Edward Bellamy's Ambivalence: Can Utopia Be Urban?

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to identify and analyze the contributions of Edward Bellamy to planning history and theory and utopian thought through a comparison of his two novels *Looking Backward* (1888) and *Equality* (1897). It endeavors to answer the question of whether or not his perspectives are as relevant today as they were at the beginning of this century. The paper begins with a brief synopsis of Bellamy's background, continues with a review and analysis of his two utopian novels, shifts to perspectives offered by historians and political theorists and ends with this author's thoughts. It is my position that, despite the fact that the two books were published only nine years apart, they reveal a dramatic shift in Bellamy's ideological perspective. In *Looking Backward*, he is clearly a proponent of Micah's "City on the Hill" ideal while in *Equality*, he argues for the dissolution of our great cities. This shift centered on the role of the city in society, the influence of technology upon the formation of community, the place of nature in society and the ideal form of community. It is explained below.

The Great City or the Regional Village?

Bellamy had traveled abroad and had first-hand knowledge of both European and American cities (Tichi 10). He saw little that impressed him (White and White 114). And yet, in *Looking Backward*, Bellamy's main character, Julian West, upon awakening from a 113 year slumber, exclaimed the following about a new Boston:

"At my feet lay a great city. Miles of broad streets, shaded by trees and lined with fine buildings, for the most part not in continuous blocks but set in larger or smaller enclosures stretched in every direction. Each quarter contained large open squares filled with trees, along which statues glistened and fountains flashed in the late afternoon sun. Public buildings of a colossal size and architectural grandeur unparalleled in my day raised their stately piles upon every side. Surely I had never seen this city nor one comparable to it before" (p. 55).

Julian West's description of the new Boston was dramatically different from the nineteenth century Boston with its high density congestion, meandering streets and irregular coastline (Domosh 25). This description under-
scores several key themes that provide the foundation for the philosophy of Looking Backward. The first is the theme of a "great city." Bellamy sees the city as the central focus of his new society. Indeed, there is scarcely a mention of the suburbs or the countryside in the book: The city was to serve as the central place for government, culture, recreation and shopping. The second relates to the "miles of broad streets." Bellamy rejects the idea of the meandering cowpath: His Julian West would, it seems, feel much more comfortable among the long, wide boulevards of Haussmann's Paris. It is interesting to note that Bellamy, when he worked in Boston, found the labyrinth of streets so perplexing that he preferred to be guided by a cab (Morgan 95)! His third theme, suggested by the phrase "squares filled with trees" and "streets shaded with trees" implies public planning and reflects the need to provide greenery in our urban areas. This, perhaps, reflected Bellamy's knowledge, having worked in both cities and observing New York's Central Park, Boston's Emerald Necklace and Boston's developing Back Bay district with its Commonwealth Avenue promenade/mall. The fourth concept focuses upon "building enclosures that stretch in every direction." This, too, represents Bellamy's desire to regularize the city and may have reflected a knowledge of Robert Morris Copeland's master plan to bring orderly development to Boston (Kennedy 66). It is also likely that he was aware of the efforts of Olmsted to break up "solids" (structures) with "voids" (parks) (Fein 58). Finally, Bellamy's description of "public buildings of colossal size" indicates his wish that the people's hall, the people's store and the people's places dominate the skyline. In all five of the above concepts, the role of public intervention is paramount. As well, the words and phrases that he uses (a great city, miles of broad streets, stretched in every direction, statues glistened, colossal buildings, architectural grandeur, and stately piles, among others) are strong, active, powerful and positive. This city is simply not a place of utility: It is a grand place where the people are celebrated.

Most of these themes are dramatically changed, if not reputed, in Equality. Above all, the great city has been dismantled: Boston's population has been reduced by 75% while New York's population is only 250,000. His rationale for changing his perspective was two fold. First, he maintained that the most important factors in the development of cities were economic. Once they were removed, the city was no longer necessary. Secondly, given improved technology (i.e.: telephone, television, high speed distribution networks), the need to locate in highly dense areas no longer existed (Equality 294).

The idea of miles of broad streets is also revised. Instead, Bellamy's Dr. Leete joyfully describes roadways meandering through nature preserves, highways that are reduced by 113 to 1/2 of their former breadth, and paths that interlace the countryside (Equality 298). The electric car now takes the citizenry swiftly, noiselessly and effortlessly on short, luxurious and picturesque trips (Equality 298). It appeared that Bellamy had rejected the idea of the Haussmannesque grand boulevard and replaced it with Sitte's informal "pack-donkey's way" (Saarinen 113–116).
And the concept of placing greenery in urban areas to break up the high density character of the city? This too is dramatically different. Instead of simply trying to bring nature to the city, the entire city is radically transformed. Densities are lowered, unsightly buildings are demolished and high-rises are eliminated. What is left of the city are "...structures of the low broad, roomy style adapted to the new way of living." They are "...as pleasant a place to live as was the country itself. . ." (Equality 295). Clearly, the city had become the country.

Finally, the public buildings of colossal scale found in Looking Backward have been downscaled: Their functions have been redistributed to small villages. The great public department stores, libraries, baths and institutions of higher learning are brought as close as possible to the people in their small villages.

The concept of public planning is the only theme that remains consistent throughout both books. If anything, one can note an even stronger role for planning in Equality than in Looking Backward. This can be illustrated most vividly in Bellamy's description in Equality of the nation's efforts to reforest the countryside: "Every natural feature appeared to have been idealized and all of its latent meaning brought out by the loving skill of some consummate landscape artist, the work of man blending with the face of Nature in perfect harmony." (Equality 296). To Bellamy, even nature must be planned as arranged scenery: It's not to be nature as nature but nature as a stage setting as humankind plans it. It is as if Bellamy embraced whole heartedly the ideas of Vaux, Olmsted and Downing (Wood 153).

In short, Bellamy, in Equality, shifts his perspective from focusing on the city to small villages set five to ten miles apart. No longer does one have to depend upon the hierarchy of services found in the city,-no longer are the sardine-like rookeries a way of life, and no longer is there need to create mammoth public structures. Technology enables one to move to a small community where all of the amenities of the city along with human scale, clean air and nature, can be found. Concepts of space and place have clearly changed.

**The Historic Continuity**

Of all the above-mentioned aspects of Bellamy's vision of the modern city in Looking Backward, perhaps none is as important as this simple fact: Bellamy's New Boston is built on the old one. When Julian West takes his first stroll through the streets of his new city, he immediately recognizes the Charles River and the Harbor Islands. More significantly, he also identifies State and Washington Streets and Commonwealth Avenue (Looking Backward 82). His walk is clearly meant to underscore the role of history in the advent of the new utopia; Bellamy's vision may be futuristic, but it has a strong historic continuity. Moreover, Bellamy's fusion of past and future allows the reader to be aware of the "process" of the creation of a utopia. Perhaps most importantly, however, the reader is left with the incontrovertible fact that Bellamy believed the city, in an idealized world, to be worth
saving. Stated alternatively: the city does not have to be destroyed to bring about the new millennium. As Parsinnen noted, Bellamy was not attempting to eliminate urban life. Rather, he was calling for it to become more rational, controlled and reformed (Parsinnen 262).

This sense of historic continuity is clearly broken in Equality. In fact, the qualities of urban life have been dismantled. No longer is the city a place of cache or uniqueness. No longer is it the center of entrepreneurship, culture and higher learning. And no longer is it the powerful shopping hub or seat of government. In this sense, Equality represents a break from the Inward Utopia described by Rhodes (22). It is not progressive. Rather, it is reflective of past cultures well before the Industrial Revolution. Thus, we see two utopian communities. The first, described in Looking Backward, is progressive, urban based and built on an historic continuum. The second described in Equality, represents a retrograde position in which society returns to a quieter, more pastoral time.

**The Human Condition**

Bellamy's city in Looking Backward is a cold place. He had a distinct dislike of the crowd. In fact, his depictions of the mass of citizens of Boston moving along State and Washington Streets in the 19th century are quite negative and reflect the imagery of Baudelaire's walking dead as well as the mobs of Dickens, Zola and Ellison (Lehan 8). His new city is architectonic. It is ordered, straight and proper. It is almost a stage setting or a backdrop for human interaction that is to occur in privacy. The absence of whimsy, serendipity and accidental contact is startling. There is no wasted movement, dirt, smell or clash of colors; it clearly fits more with the Roman Castrum than the German Burgum (Galantay 24). In fact, Bellamy seems quite comfortable with some of the military concepts that were used to develop the Castrum; standardization, repetition, regularization and a sense of strong centralized control. One can also make a case that Bellamy would have been quite comfortable with the Law of the Indies (Crouch 1–5), particularly concerning those elements that governed the creation of awe-inspiring monumental structures, or even the medieval town where the individual's home is seconded to the clergy's cathedral, merchant's guild hall or lord's castle (Spreiregan 8–12). Nothing points out the coldness of his city as much as the fact that Bellamy's Mr. West interacts with no other Bostonian except under arranged circumstances.

In Equality, the image of community has changed. The rookeries are gone except for those preserved structures that are intended to represent examples of an evil culture of bygone times. There are no crowds and, for all intent and purposes, no large cities. Instead we have small villages that are connected to agriculture and nature. There is no longer a sense of rural isolation. The agriculture worker lives where he/she pleases: "Work on a farm no longer implies life on a farm..." We also can note that social expectations appear to have been relaxed: ... there is nothing to prevent
anybody from living a life as absolutely unsocial as the veriest cynic of the old time could have desired" (Equality 302).

Industries, Commerce and Housing

And what about industry, commerce and housing? Once again, Bellamy's affinity for things military is clear in Looking Backward. Industrial activity is to be placed distinctly away from residential areas, in huge structures and operated under the characteristics of an army. In terms of physical form, beyond the larger size of the factories and mills, Bellamy tells us very little. He was very much enamored with the textile mills of the nineteenth century and saw their systems of production as being models for the future (Bender 58), but he still remains frustratingly vague on the subject. In contrast, Bellamy vividly describes retail activity. His Mr. West goes on at length to explain what a waste of time and resources it was to shop in the nineteenth century: "Stores! Stores! Stores! Ten thousand stores to distribute the goods needed by this one city" (Looking Backward 219). As an alternative, Bellamy, perhaps borrowing from Fourier's glassed-in street gallery, envisioned the creation of what we would today call the shopping center, with its captivating form, fountains, statuary and a high dome. The major difference is that Bellamy envisioned that it would be operated as a company store under government control similar to an army post exchange. Concerning housing, his utopia eradicated slums, created guaranteed housing, eliminated classism in neighborhoods and provided different housing types for the citizenry. He also advocated, as in Fourier's Social Palace, the creation of common laundries and centralized kitchens/restaurants (Choay, The Modern City 97). In essence, the home was simply to be a place of rest and refuge.

Bellamy's perspectives on industry, commerce and housing were quite different in Equality. In fact, there is minimal reference to manufacturing in his later book except to state that the facilities were palace-like and run in such a manner that the needs of the workers were well respected (Equality 54). Perhaps most significantly, he focuses upon agricultural production. The modern farm, due to improved equipment, new fertilizers, easy access to railroads and the creation of greenhouses, has shifted from a family operation to agribusiness. The workers on these farms commute to work from their village homes. When there is need for an influx of workers, such as at harvest season, workers are drawn from a pool in the Industrial Army. In Equality, the relationship between agriculture and industry becomes far more balanced than in Looking Backward.

Concerning commerce, the shopping mall, described in detail in Looking Backward, has also changed. The village, through modern technology, has access to all of the goods formerly found in the city. There is no advantage, in terms of price or quality, in journeying to the city for a needed commodity. One simply orders one's goods at a local distribution center, and they are delivered shortly thereafter.
A Summary

In summation, then, Bellamy's *Looking Backward* envisions a distinctly urban utopia. It is ordered, regularized and standardized. It is a place where the fundamental needs of all citizens are met and where there is extensive choice for the citizens—provided they accept society's cultural norms (the price of failure to do so was high!). It is an efficient, controlled place where the mob, the crowd and the different are dispersed. There is little sense of joy, anger, whimsy and serendipity. Above all, it is, using Bellamy's own words, a "great city." It is this point that often is downplayed in reviews of Bellamy's writing. Of the few writers and critics that did comment on his urban vision, Olsen, for example, notes that Bellamy is the heir to Saint-Simon in concentrating upon the city and further notes that his emphasis on the city was fundamentally different than previous utopians (257). As well, Parsinnien saw a relationship between Bellamy and the Fabians who advocated urban reform rather than a rejection of the city (267).

*Equality*, on the other hand, rejects the city. Here Bellamy commits to the small community. It is the pastoral village connected to rural life, the natural landscape and a commitment to the land that is held up as the ideal. No longer does one live in a high density environment, no longer does one have to be humiliated by existing in heartless rookeries and no longer does one live an anomic existence, coexisting with the mob: One is able to have face to face social contact with one's neighbors while being connected to the larger world through the wonders of technology. Further, instead of the villager having to journey to the city for recreation, education, entertainment or government services, they are brought to the village. Clearly, the city has declined in importance.

An Interpretation

Why did Bellamy's perspective change? While he never directly explained his rationale, there are several reasons that clearly influenced him in the intervening years between the two books. These include the technological changes that were occurring, the continued immigration to the city, the emptying of the countryside, the alarming chaos of the city, Bellamy's desire to create a national political platform, and the critical reaction to *Looking Backward*.

Bellamy was a careful observer of the American city and was fully aware of the technological trends impacting community. For example, several of the advances alluded to in *Looking Backward* were moving from the laboratory and limited service to widespread use as he was writing *Equality*. For example, in Boston, the limited telephone service of 1880 (Boston to Lowell) had been extended to New York City and Washington D.C. by 1890 (Schlesinger 96). Moreover, the promise of Marconi's wireless, the gasoline motor, incandescent lighting and electricity, and the Transatlantic Cable were becoming realized in the period between his two books. Further, rail track continued to expand, the postal service improved and the telegraph
began a common means of communication. A key impact of all of these advances was to change senses of space: Distant communities could be economically connected, resources could be distributed more easily from core cities to outlying areas and communication across the nation and from the Atlantic Ocean were simplified. One can observe the impact of these advances in the 1887-1898 period quite vividly in Bellamy's Boston with the rise of the streetcar suburbs (Warner 22-23) and the spread of institutions out from the center city (Whitehill 174). Clearly, technology was allowing the opportunity for the creation of smaller, distant, but connected communities that could have many of the advantages of the center city.  

He could not help but observe that the character of the American community continued to evolve. In New England alone, out of 1502 townships, 932 had fewer people in 1890 than 1880 and, in Massachusetts, by the late 1880's, there were approximately 1500 abandoned farms. As rural New Englanders moved to the city so did thousands of immigrants. By 1890, 25% of all Bostonians were of alien birth (Schlesinger 53-77). The rapid growth of the cities only exacerbated housing problems (Shand-Tucci 115). The rise of the tenement, the creation of the three decker and the over use of the crowded rookery continued to create what Bellamy considered sardine-like conditions. And finally, union agitation, declining wages, financial panics, criminal activities, political corruption and health problems continued unabated (Cochran and Miller 274-277).  

What is most intriguing is that these changes were not simply abstractions. Bellamy saw them every day from his home overlooking Chicopee's behemoth mills. He observed the increasing poverty, labor strife and the quest of immigrants for political power. He noted the expansion of rail and trolley systems and, as well, the economic connectedness of Chicopee to the large city of Springfield. And, indeed, he also noted that his village could no longer be considered sustainable, locally controlled, native-based or even sharing the same value structure. These changes were, at once, disturbing and profound.  

Given these conditions one can understand his change of emphasis. From a technological sense, the rise of the village as an ideal community form could actually happen. And, given the problems of the city, one can understand Bellamy's desire to escape. And so he does: His ties to Winthrop's "City on the Hill," Fichte's City of Intellect and Voltaire's London (Schorske 102) are severed in Equality.  

Bellamy even rejects the civic form of the city in Equality. His Boston, with 1/4 its former population, lowered density and limited institutional importance is no longer the same place. He, in effect, moves from describing an historically connected community full of iconic symbols to ignoring the city's past. For example, the only important icons noted in Equality are the statue of the strikers and a preserved rookery that is designed to show the evil living conditions of the past. What is most interesting is that he was writing in a period when Bostonians were first embracing preservation (Holleran 135) and while he rented an office quite near the center of historic
Boston (Morgan 95). It would appear that Bellamy was arguing for a total rejection of the form and symbols of the past in *Equality*. If utopia was to succeed, it would be on the merits of the new current society: The past was insignificant except as a minor area of scholarly interest.

Bellamy was also acutely aware of the influence of *Looking Backward* in the politics of the nation in the early 1890's. The book inspired the creation of 162 Bellamy Clubs across the nation and a political party. As he lectured on his themes, many of his ideas became increasingly pragmatic including, for example, civil service reform, and government ownership of utilities. In Rhode Island in 1891, a Nationalist Party was formed based largely upon Bellamy's ideas: His supporters believed that "... an era of political action could now succeed that of education" (Tichi 23). As with most lofty concepts that undergo political scrutiny and debate, there must be some practical compromises that occur if they are to be implemented. And there were. As his ideas entered the political mainstream, his orientation reflected a far greater emphasis on the small community and increased participation in local governance: In the ideal villages of *Equality*, for example, the discipline of the industrial army gives way to direct democracy.

Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, while widely praised throughout the Western World, was also subject to harsh criticism. Various critics lashed out at Bellamy's perspectives calling them, among other comments, decidedly unsocialistic, authoritarian reform, a mask of tyranny and a threat to individuality and liberty (Spann 203). It even resulted in a rash of anti-utopian novels hoping to provide alternatives to Bellamy's 'dangerously persuasive propaganda' (Lokke 123). Among his severest critics was the English socialist William Morris who saw Bellamy's work as advocating little more than a soul-less, urban technopolis consisting of a middle class that is professional (Morris 1889). It was, according to Morris, a "horrible cockney paradise." He then went on to argue that Bellamy "... has no idea beyond existence in a great city; his dwelling of man in the future is Boston (USA) beautified" (Morris 94). Morris was so incensed by Bellamy's picture of utopia that he developed his own. This utopia was, not surprisingly, radically different from Bellamy's. The differences could perhaps be best illustrated in the perspectives of the two utopians toward the city: Morris, strongly influenced by his former professor, John Ruskin, viewed the city as a corrupting influence and argued for the re-establishment of the English county-side village (Lang 80). Bellamy, at least in *Looking Backward*, saw the city as an ideal location, once its inequalities and inefficiencies were eliminated. To summarize the differences, as Kirchhoff has written: "... Bellamy's rosy vision was Morris's nightmare" (129). It is interesting that while Morris was quite blunt in his criticism of *Looking Backward*, Bellamy was gentle in his review of Morris's *News From Nowhere*. Indeed, Bellamy even complimented his work by summarizing that it was "exceedingly well worth reading" (Bellamy, "News From Nowhere" 47). Harsh criticism also did not stop Bellamy from approving an advertisement for the Morris book in *The New Nation* which ran with the headline "Every Nationalist Should
Read and Ponder This Message; News From Nowhere" (The New Nation, January 31, 1891, 5).

In many ways, Morris is quite right. The utopia of *Looking Backward* is urban, middle class oriented, industrial, accepting of new technologies and, to a degree, "heartless." Furthermore, there is scarcely a mention of villages and, at least in one case, Bellamy mentions that the distribution system for rural areas had yet to be perfected. While it is impossible to gauge the exact extent of Morris's influence on Bellamy, it is clear that Bellamy was very much aware of his critics and their views and, according to Wilson (46) and Spann (205), endeavored to respond to them in *Equality*. In most cases, Bellamy answered them by refining a point or by providing more detail. When it comes to Morris's objections to Bellamy's concept of the city, however, Bellamy seems to have swallowed the lesson whole: *Equality* presents an almost entirely revised vision of the role of the city in the new utopia.

Perhaps Bellamy overstated his idea of the "City on the Hill" in *Looking Backward*. Perhaps his imagery was meant to be figurative rather than literal. And perhaps, Bellamy really intended that the ideal settlement would be the decentralized community for the middle classes. Indeed, several utopian theorists have noted that Bellamy's urban setting is hardly complete. They have noted the fact that industrial activity happens "off stage" in some distant part of the city, that the working members of the industrial army cannot be found and that the city is far more pastoral than an active center of bustling activity (Folsom 70, Wilson 47).

Thomas interprets Bellamy's writing, along with the thoughts of Henry George and Demerest Lloyd, as part of a desire to create a way of life found in the eighteenth century: "The primary perception which they shared with a great number of Americans after the Civil War was that of a rural republic, pastoral, small town, run according to village values . . . . . . ("Utopia for an Urban Age" 138). In terms of community form, there is a stress on balance, symmetry, proportion and scale. Society is decentralized, strongly tied to nature and is cooperative rather than competitive. This theme is also picked up in part by Wilson who perceives that Bellamy's view of the city is not of Boston in the year 2000. Rather, it is of his home community of Chicopee before the coming of the Irish and the creation of a booming industrial city of the 1860's, 1870's and 1880's. It is, to Wilson, a nostalgic, pre-industrial and, at times, even an anti-industrial depiction of an idealized community (45). Cantor suggests the same point: "... Boston was much like pre-1846 Chicopee. Nothing could be seen of 1888 mill towns, the sweat shops, substandard wages, child labor . . . and work environments . . . " (Cantor 25). Both Cantor and Wilson back their theses by pointing out Bellamy's reluctance to confront the industrialized city with its army of proletariat workers. Does one find a description of a factory or even talk to a member of the industrial army in *Looking Backward*? The answer, according to them, is no: His utopia is far more pastoral and village-like; there are more trees than factories or working class laborers. While their interpretations have some merit, it appears, as Segal has noted, that they have oversimplified Bel-
lamy's depiction of utopian Boston (Technological Utopianism in American Culture 195). They underplay such themes as the "great city," "miles of broad streets...lined with fine buildings," the colossal buildings, and the architectural grandeur that was to be the Boston of the year 2000. Yes, one can note the pastoral nature of Bellamy's utopic city with its trees and sinuous Charles River. Yes, one can note the absence of smokestacks and pollution, and yes, one can note the absence of description of things industrial. However, these points can be explained in the context of changes about which Bellamy would have known: The work of Olmsted in Central Park and on Boston's Emerald Necklace; the emerging boulevard qualities and tree-lined mall of Boston's Commonwealth Avenue and, in terms of removing pollution, the promise of electricity. In short, these points relate far more to Boston than Chicopee. As Martin has noted: "...his Boston is not quite unrecognizably altered" (222).

Cantor's and Wilson's points concerning the absence of any meaningful depiction of industrial areas or interaction with the workers are correct. Bellamy does feel uncomfortable with the proletariat and the spaces they occupy; while class differences have been eliminated, one still keeps one's distance. His Julian West has virtually nothing good to write of the nineteenth century worker and his/her home and has minimal involvement with the worker of Boston 2000. It is here that Bellamy's personal experiences may have been influential. Bellamy's Chicopee was swiftly changing in his childhood from a small village to an industrial community of national prominence. Bellamy saw this every day as a child and a young man but was decidedly removed from the experience (Bowman 1). He could see Chicopee's huge mills, he could observe the workers marching in virtual lock step in answer to another commanding whistle, he could walk by the hovels of Irish workers and hear the calls for alms from those without funds (Morgan 101). Still, Bellamy was not connected to them. From his family home overlooking the new Chicopee, a decidedly different community was emerging. This community was not native, rural, ordered or self-sustaining. It was not egalitarian, committed to a communitarian ideal or part of a Baptist-Calvinist belief or tradition. The new Chicopee was rootless, immigrant, Catholic, union, uneducated, unwashed, chaotic and a capitalist machine (Shlakman 96-97, Plourde-Barker 63). This was a powerful shift and one which impacted Bellamy profoundly. Nothing points this out more vividly than Bellamy's earlier efforts @re-looking Backward) to write a utopian novel. With various titles, but most often referred to as Eliot Carson, Bellamy's main character, following the advice of Thoreau, leaves his job as a well-paid mill worker to cultivate himself in a transcendental sense "...to enlarge his mind, develop the chords of sympathy and to pulsate with the rhythm of infinity" (Aaron 97).

In sum, Bellamy concluded in Equality that there was a better way to reach utopia. It was not to be the large city, it was not to be built on a historical continuity, it was not necessary to have a sense of place and it was not to be iconic. Rather it was to be the small villages connected by technology
where industry and agriculture were in ordered balance. Bellamy glanced backward in *Equality*.

Conclusions

Given the range and evolution of Bellamy's ideas, what sort of conclusions can be drawn? Is Bellamy an urban utopian, a pastoral romantic, or is he promoting an altogether new form of community? It is a difficult question to answer. As Henderson has written: "That *Looking Backward* is still in need of explanation after more than seventy years of study and influence is clear from the fact that many objections to the novel . . . at the time of its appearance have not abated" (Henderson 199). Perhaps Aaron is correct: "... Bellamy belongs among the first planners who wanted to ruralize the city and urbanize the country, to stop the unwholesome exodus from the farms and to preserve the regional outlook" (125). Bellamy manages to communicate a sense of this kind of balance by stressing the theme of connected contrasts in both books: Individual freedom (choice) requires social duty (the industrial army); personal and private space is due to public ownership; the city is decentralized while the countryside reinvigorated and there is abundance but only if society practices restraint. In some ways, then, Bellamy's "message" becomes a simple one about the "great middle"; the middle class, the middle ground and the middle taste. Bellamy called this the "middle power" and foresaw, in a theoretical sense, the need to balance the realities of nineteenth century urban life with his recollections of pastoral simplicity.

Still, this is in some ways a problematic conclusion, as no single Bellamy text supports it outright. If one looks at *Looking Backward* on its own merits, it reads as a book that advocates an urban utopia. If one looks at *Equality* alone, it reads as a book that prefigures the village ideals common to Kropotkin (1974). If one reads both books as a set, one can see that Bellamy is interested in developing a planned and balanced settlement pattern in a technologically driven, regional context. Finally, if one examines Bellamy's writings outside of the two books, his values are pastoral, pre-industrial and reflective of a small, scattered pattern of self-sustaining villages and are clearly anti-urban (Morgan 94). Given the above, it is easy to understand why a comprehensive explanation of Bellamy's thoughts on community has yet to emerge.

In a final analysis it would appear that Bellamy concluded that the city, as a form of community, was beyond salvation. It was too wasteful, too built up, too chaotic and too unchangeable in a political sense. In the words of the historian Oscar Handlin: "The machine, the factory and the city merged into a single entity, oppressive of man" (Handlin 323). Given that utopia required the embracing of new cultural ideals, the accepting of new technologies and the achieving of the highest possible quality of life, there was no choice: Bellamy clearly had to develop a new community form. Bellamy became a regionalist whose ideas are reflective of those of Robert
Owen, Charles Fourier and Etienne Cabet (Choay, The Modern City 7). His ideas also reflect, as Segal has noted, a balanced perspective where small cities and villages, farms and factories and the individual and the community can peacefully coexist ("Bellamy and Technology" 94).

Regardless of how one interprets Bellamy, however, there is still the question of the influence of his writings in planning history and utopian thought. Does Bellamy belong in our pantheon of important early contributors to our disciplines? Is Bellamy important today as we face a new century? In both cases the answer is yes. The basis for this position can be noted below.

In terms of planning and utopian thought, Bellamy's contributions are extremely important. Above all, his influence on the early ideas of Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City Movement were profound (Batchelor 196). In fact, Howard credits his reading of Bellamy's Looking Backward as the single event that made him an activist for community reform (Fishman 34). Bellamy's writings were equally as important in terms of the ideas and concepts that led to the City Beautiful Movement (Ciucci et al 58). His influence was also profound in influencing the creation of the New Deal and even the Tennessee Valley Authority. Finally, his writings have had a profound impact on such theorists as Veblen, Sinclair, Dewey and even John Maynard Keynes. In short, as Thomas noted, his legacy is still with us (Alternative America, 354–365).

Bellamy's writings, in terms of utopian thought, provide us a set of abstract warnings and concerns about how we plan as well as pragmatic concepts that are worthy of re-examination today. In terms of warnings, there is his almost facile rejection of democracy: In order to achieve utopia one must limit participation in governmental affairs to those with experience in his Industrial Army. There is, at least in Looking Backward, no room for popular democracy. His call for a cold, disciplined, rigorous bureaucracy with overtones of the Prussian Army was, in the words of Gronlund, "a dangerous militarism" (Spann 203). This sense of control did not allow for the avant garde, the counter-culture or the unique. In short, Bellamy warns us that discipline, order, top down decision making and disenfranchisement are the means and the price for utopia (Spann 208).

Bellamy also suggests that utopia can only be achieved if we replace capitalism with cooperation (state socialism). He believed that the moral force of equality in all of its aspects would be sufficient to cause us to reject our nineteenth (and twentieth) century systems. The idea has some appeal. However, when one realizes that it is "compulsory cooperatism" then, quite quickly, it takes on a totalitarian patina (Lipow 33). Individual rights, the desire to compete and the hope of gain from personal initiatives have little place in his utopia. The warning he provides is that utopia will require a monopoly of all industry, state control and a militaristic production environment.

Further, there is Bellamy's complete acceptance of technology as a critical element in leading us to the new society. His industrial army and his overwhelming enthusiasm for technology prefigured the approaches of America's twentieth century industrial planners. In fact, there is a seemingly direct
connection between Bellamy's writings and the concepts of Frederick Winslow Taylor, the father of scientific management (Thomas 355). While few of us would ever espouse actions that would blunt technological progress, almost all of us are concerned with the control of technology in society. From Albert Speer to Dwight Eisenhower, among others, we have been warned about the dangers of technology in the hands of the few. Even Bellamy, despite his overwhelming acceptance of the positive attributes of technology, was aware of the dangers. For example, he noted that within two generations of the wholesale development of steam power, its use was largely controlled by a relatively few businesses and a centralized government (Spann 203). In sum, we need to read Bellamy quite carefully: Perfection comes with a price.

Finally there are several pragmatic ideas from Bellamy's writings that are relevant today. These range from a requirement to guarantee that the basic needs of sustenance, shelter, medical assistance, education and job opportunities are met to insuring that technological advances (i.e.: communication, computers, medicine) are distributed as quickly and broadly as possible to all citizens. These ideas, according to Bellamy, can only be met by governments that have a clear vision, reinforce the notion of the "public good," carefully plan and commit to the purpose of re-distributing the national wealth. Given the focus of planning today and its acceptance by our citizens, we are far from accomplishing Bellamy's intent. The quest will continue.

Bellamy's ideas were not so abstract, so futuristic or so different from the present that his readers viewed it as total fantasy. Rather, they were connected to a known past and present and were, based upon the thinking of the time, plausible. Indeed, Mumford noted that Bellamy's vision had been partially realized (159). Ida Tarbell was equally positive: "... Of all of the known utopias... none has ever been so substantial, so realistic, so seemingly practical" (Madison 154). And even the social radical Elizabeth Gurley Flynn exalted at the results of Bellamy's work: "One marvels on rereading it, over sixty years after it was written, how much of what he prophesied has come to pass" (Flynn 48). Perhaps most importantly, his vision is still being examined in university class rooms today (Golden 27).

Neither were Bellamy's concepts unique. One can trace their roots to other earlier utopians. However, after all is written, it is Bellamy's comprehensive vision of a changed society where social and economic equality has been achieved, where a process of peaceful change has been delineated, where opportunities are expanded and where planning plays a critical moral role in a changing society that is important. This vision, coupled with the influence that he had on many of our key early thinkers, is cause to place him in our pantheon of important early planning and utopian theorists.
REFERENCES


