and engineering. All citizens must work for at least three years at various jobs before deciding on a specific career or attempting to become a scholar. The entire future society seems focused around this idea of the industrial army, and these scholars are not part of that army, though all their initial education, up to the age of twenty one, was aimed at service in the army.

As for voting and holding public office, Dr. Leete explains that:

These members of the liberal professions, the doctors and teachers, as well as the artists and men of letters who obtain remissions of industrial service, do not belong to the industrial army. On this ground they vote for

the President, but are not eligible to his office. One of its main duties being the control and discipline of the industrial army, it is essential that the President should have passed through all its grades to understand his business. (*Looking* 133)

In addition, the description of how the President and other “high officers” are elected shows that the members of the “liberal professions” are also effectively barred from nearly all public offices. They can vote, but they can’t run. And even their votes count for little, as it becomes clear through Dr. Leete’s descriptions that the number of retired workers vastly outnumbers the small amount of people in these liberal professions.³⁷

The path to full participation in civic life, according to Bellamy’s vision, is through universal education and membership in the ranks of labor. Those in the liberal professions may have some say in what goes on, but they are barred from full participation and they are small in number compared to the vast majority of the population. They are not, as Lipow claims, “a new ruling class” that evolved from “the educated middle class” (136). At best, they are a small voice that serves the industrial army rather than the other way around.

With that established, what is the role of the liberal arts and especially of the classical languages in Bellamy’s future state? To understand this role, we must first discuss the larger cultural debate about the role of classical languages in American education.

³⁷ Bellamy is also unclear about whether the “liberal” professions can vote for the president during their entire tenure or only after they have retired.

Before the Civil War, West Point (the college Bellamy initially hoped to attend) was the only major college that did not have the classics as part of its core curriculum. Even after the Civil War it took several decades before classics were relegated to the area they (more or less) occupy in our twenty-first century educational sphere. However, even before then, there were calls to make the curriculum in higher education more like what was being taught at West Point (without the military trappings). In the eighteenth century, figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush and Thomas Paine attacked “prevailing modes of classical education” by arguing “that the ‘dead languages’ were useless to farmers, mechanics, and merchants” among other criticisms (Winterer 42). These critiques may have served as “harbingers” of the eventual “decay” of classical studies, but these early “critiques had almost no effect in dislodging Greek and Latin from the college curriculum” (Winterer 42).

However, the attacks on classical curriculum never truly went away. These attacks often forced colleges to constantly defend their teaching of the classics. In 1928, “in response to Connecticut state senator Noyes Darling’s request that Yale College jettison the ‘dead languages’ in favor of subjects . . . which were presumably more useful in a modern economy” Yale issued a report which defended the teaching of classical languages (Winterer 49). This document is still controversial, with historians alternatively praising or criticizing it. Caroline Winterer stated that

The Yale Report [of 1828] was by then a dated document, a fossil of eighteenth century classicism. Its two authors . . . were born at the cusp of the American Revolution. They defended the study of classical learning in terms that suited the late eighteenth century, invoking well-worn

assertions of the value of classics in building the foundations of a gentleman's knowledge and the usefulness of the world of words in forming the citizen. (48 – 49)

In contrast, Robert L. Geiger has argued that “the Yale Report has been almost universally misinterpreted as a conservative document, seeking to turn the clock back . . . In fact, the classical curriculum had to be reinvented in the nineteenth century, and Yale was proud to be in the forefront of this endeavor” (*Introduction* 4). Peter Hall concurs, arguing that the Yale report was “a forward looking manifesto” (197).

Whatever the case, the Yale report was an attempt to defend the classical tradition in higher education and resist efforts to bring in more “useful” subjects to the curriculum. As the century progressed, this debate between studying the classics and a curriculum that emphasized “usefulness” (or utility) intensified. “The college and university, according to the advocates of utility, should explicitly prepare students for what became known as ‘real life,’ as distinguished from the sheltered groves of the college” (Winterer 104). However, “it was not utility alone but utility conceived as a fundamentally scientific enterprise that corroded classicism” (Winterer 104).

Union College, which Bellamy attended for a time, was often at the forefront in providing classes that were more “useful” for its students. Roger L. Geiger notes that Union College was the “supposed antithesis” of Yale, mainly because it began allowing “curricular choice the same year that Yale published its famous report [of 1828]” (Geiger 5). As David B. Potts wrote, “throughout the 1830s, Union was graduating as many students as . . . Yale” (Potts 42). While Potts notes that Union’s popularity can be explained by other factors in addition to curricular choice (for example, fraternities were

invented at Union), it seems clear that the gradual abandonment of classics as part of the core contributed to Union's popularity as a rival to Yale and to other institutions of higher education.

The main debate eventually settled around what colleges were meant to prepare students for – pre-professional or professional life? “Throughout the nineteenth century, colleges had been criticized for offering chiefly pre-professional preparation – the aim emphasized in the Yale Report of 1928” (Geiger 36). In addition to this criticism, “in the late nineteenth century . . . Classicism and the humanities were cast as explicitly antivocational” (Winterer 132). Professional, rather than pre-professional, preparation became the norm by the end of the nineteenth century.³⁸ The Yale report had argued that pre-professional preparation, the training of certain habits of the mind that could be applied broadly, was the primary focus of education. By the year 1910, that ideal was a memory.

While the terms “Latin” and “Greek” never appear in Bellamy's utopian works, they do get some oblique mention, and when they do, it is clear that they are not considered as important as vocational training. In *Equality*, some of the rhetoric of “the industrial army” vanishes, but the disdain for classical languages becomes apparent, as there is some discussion of “dead languages.” In one passage, Dr. Leete criticizes the professors and clergy of West's day for their inability to speak freely: “they were economic servants and hirelings either of hierarchies or congregations, and paid to voice the opinions of their employers and no others” (*Equality* 401). Dr. Leete says that “there

seems to have been some freedom allowed in teaching the dead languages” but then implies that this freedom was more or less useless: “let the instructor [of dead languages] take up some living issue and handle it in a manner inconsistent with the capitalist interest, and you know well enough what became of him” (*Equality* 401). Leete seems to be arguing that the dead languages were wholly ineffective for dealing with issues of the day. Rather than preparing one for certain habits of mind suited for public life, Leete implies that “dead languages” rendered one unable to make any real difference in the world – the freedom applied only to things in the past.

Beyond just the “dead languages” of Bellamy’s day, the text implies that the study of the past is fairly useless, especially the literature of the past. When informed that most people alive in the year 2000 know two languages, their national tongue and a universal tongue, West is told that

A number of the smaller nations have wholly abandoned their national tongue and talk only the general language. The greater nations, which have fine literature embalmed in their languages, have been more reluctant to abandon them, and in this way the smaller folks have actually had a certain sort of advantage over the greater. The tendency, however, to cultivate but one language as a living tongue and to treat all the others as dead or moribund is increasing at such a rate that if you had slept through another generation you might have found none but philological experts able to talk with you. (*Equality* 257 – 258)

³⁸ Echoes of this can be seen in many utopian novels outside the scope of this study. William Dean Howells’s *Altrurian* works contain dialogues over whether professionals should attend school. Several

The principle here is clear: “fine literature” may be “embalmed” in a particular language, but, in the end, progress goes forward and the tongues must be abandoned, left only for the “philological experts.” Dead languages have no utility for those in the industrial army – they’re too busy working and living life.

At this point, Bellamy’s message about classical languages and learning could not be clearer: It was of no use to the educated people of an enlightened society, except for a few philological experts who are unable to hold public office and are considered to be somewhat outside the mainstream of society. Only through the industrial army can one fully participate in civic life; professors of dead languages are an interesting curiosity, but they study texts that few in utopia will ever use.

Similar attitudes can be seen in McMartin’s *A Leap into the Future, or How Things Will Be: A Romance of the Year 2000*. McMartin’s sequel to *Looking Backward* was written before *Equality*, but it carries many of the same attitudes about the uselessness of studying classical languages. In fact, McMartin is even more explicit about the rejection of classical languages. McMartin’s version of West asks “in order to obtain culture, I suppose it is still necessary to understand Latin and Greek?” and is told “not at all . . . While it may be true that no one can be truly cultivated who knows nothing of the history, philosophy and literature of the ancient Greeks and Romans, yet this does not mean a technical familiarity with the languages of those peoples” (183). Echoing several of the arguments set forth in the nineteenth century, McMartin argues that critical thinking is more important than the ability to read Greek and Latin:

characters argue that higher education does not prepare businessmen for the business world.

While you had parsers and spellers by the hundreds, you only had intelligent readers by the dozens. How many parents fondly and erroneously supposed that their children were more intelligent than themselves when, in reality, the only difference was in mental discipline and technical acquaintances with tools, by means of which knowledge, theoretically, might be more readily obtained. (183)

McMartin's views are summed up by saying that those who study Latin and Greek often know very little: "Their appreciation, beyond the technical, was little better than that of the ignorant compositor" (183 – 184). Overall, McMartin seems to agree with Bellamy. Latin and Greek may be fine for a few philologists, but the majority of society has no need or use for it.

Surprisingly, utopian novels that disagreed with Bellamy on the economy did not necessarily disagree with him on this point. Wilbrandt's anti-Bellamy book briefly mentions Latin and Greek during a discussion of the educational system:

Though the decision of the strife over the Latin essay and the Greek language seemed to belong to the past, even after the retreat into the purely practical province, wide differences of opinion existed concerning the boundaries to be maintained and the branches of learning requisite for a healthful education of the masses. (77)

In this case, Wilbrandt leaves the question unanswered. His focus is on how the educational system of the future is more of a propaganda mill than a learning center. To Wilbrandt, this question over classical languages remains unsettled – which reflects some of the ambiguity of the text itself, given that Wilbrandt's protagonist (Mr. Ost) spends

much of the narrative undecided about the overall benefits and drawbacks of the Nationalist system.

In contrast, William Morris' *News from Nowhere* presents an educational system that is largely self-directed, with no central controlling authority. Though his future utopia contains the equivalent of colleges, people come and go as they please, and no one earns any degrees. Children learn what they like, when they like, and Morris claims that this works better than any centralized system. However, even the children "mostly learn Latin and Greek along with the modern [languages]" (32). Morris clearly sees classical language as so important that it will not vanish even when no longer required. In fact, Morris may be arguing that more people will learn classical languages, once they are free to pursue whatever education strikes their fancy (as opposed to whatever education they can afford under a capitalist society). Here Morris is not disagreeing with Bellamy so much as proposing a radically different educational system, one where people's natural interests will direct their learning. In Morris's view, classical language learning emerges as a by-product rather than as a main concern.

No one disagrees that each of these utopian novels addressed larger cultural issues. Several studies have already established that. What I have attempted to show is that these texts not only addressed larger cultural issues, but they also engaged in a form of conversation that often resembles Wayne Booth's idea of coduction. The tendency of nearly all studies of utopian fiction is to treat each of these novels as autonomous units – or when they are treated as inter-related, as part of various clearly defined and autonomous groups (such as socialist, capitalist, anarchist, etc.). In this chapter, I have

attempted to show that these texts are all very closely intertwined, and are constantly in conversation with the larger culture and with each other, with Bellamy at the center, shaping (but not controlling) the direction of nearly every thread of the conversation.

Chapter 4

Utopia Comes to an End

While the reasons for and the extent of Bellamy's success still fuel debate, the debates over his eventual decline are just as contentious and multi-faceted. Of course, in the end, most political movements eventually fail, undergo change, become absorbed into another movement, or otherwise fade away. What makes Bellamy's failure particularly interesting is that he was wildly successful for several years, yet within a few years of his death, his ideas had almost completely vanished from public life.¹ He wrote a utopian book that created a political party², inspired hundreds of clubs devoted to bringing about his ideas, and helped launch several newspapers. For over a decade, political newspapers, economic journals, and the mainstream press had to confront Bellamy's ideas.

Everett W. MacNair summarizes Bellamy's major accomplishments this way:

In Boston, [Nationalism] gave real help to those who put through the

General Court, an act enabling cities to produce their own light and gas.

¹ However, this is not to say that Bellamy completely vanished and is only the object of occasional study. The final chapter of this dissertation deals with some of his more lasting impact. His long term impact included the (very) brief resurgence of Bellamy clubs during the Great Depression, the literary "remakes" in the 1970s of his two utopian novels by science fiction author Mack Reynolds (not to mention Robert Rimmer's erotic utopia *Love Me Tomorrow*), and the few "Bellamy partisans" who still agitate for his ideas in contemporary America (among others). To say that his ideas faded is not to say that they completely disappeared.

To use a literary analogy, near the end of the fantasy novel *The Great Hunt*, Rand al'Thor discovers he is "the Dragon reborn" – the reincarnation of a legendary hero. He is reluctant to proclaim his status, as there have been so many "false dragons" that he thinks that no one will believe him. One of his companions tells him that there will always be people who will follow any person that claims to be the Dragon Reborn. Similarly, there will likely always be people who will find Bellamy's ideas to be useful and worth championing, no matter how much Bellamy has been "discredited" or how far Bellamy has receded from the popular consciousness.

² Though in some cases, this party was "ad hoc," organized at local rather than national levels, and often "disappeared from the political scene almost as soon as the ballots were counted," it had many successes

Elsewhere, it lent strong support to some who cleaned up corrupt utility and street car franchise situations. More than that it trained new leaders to the world of reform. Men like Daniel De Leon and Henry Gaylord Wilshire cut their teeth on Nationalism. (331 – 332).

MacNair goes on to list several prominent activists who first entered (or came to prominence through) activism by way of Nationalism. Combined with the many Bellamy clubs, the best-seller status of his book, and the flood of other utopian novels he inspired, it seems as though there should have been a stronger, lasting legacy for Bellamy and for Nationalism. Yet within a few years of his death, he had faded almost completely from the public and intellectual imagination.

We could compare Bellamy to Upton Sinclair (who claimed to be partially inspired by Bellamy). Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle*, while it did not create as much change in society as Sinclair wished, resulted in the creation of the FDA, which is still with us. Bellamy's Nationalist party and the Peoples/Populist party which he eventually threw his support behind³ do not exist today, even if possible remnants of their ideas can be found in the platforms of both major political parties. The response to Sinclair was almost as immediate as it was to Bellamy, but besides being a partial inspiration to

and "first[s]" – including being the vehicle for the first socialist to run for Congress, H. Gaylord Wilshire (Quint, "Gaylord Wilshire" 327).

³ MacNair, however, argues that the Peoples/Populist Party distanced itself from Bellamy: "It would be hard to believe from the reform journals of the prairie states after the Peoples Party got under way . . . that they had ever known Bellamy . . . Nationalist support is not even mentioned" (327). So even if one could argue that the People's party absorbed Nationalism in some way, it absorbed it so completely that nearly all traces of Nationalism vanished.

Sinclair and to others and besides the still in print *Looking Backward*, Bellamy left no lasting legacies that can easily be pointed out without serious qualifications and caveats.⁴

One could argue that Sinclair's focus was narrower, allowing for more specific proposals, whereas Bellamy offered an overall utopian vision. However, *The Jungle* and other comments by Sinclair make it clear that his vision was larger than the FDA as well. Somewhat akin to Bellamy, Sinclair wanted to create a revolution; he even referred to his work as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for labor. Bellamy's main focus was on industrial production, and Sinclair wanted improved conditions for workers. Though the creation of the FDA was not Sinclair's initial hoped for outcome, it had a lasting impact that continues to influence society and ensured that Sinclair's name would be more than just a historical footnote. It also bears noting that in E. D. Hirsch's *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (3rd edition), Upton Sinclair is mentioned while Bellamy is nowhere to be found. This inclusion/omission indicates that Sinclair is among those things that Hirsch believes "every American needs to know" (or at least have a passing familiarity with), as the cover of his dictionary proclaims. While the debates over Hirsch's educational proposals are beyond the scope of this study, his *Dictionary* is a good

⁴ Arthur E. Morgan makes a valiant effort at arguing for a longer term impact, claiming that "William Jennings Bryan's famous 'cross of gold' speech was but a paraphrase from *Looking Backward*," and "it may be that the long-range direction and import of the New Deal can be made clearer by reading Bellamy's *Looking Backward*" (*Nowhere was Somewhere* 9). Though there are similarities, it seems a stretch that Bryan's "cross of gold" phrasing is meant to echo West's cry that he saw humanity hanging on a cross. Bryan's theme was the debate over free silver, whereas Bellamy was more concerned with poverty and the hellish state of nineteenth century society. Bryan's image dealt with a future he hoped would not happen, but Bellamy's cross was (in his eyes) an accomplished fact. In an American society that was heavily influenced by Christian rhetoric and practice and without any direct evidence, it is just as likely that the symbol was created independently. As far as the New Deal goes, though Bellamy may have helped lay some of the cultural groundwork for the acceptance of FDR's plans, the evidence again is mostly circumstantial and relies on broad similarities that were fairly common across a wide range of progressive reformers.

resource for items and ideas in American culture that are constantly referenced in news and entertainment with the expectation that the audience will understand the references without any additional explanation.

With only slight exaggeration, Robin Hahnel can write that “the popular response to *Looking Backward* was so overwhelming that Bellamy the writer was drafted into the life of an activist by the Nationalist Clubs that sprang up to spread his gospel – only to become a forgotten social critic twenty years after his death” (396). While Bellamy has never been truly forgotten by assorted academics, activists, and agitators, he had (more or less) faded from the public mind by “twenty years after his death.” Though some scholars continue to argue for the relevance of Bellamy’s ideas (and others have argued that Bellamy’s ideas had more staying power than what was generally acknowledged), when considered from a political and rhetorical standpoint, Bellamy proved to be ultimately unsuccessful. Politically because Bellamy left no major lasting political parties or reforms that persist today (like Sinclair and the FDA), and rhetorically because his arguments, while successful for a time, faded so quickly from the public’s memory that even those who were later influenced by him had to “rediscover” him again and again.

Many scholars propose various reasons as to why Bellamy’s ideas (and Nationalism specifically) failed to have any solid and significant long term impact, especially after the death of Bellamy. A good counter-example from the same time period is the British socialist movement Fabianism. The initial idea behind Nationalism, before Bellamy began to more actively push for Nationalist reforms, resembled the Fabian Society’s aims to gradually introduce socialism through small reforms and

discussion, rather than through outright revolution. As historian A.M. McBriar notes in his history of the origins of the Fabian movement, “the Fabians were a very small group not notably motivated by personal interest” (7). Generally, they were not involved in demonstrations or direct legislation: “The Fabian Society as a whole took practically no part in the unemployed agitation. It was still little more than a drawing-room discussion group and its chief contribution to the unemployment situation was the production of its ‘first typically Fabian’ document” (17). Initially, their chief means of activism was the release of several Fabian tracts that were “issued between 1887 and 1891,” though these tracts “were really nothing but restatements of [earlier] demands either in the same or more elaborate terms” (25). Overall, the early Fabians focused on “practical detailed reforms” and stayed away “from the higher ranges of theoretical speculation” (346). At first glance much of what the Fabians initially did resembles Bellamy’s Nationalism, with small groups meeting to discuss ideas and then write articles and pamphlets to educate the public and to push for small reforms here and there.

While Fabianism never became a very large movement, it has continued to be very influential in Britain. Like Nationalism in the United States, it attracted authors, reformers, and politicians of various temperaments to its ranks. However, unlike Nationalism, Fabianism still exists. It closely affiliates with the Labour party in Britain, serving as something of a brain trust, though the Fabian Society maintains a separate identity. When the founders of Fabianism died, the movement lived on. When Bellamy died, Nationalism (which at that point had receded from a political party to more of a general political philosophy) slowly began to dissipate.

There are clear differences between the two movements, as Fabianism always stayed a relatively small, select group while Nationalism attempted to become a widespread, inclusive political party. However, even with these differences, there are enough similarities to show that Nationalism did not have a predestined expiration date, and that it likely could have found a way to survive. As Bellamy biographer Sylvia Bowman argued, “[Bellamy’s] methods of intellectual preparation were proved effective by the Fabians of England” (2000 314). Nationalism possibly had a moment when it could have gone the Fabian route, had Bellamy wished it. While Bellamy contributed to *The Nationalist* newspaper, he did not have editorial control. One reason he started *The New Nation* was to push for a more aggressive expansion of Nationalism and its ideas, since the editors and writers of *The Nationalist* were more interested in exploring the ideas of Nationalism while serving an educational function rather than an activist agenda. Perhaps if Bellamy had decided to follow the route of *The Nationalist* and keep Nationalism somewhat small and focused on the development of ideas, Nationalism may have become more like Fabianism, continuing on as a type of “think tank” rather than as a widespread, activist political movement.

Howard Quint has argued that Nationalism “was not destined to fail” but did so because “it exploded in all directions at the same time . . . had little organization . . . [and] lacked those elements of imminent expectation and of ultimate fulfillment that won countless thousands over to Marxist ideological doctrines” (*Forging* 101). Others argue that the failure was due more to mission drift. Sylvia Strauss states that “Bellamy’s middle-class followers, both male and female, drifted into the Progressive movement” (88), and her argument agrees with Everett MacNair’s contention that “the Populist phase

of the political activity of Nationalism did not kill the Nationalist clubs. Rather it replaced them” (327). MacNair, however, believed that there were several additional reasons that Nationalism died, and one of them squares with Quint’s idea that Nationalism was too disorganized:

Why did the Nationalist clubs discontinue meeting, and their program fall apart? Because they were of such diverse nature, and such heterogeneous personnel. They included so many different types of reformers, that there was not sufficient internal magnetism to keep their particles together. Their centrifugal tendencies were stronger than their centripetal power. The utopian completeness of Bellamy’s picture of the great new social order was so inclusive as to invite every ism and nostrum to come into the movement. The statements of purpose were vague and general enough to bring into the Nationalist clubs people who did not understand . . . it[.] (328 – 329)

Although MacNair seems to feel that a lack of focus caused the failure of Nationalism, it is also possible to argue that this lack was a symptom of (rather than a cause of) Nationalism’s failure. As with Fabianism, if Nationalism had remained a small, focused educational society, it may have avoided this dilution.

Alternatively, Edward K. Spann argues that Bellamy failed because he was attacked from all sides: “The Nationalist entry into politics . . . invited much criticism of Bellamy’s ideas from social radicals as well as conservatives” (203), and that “the attentions of Bellamy’s . . . audience had been distracted not only by reform politics but by a spate of rival utopian novels that served to dilute the vision that he had raised in

Looking Backward" (209). In addition, there is "the mainstream explanation . . . that his ideas did not withstand the test of time" (Hahnel 396).⁵

No matter what the explanation, the Nationalist movement and its ideals – in their identity as Bellamy inspired Nationalism – did not long survive Bellamy. Some scholars have attempted to show that Bellamy's ideas had a longer lasting impact, mostly by pointing to the brief (and limited) resurgence of Bellamy clubs during the Depression and by the few times such luminaries as Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Upton Sinclair, and Eleanor Roosevelt mentioned a passing familiarity with Bellamy's ideas. Some have tried to play on similarities between the FDR's New Deal and Bellamy's Nationalist ideas (though often these similarities do not seem to be ideas unique to Bellamy, but rather they were ideas common among many utopian writers and movements of previous eras), but for all intents and purposes, Nationalism quickly faded from the larger public mind following Bellamy's death. The brief resurgence of Bellamy clubs during the early stages of the Great Depression is something of an exception, but even then they did not last long and faded almost as quickly as they appeared. John L. Thomas put it well when he said that after the brief resurgence of interest in Nationalism during the Depression, "Bellamy's ideas were quickly dropped by a younger generation of New Deal pragmatists who rejected the book's implicit totalitarianism" (356). At most, arguments that attempt to draw connections between Bellamy and later political movements play on broad similarities and wide probabilities. Even the luminaries who claimed to have read

⁵ Another possible explanation comes from Arthur Morgan, who argued that the Theosophists were primarily responsible for the development of the initial Nationalist clubs, and that the folding of *The Nationalist* caused a falling out between the two camps, leaving Nationalism bereft of support. MacNair pretty definitively refutes this claim by showing that the Theosophists were not so numerous nor so supportive as Morgan had supposed (MacNair 329 – 330).

Bellamy rarely (if ever) cited him as the sole or originating source of their ideas or philosophies.

To reiterate an earlier point, I am not arguing that Bellamy completely faded from everyone's minds in all of America and therefore his ideas had no long term impact whatsoever. Instead, I am taking the standard scholarly view that, although Bellamy's ideas continue to influence some people, for the most part he and his ideas faded from the public mind. In other words, his rhetoric was effective for the short term, but failed to create any long term place for Bellamy in the public consciousness. Another text to contrast with Bellamy is *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which had a long lasting impact that can still be seen today, and which still has a place in the popular mind of the American public.⁶ Another apt comparison might be with Horatio Alger. Alger, like Bellamy, is generally only read by academics, yet his name still has some cultural currency. The phrase "Horatio Alger story" often appears in contexts where it is assumed that the audience will understand the reference, even if they haven't read any of his books.⁷

The question then becomes why Nationalism did not last, especially considering how popular it was during Bellamy's lifetime. MacNair stated that "the flattering list of critics and enemies of Nationalism alone, proves that tangible results were expected and feared" (332); though MacNair points to a few results here and there, he concludes that "the tangible results of Bellamy 'Nationalism' were indeed small" (331). If, as Darko

⁶ As well as the Rogers and Hammerstein musical *The King and I*.

⁷ A quick Internet search easily confirms this, but here are two typical examples:

a. "This is the Horatio Alger story of our times, isn't it?" (from "Lindsay in Rehab," a 2007 commentary piece by Bryan Young about the media coverage of Lindsay Lohan at *The Huffington Post* website < http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bryan-young/lindsay-in-rehab-a-moder_b_61496.html>).

Suvin argues, “Bellamy had hit exactly the right note at a time of widespread search for alternatives to ruthless plutocracy” (63), then it seems worthwhile, from a rhetorical perspective, to investigate why “exactly the right note” stopped sounding so soon after Bellamy’s death.

Just as there is no one all-encompassing reason for Bellamy’s success, there is clearly no one solid reason for his failure. Likely all of the reasons discussed above played a hand in the failure of Nationalism. However, I would like to argue for another overlooked reason: Bellamy was a neoclassical rhetor in a romantic age.⁸ The power of his ideas and his rhetorical skill as a writer may have helped bring about his initial wild but brief success, but at the same time, the underlying contrast between his rhetorical neoclassical grounding and romantic reception helped guarantee that the Nationalist movement would have a short life.

When considering Clark and Halloran’s thesis (as discussed in previous chapters) concerning the changing nature of rhetoric in the nineteenth century, Bellamy’s success and failure dovetails rather well with the idea that the late nineteenth century saw a move away from rhetoric with a “communitarian ethos” (“Introduction” 8) to a public discourse focused on powerful individuals powered by an “ideology of self-interest” (11). As discussed in the first chapter, this thesis is not unique to Clark and Halloran, but I find their framing of the change to be the most useful for the purposes of this discussion. Richard M. Weaver, though coming at the era from a different angle, framed the change

b. “Before telling me his Horatio Alger story, though, he had something he wanted me to understand” (from “Horatio Alger Multiplied by 1.3 Billion,” an April 26, 2008 article in the *New York Times* by Joe Nocera about Chinese entrepreneurs <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/26/business/26nocera.html>>).

⁸ Albeit a romantic age that still clung to vestiges of neoclassicism, though those vestiges faded quickly.

in public discourse in much the same way. Weaver argued that oratory (he calls it “old rhetoric”) before the late nineteenth century was “spacious” because it included not just the speaker and the audience, but the larger community and sometimes even all of humanity. “The object of an oration made on the conditions obtained [in the nineteenth century] was not so much to ‘make people think’ as to remind them of what they already thought” (172). But rhetoric changed to a narrower focus, such as “entertainment” (183) or “immediate effect” (184).⁹ This assertion parallels Clark and Halloran’s thesis, as one by-product of this change was that some types of public discourse “came to function primarily as entertainment” that “turned people inward” so that they “define[d] themselves as an assemblage of autonomous individuals” (“Introduction” 14).

Using Clark and Halloran’s framework, it can be said that Bellamy saw himself as operating within the neoclassical ideal and expressing communally shared values, while his audience clearly did not. For example, the fact that his Nationalist clubs were often called “Bellamy clubs” shows that Nationalism was (to some extent) built around a cult of personality. Bellamy apparently thought he was operating as a rhetorician in the classical mode (even if he would not have phrased it in those exact terms), while his audience (at this point in time) only perceived him as an individual genius. He saw morality as emerging from the entire community, but his followers saw morality as coming from him and his ideas.

⁹ Weaver politics being what they were, he seemed to lament this change. Though he acknowledges that society will likely never return to the “spacious” old rhetoric, his discussion of it contains a certain wistful, nostalgic fondness (as well as an apparently stern but subtle disapproval of “modern” rhetorical practices)

Relying solely on Clark and Halloran's frame only provides a partial picture of how Bellamy's rhetoric engaged with his followers and with the larger culture. To explore the idea further, I will use Kenneth Burke's dramatic pentad and his idea of "rhetoric as identification" to help explore how and where this rhetorical disconnect occurred. In his book *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke provides a grammar – or a way to talk about – the motives of people. The pentad consists of five elements that, when compared to see which are dominant in a given situation, allow us to draw conclusions about and discuss the motives behind a person's actions in given situations.

Just noting that Bellamy saw his ideals as communal, and his followers saw them as coming from an individual, does little to explain why his ideas were as successful as they were, or why this disconnect did not hinder Nationalism while Bellamy was alive. I believe that Kenneth Burke's pentad will help explain what motivated Bellamy and those who followed him (in varying degrees of loyalty and acceptance). For Burke, the pentad is a way to answer the questions "what is involved when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?" (Burke, *Grammar*, xv). In this case, we need to ask: what was involved when people followed Bellamy, what was involved when Bellamy helped create Nationalism, and why was he/were they doing it? Burke describes the five points of his pentad in this manner:

In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the

purpose . . . any complete statement about motives will offer some kind of answers to these five questions what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose). (Burke, *Grammar*, xv)

But merely identifying these five points is not enough in understanding the motivations and reasons involved. For Burke, the importance of the pentad was not just to identify all five elements of the pentad as though we were creating a rhetorical laundry list but to see which aspects of the ratio dominated the motivations of those involved. Real insight into motivations comes from seeing how the points of the pentad relate to each other in various ratios. With these guidelines in mind, I will start my analysis by briefly describing each point of the pentad and their relation to both Bellamy and to his followers and then determine which ratio helps understand the disconnect that allowed Nationalism to fade away:

“Purpose” – Bellamy and the Nationalist followers wanted to “nationalize” industry and bring about the changes described in *Looking Backward*, even if they did not fully agree on all of the details. They acted out of despair over the conditions they saw around them. Both Bellamy and the Nationalists had the same end goal in mind.

“Agency” – Many of the editors and writers of *The Nationalist* seemed content to allow the process to occur naturally, whereas Bellamy eventually felt that a more active and direct approach was needed. Given the legislative battles fought by some Bellamy clubs, it seems that a significant number of his followers agreed with him. But this divide is not irreconcilable, as both sides believed the process was more or less inevitable. One could help it along, but Nationalist rhetoric clearly indicated that radical action was not

necessary. The end game was distant rather than near, and there was no hurry to make things happen now.

“Act” – In order to help hasten the nationalization of industry, clubs were formed, newspapers were created, and debates were engaged in. As discussed earlier, Nationalist candidates appeared on ballots in a few states, and the Nationalist clubs had a few small legislative victories here and there across America. They all agreed that the most important goal was to keep the ideas of Nationalism in the public sphere.

“Scene” – The radical changes and social disturbances of the nineteenth century (the Haymarket riots, the Panic of 1873, the Long Depression, the see-saw of the economy, the suffering of the poor along with the sudden rise of the very rich, and the obvious disparity between the extremely wealthy and the working poor) provided the perfect backdrop for Bellamy’s ideas to take hold, as well as to motivate many people to embrace his ideology. *Looking Backward* was a reaction against what he saw as the injustices of his time, and his audience’s reaction indicated that they also viewed the scene in the same way as Bellamy.

“Agent” – Here, a disconnect occurred between Bellamy and his followers. Bellamy saw the agents as society as a whole. His followers, however, saw him as the prophet who would lead them into the promised land.

In Kenneth Burke’s pentad, Bellamy and his followers agreed on the “Purpose”, “Agency”, “Scene”, and “Act”, but differed in the “Agent.” This occurred due to a “mis-identification” between Bellamy and his followers. Rhetorical agency had shifted from a neoclassical to a romantic focus, and Bellamy saw society as the primary

agent, while his followers saw Bellamy in that role. To illustrate this disjunction, I will compare two statements, one from Bellamy and one from a devoted follower.

A good description of Bellamy's conception of the agent of change comes from the middle of his article "The Progress of Nationalism in the United States":

The foregoing considerations may perhaps sufficiently indicate how far back in American history the roots of Nationalism run, and how it may indeed be said to have been logically involved in the very principle of popular government on which the nation was founded. (*Speaks Again!* 136)

Here, the community (or the entire nation) is the source of morality and the wellspring of authority. Bellamy's ethos is grounded in how well his ideas fit with what the entire nation has already deemed good. His job is to remind the people of what they all already know. His followers did not see it entirely that way, though.

John Clark Ridpath (a Nationalist and a devoted disciple of Bellamy) conceived the agent differently than Bellamy did, but he clearly represented the view of the majority of the Nationalists. In Ridpath's elegy to Bellamy's memory, he sets the tone by beginning with a discussion of prophets and of what happens to their ideas when they die:

When a prophet dies he does not go away; he disappears. The real presence of the departing seer remains behind and expresses itself evermore in his works . . . Edward Bellamy was a prophet . . . Let us inquire how this prophet should be regarded by his fellow mortals who have not disappeared from the arena of visible life. (Ridpath 243)

Ridpath's rhetoric leaves no doubt – Bellamy is the unique seer who “lived to see with most penetrating vision” what others could not see (Ridpath 243), and his writings (two utopian novels, essays for various Nationalist periodicals, etc.) were like holy writ. Along these same lines, another follower of Bellamy named Kent Alexander, in the November 1889 issue of *The Nationalist*, referred to *Looking Backward* as “the chief missionary document” in the “holy war” of Nationalism (39). Bellamy argued that his ideas were the ideas that everyone else already had, while Ridpath and Alexander (along with many other Nationalists) viewed Bellamy as a singular genius with new ideas, a prophet with new scripture.

In the case of Bellamy and his followers, the dramatic ratio that seems to have dominated was the scene-agent ratio, “where the synecdochic relation is between person and place” (*Grammar* 7). The scene (Gilded Age America and its eventual transformation into the utopian year 2000) dominated and was, for the life of Nationalism and Bellamy's popularity, the chief concern of both Bellamy and his followers. The agent, the ultimate source of morality, was a secondary (but important) concern. Even as harsh a critic as Arthur Lipow admits that Bellamy was successful because he was able “to express the frustrated expectations” of his readers and that his “indictment of the cruelty and inhumanity of industrial capitalism inspired many of its readers to think about social alternatives to capitalism” (4). Articles in both *The Nationalist* and *The New Nation* show that Bellamy's supporters and fellow-travelers saw the same late nineteenth-century scene that he did and envisioned the same (or a very similar) future utopian scene. There was little disagreement about what was wrong, and they generally agreed on what the final product would look like. But their conceptions of who was at the moral

center of the scene differed enough that after Bellamy's death, the utopian scene faded away.

Scene and the (neoclassical?) agent

During Bellamy's early life, and before he wrote *Looking Backward*, he participated in the lyceum movement, a forum where he first publicly articulated his interests in socialism. His participation in the lyceum movement is noteworthy, as Clark and Halloran use it as one example of the changes in the practice of rhetoric in nineteenth century America:

The lyceum movement [founded in 1826] . . . was an expression of an individualistic idealism that envisioned every American (at least every white male American) able to prosper in private affairs and participate fully in public affairs by virtue of a general moral and intellectual improvement . . . [But later in the century] the lyceum movement was inexorably transformed into something quite different . . . [it became] a medium of entertainment. (9)

Ronald F. Reid's essay on "the American Cicero" Edward Everett (1794 – 1865), who was one of the movement's most prominent practitioners, helps to clarify the lyceum movement and how it related to the changing nature of public rhetoric. Reid shows that Everett, in his lyceum participation and in his other oratory, focused on "epideictic speeches" that emphasized an "American consensus: Our 'great past,' our indebtedness to the great Revolutionary heroes, and our mission to serve as a model of freedom" (Reid 33). However, as the movement progressed, it became more and more focused on the skills of the individual orator, and eventually developed into a form of entertainment

rather than of education (this change happened gradually over time, though the trajectory was fairly clear during the last decade of Everett's life – Reid shows that much of the change is reflected in Everett's posthumous reception). Likewise, Bellamy's early participation occurred during a time when the lyceum movement still allowed for orators who were less interested in showing off their skill and more interested in living the Ciceronian/neoclassical ideal. However, the larger changes in the culture eventually left both men somewhat out of place – in Burkean terms, the agent changed from the community to the individual.

Reid's description of Edward Everett's successes and failures also applies (in a general way) to Bellamy's career:

[His] popularity as an epideictic orator shows that remnants of the old oratorical culture remained throughout [his] lifetime . . . He was psychologically an eighteenth-century belletristic gentleman who could not quite come to terms with the changing oratorical culture of the nineteenth-century in which he lived . . . He could neither adapt to the nation's rising egalitarianism nor engage in blatant appeals to special interests . . . His lifetime popularity and the fact that his collected [essays] were reprinted frequently until [many] years after his death show that the neoclassical ideal was not dead, but his failures show that it was dying.

(Reid 55 – 56)

Broadly, the same can be said of Bellamy. However, Bellamy's success seems to have occurred despite his reliance on the neoclassical ideal rather than because that ideal was not completely dead yet. As established in previous chapters, Bellamy's vision was

presented in a rhetorically convincing way, and its power was enough to overcome any initial disconnect between Bellamy's views and his audience's views on where the source of ultimate authority came from (especially as the main focus of Bellamy and his disciples was on the scene rather than on the agent).

But Bellamy clearly operated in the neoclassical, community centered mode with the public as the agent. In his philosophical essay "The Religion of Solidarity"¹⁰ and in his own personal journals, Bellamy articulated the following beliefs (as summarized by Bowman, his most recent biographer): "The universal . . . force which bound people and things together was the all-important aspect of man. Individuality was to be regarded as petty and narrow . . . [but] Individuality was not to be wholly condemned for it made possible . . . the expression of the universal" (Bowman, 2000 31 – 32). Bellamy did not want to eliminate individuality entirely, but he did see the individual as part of the larger whole. In "The Religion of Solidarity," he clearly stated his ideas of the relationship between the individual and the larger group by stating that "the personality should not be contemned, should not be worn with half-heartedness and repining. It is dignified in being the channel, the expression of the universal" (Bellamy, *Selected Writings* 12). Here, Bellamy is saying that the whole gives meaning to the part, but not the other way around, or as he clarified: "We should ever interpret the finite in us by the infinite, but the infinite by the finite, never" (15). Individuals should never seek to make themselves individually great, as "[being] great as individuals [is] a sort of pygmy greatness not to be

¹⁰ Not published during his lifetime, and generally kept secret. Only a few of his friends and family were aware that he had written a summary of his personal religious views. According to a later note that he appended to the unpublished manuscript: "This paper . . . represents the germ of what has been ever since my philosophy of life" (*Selected Writings* 26). This later note also mentions a few criticisms that he has of the text, but his criticisms are stylistic and do not deal with the basic beliefs expressed therein.

desired” (23) and because “the workman does not sacrifice himself to his tools; so should we not seek to serve the individual, which is the serf of the universal” (18). Individuals are necessary tools, but in Bellamy’s philosophy, they are the servants of the greater, universal community where the true source of morality exists.

Bellamy felt that humankind was meant to work together and that morality was held by the entire community, rather than in the hands of an elite few. Nationalism was not meant to “make war upon individuals,” because for Bellamy “the organic unity of the whole people” was more important than any individual person (*Speaks Again!* 31, 32). He clearly saw himself working in the community centered neoclassical ideal that had permeated early nineteenth century rhetorical practice (but was dying out by his time). Bellamy himself said in a public address that “a man has no need to be a Nationalist at all to advocate [Nationalist ideas]” because “there is not even anything [in them] which can be said to be greatly in advance of public opinion” (Bellamy, *Speaks Again!* 67, 68). In another article, he claimed that *Looking Backward* was successful because “it is a bare anticipation in expression of what everybody was thinking and about to say” (*Speaks Again!* 137). Bellamy’s words parallel Richard M. Weaver’s insight (discussed above) that the neoclassical rhetorical focus in nineteenth century America was to “remind [audiences] of what they already thought” rather than to introduce new ideas into their minds. To Bellamy, the larger community was the true source of Nationalism’s moral authority and truth rather than his own skill as a writer or thinker.

One side effect of Bellamy’s insistence on the universality of his message was that he risked diluting Nationalism. In some cases, it became anything to anyone who wanted to find something in Bellamy. C.H. Stone, as evidenced in her book *One of*

“*Berrian’s*” *Novels* (discussed in the previous chapter), found mental telepathy and other psychic powers in Bellamy’s vision. Other writers found room to graft Nationalism to temperance or to whatever their particular pet political (or social) projects may have been. Since Bellamy insisted that his ideas were mere “expression[s] of what everybody was thinking and about to say,” his attitude allowed nearly “everyone” who found themselves attracted to Bellamy’s ideas to believe that the ideas they currently held were already present in Nationalism. To use the words of Clark, Halloran, and Weaver, Bellamy felt that he was telling everyone “what they already thought,” but they received the message “as an assemblage of autonomous individuals” who then proceeded to (somewhat solipsistically) apply the message to their own likes and dislikes, rather than to those of the community as a whole.

Bellamy’s rhetorical focus on the larger community as the ultimate source of values is quite evident in *Looking Backward* as well as in his later essays for *The New Nation*. In *Looking Backward*, Dr. Leete says to Julian West that “the excessive individualism which then [in the nineteenth century] prevailed was inconsistent with much public spirit” (Bellamy, *Looking Backward* 68). This basic thesis illustrates Bellamy’s own views of his time period: Individualism was generally bad, especially when carried to excess. The “public spirit” was more important and was the true source of morality and ethics. In the early part of *Looking Backward*, the extended metaphor of the coach also shows Bellamy’s concern with society as a whole. He does not discuss the role of the individual – in his metaphor there are no distinct individuals. Part of this focus is the nature of the metaphor itself, but a part comes from Bellamy’s view that what matters is the overall picture of society – the individual parts are more or less

interchangeable. This view is reflected in the rhetoric of Dr. Leete, who discusses “society writ large” at all times. Individuals are rarely named, and when they are, it is with the idea that any other qualified person could easily fill their shoes. In the case of Dr. Leete, for example, the reader gets the idea that any denizen of the year 2000 could have educated Julian in the ways of their government. While Dr. Leete is clearly “elite” in some sense, the implication is that everyone in this future society is equally “elite.”

Despite this potentially aggressive communitarianism, Bellamy does not want individuality erased completely. There are several occasions in *Looking Backward* when Julian West awakes and finds himself so confused by his new surroundings and by all of the new information he has had to assimilate that he fears the loss of his “personal identity” (88, 146). He spends an indeterminate amount of time enduring “mental torture [that consists of] helpless, eyeless groping for myself in a boundless void” (88). Though communal values are to be prized above all, Bellamy also does not want people to completely lose their individuality – they just need to remember which is more important and the true source of values. Julian’s desire for individuality is not wrong unless it is carried to the excesses that Dr. Leete claims characterized the nineteenth century.

Julian West’s dream of returning to the nineteenth century also reveals that individuals cannot be the center of morality nor dictate morality to the rest of society. In his dream, West takes it upon himself to be a lone spokesman for the future society he has witnessed. But instead of expressing communal values, he expresses himself as a lone prophet crying in the wilderness. He cries out “I have been in Golgotha . . . I have seen humanity hanging on a cross!” (237 – 238). He goes on to describe his attempts to convert his audience, which are notable because of the heavy use of the word “I.” He

declares “I . . . tried to speak calmly” and “I showed them how” and “I spoke of that new world” (238 – 239; emphasis mine). He is rejected, partly because his audience is rich and cannot comprehend a world without the poor and partly because Julian sets himself up as the sole source of morality. Julian’s failure to influence his past fellows comes from his inability to appeal to their communally held values – instead he appeals to values he presents as coming solely from himself and from his supposed dream of the future (which, of course, turns out to be the reality, while the return to the nineteenth century is the dream).

Julian’s attempts to persuade the nineteenth century denizens of his dream contrasts with Bellamy’s own approach in *The New Nation*, his Nationalist newspaper.¹¹ Julian used “I” over and over again, but Bellamy preferred the pronoun “you” in both the singular and plural senses. This tendency, combined with Bellamy’s public demeanor and with his other writings related to Nationalism, clearly shows his neoclassical concern with the community over the individual. Despite his growing fame, Bellamy avoided the spotlight as much as possible. Bowman noted that “Bellamy refused to be lionized or to attend social functions in his honor when he became a popular author” (Bowman, 2000 123). In *The New Nation*, Bellamy wrote a column under the name “Mr. Smith,” a move that seems calculated to draw attention away from Bellamy himself and more toward the sense of a general everyman. This “Mr. Smith” wrote columns that were aimed at various people such as “a Tariff Reformer”, “a Believer in the Bible”, “a Father of a Family”, “a

¹¹ *The New Nation* essentially replaced the earlier periodical *The Nationalist*, which was run by followers of Bellamy (though Bellamy contributed) who wanted to take a more educational and less activist approach. *The New Nation* was edited and mostly written by Bellamy with support from those who wanted to take a more aggressive approach to spreading the tenets of Nationalism.

Pessimist”, “a Banker”, “a Pastor”, and “a Lover of Variety” – among many other generic but descriptive names. Written pseudo-anonymously, Bellamy clearly wanted the focus not to be on “Bellamy as the prophet of Nationalism” but on the wide ranging community he envisioned. He felt that Nationalism should include the rich, the poor, the middle class and people from all walks of life. This focus is another reason why many socialists of the day did not warm to Bellamy – he refused to engage in class conflict, and instead members of all classes (in theory and sometimes in practice¹²) intermingled at Nationalist or Bellamy club meetings.

The Mr. Smith writings were semi-Socratic dialogues, where “Mr. Smith” – a generic name clearly meant to indicate that this character could just as well be any of his (male) readers – defends Nationalism against a whole host of charges. Notably, conversions are rarely explicit in the dialogues, and many conclude with Smith’s debating partner declaring that he or she will have to give more thought to ideas they have discussed. A few even end with Smith telling the person not to become a Nationalist until he or she is ready to devote everything to the cause. Even in the majority of the dialogues, where Mr. Smith gets the last word, there is no real sense of Smith having “won” the argument – merely that he has moved his debating partner a little closer to the truth.

Mr. Smith’s overall tactic in each discussion consists of him showing his friend/opponent/debating partner that their skepticism is unfounded, and that they, in fact, already believe in the tenets of Nationalism. So when Mr. Smith debates an “Opponent to

¹² As Lipow shows, though, Bellamy’s ideas appealed more to the educated middle class than to any other social group.

Paternalism,” he begins by showing how the Opponent’s views are self-contradictory: “You might as well say that Man can be his own father” (Bellamy, *Talks* 58). The Opponent, at first, brushes off the criticism by calling it “mere verbal criticism” (59) but later agrees with Mr. Smith when confronted with the idea that the (then) current system is more paternalistic than Nationalism would ever be. Mr. Smith asks him: “You who are so needlessly afraid of the possibility of paternalism under nationalism, how do you like that kind of step-paternalism with which the country is today confronted?” – to which the Opponent replies: “I don’t like it” (62). When a “Disciple of Malthus” complains that Nationalism will lead to “the population of the world . . . multiply[ing] at such a rate” as to lead to “universal famine” (118), Mr. Smith leads the Disciple through a carefully constructed argument that reveals Nationalism is the best way to control the population: since the rich have fewer children and marry later, if everyone is made rich, then the overall population will reach a manageable level.

The most obviously rhetorical of the Mr. Smith dialogues is with a “Public Speaker” who has just given a speech against Nationalism. At the end, the Public Speaker admits that he agrees with one specific point, but he finally ends the conversation by saying: “Well, I’m going to revise that lecture on one or two points before I deliver it again” (Bellamy, *Talks* 42). Though the Speaker is clearly not converted, and will apparently continue to give his anti-Nationalist talks, he has realized that, at least on one point, he already agrees with the Nationalist ideal. That tactic is the core of Bellamy’s approach. His Mr. Smith dialogues do not tell the reader: “Believe Edward Bellamy’s ideas,” but instead they say: “Realize that Nationalism merely represents the ideals you and your neighbors already believe in.”

This focus on the community is mirrored in how Bellamy structured his utopian society. Bellamy's idealized vision illustrated a society that both imitated the industrial structure that was rapidly transforming late nineteenth century society, while also nostalgically mimicking the small communities of the preindustrial era. His utopia had an industrial army yet was structured around communities. Although Bellamy's utopia has a "president," Dr. Leete indicates that this man is more of a figurehead who carries little authority. Thus, unlike the industry of Bellamy's day, there was no single authority figure that anyone could identify as the one in charge. No Rockefeller, Carnegie, or Morgan created this utopian industry. Marx, Engels, or Fourier received no mention for providing any of the philosophical foundation of the utopian society. Instead, society at large made the decision to adopt the Nationalist structure based on experience and common sense. Bellamy thus managed to combine nostalgia with vision. While nineteenth century society focused more on the individual as the center of rhetorical, political, and economic power, Bellamy himself made the source of that power emanate from society as a whole, rather than from some industrial magnate or visionary leader.

Unfortunately for Bellamy, his followers and admirers did not treat his ideas in quite the same way. Instead, they saw Bellamy as the founder, the discoverer, the prophet – the one whom they should look to for wisdom and guidance. While they agreed with Bellamy about the problems facing society and about the general course that they needed to follow to fix them, they did not seem to agree with Bellamy on the source of the ideals. This dichotomy goes back to the first Bellamy club. As Everett W. MacNair's history of the Nationalist movement relates, as the first Bellamy club was formed, "Bellamy insisted that his name be not used to entitle the movement . . . [thus]

the name ‘Nationalist’ was substituted” (42). However, “[Bellamy’s] name was heard on every side” (44) in this first club. Despite the prestigious nature of several of the members and Bellamy’s desire to keep Nationalism from becoming a “Bellamy” movement, Bellamy’s name dominated the discussion.

Bellamy tried to avoid being thrust into the role of a prophet. After the organization of the first Bellamy club in Boston, “he avoided much direct helmsmanship, and stood by to encourage those who led” (50). However, MacNair’s history of the Nationalist movement constantly references the trope of Bellamy as a prophet. Beyond MacNair’s frequent references to Bellamy as “the prophet of Nationalism” (64) and his use of religious language (“the new converts of Bellamy’s gospel”) to describe the movement (55), he also quotes from periodicals and thinkers of the day. In one example he cites Thomas W. Gilruth’s article “Why I am a Nationalist” (originally published in a periodical called *Craftsman*), which referred to Bellamy as “the prophet of this age” (143). MacNair details how “[Bellamy] continued to believe that Nationalism was bigger than local differences of opinion” (117), but that many of the Nationalists “still appealed to Bellamy as their prophet of plenty and prosperity for all” (142) regardless of Bellamy’s desire to stand by and encourage rather than lead. Bellamy’s actions seem to indicate that he felt that the larger community was the source of truth, but the rhetoric of his disciples indicates that they looked to him for revelation.

Several more examples come from the essays printed in the posthumous collection *Edward Bellamy Speaks Again!*, which collects many of Bellamy’s most important essays, as well as three essays about Bellamy. In his essays Bellamy is careful to represent himself only as speaking for society as a whole and expressing their views.

He rarely refers to himself, yet he constantly makes reference to the whole of society. In the essay “Plutocracy or Nationalism – Which?”, Bellamy tells his audience that “your argument is not with me” but instead with “the facts of the present state and tendencies of national affairs” (42). In the rest of the essay, Bellamy attempts to argue (just as “Mr. Smith” did with his verbal adversaries) that his audience “ha[s] no choice but to be Nationalists” because if they would merely think about “the state of things” they would realize that they already agree with the basic tenets of Nationalism (43). Bellamy does not set himself up as more learned or more knowledgeable than his readers – at best he sees himself as a guide, helping them clarify (and then, hopefully, apply) what they already believe in their hearts.

However, the essays in this collection that were not written by Bellamy do not share his same vision. Sylvester Baxter’s defense of the term Nationalism treats “Mr. Bellamy” as the source of authority from whence the tenets of Nationalism spring (28). Though Baxter does use the first person plural – “our great book” (27) and “our principles” (29), he treats “Bellamy’s mind” (27) as the ultimate source of these truths, not the community. The community will put these ideals into action, but Bellamy will tell them what to do. The same tendency occurs in the final essay in the collection, which was written by John Clark Ridpath¹³ a few months after Bellamy’s death (I have already discussed one passage from this essay above). The title “Is the Prophet Dead?” seems clear enough: Bellamy is not a mouthpiece of commonly held views but is instead a lone prophet crying repentance in the wilderness. Ridpath says “we read *him* when we read

¹³ Editor of the periodical *The Arena*. The article reprinted in *Edward Bellamy Speaks Again!* was originally published in *The Arena* in August 1898.

the book” (Ridpath 241; italics in original) despite Bellamy’s insistence (quoted above) we are reading nothing “greatly in advance of public opinion.” Ridpath goes on to discuss what Bellamy saw that the rest of us did not – Bellamy’s unique vision. In Ridpath’s view they are “his [Bellamy’s] visions and dreams” (248) which we must carry on as “apostles of Edward Bellamy” in his absence (247). Bellamy thus becomes the visionary, the unique man, not the neoclassical rhetor expressing communally held values.

Even more recent writings about Bellamy express this sentiment of Bellamy as a singular prophet. Arthur E. Morgan’s 1944 biography treats Bellamy as a lone, misunderstood genius whose ideas need to be considered again. In Morgan’s eyes, Bellamy is the individual who teaches us what we need to know. Morgan states “Bellamy was . . . an original thinker” (*Edward Bellamy* viii), and that “the most immediate handicap to human progress is lack of a vision . . . Bellamy’s great contribution is to provide that vision” (xv). Morgan concludes his biography with sentiments like Bellamy’s “original, creative minded genius” (411) and “rare creative ingenuity” (413) helped make him “the prophet of a new day” (416). Morgan does find some flaws in Bellamy’s ideals, and he claims that Bellamy’s biggest problem, and the main reason Bellamy did not succeed, was that “his program seemed nearly perfect in his eyes” and thus Bellamy was unable to deal with criticism or modify his positions based on pragmatic concerns (416). Even then, Morgan still treats and sees Bellamy as unique, a singular genius. There is no hint that Bellamy was merely expressing what everyone already knew – Morgan places Bellamy in the romantic role of artist as prophet.

Sylvia Bowman's later autobiography and other studies of Bellamy reveal the same dichotomy. Bowman's biography, at least, acknowledges that Bellamy saw himself as merely expressing ideas the public already had, even if they weren't always aware of them. However, Bowman still treats Bellamy as a powerful, individual center of morality. When discussing Bellamy's death, Bowman declares:

The spirit of Bellamy lived on . . . in the impersonal form of the ideas he had promulgated and the pictures he had drawn for the contemplation of the world of an ideal government which would create a social order in which men could develop themselves and discover, perhaps, the Great Mystery. (2000, 152).

Here, Bellamy drew the pictures, and others used them. The agency for his ideas is Bellamy, not society. Society may be blessed by what he has found or "promulgated," but Bellamy is the one who blessed us with how to find "the Great Mystery." Elsewhere, Bowman states "Bellamy sought to create an industrial, political, and social order which would not lead men into temptation" (297). Bellamy did not discover already obvious truths, nor is he reminding the public of these truths – he *created* this vision.

Despite Bowman's quotation of Bellamy's view that he expresses only what the rest of society already believes (Bowman, 2000 74), she subtitles one of her books "An American Prophet's Influence." When she traces his later influence, she constantly refers to the tenets of Nationalism as "Bellamy's ideas" and "the thinking of Edward Bellamy" (Bowman, *Edward Bellamy* 127, 129). Both Bowman and Morgan's biographies, in places, read more like a celebrity hagiography than a critical biography.

Even the recent scholarly book *Revisiting the Legacy of Edward Bellamy (1850 – 1898), American Author and Social Reformer* (edited by Toby Widdicombe and Herman S. Preiser), devotes several chapters to a “What Would Bellamy Do?” approach in response to modern conditions and events (as opposed to “Can we apply the ideas Bellamy articulated to the modern day?”). The Foreword asks: “What insights can we as Americans and leaders of the free world gain from Edward Bellamy’s philosophy and vision? What would he say to us at this juncture in history?” (ix). Several other chapters¹⁴ discuss how a Bellamy-inspired view would apply to modern times in various ways. This is not a critique on my part – I am not arguing that true followers of Bellamy should see his vision the same way he did. What I am pointing out is that even those most familiar with Bellamy cannot seem to avoid thinking of him in romantic terms rather than neoclassical terms.

Earlier utopian thinkers (such as Fourier) and their followers were often careful to distinguish between the thinker and his ideas. In his 1844 speech “A Lecture on Association, in its Connection with Religion,” Charles A. Dana makes it clear that while those at Brook Farm and the other Phalanxes may be called Fourierists, Fourier is not the source of the rightness of their ideas; rather, Fourier merely discovered the truth that already existed and explained how to create the perfect society:

Before I go further, let me state precisely the relation in which . . . we stand to Fourier. In the first place, we accept the title of Fourierists as a convenient name . . . generally understood, and not for any

¹⁴ Most notably, the chapters by John W. Baer, Robun Hahnel, Ron Howe, and Herman S. Preiser.

appropriateness that it has. Fourier himself was always unwilling that the system he had discovered should be called by his name. He could not consent that what he believed to be the science of universal laws, should bear the appellation of an individual . . . This, then, is the attitude in which we stand toward Fourier; – his pupils . . . we hold ourselves bound . . . to the maintenance and service of the Truth, whether it is set forth to us by Fourier, by Swedenborg, by Plato, or by whomever. (Dana 27 – 28)

In Dana's eyes, the ideas were no more Fourier's than anyone else's: Fourier was just the first (or best) to explain them. Therefore, it was a lecture on "Association" rather than "Fourierism" – the latter a term Dana treats as a useful but reductive misnomer. Fourier is not a prophet – he is merely a man who has happened upon a universal truth. This attitude did not exist among Bellamy's disciples, who treated him as the center for the moral worth of his ideas. Bellamy, like Fourier, "was always unwilling that the system he had discovered should be called by his name" – which (as discussed above) was one reason why the term Nationalism was coined for the movement. However, between 1844 when Dana gave his speech on Association and 1888 when Bellamy published his utopian novel, society had changed. Individuals, not the community, were the agents at the center of public discourse. The ideas of Nationalism were, to them, Bellamy's ideas, and he was the source. "Bellamyists" and "Bellamy clubs" were not just "convenient names" but, in the minds of Bellamy's disciples, entirely appropriate and necessary labels. Franklin Hunter's 1892 pamphlet *An Exposition of Nationalism*, praises Bellamy in terms that Dana and other Fourierists would likely have found uncomfortable: "the name of . . . Edward Bellamy . . . will take a place among that company to whom the

world has ever paid homage as those who have enabled it to approach the nearer to its ideals” (15).

However, there is an article in the December 1889 issue of *The Nationalist* that expresses similar sentiments to Dana’s speech. The section “Editorial Notes” contains the following warning:

There is always a danger in hero-worship . . . the chief danger lies in confusing a person, however great and heroic and worthy of esteem, with a Cause which is at once the composite . . . of the many – of Man, the Mass, in contradistinction from man, the unit . . . though great honor is due to Edward Bellamy . . . many others have worked and suffered and died young to bring about that clarity in the general intellectual atmosphere. (33 – 34)

However, this brief statement is completely undermined by the texts and paratexts that surround it. This same issue contains a portrait of Bellamy, which the same “Editorial Notes” praises: “[the portrait] may justly be called a work of art . . . besides being the most popular and probably the most famous living author . . . Edward Bellamy is one of the most high-minded, kind-hearted, and companionable of men . . . those who know him esteem the man even more highly than the genius” (33). This picture was made available for sale and advertised in several later issues (which included a standard facsimile as well as a limited edition of one hundred prints signed by Bellamy and the artist). There is a contradictory message presented here: Hero worship is to be avoided, but make sure you have a picture of Bellamy in your homes and meeting houses; admire this picture, and use it to remind you of what a great man he is. Additionally, on the page following the

warning against hero worship, the editorial notes make a reference to Nationalism as “the glorious picture painted by Bellamy with the heartfelt hand of genius” (34). Even while warning against the dangers of hero-worship, the editors of *The Nationalist* still thought of Bellamy in terms of the prophet, the lone genius, and the heroic intellect. Dana said Fourier merely expressed principles independent of himself, but he did not invent them. Here, Bellamy created the principles, and while others work and sacrifice, there is little sense that the principles are independent of the creator (whose picture his followers should admire as a work of art).

Bellamy clearly saw himself in the same way that Charles A. Dana saw Fourier, but Bellamy’s followers apparently saw him in the same way the Children of Israel saw Moses. Moses, however, had Aaron to help him speak, and he later appointed Joshua as his successor to lead the Children of Israel. Other successful socialist movements also had their Aarons and Joshuas. For example, Karl Marx co-wrote *The Communist Manifesto* with Friedrich Engels, who then carried on by editing posthumous volumes of Marx’s work. Bellamy, on the other hand, had no clear appointed successor. Ridpath’s declaration about Bellamy (cited above) that “the real presence of the departing seer remains behind and expresses itself evermore in his works” seems to have been an inaccurate prophecy. After Bellamy’s death, no one picked up the mantle. Bellamy’s belief that the values he taught were held by all likely made it so that he felt no need to find or appoint a successor.¹⁵ He apparently believed that the community could function

¹⁵ This may explain why Bellamy’s wife and daughter were somewhat responsible for the brief resurgence of Bellamyism during the Great Depression, though even they could not keep it alive. Even then it was too late, as Bellamy’s ideas had become history rather than history making.

without a powerful individual to serve as a rhetorical focal point, because the community already believed what he taught. He had reminded them all of what they already knew and believed; so there was apparently no need to appoint a new prophet since, in Bellamy's mind, the entire society was already its own prophet.

Those who might have taken up the mantle seemed unable or unwilling to do so, perhaps out of reverence for Bellamy's ideas, or because they were too far removed from the ideal of Nationalism. Ridpath, as shown above, treated Bellamy as a prophet and his writing as holy writ – so perhaps he was unwilling to take up the mantle. Another potential candidate may have been William C. Owen, the editor of the *California Nationalist* (later called the *Weekly Nationalist*). Using his own distinct principles of Nationalism (which occasionally contradicted those promulgated by Bellamy), Owen “always mention[ed] Bellamy with respect” but “talk[ed] his own language and follow[ed] his own standards” while promoting his personal version of Nationalism (MacNair 250). Since it was clear that Owen did not reverence Bellamy as a prophet and did not see Bellamy's ideas as inherently self-evident, he might have been able to carry on the banner of Nationalism if he had been willing. However, after some acrimonious disputes between various California Nationalist clubs, he moved to the Socialist Labor Party and only occasionally dealt with Nationalism before becoming a fully committed anarchist.

The history of Bellamy's movement is filled with people like Owen – those who did not see Bellamy as a prophet tended to move on to similar movements such as the Populist party or other various socialist parties. Nationalism proved to be a training ground for many prominent reformers, including (as discussed above) Henry Gaylord

Wilshire, but it did not prove to be a training ground for a successor to Bellamy. MacNair states that Wilshire “stood out as more worthy and able to carry on Edward Bellamy’s idealism and influence” (256); as the first person to run for Congress as a Nationalist, his prominence in California Nationalism ensured him an important place within the movement. However, his belief that “Nationalism and socialism are absolutely the same” (MacNair 258) allowed him to move between Nationalism and various socialist parties with ease, later running for the English Parliament for the Social Democratic Federation of Manchester and for attorney general of New York as a member of the Socialist Labor Party. He had no particular loyalty to Nationalism (or to Bellamy), merely viewing it as a small part of a much larger struggle. Like Owen, he did not view Bellamy as a prophet, so he saw no reason to take on the prophetic mantle once Bellamy died.

Posthumously, Bellamy’s publishers released a short story collection and a previously unpublished historical novel (*The Duke of Stockbridge*). While the novel and a few of the stories had some affinity with Bellamy’s utopian ideals, they did not further the cause of Nationalism in any significant way. *Equality* made little impact on the market, and while activist newspapers and other periodicals still made some references to Bellamy, those references faded quickly. The lack of a Joshua or an Engels for Bellamyism helped ensure that Bellamy would be relegated to a footnote (albeit an important one) rather than make a name for himself that still has immediately recognizable currency in American culture.

Not Completely Vanished

According to Sylvia Bowman,

In 1935, Edward Weeks, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* asked Charles Beard, the famous historian, and John Dewey, the philosopher . . . to join him in preparing lists of the “twenty-five most influential books published since 1885.” All three placed *Looking Backward* second only to Marx’s *Das Kapital*. (Bowman, *Bellamy*, 26)

Despite this fairly prestigious endorsement, Bellamy’s books are only occasionally read or studied today, except in the context of utopian studies or American socialism. In this chapter, I have offered one more possible context within which Bellamy can reasonably fit: Rhetoric and public discourse in nineteenth-century America. The rhetorical change from neoclassical to romantic public discourse provides an excellent framework within which to understand how and why Bellamy was so successful, and why that success did not last. Bellamy, it seems, was one of the last gasps of the neoclassical ideal, the good man expressing communally held values. But while Bellamy saw himself as acting within that framework, American society had moved on and instead perceived Bellamy as the learned man, the individual expert, the Romantic prophet – and once he was gone, the movement that had grown up around his individual personality did not survive. Without another prophet to take his place, the community scattered to various other folds built around other strong individuals.

Thus, it can be generally said that no matter how skilled or successful a rhetor, larger cultural changes can render that rhetor ineffective. Bellamy was a neoclassical rhetorician in a romantic age and, despite overwhelming success during his life, his

Nationalist movement soon fizzled after his death, remaining popular mostly among a few intellectual elites who occasionally praised but made little practical use of his ideas.

Because the scene aspect of the scene-agent ratio dominated, it was fairly easy to overlook the disconnect between the source of their ideals (or the agent). Bellamy appears to have been one of the few Nationalists who actually felt that the community was the ultimate source, and that he was merely expressing communally held values and reminding people of what they already believed. Once he died, however, he was unable to continue to remind them, and since they saw him as the moral center of the Nationalistic ideal, it was almost inevitable that attrition would set in and that his ideas would gradually fade into the background. Ridpath felt that Bellamy may have “disappeared” but that his texts would allow his ideas to stay; Kent Alexander may have felt *Looking Backward* would function much like the Bible in converting the unconverted. But with no prophet to guide them, the sacred texts did not prove enough to keep the religion viable.

Chapter 5

Bellamy as Rhetorical Trope

After having spent the previous chapter arguing that Bellamy's ideas did not stand the test of time in part due to a rhetorical disjunction between Bellamy and his disciples, I must qualify that sentiment somewhat in order to proceed. Bellamy's ideas may have mostly vanished from the larger cultural consciousness, his name no longer prompts immediate recognition, and his novel *Looking Backward* – while still in print – is not usually considered an indispensable classic. E.D. Hirsch, Jr. does not consider Bellamy necessary for “cultural literacy” and he rarely appears on lists of “must read” books or authors. In some sense, he is like John Adams. Adams was a very important figure in his day, but as the president between the more popular Washington and Jefferson, he was largely forgotten in the public mind (at least until a recent popular biography and HBO mini-series brought him again to the public's attention). While reformers of yesteryear tend to have a shorter cultural half-life than presidents, names such as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Upton Sinclair, and Henry David Thoreau still have some purchase in modern American culture. Educated people have at least heard of them – but it is possible to earn an advanced degree and never encounter the name of Edward Bellamy. When confronted with the name “Henry David Thoreau” a person might say, “I've heard of him. Remind me what he did again” – whereas the name “Edward Bellamy” is more likely to provoke the response, “Never heard of him. Must not be that important.”

LaVerne Schrimsher Thompson's study “The Literary Influence of *Looking Backward*” claims that “from 1900 until the 1920's [sic] very few references to it can be

found in general works of literary criticism” (47). A search of newspapers and periodicals of the time indicates that, for the most part, this is true of the larger media culture as well. With a world war and other drastic changes just after the turn of the century, Bellamy was likely no longer on many people’s minds. Only after the war was over and the Great Depression hit did some decide to revisit Bellamy’s ideas. But after the New Deal became a reality, Bellamy again faded. In addition to the feeling of some New Deal pragmatists that Bellamy’s vision was too authoritarian (as discussed in the previous chapter), Bellamy’s widow’s claim that the New Deal “partly” embodied her late husband’s ideas (“Bellamy’s Widow” N1) may have also contributed to the ephemeral nature of the resurgence, possibly signaling to Bellamy devotees that once the New Deal was enacted, the work was mostly done (especially considering Bellamy’s insistence that Nationalism was inevitable and a natural outgrowth of societal trends).

That said, Bellamy has never completely vanished. My previous chapter quoted a few works from Bellamy partisans of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Bellamy even shows up in books that are not devoted to promoting or defending him, such as in two pages of Jonah Goldberg’s recent (2007) partisan polemic *Liberal Fascism* (which argues that modern American liberalism has more in common with fascism than modern American conservatism). Goldberg traces the modern progressive movement directly to Bellamy, arguing that 1888 makes as good a starting point as anywhere else: “It’s hard to fix a specific starting date for the progressive race of the Great Society, but a good guess might be 1888, the year Edward Bellamy’s novel *Looking Backward* burst on

the American scene” (215).¹ But despite placing Bellamy in such a prominent position, *Looking Backward*, Nationalism, and Bellamy receive scant mention in the rest of the book. Goldberg does not seem interested in Bellamy for any reason other than as a rhetorically convenient jumping off point.

However, Goldberg could have started at several other prominent places from roughly the same time period as Bellamy, such as the founding of the Socialist Labor Party, the publication of Laurence Gronlund’s *The Co-operative Commonwealth*, the creation of the People’s Party, or several dozen other contemporaneous events that had almost as much (or perhaps even more) impact than Bellamy did – but Goldberg choose Bellamy because Bellamy apparently provided maximum rhetorical impact for this particular argument. Bellamy provides a convenient clearing house for many of the ideas and social reforms Goldberg rails against. Additionally, since Bellamy clearly belongs to the history of progressive ideas in the United States and since many modern liberals/progressives find themselves bothered by the authoritarian implications of Bellamy’s system,² Goldberg uses a piece of evidence that shows at least some connection between fascism and modern American liberalism (even if that connection may seem strained or distant to those not in Goldberg’s camp). Leaving aside the truth or falsity of Goldberg’s central argument, it’s clear that he sees Bellamy as a powerful rhetorical tool, even if he also recognizes the fact that most of his audience will not be

¹ Though others with more sympathy towards Bellamy have made arguments along these lines, though with a narrower focus than Goldberg. Henry F. Bedford (writing in the 1960s) stated that “the history of modern American Socialism really begins with the publication of *Looking Backward*” (12).

² Lipow’s study is one example. Lipow’s academic polemic can be seen as an attempt to purge Bellamy from modern progressive ideas, whereas Goldberg is insistent that Bellamy is historically important enough that he cannot be eliminated from the discussion.

familiar with this utopian author. Goldberg's use of Bellamy provides a nice microcosm of how, ever since his death, Bellamy has fared in American culture: Bellamy is either used as an object of academic study or as a rhetorical trope.

In either case, the academic or the polemicist cannot assume that the larger public has any familiarity with Bellamy. In Goldberg's case, Bellamy allows him to set a specific target date, emphasize the troubling totalitarian tendencies in Bellamy's work, and then attempt to tie those tendencies to modern American liberals.

In *Revisiting the Legacy of Edward Bellamy* (discussed briefly in the previous chapter), Bellamy serves as a focal point that allows several of the contributors to argue for specific political policies. In both cases, the authors go far beyond what Bellamy wrote and extrapolate to the modern day. Bellamy's specific ideas and policy proposals become springboards for arguments about how to "Nationalize" our current industry. Many of the policy proposals in *Revisiting* could have been made in other venues without reference to Bellamy. However, these authors see Bellamy as a useful rhetorical trope, much in the same way Goldberg did, even though they are "on Bellamy's side" and Goldberg is not. In Herman S. Preiser's foreword, after he asks how Bellamy would react to the current post-9/11 world, he replies by arguing that "the United Nations should be strengthened" (x) and that "we must . . . pass a 'Tobin' tax on transnational capital flows, taxing quick turnaround of capital at a higher rate rather than long-term investment capital" (xi), among many other proposals. These proposals are far removed from Bellamy, though perhaps he might argue for these same things if he were alive today. However, citing Bellamy as the source or ultimate authority for these proposals is not

necessary to make their case. Yet Preiser clearly sees some rhetorical value in using Bellamy.

Bellamy has clearly become a rhetorical trope – even if the audience may be unaware of Bellamy, authors such as Goldberg and Preiser see rhetorical value in citing him as the origin of whatever principle they wish to attack or advocate. Long after he has been forgotten in the public mind, Bellamy has survived as more than just an object of academic inquiry or historical analysis.

Another example of how Bellamy has been used as a rhetorical trope occurs in the book *Red, White, And Blue Paradise: The American Canal Zone in Panama* by Hebert and Mary Knapp (published in 1984). Bellamy rarely appears in the main portion of the book, but he serves as a framing device the authors use to understand the Canal Zone. They argue that the Canal Zone was “an American version of authoritarian socialism” that closely “resemble[ed] Bellamy’s utopia” (3, 4). As with other writers that use Bellamy, the Knapps assume that their audience will be unfamiliar with Bellamy and Nationalism, so they provide some background information on Bellamy and his ideas. Though they cite several commentators who compared Bellamy’s utopia to the Zone (establishing that the idea did not originate with their book), they also feel the need to clearly establish for the reader just who Bellamy was.

Bellamy, though, is rarely mentioned outside of the beginning and ending chapters. He does receive some mention in the middle part of the book, but these references appear seemingly at random. For the most part, the book reads as though Bellamy was a late addition, something added late in the writing process to add extra rhetorical force to the Knapps’ argument; the inclusion of Bellamy seems designed to add

more gravitas to the narrative. Without Bellamy as the occasionally referenced frame, the book would appear little more than a work of cultural apologetics, meant to defend the Zonians (government employees who worked on the Zone) against inaccurate accusations of racism, jingoism, and cultural imperialism.

Roughly equal parts a popular history of the Canal Zone, a personal journey of enlightenment, and a political tract on centralized planning, Herbert and Mary Knapp's book has not received as much critical attention as it deserves.³ One of their central arguments is that the American elite class and the press did not really understand what the Zone was like. They claim that reporters, academics, embassy workers, and pundits (all of whom had little contact with the day to day life on the Zone or contact with Zone workers) too favorably reported false stereotypes, too willingly blamed the USA for any and all problems, and too readily made excuses for the various military dictatorships that often ran Panama. The book functions as a record of the political and cultural awakening of the authors; they admit that before living in the Zone they uncritically held many of these same attitudes:

We disapproved of indoctrination. Indoctrination was the antithesis of our rational, progressive ideal. So we preached secularism, relativism, and social engineering to our students, while assuring each other that we weren't really indoctrinating them. It was those old-fashioned teachers who were doing the indoctrinating – by teaching ethnocentrism,

³ Searches of academic databases find almost no citations. Other than listings of the book itself, the MLA database has none, Lexis-Nexis found only one reference, Academic Search Complete found nothing, and Academic One File found one book review. Google Scholar found thirteen citations, but some were repeats, and most were brief mentions in footnotes or listings in bibliographies.

patriotism, and an uncritical respect for authority and tradition. It seems odd, now, how dear that fiction was to us . . . It enlarged our lives. Ill-paid and apparently insignificant, we were really secret agents working to Save Civilization from Christianity, Capitalism, and the Dead Weight of the Past. (35 – 36)

Their experiences in the Zone apparently changed their views, as they end the book expressing thinly veiled contempt for liberal/progressive elites who ignored the Zone or inaccurately attacked it to further their own ends. They attack “liberal professionals and administrators” who

are more sympathetic to the idea of socialism and often assume that their social goals are congruent with those of the working class. However, their antipathy to the working class society on the Zone suggests that this is not so – as do their casual references to ‘rednecks.’ But the status liberals did not face up to their class bias. (189)

Clearly, the Knapps came back from their time in the Zone with a different political outlook than when they started it. But though the book starts out seemingly even-handed and fair, as it progresses, the attacks on the liberal elites they perceived as unfairly attacking Zonians become more openly contemptuous. This rhetorical stance hurts their rhetorical aims and may be one reason why the book has received scant attention.

As far as their use of Bellamy goes, he also suffers at their hands. Although the early parts of the book make it appear as if the Knapps see at least some value in the Bellamy’s ideas, in the end he becomes a target as well. Though the book mostly functions as a defense of the Zone and its American inhabitants, Bellamy serves as the

rhetorical justification for their literary exploration. After quoting several early writers who compared the Zone to Bellamy's utopia, Herbert and Mary Knapp declare that with FDR's New Deal, "America made a start toward an approximation of Bellamy's dream, and it has continued to move in that direction ever since" (5). As they saw the Zone as "an instructive approximation of Bellamy's American-style authoritarian socialism," they declared "we think anyone dreaming of 'real' socialism in America could profitably compare his dream to the Zone's reality" (34). By doing this, they hoped that readers would then be equipped to make an informed decision about whether to follow "the general goals outlined by Bellamy . . . to modify them, or to strike out in a new direction" (6).

As their narrative progresses and although Bellamy appears infrequently, it becomes clear which way the authors would go: they want to strike out in a new direction. Though they enjoyed their time in the Zone, they felt it had problems as well. For one thing, it was often boring. "Compared to the States, the Zone was a very limited place. It did not provide people with an abundance of things or with a great variety of opportunity" (99). Though having limited opportunities had some good points: "To our surprise, we soon learned that we had been able to organize our private lives more efficiently in the apparently wasteful consumer society of the United States," but "efficiency is not everything. The efficiently organized life does not leave much time for reflection, exploring one's interest, or enjoying casual encounters" (100). To them, the Zone only worked because one could leave it. "We could not have stayed on the Zone if we hadn't been able to get away to Panama regularly and to the States every year or two" (274). Overall, it was too authoritarian in nature, but it was also redeemed because it was

controlled by a government that was not Bellamy-esque in nature: “Reform occurred on the Zone only in response to distant reforms originating in the *democratic* ferment of the United States” (160; italics in original). Their ultimate conclusion was that to model the entire United States after such a system would be disastrous, as there would be nowhere to escape to, and no higher authority to help keep in check corruption, waste, and any “propensity toward arbitrary authoritarianism” (275). In the end, they preferred the messy, inefficient, and wasteful tumult of the mainland United States: “Nevertheless, for all [The USA’s] irrational contradictions, it is preferable to the tranquil, rational, almost unchanging, and more nearly ‘perfect’ system we left behind” (275).

For the Knapps, Bellamy does not represent a potentially better future. Though they recognize a slight drift in America towards Bellamy’s ideals, they do not seem enamored with the drifting. Whether life in the Canal Zone accurately reflected how Bellamy’s utopia would play out if adopted by the United States is almost beside the point. Bellamy’s presence in their text allows the Knapps to attack the idea of utopia: “In a real utopia, no one is ever surprised, which is a good thing only if you expect all your surprises to be unpleasant. Utopias are designed by pessimists, and time is never on their side” (106). Bellamy, as the most prominent American utopian writer, serves as a useful focal point for their critiques.

By the end of their narrative, it is quite clear that Herbert and Mary Knapp did not truly intend a dispassionate exploration of whether Bellamy’s system is valuable or not, but Bellamy has still served their rhetorical purposes. He allowed them to make their book more than just a series of apologetics designed to defend Zonians against uninformed attacks by progressive elites. Instead, using Bellamy as a frame gives their

argument a greater sense of history, as well as a focus on the future. Without Bellamy, their argument is mostly timely, something to be quickly discarded once the American Canal Zone has left living memory. With Bellamy, they can aspire to a more broadly applicable argument, one about the future of the nation as a whole rather than about the habits of a small group of government workers. While they may not have fully succeeded in making the impact they wished, their use of Bellamy shows that Bellamy makes for a valuable rhetorical tool, adding historical weight and political authority to arguments that might otherwise lack it.

Mack Reynolds

Mack Reynolds is perhaps the most prominent of the late twentieth century authors who engaged or used Bellamy in their fiction. Though apparently widely popular among science fiction readers in his lifetime,⁴ he has since faded. Critics have largely ignored him, and only a handful of articles and one book attempt to analyze his work in detail. Though critic and editor David Pringle lists Reynolds's Bellamy pastiche *Looking Backward, From the Year 2000* in his book *Science Fiction: The 100 Best Novels*,⁵ Reynolds is rarely reprinted. Most current science fiction fans (even among the most dedicated) would probably not recognize his name. Outside the field of science fiction, he is almost completely unknown; inside the field, he is obscure.

⁴ The covers of many of his books proclaim that the readers of the science fiction magazines *Galaxy* and *If* voted him as the most popular author. Reynolds lived from 1917 to 1983; the bulk of his science fiction work occurred during the 1960s and 1970s.

⁵ Though he qualifies the title in his introduction, saying that there really aren't 100 "literary masterpieces" in his list (because there are only a dozen or so masterpieces in the whole genre), so "best" is a relative term, and that the more accurate "*A Hundred Better Science Fiction Novels*" would have been an unmarketable title as well as "silly" (15).

Despite this relative obscurity, he did have an important influence on the genre, as he was among several authors in the 1970s who helped science fiction move beyond a focus on technology to a focus on socio-economic speculation and extrapolation. He was not the first author to do so, nor the most important one, but he did bring a socio-economic focus to the popular level. The “New Wave” in science fiction, which reached its peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s (and included such respected authors as Ursula K. LeGuin and Harlan Ellison), is often credited with bringing social and economic ideas into science fiction, but the New Wave was self-consciously literary. New Wave authors often received critical acclaim, but they did not often immediately penetrate fandom and the popular market (though currently they are considered standard works in the genre). Reynolds, conversely, wrote “pulp” type fiction for a popular audience. His novels were released in paperback, and often several were released in a year. He wrote quickly, with little revision, and he made few pretensions to literary status. Though “Reynolds’s books are often more interesting in conception than they are successful in execution” (Smith 51), he had a steady audience that consumed his works. As the popular science fiction market often demanded tales of action with interesting technology and little of the social analysis inherent in the New Wave authors, Reynolds can be viewed as a bridge between the two camps; he found a way to combine the socio-economic concerns of the more literary, experimental authors with the style and content of the popular, pulp influenced writers. In this way, his influence on science fiction can be seen as greater than his current reputation would imply.

Reynolds was uniquely situated to write science fiction with a semi-socialist bent, as he was born and raised in the Socialist Labor Party (SLP). In his own words, he was a

“red diaper baby” (Smith 10) who, for most of his youth, remained unaware of religion and of anything not approved of by the party. Though he ultimately broke with the party (partly over his publication of a capitalistically inclined book titled *How to Retire Without Money*, but mostly due to his refusal to toe the party line), he never completely abandoned its ideals. One statement from Reynolds’ version of Dr. Leete apparently summarizes his basic world view (as embodied in his novels): “I’m no Marxist, but I go along with his materialist conception of history” (*Equality* 116).

Given the history of the SLP, this is not surprising. Reynolds was likely exposed to Bellamy at a young age. Though founded in 1877, the SLP’s most important nineteenth century leader was Daniel DeLeon, who was originally “one of the leading luminaries of the first Nationalist club in the metropolitan New York area” (Quint, *Forging* 144). Though not exclusively a Nationalist, he promoted Bellamy’s ideas and gained many of his early contacts with other socialists through Nationalist party channels. He eventually decided that Bellamy’s program was not radical enough, so he left the Nationalists to commit fully to the SLP. From there, he became a “leading luminary” responsible for much of the future direction of the party. “It was an important event . . . for DeLeon as much as, if not more than, any other man during the 1890s shaped the course of American socialist political development” (Quint, *Forging* 142). Though DeLeon’s later actions indicated he was more interested in radical political action rather than the more restrained vision of Bellamy, the influence of Nationalism could still be found in some of his rhetoric: “De Leon . . . remained under the influence of *Looking Backward*, even though its vision . . . would seem to be at odds with the SLP’s view that only violent revolution could overthrow the capitalist class” (Smith 11); as Curtis C.

Smith details, the influence of Bellamy never quite left the party. References to his work appeared in official party literature, though the sentiments were “that Bellamy alone is an inadequate introduction to socialism, one that must be supplemented with Marx and De Leon” (Smith 58). Thus, as a child, it would be highly unlikely for Reynolds to have avoided at least some exposure to Bellamy. Reynolds seems to have made the opposite journey of DeLeon – moving from the SLP to a more Bellamy-esque vision where a semi-socialist future society is possible without revolution.

When discussing Bellamy, the tendency might be to focus exclusively on Reynolds’s Julian West novels, two Bellamy pastiches with the titles *Looking Backward*, *From the Year 2000* and *Equality: In the Year 2000*. However, Bellamy’s influence can be felt in nearly all of his novels, especially in a set of novels focused on the year 2000.⁶ Reynolds’s “year 2000” novels may or may not all take place in the same year 2000 (as will be discussed below), but the clear influence of Bellamy is found in all of them. Each of his year 2000 novels, regardless of whether they occur in the same world or in different universes, clearly share a debt to Bellamy. Bellamy’s influence permeates them all, from the choice to center the stories around the year 2000 to the use of “credit cards” in the way Bellamy used the phrase (which makes them more like modern debit cards). Other concepts from Bellamy’s utopian works appear in several of Reynolds’s novels,

⁶ Though there is some critical debate about which books fit within the year 2000 group, for the purposes of this analysis, I will focus on books published between 1973 and 1977, with the Julian West novels at the beginning and end. In order of publication, they are: *Looking Backward*, *From the Year 2000* (1973), *Commune 2000 A.D.* (1974) *The Towers of Utopia* (1975), *Ability Quotient* (1975), *Rolltown* (1976), *After Utopia* (1977), *Perchance to Dream* (1977), *Police Patrol: 2000 A.D.* (1977), and *Equality: In the Year 2000* (1977). Some caveats apply – the order of publication does always not equal the order they were written, and some of the novels used material previously published in science fiction magazines.

such as the term “muster day.” In Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*, “Muster Day” is the day workers are “mustered into the industrial service” (81); Reynolds uses the same term in his version of *Looking Backward* (158) as well as in *Commune 2000 A.D.* (22), though in Reynolds’s vision, muster day is the day jobs are assigned to a select few whom the computers have selected based on their AQ (either Ability Quotient or Aptitude Quotient, depending on the novel). Though Reynolds has modified the concept somewhat (only a few people are assigned jobs instead of everyone working, and computers do all the selection), he has kept the terminology but assumed that technology will wind up putting most of the population out of a job.

The main critical controversy around Reynolds and his year 2000 novels deals with how seriously Reynolds intended his utopia(s). Was he really presenting a blueprint for the ideal society? Even if he changed his mind later (as possibly evidenced by his other year 2000 novels), was his *Looking Backward* as serious in intent as Bellamy’s, or did Reynolds have some other intention? Reynolds apparently treated his Julian West novels differently, and saw them as worthy of more attention than his other novels. Critics such as Brian Stableford and Patricia Warrick seem to take Reynolds’s version of *Looking Backward* at face value, the closest he has come to expressing his version of the ideal future. They see the critiques of a Bellamy-esque society implied in his other novels as signs that Reynolds’s views matured or changed over time as he became unable to sustain the illusion that utopia was possible.

This analysis may be true, but Reynolds himself warned against such readings. In his response to an article by Stableford, he states:

Contrary to a belief Mr. Stableford seems to have arrived at, I have not intended to point out a path to Utopia. I subscribe to a statement once made by Eugene V. Debs . . . “Even if I could, I would not lead you into the Promised Land. For if I could lead you into it, someone else could lead you out again.” (“Afterword” 54)

Thus, the other year 2000 novels should not necessarily be read as Stableford and others do - as Reynolds’s growing disenchantment or disillusionment with his utopian ideal. Instead, they should be seen as Reynolds’s variations on a theme or attempts to see “what if” this or that happened in a utopia? Sometimes his speculations created positive worlds, and sometimes they created negative ones. As Curtis C. Smith stated, Reynolds’s novels were “meant not to propagandize the reader, but to present possibilities” (34), and “Reynolds’s utopias are uneasy places, never static and never perfect, their protagonists alienated if not driven to make further revolution” (25). In the end, Reynolds’s utopias are always “ambiguous” (26). The first Julian West novel, though generally positive, ends on a note similar to Rabbi Schindler’s *Young West*: the future is so different and Julian is so much a product of his times that he is unhappy and alienated from the future utopian society. Though Reynolds’s later sequel modifies this ending somewhat by allowing West a happy ending, he still includes several alienated characters who are unhappy in utopia and who want it to change. Regardless of whether or not Reynolds saw his Julian West novels as statements of his ideal, he clearly recognized that no system could make everyone happy.

Reynolds further stated that his aim was not to promote any particular view of utopia or the future, but to help readers realize that (to use the title of one his novels) tomorrow might be different:

The task I have set myself, then, is not to point out a definite future, my own idea of Utopia, and the path to it, but to try and instill in my readers the understanding that a different society is possible and even desirable . . . Sometimes I deal with them sympathetically, sometimes the opposite, sometimes even in humor. (“Afterword” 55)

These comments are usually treated as a criticism of the science fiction genre as a whole, as it often imagines the future as a place either more or less like the present in socioeconomic terms (American science fiction assuming capitalism lives on forever, or Soviet science fiction acting as though the entire world will embrace communism) or else having degenerated to some previous society (such as feudalism or tribalism).⁷ However, it can also be seen as Reynolds’s critique of Bellamy (echoing critiques made in the nineteenth century), that *Looking Backward* felt like the nineteenth century American middle class made ubiquitous. Reynolds sympathizes with the impulse but feels the execution was too conservative. As Curtis C. Smith wrote in his summation of Reynolds’s literary legacy: “Where most science fiction writers have assumed that the future will be the same or similar to the present in its socioeconomic expectations, Reynolds’s only assumption is that tomorrow’s society will be difficult for us to imagine

⁷ Stableford makes many of these criticisms in his article on Reynolds as a way of emphasizing just how different Reynolds was from other popular science fiction writers of that era, and Reynolds echoes several of the same criticisms in his response to Stableford.

. . . What Reynolds has left behind is the idea that the future will deconstruct our planning for it” (103, 106).

Reynolds realizes, however, that even in this attempt he is likely to be far off the mark. His own version of *Looking Backward* begins with a quote from Arthur C. Clarke: “the most daring prophecies turn out to be laughably conservative” (7), and Reynolds continues this theme on the dedication page of his version of *Equality*: After dedicating the book to Clarke, he quotes Clarke again: “It is impossible to predict the future, and all attempts to do so in any detail appear ludicrous within a very few years” (dedication page to *Equality*). These ideas are a critique of the conservative nature of science fiction as a genre and of Bellamy’s utopia (which Reynolds is attempting to update), but they also serve as a warning to himself and to his readers: realize that these texts are likely to be just as inaccurate as Bellamy turned out to be. Bellamy may have predicted a few things (such as credit cards and satellite radio), but overall society does not resemble his year 2000. By including these quotations from Clarke, Reynolds is signaling that he does not expect his utopia to be any more accurate. The main difference is that Bellamy saw his vision as an accurate one, while Reynolds is not trying to persuade any one person to any one view. Instead, Reynolds is aiming to open his readers’ minds to many possibilities. His aims are rhetorical in nature but not necessarily aimed at a specific outcome. In this sense, he returns utopian fiction to the epideictic realm, aiming at improving his readers’ ability to imagine the future but without a specific deliberative agenda.

Following Kenneth Burke’s idea of rhetoric as identification, Reynolds wants his readers to identify with multiple possible futures, rather than be persuaded to endorse or embrace a specific prophecy. Most definitions of rhetoric have dwelt on the idea of

rhetoric as persuasion, of a rhetor aiming to move an audience to some specific action or belief. Kenneth Burke, though, argued that rhetoric also included “identification,” which covered a wide range of possibilities, “from the politician who, addressing an audience of farmers, says, ‘I was a farm boy myself,’ through the mysteries of social status, to the mystic’s devout identification with the source of all being” (*A Rhetoric of Motives*, xiv). Identification is a complex term for Burke, especially as it approaches the level of the mystic, but he argues that rhetoric encompasses attempts at identification in addition to persuasion. For Burke, identification is aimed at closing the gap between different people – we are separate and thus divided: “Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division” (22).

Though Reynolds’s purpose may not be to completely eliminate divisions, his visions of the future are ones where social and economic distinctions have become blurred or even erased. People identify with each other more even when they don’t agree. Reynolds apparently has the same goal in mind for his readers – he doesn’t care so much which vision of the future they embrace, but he hopes they embrace one that is better and less divided than the present. Reynolds does not necessarily believe in a “promised land,” but he writes about lands with more promise than the ones he sees in the present. Reynolds is clearly doing more than just writing entertaining tales – he has a rhetorical aim in mind. But that aim is not deliberative in nature. His rhetorical project fits better under Burke’s label of “identification” than under the usual definition of rhetoric as “persuasion.” Thus, Reynolds’s fiction is better considered as a rhetorical project rather than a thematic one. His works have different and sometimes contradictory themes, but he clearly has them all aimed at the same rhetorical goal.

One important question that affects the analysis of Reynolds's use of Bellamy is whether or not his Bellamy novels are set in the same fictional universe as his other semi-utopian "year 2000" novels such as *The Towers of Utopia* and *Police Patrol: 2000 A.D.* (most of which were published between 1973 and 1977, making the Julian West novels bookends to the series). Patricia Warrick groups them all together as part of a larger series, calling them "the largest number of novels" in the Reynolds corpus (138). Brian Stableford treats them more as variations on a theme, only asserting that *After Utopia* is "the world of *Looking Backward* half a century on and already decaying" (49), but referring to others in this series as merely "explor[ing] some of the ideas" used in *Looking Backward, From the Year 2000* while not necessarily sharing the same setting (45). Matthew Kapell treats them as one series, though he admits "there is enough differentiation in terminology to suggest that they might not all be taking place in the same 'future'" (204). However, Kapell still treats them as belonging to one series because "there is so very much in terms of socio-political theory that connects them" and "they are all essentially the same thematically" (204). At first glance, Kapell's claim appears to be the most correct, because while the year 2000 novels all start out with a basic premise of a future "utopian" America, they do not all have the same view of that future, nor do they always share the same vocabulary. While these novels may go different places and come to different conclusions, this is in line with Reynolds's own stated purpose to help his audience recognize various future possibilities rather than focus on the one true vision of the utopian Promised Land (as discussed above). With a few exceptions, the year 2000 books seem roughly split between those that deal with a government called "Meritocracy" (where intelligence determines who rules), People's

Capitalism (where all citizens are shareholders and receive a basic stipend), and a Bellamy-esque future where everyone is wealthy and there is plenty of money and goods to go around.⁸ However, I believe Kapell's claim is somewhat incorrect, in that he argues the books are "the same thematically." It's clear that they are not all the same thematically. I would modify this sentiment to argue (as I said above), that they are "essentially the same rhetorically" because, while his novels have some contradictory themes, Reynolds has the same rhetorical aim in mind. Here I will attempt to detail with why Reynolds's year 2000 books cannot be considered a unified fictional universe or even a unified thematic unit.

If we decide to treat Reynolds's year 2000 books as novels about different versions of the future, rather than books about different events within roughly the same time period, we run into a problem. Namely, that there are several indications in the text itself that Reynolds intended these novels to be part of an overall fictional universe. Though there are many discontinuities between the books, there are also many clear connections that go beyond just sharing similar economic situations and thematic elements. The Julian West books use the "new calendar" (NC) that starts with the year 2000 as year zero (the West books, despite their titles, take place in what we would consider 2002). *After Utopia* also uses this "new calendar" and takes place in the year 45 NC (or 2045 AD/CE from our perspective). The learning machines and educational stimulants from *Ability Quotient* appear in *Equality: In the Year 2000* and in *After*

⁸ Despite several differences between Reynolds's Julian West novel and his other books where "Meritocracy" is the official title of the government, when pressed to name the type of government in the year 2002, Leete uses the term "meritocracy" as a possible label; however, he also insists any possible label is inherently inaccurate (Reynolds, *Equality* 209).

Utopia, and the dream programmers from *Perchance to Dream* cure West's nightmares in *Equality*. However, these dream machines are a major cause of society's ills in *After Utopia* (something one character prophesied would happen in *Perchance to Dream*). The Julian West novels also share several terms and concepts with the other year 2000 novels. Among other items, there are university cities (gigantic high rise buildings dedicated to learning), academicians (a new degree beyond the Ph.D.), underground roads with automated cars, and an apparent obsession with constantly referencing Robert Oppenheimer's claim that human knowledge doubles every eight years.⁹

Other shared elements include some form of the "Guaranteed Annual Income," which appears under various other titles such as "Negative Income Tax" and "United States Basic." As Stableford says, "this kind of system appears in virtually all of Reynolds's stories about near-future America" (39). In addition, people usually live in high rise towers that allow for much of the earth's surface to be converted to parks and wilderness, though there are differences between the two: "the gigantic high-rise Demes of *The Towers of Utopia* becom[e] the University Cities of *Looking Backward*, although a decadent, sybarite lifestyle prevails in the former but not in the latter" (Smith 63).¹⁰ The "university cities" appear in *Commune 2000 A.D.*, *Perchance to Dream*, and *Ability Quotient*. The mobile communities/communes featured in *Rolltown* and *Commune 2000 A.D.* are mentioned in many of the other novels as well. Several novels feature the

⁹ For some examples, see *Looking Backward*, *From the Year 2000* page 11, *Equality: In the Year 2000* page 7, *Commune 2000 A.D.* page 77, *After Utopia* page 72, *Perchance to Dream* page 7, and *Ability Quotient* page 173.

¹⁰ One could argue that perhaps Julian West merely did not encounter the "decadent, sybarite lifestyle" because of his sheltered introduction into the future.

constant use of “wizard” and “funker” as slang terms, and everyone uses Bellamy-esque “credit cards.”

Additionally, nearly all of these works have a conflict known as “The Asian War” in their backstories. While this label, as these books appeared in the 1970s, might be seen as a reference to Vietnam,¹¹ the age of several of the characters who fought in this Asian War indicates that it took place sometime in the very late 1970s or early 1980s.¹² Reynolds’s novels are usually vague on what this War entailed, but it apparently helped in some way to bring about the future semi-utopian society. How society changed is also usually left unclear: the same critique David Pringle made of Reynolds’s *Looking Backward*, that utopia apparently “just happened” in such a short space of time (160),¹³ applies just as well to all of Reynolds’s year 2000 novels, as they all deal with the year 2000 (give or take a few years) as an “alleged utopia” (Reynolds, *Commune 2000 A.D.*

¹¹ The Vietnam War was occasionally referred to as “the Asian war” (though without the capital letter on “war”) in the media and popular press of the era.

¹² For example, in *The Towers of Utopia*, Bat Hardin is a veteran of this war, and he is described as being “in his late thirties” (4). Since *Towers* takes place in the year 2000 (if the cover is accurate) or sometime soon after (as the chronology between the books would require), he could not have served in Vietnam. Assuming an age of 39 and the year 2000, the earliest he would have been 17 was around 1978. Additionally, one character in *Police Patrol: 2000 A.D.* refers to the Asian war as “more than 20 years” ago (172). This indicates that the “Asian War” (even if we assume Reynolds plays fast and loose with his chronology in the same way he does with his terminology) took place sometime after the publication of Reynolds novels (in the middle 1970s), rather than before. As Julian West refers to his experiences in the Vietnam War as “the Asian War” (Reynolds, *Looking Backward* 103) and several of the year 2000 novels were written and/or published before 1975, it may be that Reynolds extrapolated that the conflict would continue and perhaps expand in scope. However, this does not explain why books published after 1975 would continue to reference the Asian War as though it had only recently ended before the year 2000, but it may be that Reynolds’s apparent desire to have main characters with military backgrounds required that he keep some sort of recent military conflict in his fictional history. Thus, he likely kept “the Asian War” in the backstory so he could have an excuse for his protagonists’ combat experience. The vague references (except in the West novels) and unclear chronology can be seen as Reynolds’s way of literary bet hedging in case real history diverged from his fictional one (as it did). The later West book, *Equality, In the Year 2000*, abandons the term “Asian War” in favor of “the Vietnam War” (35), though other year 2000 novels published the same year use the term “the Asian War.” This likely indicates Reynolds saw the inconsistency and, at the very least, attempted to correct for it in *Equality*.

32). The list of similarities could go on; Reynolds was clearly exploring many fictional variations on a theme, even if he did not intend them all to be part of a single shared universe.¹⁴

The biggest obstacle, however, to claiming that Reynolds's "year 2000" novels do not take place in the same fictional universe (regardless of other similarities and differences) is that several of his books share the same characters, even when those books use widely different terminology. Bat Hardin is the most obvious example.¹⁵ He appears in three novels, and each one uses different terms to describe some concepts shared between books, while other terms stay the same. The first Hardin book (*Commune 2000 A.D.*) appears to take place in the Bellamy-esque world, but the second and third ones (*The Towers of Utopia* and *Rolltown*) take place in the Meritocracy.

Some terms do not change, such as the use of "Common Europe" to refer to the new European nation-state (or economic system like the European Union – Reynolds does not develop the idea in detail), but overall the difference in terminology in the different Hardin books is quite striking. For example, in *Commune 2000 A.D.* the income everyone receives is called the "Universal Guaranteed Income" (UGI), yet in *The Towers*

¹³ Also echoed by Brain Stableford: "One of the most striking weaknesses of both Bellamy's and Reynolds's utopian novels is their vagueness in drawing a historical connection between future and present" (50).

¹⁴ Though Stableford feels that Reynolds risked "perpetual self-cannibalism" (53) with his constant re-usage of various motifs and concepts.

¹⁵ There are other characters, such as Rex Bader and Ilya Simonov. However, the novels that feature these two seem quite distinct from the other year 2000 books despite some shared terminology and concepts. Since none of the critics who write on Reynolds agree on exactly which books belong in the year 2000 group (though they all agree that there is a year 2000 group), I have taken a "lowest common denominator" approach and focused on the books that nearly all the critics agree belong, leaving out ones that don't quite fit or appear to be part of another series with a different focus. For example, a reference to "satellite city" in Reynolds's *Looking Backward* is clearly a reference to the Rex Bader novel *Satellite City* (204). However, as the Rex Bader books deal with other issues besides economic equality and contain many of

of *Utopia* everyone refers to it as “Negative Income Tax” (NIT), though Reynolds appears to gloss over this discrepancy with a comment made in passing: “Oh, they had other names for it” (*Towers of Utopia* 16). However, this comment makes little sense, as it seems unlikely that such a widespread term, which is on everyone’s lips in both books, would undergo such a drastic change within such a short time period.¹⁶ In addition, the UGI and the NIT are vastly different types of income. The differences between the UGI and the NIT make it appear that the entire society has radically changed almost overnight. The feel of America in *Commune 2000 A.D.* is much more socialistic, while *Rolltown* and *The Towers of Utopia* assume a more capitalistic background. In *Commune 2000 A.D.*, all citizens have the same income, and while there are various informal and formal barter systems, there is no profit. In *Rolltown* and *Towers*, however, everyone is guaranteed a minimum income, and they are free to make extra profit on top of that in various ways.

Towers has bureaucratic corporations that make a profit by renting out rooms in the titular towers, whereas *Commune 2000 A.D.* is much more collectivist, with no corporations other than the government. In *Rolltown*, “only the truly wealthy can afford [servants]” (51), and some people are so rich they “pay enough taxes to support” the rest of the nation (48); others clandestinely “work . . . on the side to augment their [income]” (51). *Commune 2000 A.D.* doesn’t discuss taxes, but instead of the stipend-like “Negative Income Tax” of the two other Hardin books, the “Universal Guaranteed Income” is “an abundance for all” where “no one bothered to surpass his neighbor’s

their own inconsistencies and discontinuities, I’ve decided to omit them; they belong to a separate thematic/fictional/rhetorical unit.

¹⁶ If the titles and the cover of the books are to be believed, all three books took place in the year 2000. While possible, this strains credulity.

possessions” (41) because everyone is already well-off. There are no jobs “on the side” where extra income can be earned. In *Commune*, unused income is returned to the state – yet in *Towers*, citizens can save unused NIT over a long period of time. In *Commune 2000 A.D.*, while rank may have its privileges, being rich is a thing of the past (or more accurately, everyone is rich). In the other Hardin novels, there are clear divides between the rich and those who only take NIT. One character in *Rolltown* even refers to the NIT as “poverty level, subsistence level income” (106), and while Hardin treats this statement as an exaggeration, he does not refute the claim.

Another discontinuity between the books is the use of AQ (or “Ability Quotient”) versus IQ (or “Intelligence Quotient”). Going by internal chronology, rather than the order in which the books were written or published,¹⁷ *Commune 2000 A.D.* features a lengthy discussion on why IQ was abandoned in favor of (or absorbed into) the more comprehensive and accurate AQ. Citizens’ AQ determines what jobs they are eligible for and receive. However, in *Rolltown*, part of Hardin’s personal story arc revolves around how IQ determines job status, since his IQ was too low to get a job (though this is later discovered to be false, prompting his move to leave the commune and join the Meritocracy back in the USA); the AQ is never mentioned.

Also, though it is possible to read Hardin’s complaints in *Rolltown* about the Meritocracy as the fulfillment of the elite conspiracy discovered by Theodore Swain at the end of *Commune 2000 A.D.*, Hardin and the other characters act and talk as though

¹⁷ *Rolltown* was published after *Commune 2000 A.D.* and *The Towers of Utopia* though it clearly takes place between the two novels. In *Commune 2000 A.D.* the mobile commune of New Woodstock is planning to make the trip to Mexico that occurs in *Rolltown*, and *Towers* refers to Hardin’s past as a volunteer police officer in a mobile commune. According to Curtis C. Smith, *Rolltown* was written several years before the other two, though it underwent some revision before being published.

the Meritocracy and the restriction of voting to ten percent of the population has been an accomplished fact for years, rather than something relatively new. Also, in *Commune 2000 A.D.*, Swain discovers that there is a counter-conspiracy behind the communes, one aimed at forestalling the elites' takeover of the government. Hardin is apparently part of this conspiracy – signaled by his use of the code words “the spirit of Robert Owen still lives” (53) – yet this communal counter-conspiracy is never mentioned again (Swain also never appears again, despite apparently joining New Woodstock at the end of *Commune 2000 A.D.*). In *Rolltown*, Hardin discovers a radical dissenter within the mobile community, but even though this dissenter claims to be part of a small underground movement, Hardin shows no indication that he is part of the communal counter-conspiracy that he belonged to in the earlier novel. In fact, he argues that any changes should “be made from the inside” rather than from outside, underground groups (*Rolltown* 165).

These problems indicate that either we are dealing with three different Bat Hardins (unlikely as each novel assumes the same basic backstory for Hardin), that the year 2000 society undergoes radical changes in terminology and government within an extremely short amount of time (which seems more chaotic than the uber-efficient bureaucracy Reynolds assumes in each book), or that Reynolds was not very careful about his terminology from book to book. As his novels were often written (or revised) in haste, and the underlying concepts are similar, the last option seems the most likely. If that is the case, then the differences in terminology and usage do not necessarily indicate that these novels take place in different futures. They could all very well take place in the same future – Reynolds, under deadlines and the need to sell books to make a living, may

not have been particularly concerned with making sure that Bat Hardin (or his other characters) inhabited consistent fictional universes.¹⁸

Additionally, Reynolds constantly recycled very specific character types (rather than just stereotypes or stock characters), such as “the woman in the futuristic commune who does not receive money from the government because her parents weren’t citizens.” In *Commune 2000 A.D.*, the character Sue Benny is the daughter of immigrants, but she is ineligible for the UGI because her parents “didn’t bother to become citizens,” her father lost all their money because he was ignorant of finance, and since “everybody in the world . . . would have liked to become an American citizen . . . the government cracked down. No more new citizens” (65). She gets by because the citizens of the New Woodstock commune share their largesse (since everyone has more than enough money thanks to UGI) and buy her whatever she needs whenever she needs it. *Rolltown* has a character, Diana Sward, with almost the same backstory. Her mother immigrated to the USA but never bothered to become a citizen, lost all her money because of financial ignorance, and then the government stopped allowing new citizens with the advent of NIT (*Rolltown* 20). She gets by because the people of New Woodstock help her out where they can. In *Commune 2000 A.D.*, Hardin is apparently aware of this type of set-up, but in *Rolltown*, he needs to have Sward explain it to him.

This analysis is not intended to critique Reynolds for sloppy writing or mere hackwork, though these are criticisms that could be aimed at him (and have). Reynolds

¹⁸ This is not an uncommon occurrence even with the most careful crafters in science fiction. Ursula K. LeGuin has remarked that her Hanish novels sometimes have unintended but rather glaring inconsistencies. Despite that, she still intends them all to take place in the same fictional universe. Mack Reynolds shows few signs of being as careful an author as LeGuin, though.

wrote novels in a hurry, revised them in a hurry (and only when required by the publisher), and likely spent little time making sure each of his books agreed in every detail with all of his other books. The point of detailing these discontinuities and discrepancies is to show the futility of claiming either 1.) that Reynolds had a consistent vision of the future that he intended to represent his one true view of utopia or 2.) that he saw each book as only thematically related to the others and thus they cannot in any way be considered part of the same fictional universe. The critics who have dealt with Reynolds often treat the books as though a clear progression can be found: Reynolds, at first, felt that utopia was possible but eventually became more skeptical, realizing it was not workable. But this does not fit with the novels or with Reynolds's own statements concerning his reasons for writing. As I argued above, Reynolds aims were more rhetorical than literary; to him fiction was the means but not the end. The end was rhetorical identification with many possible futures. In his novels continuity is lacking and themes contradict; however, the rhetorical intention always stays the same.

Thus, though Reynolds' other "year 2000" novels may not take place in the exact same fictional universe, dividing them into distinct thematic universes would likely create too much separation between the texts. Instead, they could be said to share the same *rhetorical* universe, using many of the same basic concepts and motifs building on the promise (or threat) inherent in Leete's constant declaration that there is no such thing as utopia, and that the perfect society can never exist. Reynolds's characters, ideas and motifs crossed over each novel in a somewhat haphazard fashion, but his central idea is always to help his readers identify with various possible futures. Analyzed from this angle, Bat Hardin's sojourn as a character in two or three different versions of the same

future makes him something of a proxy for Reynolds's readers. Reynolds's readers can also, for the duration of a paperback novel, exist in these same universes. They can react to each fictional world however they wish, taking away what they like and rejecting what they don't. However, Reynolds wants them to learn something. The novels don't have to be consistent, because if the reader is always presented with the same world with the same themes every time, then they cannot learn to identify with a wide variety of possible futures. Reynolds is not specifically concerned about which world his readers identify with or whether they prefer UGI to NIT or Universal Basic. What matters is that we, as Reynolds's audience, realize that we could end up in any of those future worlds (in the same way that Hardin finds himself in different futures).

It seems clear, however, that Reynolds (despite some of his protests to the contrary) did see his "Bellamy books" as different from his other year 2000 novels. None of his other works contain the extensive quotations, a foreword by the author, or various other bits of "paratext" that frame and give meaning to the main text of the story; Reynolds treats his Julian West novels differently. Both *Looking Backward, From the Year 2000* and *Equality: In the Year 2000* have dedications (the first to Bellamy and the second to Arthur C. Clarke), while most of his other novels do not have any dedications at all. Each chapter of his West books starts with an illustrative quote that highlights the themes of the work as well as revealing the length and breadth of Reynolds's reading and research. These two novels have a more polished feel and a slightly more literary sensibility, whereas many of the other year 2000 novels have a rough, hurried feel. Unlike the inconsistent themes and unexplained character motivations of *Rolltown* or the

pervasive sex of *Commune 2000 A.D.*, his Bellamy books feel more restrained, focused, and unified.

Rather than begin at the beginning as Bellamy did, Mack Reynolds starts his version of Bellamy's *Looking Backward* in the future. While Bellamy provided Reynolds with "the basic idea" (5), and he "used various of [Bellamy's] passages all but verbatim, both from *Looking Backward* and its little known sequel, *Equality*" (4), he mostly followed the same format as Bellamy, though Reynolds' introduction addresses a contemporary audience and functions as an acknowledgements section.

Reynolds begins chapter one in the future, entering the middle of a conversation between "Leete" and "Julian West" (9). The entire point of the first chapter is to justify Reynolds's use of the year 2000 for utopia, despite 2000 being less than three decades away for his readers. Bellamy himself originally felt that 2000 was too soon – "ten centuries at first seemed to me none too much to allow for the evolution of anything like an ideal society" (Bellamy, *Speaks Again!* 203), and he initially intended for his utopia to take place in the year 3000. However, he changed it to 2000 when his "belief as to the part which the National organization of industry [will] play in bringing the good time coming" convinced him that "by the year 2000 the order of things we look forward to will already have become an exceedingly old story" (Bellamy, *Speaks Again!* 203). Reynolds, on the other hand, seemed to feel the year 2000 was far enough away to accommodate massive societal changes.

Therefore, Leete's dialogue with West in Reynolds' first chapter must do more than convince West: it must convince the reader that three decades (give or take a few years) is more than enough time to have a radical change in society. As the first chapter

makes its case that thirty years is plenty of time for utopia due to the rapid pace of scientific discovery, the second chapter reinforces this point by having West's 1970s era doctor discuss how "perhaps in five years, more likely ten, medical science will have arrived at the point" where it can do something about West's condition (14). His doctor emphasizes that "the field of organ transplant is in its infancy. However, amazing progress is already being made" (13 – 14). When West goes looking for help elsewhere, Doctor Pillsbury initially refuses to help because "the science . . . is in its absolute infancy" (19). While these comments do not directly reference utopia making technology, it supports Leete's contention in chapter one that utopia arrived in thirty years because of radical breakthroughs in technology:

About the year 1950 Dr. Robert Oppenheimer pointed out that human knowledge was doubling every eight years. Since that time . . . progress has accelerated . . . One scien[c]e will forge ahead dramatically under the influence of several new breakthroughs . . . Each discovery made leads for two or more others. Were it not for the International Computer Data Banks, no man could begin to keep up. (11)

Julian West's problem, then, is that in his past, science was not progressing fast enough to save him, but now it has progressed so fast that he cannot possibly begin to catch up. Whereas during his life, science seemed doomed to a crawl, during his hibernation it began to sprint.

The amount of progress that has been made is also emphasized by West's thematically convenient dreams. In the original *Looking Backward*, West only returns to the past in his dreams once; Reynolds's West is plagued by nightmares of the past –

nightmares which always emphasize certain themes. A discussion of the liberated sexuality of the future and of why prostitution no longer exists is accompanied by West dreaming of the night he visited a prostitute and afterwards overheard (but did not respond to) the sexual assault and murder of a woman (most likely a reference to Kitty Genovese). West also dreams of his own parents' infidelity and of their cruelty to their servants (by firing them on a whim without care to how they would support their families) at the same time as discussions on why marriage has gone out of fashion and the benefits of making everyone financially independent. These dreams also add more flavor to the narrative, avoiding the tedium that a straightforward Bellamy-esque narrative of back and forth dialogue might induce in Reynolds's primary audience. West's dreams deal with his experiences in the Vietnam War as well as with other tense or dangerous moments in his life. Each dream serves as something of a mini-narrative embedded in the larger tale, adding bits of action and suspense in the midst of the Leete family detailing the wonders of twenty-first century society. David Pringle attributes these juxtapositions to Reynolds's attempt to "reconcile his political beliefs with [pulp]-type s[cience]f[iction]" and further argues that "it is that unholy mixture which makes [Reynolds's *Looking Backward*] fascinating" (160).

Pringle's statement, however, applies to many of Reynolds's novels. Nearly all of the year 2000 books feature extensive discussion about the nature of the future interspersed with occasional bursts of action. *Rolltown*, for example, starts with a bar fight and ends with a shootout in the Mexican desert, but most of the middle of the novel is taken up with ruminations and reflections on the NIT and its good and bad points. *Commune 2000 A.D.* contains hints of a conspiracy along with the protagonist's uncanny

ability to find women willing to engage in sexual intercourse no matter where he goes, but the bulk of the narrative consists of the leaders or members of the various communes discussing their philosophies or the nature of the government.

This approach is part and parcel of Reynolds's writing. What makes his West novels different is that West's dreams (where most of the "action" takes place even though most of the narrative occurs in the waking world) are thematically significant. In *Ability Quotient*, the kidnapping and guns subplots read more like a way to keep the reader interested, to add more suspense to what otherwise would be a narrative about college students studying (albeit with the help of new technology that allows them to learn at a much faster rate). In the West novels, the dreams add action, suspense, and thematic depth; they further Reynolds' rhetorical point rather than dilute it. Though all of his year 2000 novels have the same rhetorical aim, only his West novels seem thematically unified. Everything in them appears aimed at proving the point rather than merely making the message easier to accept. That said the two West novels are not a thematic whole when taken together. Each one, individually, is more thematically unified than any other Reynolds novel, but there are differences between the two – differences that even Reynolds acknowledged in his introduction to his version of *Equality*.

Equality: In the Year 2000, while maintaining a more hopeful outlook than his other "year 2000" novels, still acknowledges that there can be some discontent in such a world, even if that discontent is largely confined to those who belong to the world of thirty years ago (thus giving new meaning to the phrase "never trust anyone over thirty"). Stableford's overview of Reynolds's life and work treats these works as though they are

in conversation with each other and with Reynolds himself, as Reynolds worked out his own philosophy.¹⁹

There *is* some kind of additional commitment in Reynolds' philosophy of progress, because there has to be in order to render his speculations intelligible, but it remains both covert and uncertain. He cannot spell it out, it seems, because he is himself unsure of what it amounts to. It is this deficiency that represents the real failure of *Looking Backward from the Year 2000* and its sequel, and not the fact that it fails to convince as an image of our future. (Stableford 52; emphasis in original)

Stableford is too harsh. Reynolds is not trying to “convince” his readers of any specific “image of the future.” If you take all of his year 2000 novels as a set, there are two consistent ideas: Things do not have to be perfect in order to be better than our current system, and no system can satisfy everyone. The argument is, in Reynolds's own words, that “a different society is possible and even desirable” (“Afterword” 55). Reynolds's fiction explores variations on possible future societies, not in an effort to convince his audience of this or that specific utopia, but to see that “utopia is not what has been achieved, but the goal” (Kapell 205). This claim is most blatantly stated through Leete's constant insistence to West that “there is no such thing as Utopia, Julian. It's an unattainable goal. It recedes as you approach it . . . As each problem is solved, new ones are manifested” (Reynolds, *Looking Backward* 48). Though the future

¹⁹ Despite Stableford's concerns with Reynolds's “self cannibalism” (discussed above), Reynolds was in conversation with more people than himself and Bellamy. His introduction to *Equality: In the Year 2000* indicates he was also, through letters, in conversation with various fans and critics and that this dialogue prompted him to write more on these themes “in defense” (Reynolds, *Equality* ii).

portrayed in the Julian West novels is relatively problem free, the other year 2000 novels illustrate what those new problems could be. But despite those problems the enduring message is that the future can be better – even significantly better – than the present. Reynolds's *Equality* moves in that direction by acknowledging that there can be discontented malcontents. *After Utopia* even endorses the solution envisioned by the malcontents from *Equality* (a fake alien threat will force humanity to grow and progress), though the problems in *After Utopia* are not the same problems discussed in *Equality*.

In *Equality*, the dissatisfied malcontents want things to return to the past – religion, sexual abstinence as the expected norm, a clear divide between rich and poor, etc. They are upset because of the equality of it all. In *After Utopia*, the dissatisfied revolutionaries are more upset because a large swath of society has become addicted to the dream machines, and with no new frontiers to conquer (the space program has been abandoned), there are no incentives or reasons for anyone to progress. Thus, *After Utopia* deals with new problems manifested by society's progress, showing that progress is not, in and of itself, always a desirable thing (though the dream machine did have some medical application, as it cured West of his constant nightmares). The dissatisfied people West meets in *Equality* prefer the old problems and cannot cope with the new problems. They hate leisure, crave the prestige that comes with riches and power, and enjoy violence.

As *After Utopia* suggests that a society based around leisure may need a fabricated alien threat to correct its problems, Reynolds condemns West's malcontent acquaintances not for their solution but for what their solution means to accomplish. The future society is not perfect, but it is better; a return to the old ways is undesirable. The

revolutionary group in *After Utopia* wants to progress, not regress. Reynolds prefers the problems of the future to the problems of the past. As discussed above, he wants his readers to see possible futures as desirable, regardless of whatever problems they may have. These problems can be fixed – but he wants to abandon the problems of the past. The revolutionaries of *Equality* have a correct solution, but rather than enter a better future, they wish to return to the even worse (in Reynolds’s view) past.

In many ways, *After Utopia* serves as a better sequel to *Looking Backward, From the Year 2000* than *Equality: In the Year 2000* does. It definitely serves as a literary foil, following the same basic initial set-up, with a twentieth century man (Tracy Cogswell) entering suspended animation only to wake up in a semi-utopian future. Cogswell receives many of the same explanations as West does, but he also finds a society that has both progressed and regressed. West is at first alienated from the future, but he finally becomes reconciled to it. Cogswell, on the other hand, must save it from itself. West is given the opportunity to fake an alien threat, but turns it down. Cogswell uses that same threat to move the future out of its lethargy. The main difference is that in West’s tale, the ones wishing for change belong to the past and are out of place. In *After Utopia*, the revolutionaries are fully a part of the future, though they feel they need to use someone from the past to accomplish their goals.

In the West novels, the narrative has no doubts about the fairness and correctness of the utopian system. West’s critiques are vapid and outdated, and the few people who are discontented are treated as out of touch remnants of the old regime. West realizes that his twentieth century thinking is backward and that he is mentally unfit for the new society because of his background.

If the other “year 2000” novels are allowed into the same continuity as the West novels, then all of West’s complaints become valid. Even if the other tales are variations on a theme that do not share the same timeline, then (at the very least) West’s complaints have some validity and thus are possibly correct critiques. West therefore becomes too accepting of the explanations given, too quick to embrace utopia, and too willing to defend a system that may very well have deep and abiding flaws, even if it is better than the society he left behind (even the “rebels” West encounters quote Arthur C. Clarke). When taken as merely part of Reynolds’s overall rhetorical project, the other year 2000 books indicate that West could have been too trusting, and if he was, here’s what the future would be like. But within the West books themselves, it is clear West has not been hoodwinked or fed partial information.

If you take the entire year 2000 books as one unit, then Mack Reynolds has single-handedly recreated the literary debate that I discussed in chapter three. His Julian West novels are clear imitations of Bellamy, while his other “year 2000” novels, whether he was aware of it or not, enact the same debates as the texts discussed in this study. The disaffected counter-revolutionaries of *One of “Berrian’s” Novels* can be found in Reynolds’s *Equality*; the dangerous idleness warned against in *Looking Within* or *Looking Backward and What I Saw* is echoed in *After Utopia*; and the potential for corruption in the bureaucracy discussed in *Mr. East’s Experience in Mr. Bellamy’s World* and *Looking Within* are acknowledged in *Commune 2000 A.D.* and *The Towers of Utopia*. There are many others that could be listed. Though it’s unlikely that Reynolds was aware of or had read most of these utopian texts, the literary conversation among his own works clearly reenacts some of the same ideas and tropes. Reynolds anticipated the objections

to his utopias, and rather than defend his works against them, used those objections as creative fuel for creating other futures.

Whither Bellamy?

Jonah Goldberg, Mack Reynolds, and Herbert and Mary Knapp are not the only authors to make use of Bellamy for rhetorical or literary purposes, though they are the most prominent. Bellamy has also functioned as a way to give some measure of erudition to books that might otherwise be dismissed as fringe or low culture. Robert H. Rimmer's erotic utopian novel *Love Me Tomorrow* (originally published in 1978) was, according to the author (in an introduction to a reprint edition), "originally titled *Looking Backward II*" (i), though it was changed when the publishers insisted that the "original title wouldn't help the sale" (ii). The phrase "Looking Backward" still appears in the dedication, and one of the main characters (a visionary with the on-the-nose name of "Newton Morrow") claims to be the reincarnation of Bellamy. Newton Morrow also writes a book called *Looking Backward II* and later becomes a popular political figure. His popularity causes Bellamy's books to become best-sellers as well, and all this propels Mr. Morrow to a win in the presidential election, after which he proposes a new Constitution to create an updated Bellamy-esque society. Though the book does spend some time detailing Newton's economic plan,²⁰ the main focus of the text is on discussions and descriptions of the novel sexual arrangements in the future, including a religion call "Unilove" built around worship that includes live performances of sexual

²⁰ A footnote does tell the reader that they can "skip to page 265" (233) if they don't want to read the main details. Rimmer claims this was added at the insistence of his publisher who felt the economic treatise might bore readers (ii).

acts. Though Rimmer's tale condemns pornography as loveless and empty, the text is full of explicit sex with multiple partners, which is apparently deemed acceptable because the promiscuous sex is loving in nature.

The use of Bellamy gives the text a slightly more high-brow and serious tone than it might otherwise have. Bellamy, of course, did not directly deal with matters of sexual intercourse in *Looking Backward*. Without Bellamy, Rimmer's novel would not be much more than another erotic novel with a slight science fiction theme, aimed solely at the type of audience mainly erotic fiction is aimed at. John Stark Bellamy II, a great grandson of Edward Bellamy, accurately summarized Rimmer's novel this way:

My favorite *Looking Backward* sequel is none of [the] nineteenth century efforts. No, my favorite *Looking Backward* offshoot will always be *Love Me Tomorrow* [. . .] Within its seething, pulsating pages, Edward Bellamy is reincarnated in the late twentieth century as a man named Newton Morrow [. . .] Morrow, it develops, is intent on setting up a socialistic paradise in the United States, based on a combination of Edward Bellamy's economic ideas . . . and some rather lurid notions of free love. Morrow/Bellamy is abetted in his noble crusade by a pornographic film star named Christina North [. . .] Sad to say, Morrow/Bellamy is murdered at the end of the book and his followers are left to carry on his lubricious dreams . . . but not before the reader has waded through multiple pornographic episodes [. . .] the most memorable of which involves Christina and her son re-enacting the Oedipus myth. What makes this book truly outré is that whole chunks of Edward Bellamy's political

philosophizing are interlarded into Rimmer's amazing book as pillow talk during many of the multiple sex episodes [. . .] *Love Me Tomorrow*, for example, is probably the only pornographic novel I've ever seen that has a lengthy, annotated bibliography. (332 – 333)

The wry amusement of Bellamy's descendent is easy to understand, as the inclusion of Bellamy and an annotated bibliography make Rimmer's effort an attempt to do more than just a run of the mill erotic novel. Bellamy adds a little more ethos to what otherwise might be written off as a low-brow piece of pornography.

However, there is a clear difference between Rimmer (where sex is the focus) and an author like Mack Reynolds. Reynolds included sex in his novels, and in his Julian West books he briefly discusses how, at the age of fourteen, citizens are eligible to receive lessons from older "sex tutors" that teach them all the best techniques to please themselves and their partners. Overall, Reynolds's vision of the future is almost as full of "free love" as Rimmer's vision. However, Reynolds never makes sex the main focus. Not all of his novels have sex scenes, and the few that do are hardly explicit; usually, the sex is quickly passed over in order to get back to the narrative. With Rimmer, sex *is* the narrative, and as Bellamy's great grandson stated, the economics is just "pillow talk." Even with a main character who claims to be Bellamy's reincarnation, Rimmer's effort comes across as a rather disjointed and odd pairing of high-brow economics and low-brow explicit sex. Despite being both, it never quite averages out into middle brow reading, as the constant (except for the few pages mentioned above that the reader is told they can skip over) explicit sex renders the story a blur of tangled, throbbing body parts.

Rimmer is not the only recent author to use the idea of Bellamy being reincarnated. As reincarnation was implied in Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, it seems inevitable that later authors would pick up on the idea. Besides Rimmer, reincarnation also appears in the self-published (in 1997) work *Edward Bellamy Writes Again* (the title is clearly meant to parallel the posthumous collection of essays *Edward Bellamy Speaks Again!*). Here the author (Joseph R. Myers) claims to be the reincarnation of Bellamy, and he uses this claim to spin a tale about a future utopia built on the prophecies of Edgar Cayce (and that freely mixes Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist theology) rather than the ideas of Bellamy. Theologically, I am unable to accurately judge Myers's claim to be Bellamy reincarnated, but his example shows that Bellamy continues to inspire and motivate writers and thinkers from all walks of life.

As I said in the first chapter, despite being somewhat outside contemporary public discourse, Bellamy still has the power to provoke. Reynolds, Rimmer, Myers, and the other authors discussed above all show that Bellamy still serves a function as a valuable and necessary rhetorical trope. This does not mean that Bellamy is nothing more than a trope, nor that as a trope he is interchangeable with other historical figures regularly invoked in similar ways. The very nature of how these writers have used Bellamy indicates that no other figure will quite do, regardless of whether they wish to attack, defend, or modify his ideas.

Afterword

I do not claim to have discovered the key to all utopian mythologies (or even the key to just the mythology of nineteenth century utopias). Nor do I wish to imply that utopian fiction take a preeminent place within the canon of the history of rhetorical practice. Instead, I hope (somewhat Janus-like) to add a new, frequently overlooked perspective to both the history of rhetoric and the study of utopian fiction.

By its very nature, utopian fiction usually has deliberative aims, despite taking an epideictic form. Though Socrates and Thomas More may have been playing more with thought experiments and satire than with actual political proposals, most utopian writers take their utopian worlds seriously; even anti-utopian or dystopian writers take their work seriously. George Orwell may not have wished for Ingsoc to actually occur, but he clearly hoped that his novel would potentially prevent something like Airstrip One from coming into being.

For whatever reason, many writers (and other artists) have, over the centuries, found utopian writing to be a very effective means of persuasion. As these Utopian novels, essays, plays, films, etc. were presented to the public, the artists clearly hoped to do more than just entertain or improve the moral sense of their audiences. As rhetoric deals with argumentation and as utopian fiction has been a very influential form of deliberative argumentation, I am arguing that it deserves more attention than it has received in the field of rhetoric. I am also arguing that utopian scholars could gain more insight and new ways to approach their field if they made use of rhetorical theory.

I do not claim that rhetorical theory should be the dominant mode of study for utopian scholars or that discussions of Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln, and Frederick

Douglass be replaced by analysis of Edward Bellamy, Charles Fourier, and Mack Reynolds. However, I do believe that it would be beneficial to spend some time acknowledging that much deliberative rhetorical work went on in areas and venues that are generally relegated to the realms of *belles lettres* and epideictic rhetoric.

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Vita

Ivan Wolfe was raised in Homer, Alaska and attended high school there. After graduating, he attended Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho and earned an Associates of Arts and Sciences degree in 1997. He then attended Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, earning a BA in 2000 and an MA in English in 2003. In 2003, he began attending graduate school at the University of Texas – Austin. He has taught college writing for almost 10 years, and his most recent publications include two essays in the collection *Battlestar Galactica and Philosophy* from Open Court.

Permanent address: 5007 Clover Lane, Homer, Alaska 99603

This dissertation was typed by the author.