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Conclusion

In short, *Looking Backward* can be considered as a monologic novel in which the divergent voices of trusts and labor representatives are synthesized in the writer's authoritative voice allowing no contending voices to be heard. It claims a position of centrality to learned elites whose voices were to become, locally and globally, increasingly influential considering the central function that communications and information were to acquire in the modern age. Like Plato's *Republic* its welfare and order depend on the knowledge, wisdom and ascetic discipline of a ruling caste committed to the happiness of the social subjects. However, unlike their Greek precursors, the modern rulers do not depend on the labor of a slave caste. This appropriation by the intelligentsia of workers' suffering and the rulers' fears to construct a new order in which they hold a central position may betray a quest for social prestige and lust for power. It seems close to the platonic republican ideal in which philanthropic benevolent king philosophers assume ruling functions.

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nature of that society in terms of the relationship between its culture and its power structures' (Peyser, 1998: iii). He goes on to explain that as a cultural construct, society is made up of 'fictive foundations [an ideology] that sustain an order' (ibid). The question here is whether societies thus constructed and ideologically sustained could alter the structure of the existing system, and establish new relations between its component parts by setting up new imaginary foundations. The answer to such a question is positive if it is looked at in the light of the history of social formations. Bellamy along with other reformers seems to have taken cue from that history in their attempt to set up a new social order. By drawing upon the most salient elements of late Nineteenth-century U.S. culture, Bellamy succeeded in giving shape to that society of millions of well-disciplined workers that most reform-minded intellectuals in the industrial world dreamed of but could not as clearly articulate.

Despite the numerous critiques which targeted it especially from the advocates of proletarian revolutionary doctrine probably frustrated at having been denied their proletarian revolution, Bellamy's novel had the merit not only to stir debate about the numerous flaws of industrialism and laissez-faire capitalism, but also political and social action towards change. The welfare and social measures underlying Roosevelt's New Deal three decades later when the Great Depression had reached its apex owed an undeniable debt to Bellamy's ideas. What is debatable is the artificial, mechanical aspect of life in his utopia, in which the industrial and commercial systems function with the precision of a machine, and which prefigure modern man's subjection to the productive and consumerist logic of the new society. Equally questionable is the militaristic logic of the new society which, as later developments would show, contained the seeds of fascism and totalitarianism.

stable, and above all, a society that would serve as “the vanguard to the nations of the world”.

From Nationalism to Globalism

Further evidence of the growing influence of the intelligentsia is the commitment of Bellamy and his Nationalist Clubs to function ‘as the ideological spearheads of the Populist Party’ in its campaign against the two traditional parties, and the inclusion by the Democratic Party of planks contained in the Populist platform in its programs for the 1896 presidential elections. Bellamy goes further in tickling American national pride and its burgeoning globalist ambitions by presenting his utopian model of society as one that has already impregnated the world. To a question by Julian west about the state of the Old World, Dr Leete informs him that the great nations of Europe, as well as Australia, Mexico, and parts of South America, are now organized industrially, like The United States which was the pioneer of the evolution. The peaceful relations of these nations are assured by loose form of federal union of worldwide extent. An international council regulates the mutual intercourse and commerce of the members of the union and their joint policy toward the more backward races, which are gradually educated up to civilized institutions (Bellamy, 1888: 184).

This international council is set mostly to facilitate free access to all sorts of resources and markets worldwide, and insure fair commercial practices; already hinting at the defunct League of Nations instituted after WWI, and the United Nations with its satellite organizations set up after the Second World War such as the GATT, the WTO, and the IMF as instruments of international economic and financial intercourse and ‘world governance’. However, this global federal system should in the future evolve into a single global body in much the same way as progress had made tribes and small kingdoms into nations. ‘You must understand’, Dr Leete argues, ‘that we all look forward to an eventual unification of the world as one nation. That, no doubt, will be the ultimate form of society, and will realize certain economic advantages over the present federal system of autonomous nations’(ibid: 186).

David Ross’s claim that ‘Society is after all a cultural construct’ is probably close to the truth. In his introduction to Thomas Peyser’s *Utopia and Metropolis*, Ross uses the metaphor of society as a ‘text, a historical human construct that can therefore be deciphered and help to penetrate the

proletarian revolution' (Baumont 2005). The publication of the novel was immediately received as the bible of the reformers and Bellamy found himself involved in politics. Demands for the constitution of Nationalist organization emanated mostly from intellectuals and retired officers of the Army of the Union. Bellamy in his answers insisted on the leading role for the learned classes. In a letter to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, dated December 28, 1889, he insists that the change [should be] led and guided by the natural leaders of the community, [not] left to the demagogues [adding that] it was the peculiar felicity if our countrymen in their revolt of 1776, that their natural leaders, the men of education and position, led it. [. . .] As for our politicians they of course will only follow not lead public opinion. It belongs to the literary class to create, arouse, and direct that opinion. (Unpublished Papers, 76)

The medial position they hold between the conflicting forces of labor and capital gave intellectuals a favorable position as intermediaries who could convince the conflicting parties of the need to strike a deal.

The deal which mirrored the threat of an impending revolution that might sweep away the owning classes if they did not give in to the aspirations of working classes, and which promised the masses a peaceful progressive evolution towards the commonwealth as an inevitable historical process, presented a threefold merit. First, to the owning classes, the new society promised positions of leadership since the utopia is a meritocratic but philanthropic society in which the managing staff of the industrial army holds executive positions in an industrial society where disciplined, dedicated soldiers now enthusiastically perform the tasks which were formerly only reluctantly performed by rebellious working class members. Next, to the members of the working classes whatever their functions, the new society provides 'each according to his needs'; which means that any worker, just like any high ranking officer, receives enough to grant him access to the luxuries of the affluent society. Last and most importantly, to the architects of the new system, it grants the honors due to heroes for they will have succeeded to build the consensus by combining modern elements of socialist thought with the traditional American evangelicalism to produce a highly efficient industrial society; affluent, egalitarian, communitarian and

Owen, Karl Marx, and the Fabians, to name only these. If the early utopias were conceived as closed places, cut off from a corrupt and potentially corrupting outward world which was characterized by greed and ruled by sheer power, the spread of reason and science with the Enlightenment emboldened the bearers of knowledge that reason and science alone deserved to rule and order society. Scientific and technical progress increased intellectuals' confidence that science should be the Religion of Humanity, and its bearers the natural architects of a regenerated world, and therefore its legitimate rulers. In the nineteenth century, scientific and technical resources had been made available, and the utopia long sought for seemed attainable. This may explain why that period, which constituted a watershed between a declining traditional agrarian society rebellious to change and a modern industrial one not yet fully born, was rife with utopian aspirations.

Although the discovery of America was given religious interpretations, the constitution of the newly born nation drew heavily on the secular ideas of the Enlightenment and Humanism. The basic principles of human equality, freedom, and happiness underlying the foundation of the U.S. state belong to that tradition. They sought to institute social order and human happiness as ultimate ends through the technical means of science checked by the ethical means of justice. In the late nineteenth century U.S.A., as was the case in Europe both of which seemed caught between the hammer of a ruthless plutocracy and the anvil of a revolutionary proletariat, the rising 'unattached class', conscious of its growing power to generate consent or to stir revolution, suggested to re-negotiate the social compact on renewed terms. Alvin Gouldner (1979) grasped the rising power of the intelligentsia when he declared that 'intellectuals have, for many years now formed a new class which has developed a monopoly over a culture of critical discourse, and whose power has superseded the power of the traditional wealthy families and the landed aristocracy' (Trans. Mine, quoted in Said, 2001: 22) .

Looking Backward 2000-1888, partakes of the intellectuals' desire to enter politics in quest for the good society. Like the Fabians in England, especially the Webbs, they attempted to use their cultural and symbolic capital to construct an order halfway 'between the morally bankrupt Charybdis of laissez faire, and the potentially destructive Scylla of a

volunteers in the Industrial Army are promoted to positions of responsibility and decorated with medals of honors. Although apparently egalitarian, since it is based on equality of income, the new society is a Darwinian, meritocratic society in which the intellectually and morally fittest still hold positions of power. However, this power, which is put to altruistic and philanthropic ends, arouses the gratitude and admiration of the people which they serve so disinterestedly instead of their fear or envy.

The Religion of Solidarity provides the necessary emotional atmosphere for the social subject to serve the system. Its basic premise, which is inspired by the Christian tradition of martyrdom, is that human beings are instinctively driven to seek communion with the infinite, but are often prevented from doing so by the egotistic side of self which clings to the quest of immediate temporary pleasures. The Religion of Solidarity is then an appeal to its followers to abandon the temporary, egotistic and mortal self, to seek regeneration and eternal life through communion and merging with the universal self. How is this ideal of fusion with the greater being, be it society or humanity, to be achieved? Solidarity, equality, and dedication to the service of the nation could be spread through culture and education on which Bellamy and most reformers insist to make change desirable, therefore possible.

The Religion of Solidarity stood in opposition to the materialistic and individualistic ethos of the Gilded Age. It drew upon the sense of sacrifice that stirred the humanitarian and patriotic feelings of soldiers of The Union during the Civil War; feelings that were deflected into work energies in the service of industry. It also appealed to the Christian feelings of charity, brotherhood and sense of sacrifice to cure the ills of capitalism and Laissez Faire rather than socialist doctrine which Bellamy well knew would arouse reactions of aversion from the majority of Americans who associate it with immigrants, anarchy and violence. Appearances notwithstanding, it was another form of oligarchy in disguise.

The new aristocracy of the word

Bellamy belongs to that tradition of thought which sought to construct the good place, i.e., an elsewhere that would constitute the ideal counterpart of the flawed ongoing society. He is heir to the tradition established by Plato, Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Henry de Saint Simon, J.S. Mill, Robert

the more efficient their management; so that when the nation came to integrate all the trusts, public opinion had grown favorable to it.

Bellamy's aversion to socialist doctrine and class war which he assimilates to 'anarchy and bomb laying' has been underscored by more than one critic. He insists on the fact that the New Society was inspired rather by the millennial dreams of equality and the Christian teachings of self-sacrifice and martyrdom which ensure their followers rebirth and eternal life in the universal being which are society or humanity at large. These are, for Thomas, the main factors which cement the organic unity of the new society. As an American writing in the Cold War period, this scholar was probably reluctant to admit any influence of socialist ideas on Bellamy. He explains that Bellamy drew upon the American tradition and used the Religion of Solidarity, the National Party, and the Industrial Army as the ideological instruments 'that checked the destructive forces of capitalist greed and proletarian envy' (Thomas, 1967: 55-56). Krishan Kumar, by contrast, writing after the demise of Communism, says that Bellamy who had travelled through Germany 1869, and who had edited Charles Nordhoff's *The Communist Societies of the United States*, and John Noyes' *History of American Socialism*, had been influenced by socialist ideas, but remarks that the author could not openly advocate socialist ideas in a society where anybody suspected of socialist sympathies 'could be taken into a corner and clubbed' (Kumar, 1991: 141).

The Industrial Army is the basic economic and political structure of Bellamy's utopia, of which the Religion of Solidarity is the dominant ideology and the instrument of organic cohesion. As its name suggests, this army is a strict military organization applied to economic and social ends. Its purposes are obviously utilitarian since it aims at the construction of the welfare state in which highly efficient industrial organization based on strict discipline and patriotic devotion to work in the service of the nation grant regular supply of commodities and services to the utopians. Promotion in the ranks of the army is merit based; and the incentive that puts the utopians to diligent work is the quest of their peers' respect and the nations' gratitude to those who serve it. Bellamy, as Krishan Kumar notes, has created the moral equivalent of war. Warring energies and Christian feelings of compassion are deflected into working energies in the service of equality and welfare. Like wartime heroes,

an overview of the utopian city that 'lay at[his] feet' (Bellamy,1967: p. 115). Interestingly, the visitor to utopia and his mentor choose a lofty perspective to overlook the new society and get as clear a view of it as possible. However, the true beauty and harmony of the new society, which the new visitor has yet to discover, lies in its economic, political, and social organization of which the architecture and the urban landscape are eloquent reflections.

Economically, the new society was a centralized system in which the state had the complete monopoly of industries, banks, and public facilities. State control over public facilities was actually a demand formulated by most reformers of the late 19th century in the U.S.A. This has taken place naturally and peacefully Julian's host explains. As the trend toward larger and larger monopolies continued, small businesses and trusts disappeared swallowed by larger ones, until there remained only one trust; the trust. As Dr Leete explains to his visitor:

Early in the last century the evolution was completed by the final consolidation of the entire capital of the nation. The industry and commerce of the country, ceasing to be conducted by a set of irresponsible corporations and syndicates of private persons at their caprice and their profit, were entrusted to a single syndicate representing the people, to be conducted in the common interest for the common profit. The nation, that is to say, organized as the one great business corporation in which all other corporations were absorbed, it became the one capitalist in the place of all other capitalists, the sole employer, the final monopoly in which all previous and lesser monopolies were swallowed up, a monopoly in the profits and economies of which all citizens shared (Bellamy:1888, p. 126).

Following the Darwinian evolutionary process of natural selection, the American economy has progressively and peacefully developed into a system of state capitalism in which the state which is the economic and political emanation of the nation is the unique trust, "The Trust", of which all the citizens are shareholders; a sort of ' utopia Ltd' in Matthew Baumont's words'. What surprises Julian West further is the fact that no revolution or bloodshed were needed for the change to occur. As Dr Leete explains, through a series of objective lessons, the people realized that the larger the trusts the easier and

were hanging over society (ibid).The fears felt by sensible men as regards the future of the American society were exacerbated, in Bellamy's words, by 'the talk of a small band of men who called themselves anarchists, and who proposed to terrify the American people into adopting their ideas by threats of violence', adding as an afterthought that, 'a mighty nation which had just put down a rebellion of half its own members in order to maintain its political system [was unlikely] to adopt a new social system out of fear' (ibid: 102). The future society, from which Julian West looks backward, and which he intends to use as an argument to overcome resistance to change, is a technocratic utopia in which the contradictions and the tensions plaguing nineteenth century U.S.A have miraculously vanished.

The New Nation

The new society which Bellamy's hero discovers spells order, discipline, plenty and bliss. It is one which has been constructed by an Industrial Army whose officers, and ranks and files were devout to the Religion of Solidarity. The basic outline of the story is that of a sleeper who awakes in the utopian society one hundred and thirteen years later. Julian West, Bellamy's hero, is an insomniac who sleeps in an underground vault known only to his manservant, and the professional hypnotist, Dr Pillsbury, who regularly puts him into a trance at night. Julian's chronic insomnia was the result of the climate of anguish and unrest created by the frequent labor conflicts. By virtue of his class affiliations Julian resents the labor activists. Besides, he has personal reasons to hate them for strikes in the building industry were delaying the completion of his house and his marriage to the wealthy and beautiful Edith Bartlett. One night, Julian's house burns down, and his servant with it. Julian, who is presumed dead, remains in trance, and goes on sleeping to awake in the year 2000, in the house of a certain Dr Leete, his wife, and their daughter Edith. It is therefore through death in the old corrupt self and rebirth in the new society that Julian undergoes a process of regeneration, by I initiation to life, and integration of the new society.

The new society which Julian discovers has, as though miraculously, progressively rid itself of all the problems of the late 19th century America. Dr Leete, a high ranking official of the ruling elite, welcomes him and introduces him to the Boston of the year 2000, its institutions and culture. Interestingly enough, it is from Dr Leete's 'house top' that the visitor had

The New Religion and its Clergy

By the time he set out to write his utopia, Bellamy, through his work as a journalist, had accumulated enough knowledge about the ills of industrial societies and the remedies likely to cure them. His knowledge of the social inequalities that characterized the American society inspired Bellamy with the parable of the coach. 'I cannot do better', he writes about nineteenth century U.S.A, than compare society as it then was to a prodigious coach which the masses of humanity were harnessed to and dragged toilsomely [sic] along a very hilly and sandy road. The driver was hunger, and permitted no lagging, though the pace was necessarily very slow. [. . .] The top was covered by passengers, who never got down, even at the steepest ascent, [and . . . who] could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically discuss the merits of the straining team. Naturally, such places were in great demand, and the competition for them was keen, everyone seeking as the first end in life to secure a seat on the coach for himself and leave it to his child after him (Bellamy, 1887: 97).

Those on top of the coach, the writer goes on to explain, do feel compassion for their brethren; and at such times express their empathy noisily and exhort the toilers to patience, for their efforts will be duly rewarded in the other world. For Bellamy, traditional religion has been turned into an ideological opiate that binds the workers to their condition and gives the ruling class an easy conscience. Indeed, for members of the ruling class, exploiting the workers and being served by them was part of the natural order of things; a feeling that resulted from their religious and class perspective. Inequality and injustice were given metaphysical rather than human interpretation, which of course spared the haves of their responsibility toward the deprived. What was needed was a renewed form of faith: "The Religion of Solidarity".

The period in which the writer produced his story is characterized by competition among the haves on the one hand, and labor unrest on the other as 'The working classes had quite suddenly and very generally become infected with a profound discontent with their condition' (ibid, 100). The workers knew what they wanted; but as they did not possess enough light and wisdom to choose the means most appropriate to achieve their end, they may cause havoc in society as signs of 'an impending social cataclysm'

the conflicting parties in order to compel them to transform conflicts of interests into conflicts of ideas' by rationalizing the demands of the contending parties and attempting to reconcile them through a renegotiated social compact which would be acceptable to all. To achieve this end, intellectuals draw upon the resources available in the situation- the cultural matrix of their society- dismissing practices that are no longer acceptable, and cancelling those that are not yet realizable. By doing so, Mannheim observes, 'they use their privileged social moorings [in] their quest for [and] fulfillment of their mission as the predestined advocate[s] of the intellectual interests of the whole (ibid, 158)'.

In the looming modern society of the 1880s ushered by the new millennium, where the spread of knowledge and science had led to a sharpening of class consciousness, intellectuals may be led to a form of self-perception and self construction as the **inevitable mediators** (emphasis added) of the diverging and often conflicting interests that threatened social stability. The utopian novel written by Bellamy sounds quite in line with this spirit and with the spirit of the age. It denotes a shared exasperation with the excesses of the Gilded Age, and a new faith in progress that would lead gradually to the improvement of society and the human condition.

It was to this emerging stratum of intellectuals and experts that Bellamy belonged. Their sense of justice and consciences demanded that they act to relieve the plight the working classes, while fear of radical anarchy dictated caution in the schemes they drafted to that end. It was to the members of that 'cultured class' that he appealed to steer society to safer grounds. The secret of Bellamy's success may be explained by his ability to feel the pulse of the American society during the Reconstruction period, grasp the contradictions that threatened the country's cohesion, and draw upon core elements of the U.S. cultural matrix to envision an order in which the contradictions are magically solved. Bellamy's futuristic society, presented the narrator with a "hill-top perspective" wherefrom he could historicize his society and which could serve according to John L. Thomas 'as a blueprint for the reconstruction of the American society plagued by the materialistic excesses of the Gilded Age' (Thomas, 1967:16).

different parts are integrated by the writer's consciousness and the contending voices are synthesized in the writer's authoritative voice. The monologic novel, accordingly, depicts a world in which harmony and consensus prevail; a world where conflict is resolved. Central to this feat, is the heroic influence of the narrator who usually acts as the mouthpiece of the author.

It is here that Mannheim's views on the novelist coincide with Bakhtin's treatment of the author. Bellamy the author, the speaking subject, and the social agent is apprehended as a member of the rising intelligentsia. The special position of the Intelligentsia comes from the fact that their outlook, unlike owners of capital or members of the working class, is not determined by a rigid position in the production process. Mannheim writes that members of the intelligentsia come from various social strata; and so may keep a certain ideological affinity with their original class, but he insists on this important fact that

There is, however, one unifying bond between all groups of intellectuals, namely education, which binds them together in a striking way. Participation in a common educational heritage progressively tends to suppress differences of birth, status, profession and wealth, and unite the individual educated people on the basis of the education they have received. [. . .] This modern education has created a homogenous medium [knowledge] within which the conflicting parties can measure their strength. [. . .] Modern education, from its inception, is a living struggle, a replica on a small scale of the conflicting processes and tendencies which rage in society at large (Mannheim: 1936, 154-156).

This acquired cultural capital gives intellectuals a mixed temperament and subjects them to the influences of opposing tendencies in the social reality. It is this relatively unattached or trans-class status that places them in a privileged position by making them 'attuned' to the different interests and points of view that inform their society. It is this lofty 'hill-top view' that enables them to develop an all inclusive synthetic view that would reconcile the interests of the various social organs and thus preserve the harmony of the social body.

Unlike the members of the traditional classes, whose thought is determined by their class position, intellectuals 'penetrate into the ranks of

Methodology

The article integrates elements of Bakhtin's theory on the novel (1996) with Karl Mannheim's treatment of intellectuals (1936) to read Bellamy's work as an ambivalent utopia promoting a form of an American socialism in a strong authoritative voice. Indeed, in his definition of language, Bakhtin goes beyond Saussure's definition of language as a binary sign system which people draw upon to name and organize the world. For Bakhtin, to speak is to change the world through an infinite number of speech acts. To speak is to enter into a creative dialogue with an already committed act, be it a speech or social act, which bears value. Value which denotes an attitude is ideological in nature; so, one speaks to foster, maintain and reproduce an already present act, or to challenge it with a view to its transformation. The ideological function of language use informs aesthetics of which the novel is an important form. This seems to be the case with the way utopian writers use this particular form of literary discourse in their attempt to deal with the tensions that inform their society. Hence, through this dynamic, dialectical interplay, authors as social agents permanently construct themselves new identities through their participation to the construction of the good society in the form of a utopia.

As an aesthetic form, the novel is the locus where the conflicting interests and the actions of the different social groups are represented. Also, as an utterance and social action, it provides valuable insight into the perspective, interests and social position of its author. With respect to the perspective and role of the author, Bakhtin distinguishes two sorts of novels: the polyphonic novel and the monologic novel. 'The polyphonic novel', Bakhtin argues, 'grants the voices of the main characters as much authority as the narrator's voice which indeed engages in an active dialogue with the characters' voices' (Bakhtin, 1996: 41). In the polyphonic novel, the narrator is placed on an equal footing with the other characters with respect to authority. Polyphony, for Bakhtin, should not be understood as an abdication by the author of his responsibility, but as recognition of the other with whom he engages in a dialogue; not another whose voice he appropriates and fashions in such a way that it fits his ideological expediencies. Polyphony, like genuine democracy, has important ethical and political implications. The monologic novel, on the other hand, represents a world in which the

Issue and Hypothesis

The fact that it is often likened to Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* is evidence of its tremendous transformative potential. However, what critics have not sufficiently underscored is the capacity of utopian writers to capture the conflicting emotions of hope and fear that inform their society, turn them into utterances that represent the contending voices, before they deftly construct a consensual order that temporarily contents the conflicting parties. This is what Bellamy succeeded to do in so far as his "gospel" *The Religion of Solidarity* and his scheme for an Industrial Army made "converts" and volunteer "conscripts" throughout the United States and even abroad. Like many intellectuals of the Progressive Era, he felt that a redefinition of the American Dream as a democracy of goods was a necessary precondition for the recovery of the original political democracy.

The present article explores the impact of the rising intelligentsia, whose emergence coincided with the rapid diffusion of knowledge and the contraction of space and time induced by technological development, not only on a national scale but globally as well. In other words it discusses the socialists' charge of 'ideological complicity of the intelligentsia with the prevailing capitalist model of history' (Baumont: 2005, 10). It goes further, for besides assigning intellectuals a central role in organizing and leading the new state, Bellamy's system in no way threatens the basic pillars of capitalism, but it moderates the excesses of the plutocracy. More than this, Bellamy's nationalist utopia is constructed as a model to disseminate to the other parts of the world; a global blueprint, conceived, and to be supervised by an army of disinterested patricians committed to the happiness and the well being of the people. Plato's philosopher kings who ruled over a closed city state are now to spread their wisdom to the whole global village. What is worth noting is that the role of historical agents is withdrawn from the workers as agents of historical change, and assigned to the intelligentsia as the architects of the new social compact. If any viable change is to occur, it has to be achieved not by revolutionary action of the proletariat, but through peaceful evolution under the wise tutelage of knowledgeable cultured elites.

heavenly sign; and, like Aaron's rod, an instrument in the service of the nation's destiny as the vanguard of humanity.

However, rapid transformations induced by progress created mitigated feelings of hope and apprehension as it led to the constitution of gigantic trusts in industries, banking, and services, depriving many Americans of the fruit of the new Eden. Industrialism and monopoly capitalism had made victims especially among little farmers, small businesses, and wage earners. As Krishan kumar notes, if the Civil War had united the American nation in its enterprise of enforcement of the basic human birthrights of "equality and freedom" by imposing the abolition of institutionalized slavery to the southern states, uneven distribution of wealth threatened to undermine the economic foundations that were a necessary prerequisite to political equality and human happiness (Kumar, 1987: pp., 138-139). Discontent among the victims took a variety of forms. Farmers' revolts, labor unrest, and different forms of violence were symptoms of this discontent. The frequent press campaigns, civil crusade against corrupt politics and the power of the trusts; and the emergence of realism, naturalism, and utopianism in literature were equally symptomatic of the crisis.

The utopian novels written in that period, of which *Looking Backward* constitutes a popular example, partook of the same need to construct the good society by unveiling and correcting the flaws of the present one. None the less, unlike realism and naturalism which highlight the corrupting influence of a basely material world on the individual, utopian literature champions progress as the utilitarian panacea that would produce social harmony and individual happiness. Said otherwise, against the pessimistic mood of naturalism which presents the social subject as the reluctant victim of powers beyond his control, utopian writing invites voluntary, enthusiastic participation of the social agent to the construction of the new society. Hope is used as the motive power for social change.

What is the secret of the novel's fame? What is there in *Looking Backward* that propelled its author from the status of journalist to that of 'social engineer and prophet of a new morality'? What is there in the novel that has helped it impregnate culturally diverse societies and reach universality? More importantly, what relevance could a revisiting of Bellamy's romance have to our time?

among the slaves of that society, is now at last forcing itself on the attention of the master (Morris,1993:309).

William Morris further warns against two dangers involved in Bellamy's utopia. The first danger is that it might convince socialist enthusiasts that the advent of socialism is an inevitable outcome of a progressive historical process; a conviction that might function as an opiate which would lead to contemplative quietism precluding or at least delaying transformative action that would bring about the desired society. The second danger lies in the hyper-centralized mechanistic logic of *Looking Backward*; a coldly utilitarian society, geared to the satisfaction of the needs of a consumerist society by making workers into disciplined conscripts of an industrial army. This system, Morris argues, will deter many socialists from pursuing it.

It would be equally wrong to consider Bellamy's utopia as having sprung up miraculously out of a cultural or ideological vacuum. Utopian ideas and schemes were an important part of American history and culture. Indeed, the quest for and discovery of the New World itself, and the series of ordeals accomplished by "the pilgrims" through their successive triumphs: over the natural elements- The Atlantic and the hostile natural environment of the continent- first, their victorious Revolution against the representative of the old corrupt order, the king of England, next, and finally their triumph over "the heathens and the Spaniards", had strengthened Americans' confidence that they were the missionaries chosen by providence to lead humanity toward moral regeneration.

Although American utopianism was largely inspired by Jewish and Christian traditions, it began to assume secular aspects with the spread of Enlightenment ideas and the development of technology. The gradual weakening of the religious sentiment led to a reinterpretation of the American Dream. The traditional religious interpretation gave way to an economic interpretation claiming equal access to the luxuries and material comfort of the New World. The 1880s were years of transition from a rural agrarian economy, to an urban industrial one. The development of modern land and water communication networks connected the Eastern coast to the Western one, the North to the South, which strengthened Americans' national feelings, and their faith that technical progress was another

However, the novel's reception is not a general fit of applause as it may seem at first sight. Drew heavily on socialist ideas while taking care not to dismiss capitalist values altogether, it received violent attacks from both conservative and socialist camps. In 1893, J.W. Foot, a conservative-minded thinker, described *Looking Backward*

[as] the ban of this nation. It breeds a notion in the minds of thousands that somehow the government will be compelled by agitation to do for them what God, nature, and society demand they shall do for themselves. Its utopian notions have taken root in many minds. Multitudes who never saw the book have received its teachings secondhand and have been poisoned by them (Qtd. in Parrington, 1964:78).

Indeed, many Americans influenced by nativism eyed with suspicion the kind of socialist ideas at the basis of Bellamy's utopia since the seeds of these ideas were sown by the waves of immigrants that flooded the country at the wake of the potato failure crop in Ireland in the 1840s, and the failure of the socialist revolutions in Europe in the same decade.

Socialist political thinkers also spared no effort to dismantle Bellamy's utopian social project. William Morris, for instance, unveils *Looking Backward* as the manifestation of its author's character: 'a bourgeois Whig frame of mind that is quite content with modern civilization once it has been rid of a few ridiculous survivals of the barbarous ages' (Morris, 1993:381). Morris argues that certain bourgeois utopias are no more than an appropriation by bourgeois intellectuals of the suffering of the poor, and their subversion into remote paper paradises where fanciful solutions are applied to real problems. In a lecture given before members of the Socialist League in 1885, Morris declares that the hopes conveyed by utopian writings like Bellamy's are but a reflection in those who live happily and comfortably of the vain longings of those others who suffer with little power of expressing their suffering in an audible voice: when all goes well, the happy world forgets these people and their desires, sure as it is that their woes are not dangerous to them the wealthy: whereas when the woes and grief of the poor begin to rise to a point beyond the endurance of men, fear conscious or unconscious falls upon the rich, and they begin to look about them to see what there may be among the elements of their society which may be used as palliatives for the misery which, long existing and ever growing greater

and ideological realignments not only east of the 'Iron Curtain' but also in former areas of influence of the ex-Soviet bloc in the Third World? What could one say about Bellamy's utopia that has not already been said considering the bulk of critical appraisals it triggered both at home and abroad for over a century now? Would a revisiting of Bellamy's utopia provide some clues to help understand the shock wave that has recently been sweeping through the Great Middle East, and which is strangely affecting mostly nation states that constituted the ideological satellites of the deceased communist U.S.S.R.?

Review of the Literature

On its publication, the novel, its author's proclaimed escapism notwithstanding, constituted both a literary and political event. 'From an anonymous journalist,' John L. Thomas writes, Bellamy was suddenly propelled to the literary and political stage to 'find himself something of a national hero' (Thomas, 1967:1). 'Within a year of its publication in 1888,' adds Krishan Kumar, *Looking Backward* sold a quarter of a million copies in the United States alone;[and] in 1897, it had sold half a million copies in America and hundreds of thousands throughout the world' (Kumar, 1987:133). Outside the English speaking countries, the novel's popularity was confirmed by its translation into most of the major languages in the world. According to Sylvia Bowman, Bellamy is read not only in England, France, Germany, Russia and Italy, but also in Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Africa, and many other countries (Bowman :1962). In an article entitled 'A Great American Prophet' published in *Common Sense* in 1934, John Dewey, the great American philosopher wrote: 'What *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was to the anti-slavery movement Bellamy's book may well be to shaping popular opinion for a new social order'(quoted in: Kumar, 1987:134). Dewey's prediction turned out to be the point since Bellamy, according to Kumar, came to exert a strong influence on American socialists such as Daniel de Leon, Eugene V. Webbs, as well as on such prominent social critics as Thorstein Veblen, and Upton Sinclair. Abroad, Leo Tolstoy, who realized the first translation of the novel into Russian, praised it as 'an exceedingly interesting book'. Kumar further observes that 'So alarmed were the Tsarist authorities by[its] success [. . .] that in 1889 they banned it in public libraries and reading rooms' (Kumar, 1987: 135).

Knowledge, Authority, and Heroism in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000-1887*

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Abstract

This article revisits Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward 2000-1888* (1887) with reference to its socialist and globalist themes in the light of the recent developments that have recently led to the triumph of liberal ideology over communism. Combining elements of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the novel as expounded in Simon Dentith's *Bakhtinian Thought* (1996), and Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1936), it reads the novel as an attempt to historicize the nineteenth-century capitalist society in a bid to renegotiate the social contract on new bases. Thanks to their accumulated symbolic and cultural capital, and the medial position they hold between the conflicting parties (capital and labor), the intelligentsia self-appointed themselves as social mediators. Their influence on politics and their participation as experts or members of think-tanks seem to have made of them objective allies of today's liberal globalizing trends.

Key words: Bellamy, utopia, American socialism, progressivism, ideological appropriation

Introduction

The moment one begins to reflect on utopian thought in the U.S.A., especially such socialist writings as Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000-1887*, one is overcome by a feeling of the vanity of such an undertaking. Indeed, what interest could the study of a socialist utopia raise after the demise of communism, the falling of the Berlin Wall, symptomatic of the victory of liberal ideology over communism, and the subsequent economic