Looking Backward: 2000-1887 Study Guide

Looking Backward: 2000-1887 by Edward Bellamy

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Contents

Introduction

Looking Backward: 2000-1887, published in the United States in 1888, created an international sensation associated with very few other books in history. The author, Edward Bellamy, although a prolific writer of short stories, essays, and novels, is remembered almost solely for this utopian novel. The premise of the story is that Julian West, a privileged citizen of 1887 Boston, awakes from a 113-year trance-induced sleep to discover that the majority of the world enjoys peace, prosperity, and equality.

Bellamy, a sensitive man keenly aware of the injustices and inequities of nineteenth-century culture, uses *Looking Backward* to espouse his views on social and economic reform. There is the barest of plots, little character development, and virtually no action. The book consists almost entirely of conversations between West and his hosts that reveal how the "perfect" society works. Despite the literary flaws, the strength of Bellamy's ideas attracted a worldwide audience. Not only his nationalized system of labor and commerce, but also his technological predictions and his attempt to treat women equally stirred great debate. Within a few years after its publication, there were over 160 "Bellamy Clubs" around the United States promoting the Nationalism that Bellamy proposed.

Aligned with the Populist party, the Nationalist movement affected legislation and labor relations until its demise during the Spanish-American War. By 1900, the book had been translated into more than twenty languages and had sold more copies than any other American book except *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It was the second book to sell over a million copies. Dozens of other utopian novels followed in its wake, but social commentators continue to rank *Looking Backward* as second only to Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* in world influence.

Author Biography

Born on March 26, 1850, in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, Edward Bellamy was the third son of a Baptist minister and a Calvinist mother. He came from a long line of New England families going back two centuries. His outspoken father, Reverend Rufus King Bellamy, and his well-educated mother, Maria Putnam, taught him the morality, work ethic, and social justice that marked his works. Although Bellamy would espouse no religious beliefs in later life, he maintained the tenets of optimism, humanitarianism, and sense of commitment that he learned in childhood.

Bellamy's birthplace was a mill town where he observed the disparity between the harshness of life for the laborers and the decadence of the wealthy. By age ten, he had started writing essays on social reform. At the age of seventeen, after failing to pass the physical examination for entrance into West Point, Bellamy took up studies at Union College in Schenectady, New York. He also studied in Germany for a year and observed the desperation of urban life throughout his European travels. He passed the bar exam with distinction in 1871. However, Bellamy was so disillusioned when his first and only case required him to evict a widow, that he immediately abandoned the law to become a newspaper editor.

Bellamy married Emma Sanderson in 1882, and they had two children: a son, Paul, in 1884 and a daughter, Marion, in 1886. Forced by ill health to give up his editorial career, Bellamy devoted himself to writing. By 1888, he had published 30 short stories in prominent magazines and four novels. His sensitive awareness of the social problems of his times, including strikes, destitute tenement life, and exploitative greed, drove him to write *Looking Backward* in an effort to bring about reforms. This book, though not a skilled literary work, gained international fame and influence. "Bellamy Clubs" sprang up across the country as people engaged in debate over social issues. While the accompanying political movement did not last much beyond 1895, many attitudes and laws were changed forever in American life.

From that point on, Bellamy was primarily occupied by lecture tours and other speaking engagements. In 1891, he founded a Boston newspaper, the *New Nation* to be his mouthpiece, but increasing illness forced him to suspend publication before long. However, in response to criticism of *Looking Backward*, Bellamy published a sequel entitled *Equality* in 1897. This novel, with even less plot and more theory than its predecessor, was not well received and had little impact. By the end of his career, Bellamy had written over 500 articles and was recognized for his psychological and speculative short stories and novels. He died of complications of tuberculosis and digestive disorders on May 22, 1898.

Plot Summary

Chapters One-Two

The first two chapters of *Looking Backward* are used to introduce the main character and narrator, Julian West. Although he addresses the audience in the year 2000, he reveals that he was born in 1857. He follows that announcement with an explanation of the culture of the late nineteenth century, using an analogy in which he compares the social structure to that of a coach being pulled by the masses while certain people sit on top. He admits that, as a member of the privileged class of Boston society, he was one of those riding instead of pulling the coach. His story begins in 1887 when he is thirty years old and planning to marry a wealthy woman named Edith Bartlett. Their wedding is delayed because multiple labor strikes impede construction of their new house. A chronic insomniac distressed by these circumstances, West calls upon a mesmerist to induce sleep with a trance. Doctor Pillsbury instructs his servant to visit West's underground bed chamber, built to keep out disturbing noises, and wake him the next morning.

Chapters Three-Seven

West awakens 113 years later. His chamber is discovered by Dr. Leete and his daughter, Edith, while inspecting a construction site in their back yard. It seems that his house burned down, killing his servant, and leaving others to assume that he perished in the fire. West finds it hard to believe that it is the year 2000 until he goes up to the housetop and sees familiar landmarks in a Boston that has changed very much. Dr. Leete explains that there is no longer any private commerce, for all people work in the Industrial Army commanded by the government. The nation is the sole capitalist and there are no more states, political parties, or politicians. Leete claims that there is no motive to be corrupt and no profit or misuse of power possible. All citizens work three years in manual labor, then choose a career.

Chapters Eight-Twelve

On the second day, West awakens early, confused and distressed. He takes a walk through Boston and fears losing his mind. But Edith comforts and calms him. He begins asking questions again, based on the changes he saw in the streets. He learns that no money is used, for there is an entirely different system for the distribution of goods. Instead, people use credit cards for transactions, and each citizen is given the same amount of credit to spend. Edith takes him shopping at the neighborhood store, where all goods are samples and the same as that in every other ward. Orders are placed and the actual item is immediately sent to the buyer's house. Upon their return, Edith introduces him to their piped-in music. The conversation with Dr. Leete turns to matters of inheritance, housekeeping done by the public, and the practice of medicine. Then the

system of apprenticeships, grades, and ranks in the Industrial Army are explained, as well as the care of those who, because of infirmity, cannot work.

Chapters Thirteen-Fifteen

Each day, West is introduced to new facets of contemporary culture. On the morning of the third day, he awakens to a musical alarm clock and has a strange dream about the Alhambra. His first conversation is about the trade system with other countries. Edith then takes him to their library where he reads Dickens. That evening, he takes his first trip to the community dining hall, using covered sidewalks in the rain. He discovers that, while home life is simple, public buildings are magnificent. Following dinner, the conversation is an explanation of the publishing system, the creation of periodicals by subscription, and the election of editors.

Chapters Sixteen-Eighteen

West pays a visit on the fourth day to the central warehouse with Dr. Leete. He is told that he will be given a position as a lecturer on the nineteenth century at the university. The conversation turns to the system of government and the election of the president and other officials. He also learns about the pursuits of retirement after the age of forty-five, and the fact that there are no professional sports.

Chapters Nineteen-Twenty

On a morning walk on the fifth day, West notices that the state prison is gone. This discovery leads to a conversation that explains the legal system of the year 2000. There are no jails because the criminally inclined are treated in hospitals. There also is no lying, no lawyers or judges, no states, and no legislators. That afternoon, West visits his old chamber with Edith and tells her something about his former life.

Chapters Twenty-one-Twenty-three

For his tour on the sixth day, Dr. Leete takes West to the city's schools and colleges, and they discuss the free educational system available to citizens until they reach the age of twenty-one. West notices how healthy everyone appears in this improved world. The after-dinner conversation covers the state of business and the national wealth. That evening, West tries to no avail to extract from Edith a secret he knows she is keeping from him.

Chapters Twenty-four-Twenty-seven

After sharing papers from his own time with Dr. Leete, West learns that the labor parties gave way to a benevolent national party that supervises all activities. He then asks

about the place of women in society and learns that they are also in the Industrial Army. However, they have segregated jobs and have no chance for the highest positions of leadership. Nonetheless, they are given the same credits as men, so they are in no way dependent upon a husband for support. Consequently, marriages are all "love matches," with the women being most attracted to the men with the highest work ethic and social conscience. The seventh day being a Sunday, West inquires about church services and learns that one can listen to a sermon broadcast to the homes. A lengthy sermon follows that praises the changes of the twentieth century and declares that society is on the verge of heaven itself. That afternoon, West confesses his love for Edith and is gratified to find that she returns his affections. He then learns that she is the great-granddaughter of his fiancée in 1887.

Chapter Twenty-eight

West awakens the next day to find himself back in his bedchamber in 1887. Stunned by the change, he wanders around the streets of Boston and is appalled by what he sees. Eventually, he makes his way to his fiancée's house, where he interrupts an elaborate dinner. When he tries to explain his revulsion to the 1887 state of affairs, the guests are angered and start to throw him out. At that point, he really wakes up to find himself back in the year 2000. The novel ends with an expression of his tremendous gratitude for his good fortune at being in the "golden century."

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The chapter begins as the narrator says, "I first saw the light in the city of Boston in the year 1857." The speaker asserts that there has been no mistake. He did not mean 1957, but was correct in giving the date of a hundred years ago. While noting how strange his words might be, the narrator goes on to discuss the social and class standing of Boston in the mid-19th century. He claims that the society is deeply divided into the classes consisting of the rich and educated, to which he belonged, and the poor and uneducated. The narrator freely admits that his great grandfather had made a great sum of money. Now the interest for the money continues to multiply their wealth, and he does not have to work at all. Using an analogy of a coach pulled by people, the narrator makes the point that the wealthy class sits on top of the coach and enjoys the life they lead because of the labor of the people pulling below. He does, however, note that the people on top are always in fear of some strange circumstance pulling them off and causing them to lose their position. Because of this fear, they are constantly shouting encouragement to the people below. Their very fear of losing their position at the top is the only thing that kept them compassionate towards those who labor below.

The well-to-do Boston narrator comments that at the age of thirty in the year 1887, he was engaged to be married to Edith Bartlett, a young woman from a wealthy family, but their marriage was delayed because the house he was building was not completed due to labor strikes. Asking for better wages and shorter workdays and making demands for certain standards of living, many of the workers were striking. The rich said that there would always be poor people since that was the nature of the world. Others suggested that the discontent of the poorer working classes would cause a social apocalypse. Still others commented that the world was cyclical in nature and that the problems with the working class would never be resolved by any straight, linear improvements. The narrator is aware that his frustration with the workers because they were delaying his marriage colored his judgment about their plight.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The division between the rich and poor is delineated, with particular regard to the labor strikes in the construction and building industries. The social stratification structure that the narrator describes is important in that it provides a contrast to the system that is depicted in later chapters. The literary device of an unreliable narrator, one who can't be trusted to give unbiased information about the story, is used. Often, narrators who protest their "saneness" or "believability" have some issue that might make them unreliable.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

On the last day of May in 1887, the narrator attends a "Decoration Day" memorial service with his fiancye, Edith, and her family. Upon the return of the family, the protagonist reads of another new labor strike and engages those around him in a discussion about the difficulties of such issues. He tries to convince Edith to marry him now without waiting for the completion of the house, offering to travel until their house is ready. He kisses her goodnight and remarks that neither of them had any idea that this was anything more than a routine and very brief separation.

The narrator (as yet unnamed) returns to his long-time family home, a large wooden mansion this is in an area no longer stylish or desirable. He is the only one left in his family and lives in the home with one servant, a colored man named Sawyer. The house is advertised for sale, as it is not appropriate for a young bride like Edith. Since the protagonist suffers from prolonged and frequent insomnia, he has built a special sleeping chamber below ground that allows him to avoid the noises and light from the city. The sleeping chamber has cement walls and is roofed with stone slabs. The door is iron, and fresh air is brought in through a small pipe connected to a windmill on top of the house. Even in this soundproof chamber, however, the narrator cannot sleep on this particular night, and he sends Sawyer, the servant, to call in Dr. Pillsbury. Dr. Pillsbury is not a real doctor but is so named because he practices mesmerism. Sawyer has trouble finding Dr. Pillsbury because the mesmerist is just getting ready to move to another city, but finally, the doctor comes to the sleeping chamber and helps the narrator to sleep by using his mesmerizing talents.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The description of the sleeping chamber can be believed because the narrator has previously admitted to the extreme wealth of his family. He has the means to construct a facility such as this. The detailed description of the chamber is essential to the credibility of the rest of the book.

The themes of labor unrest and the division between the rich and the poor are emphasized through the narrator's frustration with the delays on the construction of his house caused by labor strikes.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

The opening lines of Chapter 3 are voices whispering to each other. One voice is male, and the other is female. The woman's voice is urging that "he" won't be told. A man promises "not to tell him." The narrator wakes to see a man and a strange room. The man assures the narrator that he's being well taken care of, but the man will not answer questions as to how the narrator got there or what time it is. When the man asks the narrator what the last thing he remembers is, the narrator tells him about the Decoration Day ceremony in the year 1887. The strange man soothes him and warns him about getting alarmed over what he has to say before telling the narrator that the date is now September of the year 2000. The narrator has been asleep for 113 years. The narrator thinks he's the victim of a practical joke, but upon discussion with the strange man, he learns that he has actually been in a trance state, which has preserved his organs and his body. The narrator was discovered when the man began construction of a new laboratory next to his house. The workers found a vault-like room in the corner of the foundation of an old house. The concrete vault was intact although it was covered by a thick layer of ashes. At first glance, the man in the vault was thought to be dead, but upon close inspection, it was found that he was in a trance.

When the narrator expresses his disbelief, the man takes him up to the rooftop to look out at the city, showing him that the city is not at all like the Boston of 1887. The narrator begins to accept that a strange thing, indeed, has happened to him.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The concept of the unreliable narrator again surfaces. If the narrator of the story has been asleep for more than a century, is his story credible? The details given as to the state of society, the narrator's own standing in society and his personal sleeping chamber are important for the unfolding of the plot.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

The narrator is shocked by what he sees but accepts the circumstances. The strange man who has befriended the narrator introduces himself as Dr. Leete, informing him that the last century has brought about as many important changes as many millenniums have produced. At last, the narrator identifies himself as Julian West and learns that Dr. Leete has built a house on Julian's property. Julian has a bath and is given fresh clothing, and he is so excited by his state that he doesn't focus on the loss of his past at all. Instead, he and Dr. Leete begin an exchange of information. Julian comments that the most noticeable difference in the landscape is the absence of chimneys. In general, however, he remarks that the city demonstrates such material prosperity.

Dr. Leete begins to explain to Julian that the old system of industry, along with the focus on "excessive individualism" kept the country in a state of general poverty. In the past century, all extra wealth was spent on private luxury instead of the welfare of the city. Before continuing the discussion, Dr. Leete introduces Julian to his wife and daughter. Julian West is immediately aware of Dr. Leete's daughter, who he describes as "the most beautiful girl I have ever seen," and who, in a strange twist of fate, is named Edith.

Even though the situation is a very strange one, the conversation and relationships between the Leete family and Julian West are comfortable, reassuring and without strain. Edith is fascinated by Julian West, and the doctor and his wife are intensely interested and curious about him. Julian supposes that the layer of ash above his sleeping chamber indicates that the house burned down above him. He imagines that Sawyer died in the fire and that since no one else knew about his sleeping chamber, with the exception of Dr. Pillsbury, who had moved to a different city, no one had come looking for him, assuming that he had died in the fire. Since the site had not been built on directly, no one discovered him until Dr. Leete began work on the open lot next to his home.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Details and the theory of a house fire make Julian West's survival 113 years later more believable and acceptable, at least to the reader willing to suspend disbelief. The strange situation of Julian's century-long sleep will allow the author to explore the connection between the past and the future. Meanwhile, the coincidence of Edith's name and Julian's comment on her beauty foreshadow a future relationship between the two.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Julian does not want to be left alone because he knows the bizarre nature of his circumstances will stress him and bring him enormous emotional pain if he thinks about it. When Dr. Leete suggests that Julian stay awake a little longer to talk, Julian is relieved. Dr. Leete assures him that when he is ready to retire, he will gladly give Julian a sleeping medication to help ease his strife. Julian begins conversation by asking about the Boston of the year 2000 and about the labor question in particular.

Dr. Leete says that the labor question no longer exists, and he asks if Julian saw any signs of the crisis that was approaching when he fell asleep in 1887. Julian admits to recognizing that trouble was brewing, as evidenced by the strikes and the general discontent of the laboring classes. Urged by Dr. Leete's questioning, Julian says that the strikes were made effective by the labor organizations. Dr. Leete tells Julian that the problem with the labor movement of the previous century was that it concentrated power in the hands of those with the most capital and divided the small working men from the powerful employers. This caused the workers to have to band together to have a voice. "Corporate tyranny," as Leete calls it, only worsened as larger and larger conglomerates took over small businesses until eventually, no small business could survive. The larger the conglomeration, the more it could fix prices and destroy competition. Eventually, the nation itself took over the running of business and profit venture. Once the government controlled the commerce, the profits could be shared with the entire country, sharing the wealth with the nation and using the profits to beautify the land and communities and to sustain all the people. The people, in the form of the government, now conduct their business as one entity.

Julian is amazed at what Dr. Leete describes and suggests that for such a drastic change to occur, a horrible war or loss of life must have occurred. Dr. Leete claims that no violence whatsoever took place. He says that when people saw large companies making more revenues than states and effectively managing thousands of people, the idea of large corporations began to be accepted. The nation then consolidated the business of the few major corporations, following the proven strategy that "the larger the business, the simpler the principles that can be applied to it."

Chapter 5 Analysis

The plot of the novel which ties together more than a hundred years allows for the presentation of two social theories: the one of the novel's past and the one of the novel's present. In the Boston of 2000, the nation is the people. Government coordinates and monitors all functions for the good of the population. Essentially, the novel is describing a change from a capitalist system, which ultimately leads to monopolies, to a socialist/communist one, where the government takes over the

capitalist monopolies and uses the profits to improve society. This is a utopian vision of the future.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Julian's is overwhelmed by the idea that the government manages all business for the entire nation, arguing that in the 1800s, the government's function was to keep the peace and protect the people against enemies. Dr. Leete asks Julian whether the enemies of the people are other countries or hunger, cold and nakedness.

Still trying to fathom the new political situation to which he has awakened, Julian asks how such a system can work knowing that public officials are often corrupt. Dr. Leete explains that political parties no longer exist, and because individuals no longer have to quest after private wealth, corruption is eliminated.

Julian returns to the labor question, prodding Dr. Leete to give an answer about how the issue was resolved. When the country took over the capital of the nation and became the sole employer, each person became an employee and was expected to work. Every citizen now contributes, in his or her own way, to the good of the country. Dr. Leete explains that people think this is a natural and beneficial arrangement. Instead of feeling forced to work, they contribute because that provides a way for them to exist within the community. Without providing some type of service, a person would have no way to exist. Because there is now a fair and equitable distribution of labor of all sorts of jobs, the average working life of a person is substantially shorter than it was in Julian's century. In the Boston of 2000, each person provides a service to the country for twenty-four years, beginning at the age of twenty-one and ending at the age of forty-five, leaving time for education and youth, and relaxation and old age. The fifteenth day of October every year is Muster Day, when the new workers come in and the old ones go out.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Every argument for why this system cannot work is presented through Julian West and his understanding of the social, political and economic situation of America in the 19th century. His questions reflect the challenges that a modern day westerner would have of any system that is significantly different from the present one. Dr. Leete is an advocate for a system that might seem tyrannical because the government controls everything, but in theory, it is more democratic than the Boston of 1887 because it benefits all the people.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

The discussion between Dr. Leete and Julian continues, now delving into the topic of how each person is able to serve the country for the common good. Education is intellectual, and manual training is given in multiple fields. Students have experiences in workshops and farms and take frequent trips to different industry functions. Students are exposed to many different occupations and have the chance to choose what they have an interest and an aptitude in. Julian asks how there can always be the right number of people for a particular trade. The government, Dr. Leete explains, is in charge of making sure that the supply of volunteers always equals the demand. If there's a great influx to one trade, then it's because that trade is deemed more attractive than others. If an occupation doesn't have enough volunteers, than it's because it's not as attractive as others. The government, then, must "equalize" each vocation. One that is perceived as harder might be adjusted by having shorter workdays. The workers themselves determine the requirements of the job. If a job exists that no one would volunteer for, then the government takes it out of the common labor pool and labels it as extra hazardous, allowing men to serve for honor. Because the government needs its workers, it takes special care to preserve the safety and welfare of all the people no matter what the vocation or profession.

Julian asks Dr. Leete how people are accepted into each trade. Dr. Leete explains that preference is given to those with the most knowledge. If an opening isn't available, a man has two or three other options that he has an aptitude for. Secondary occupation choices are important in the system because it guarantees that there is always some way to serve. However, a person who wants to prove his ability in a particular field will eventually have a chance to do so. The government does reserve the right to draft people from other areas into a trade that does not have enough volunteers, but that usually doesn't happen because there is also a class of unskilled or common laborers who can meet extra demands.

All new recruits belong to this pool of common laborers for the first three years of their working life, with no exceptions. After the first three years, each person is able to choose the trade or profession of his choice. If a person goes into a field and finds he doesn't like it, he can then request a different industry, and he is also able to request transfers to any different area of the country within the same field.

Julian continues to discuss the division and distribution of labor under the national system by asking Dr. Leete how it is determined whether a man is a manual laborer or a professional man who utilizes his brain instead of his body. The solution, Dr. Leete explains, is based on academic schooling. After three years as a common laborer, anyone can enter the professional schools, and because they are so rigorous, no one tries to go to school to avoid work, as Julian suggests might happen. If anyone cannot meet the academic standards of the schools, he is freely allowed to return to the

industrial trades without any kind of dishonor. The schools require stringent testing and are open to any worker from the age of twenty-four until the age of thirty.

Dr. Leete avoids Julian's fervent question about the adjustment of wages since it is after three a.m. and provides him with a glass of wine with medication in it to make him sleep.

Chapter 7 Analysis

The theme of society's evolution over the past one hundred years continues as the basis of the novel. Dr. Leete is the spokesperson for the modern world, and he discusses the advantages of a government-run economy. Issues of wages, social class, education and the satisfaction and emotional fulfillment of the citizens are emphasized. The action of the story is based on discussion and conversation between Dr. Leete and Julian West.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

When Julian awakes, he thinks of his Decoration Day outing with his fiancye, Edith, and of his 11:00 meeting with the builder of his home. As he sits up, he realizes that he is not in his own room and is confused. He searches for clues to his own identity in this room, and eventually he remembers that he is no longer living in 1887, but has been thrust into the year 2000. Julian West is emotionally distraught now that he realizes the severity of his situation, and because he is no longer existing on the adrenaline, strangeness and curiosity of his initial arousal from sleep. To keep from losing his mental stability, he leaves the house and walks through the city. He recognizes only a few of the old landmarks. He is, indeed, in Boston, but it is an entirely different city than it was in his time. He returns to the home of Dr. Leete, which being on the property of his original home, he comes to by habit.

Julian's early morning walk has left him almost in a state of despair and mental torment until Edith walks in, offering her help, her sympathy and her compassion. She makes Julian to promise never to try to deal with his strange circumstances on his own, but to always ask for help from her or her parents. While she promises to always feel as sorry for him as he would like, she also makes it a point to tell him that she's really glad that he's here. She says that he's sure to feel the same way once he discovers how wonderful the city and their society is.

Chapter 8 Analysis

The romantic connection between Julian and Edith Leete is advanced by her finding him alone in the early morning, distressed about the strange turn of his life. His promise to let her family help him through his uncertainty clears the way for future emotional connection between them. There is a subtle irony in that her name is the same as Julian's fiancye of a century ago.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Dr. and Mrs. Leete are surprised that Julian has wandered over the city by himself. When they comment that he must have found the venture interesting, Julian asks about the absence of the merchants and bankers. Dr. Leete informs him that because money is no longer dispensed or acquired on a personal basis, there is no need for bankers.

When Julian asks about the merchants, the Leetes explain that things are no longer purchased, but are acquired through large distribution centers. Each citizen receives a yearly credit on a card, and whatever he needs is then acquired at a distribution center where the total of the goods is marked off. The amount of credit extended to each person is more than most people need, so that their needs are always met. On the rare occasions when circumstances cause a person to overspend his yearly credit amount, he can get an advance against the next year. If a person constantly proves to be a spendthrift, then his credit will be provided on a monthly or weekly basis. If a person doesn't spend his yearly amount, overages go back into the central fund.

Julian's response to Dr. Leete's explanation is that this system doesn't encourage savings, and Dr. Leete agrees. Since the status of society, its workers and its economy used to be so unstable, people needed to save as a safeguard against the collapse of the labor market or against tragedies and illnesses. Now, however, no such safeguards are necessary since society is a totally stable entity guaranteeing the ample provision for and maintenance of each citizen.

Julian, in disbelief, asks how this kind of stability is possible, if surely some men are working harder than others. He continues to ask Dr. Leete how the nation adjusts the wages of the different vocations and trades. Dr. Leete understands Julian's uncertainty about the system because he understands how the old system worked, knowing that it was based only on private interests and that competition was an essential ingredient to the economy of the Boston of 1887. Dr. Leete, however, informs Julian that in the modern-day system, there simply isn't a way to equate the old-fashioned terms "wages" and "pay." Julian continues to ask how the government determines what each man "earns" as a credit. Dr. Leete informs him that each person gets the same amount no matter what his vocation, trade or profession.

Several criticisms of this system spring to Julian's lips. He asks Dr. Leete what happens when one man does twice the work of others, or when their talents are nothing alike. The Boston of 2000, Dr. Leete remarks, only expects that each man do his best and provide the service that he is capable of giving. "....the amount of the resulting product has nothing whatever to do with the question, which is one of desert." Dr. Leete has a hard time understanding Julian's philosophy that the man who produces twice as much should have more. The philosophy of the Boston of the year 2000 is that any man

should willingly give as much as he is able and should be punished if he does anything less.

When Julian wonders that human nature has changed so much, Dr. Leete says that human nature hasn't changed at all. Instead, there are still special incentives for the population and prizes given to encourage the best effort. Dr. Leete argues that not all men are motivated only by fear of poverty or the love of luxury, and that instead, men can be inspired to work harder by honor, hope and patriotism. The coarser motivations of the late 19th century have been replaced by the higher motives.

Edith interrupts their discussion by announcing to her father that she is going to go shopping. Since Julian has been interested in this system, Dr. Leete suggests that he accompanies Edith on the venture, and Julian happily agrees.

Chapter 9 Analysis

The social structure of the Boston of the year 2000 continues to be illuminated and glorified by Dr. Leete and his family. Julian represents the questions and obstacles of the "old order" and the problems that would underlie such a revolutionary new system of governing. The criticisms Julian makes are always explained away and illustrated not to be a problem at all. The creation of a utopian society is the continuing theme.

The relationship between Julian and Edith continues to grow. Sections that focus on the attraction between Edith and Julian alternate with chapters of discussion about the characteristics of the modern Boston between Dr. Leete and Julian.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Edith begins to question Julian about his old-fashioned way of shopping, asking how, if faced with numerous merchants, a woman ever knew which shop to go into. Julian admits that women in his time would often go from shop to shop to shop to find goods, and he confesses that while the busy people often lamented the loss of time, the idle rich often used shopping as a way to fill their time. People often didn't get their money's worth if they didn't have time to shop around, and the livelihood of the merchants was based on selling customers things they didn't necessarily need.

Edith takes Julian into the local distribution center, a beautiful public building where goods are laid out with easy access. Each product is tagged with all the information needed, eliminating the need for sales clerks. The function of the clerks is simply to process the order with politeness and accuracy. After the clerk takes Edith's order, he gives her a duplicate copy and then sends one copy through a tube. Edith explains that each store has the exact same inventory as every other store. She may shop wherever she wants, but she usually does it close to home. Since the inventory is the same everywhere, there's no advantage to going elsewhere. The stores are all sample stores, places where the goods can be viewed, touched and sampled, but the actual purchase comes from a central warehouse and is delivered to the city district and then to individual homes. When Julian asks how this system works in outlying rural areas, Edith admits that they sometimes have to wait several hours for delivery of goods because not every town has its own set of tubes, but that this is being remedied.

As Julian and Edith walk home, Julian asks about the differences in the size and workmanship of the houses. Edith explains that even though each person is allotted the same amount of income, people are still free to spend it in different ways. Some spend it on the rent for a luxurious home. Others spend it on clothes or goods. When she asks if it's true that people used to keep up houses they couldn't afford just to impress their neighbors, he admits that this is true.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Edith, like her father, asserts the value of the economic/governmental structure of 2000, continuing the theme of a utopia. The relationship between Edith and Julian continues to develop as they accompany each other on a shopping outing and engage in conversations involving questions and answers about the lifestyle and habits that each one is familiar with.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

After the shopping trip, Edith and Julian return home. Edith asks if Julian would like to hear some music. Thinking that she will sing or play for him, Julian enthusiastically agrees, only to learn that in this new age, music is performed by professionals, those who have acquired the schooling and training for the musical arts. Each room in the household is connected via telephone wires to concert studios throughout the city. Musicians have scheduled hourly performances twenty-four hours a day. The occupants of the household have only to pay a small part of their credit for access to a variety of music twenty-four hours per day. Edith tells Julian that music is available at any time. It is a great solace to the ill or the sleepless, or those working night shifts.

That evening, Julian again has a talk with Dr. Leete and asks about property inheritance. Dr. Leete says that the government does not prohibit inheritance at all. Rather, the citizens themselves much prefer not to accumulate material goods that are of no use to them. It is more of a curse than a blessing to leave a relative things that he doesn't need, since this results in having to use income to rent storage space or have them taken care of. Since nothing is "salable," and since a person's income is stable, there is no need for the accumulation of goods.

Julian is then prodded to ask the question about domestic help, since Dr. Leete has already suggested that people are paid to take care of other households. He asks how they get people to do this if everyone is considered social equals. The very philosophy that everyone is equal enables domestic tasks to be done. All service is good and honorable, and some people's service is to work in the public laundries or to render service in the shops that make and repair clothing. People choose houses no larger than they need, and since personal goods no longer indicate wealth or class, people choose not to have an overabundance of furnishings or goods that would require extra work. Since everyone in the society works, everyone also desires not to create more work, and lots of labor-saving devices are utilized. If renovation of a house is in order, or if there is an extensive cleaning job necessary, the nation provides an industrial force, and their services are taken off the individual's credit card. Dr. Leete points out to Julian that in the old days, it's a miracle that society was able to exist at all since all they worried about was making one another servants and taking goods from each other.

Julian is puzzled about how the labor force works in regard to a physician, since it wouldn't work well to just send out any doctor whatsoever and for the patient to have no continuity of care. Dr. Leete explains that patients can still call for a particular doctor, but the doctor's fee is paid to the government, and the fee is standard for all care. Julian wonders what happens to the "poor" doctors, since the good ones would be called out to patients all the time. Dr. Leete points out that because of the extensive academic and professional training, there really are no bad doctors. Doctors are required to write

regular reports of their activities and calls, and if one is not doing much, the government finds work for him.

Chapter 11 Analysis

The stress between the classes as known in Julian West's day is emphasized by pointing out that only the wealthy could have known much music. Even then, it was often accessible only in mediocre form, performed by novices in their homes. To hear one piece of music that suited your mood, you had to listen for hours to an entire work. The book continues didactically examining a theoretical vision of a perfect society. Sequentially, each aspect of society is explained to Julian, and the possible problems that Julian would have foreseen are explained away.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Grappling with a vastly different way of life than he has known before, Julian continues to question Dr. Leete about the army of industry that drives the nation. He does not understand how workers are motivated if their income and survival is guaranteed. Dr. Leete explains that the system of workers still has incentives in place. The best workers and leaders of the nation have proven themselves by working up through the common laborer system and then through various grades and classes. There are three grades for each work group, with the first grade going to those who have the highest ability and the best individual work records from their apprenticeship. Those receiving the highest grade have the first choice at electing a specialty profession. Those receiving third grade classification often have to take their second or third choice at a specialty. Another incentive is the insignia worn on workers' uniforms. Third grade is symbolized by an iron badge. Second grade wears a silver badge, and first grade wears a gold badge.

Another incentive is that the higher the classification a man achieves, the more special privileges and immunities from discipline he receives. The system, Dr. Leete claims, encourages all workers to be better and allows lower grade workers the chance to move up to higher grades with good work records. Every small merit is awarded by different recognition. No one becomes a leader before the age of thirty. As Julian begins to more thoroughly understand the system, he suggests that perhaps the incentives for the workers are too demanding and would make them too aggressive. Dr. Leete's response is that the work incentives have no bearing on an individual's livelihood and that work - no matter the vocation - always has short hours, guaranteed vacation and definite retirement at the age of forty-five. Dr. Leete also contends that even though the incentive system is in place, the system enforces the idea that all workers are equally deserving because of the common allotment on their credit cards and because all have the chance to earn merit recognition. Men's accomplishments are measured with their talents, so even those less gifted can be assured of recognition for their contributions.

Dr. Leete goes on to explain that the mentally ill or physically incapacitated form an "invalid corps," who offer whatever services they can. When Julian responds that this is an ingenious way to perform charity because they are incapable of self-support, Dr. Leete is offended. He declares that once a society has learned to work together, no such thing as self-support is possible. All men are entitled to a decent life just because they are human, not because they can give a certain amount. Dr. Leete points out that if Julian had a disabled brother, he would most likely care for him and feed him the same as himself, and Julian would not consider it charity. Julian protests that this is a different scenario because a brother by blood is different than a brother just of humanity.

Dr. Leete says that this philosophy is the one idea that clearly differentiates the thinking of the 19th century from that of the 20th century. He says that even in Julian's day,

some citizens stayed at home while the military fought wars for them. The principle is the same with regard to those unable to work for the nation. Dr. Leete suggests to Julian that the most unpleasant aspect of life in the 19th century was the inability of the population to care for those less fortunate. The society did not take the inventions and advancements of the previous century, an inheritance of technologies, away from those who also had inherited the knowledge of the generation before. Dr. Leete also laments to Julian that he is totally unable to understand how the people of Julian's time did jobs where they had no chance of advancement. He wonders how they could even dare to have children in an age where so much was based on poverty, uncertainty and lack of satisfaction.

The chapter ends with a note by Julian which says that until he understood that each citizen was entitled to the same amount of credit for his occupation, whatever it was, he could not appreciate the advantages this system presented to the worker. A person could choose his occupation without concern for how much money he would make, and he would be much more likely to choose something he had a true aptitude for instead of picking a profession just because of the profit he'd make. The advantages of equal education for all workers and training in all fields is an enormous benefit in helping men find work that satisfies them and fits their talents and personalities.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Dr. Leete goes to great lengths to thoroughly explain all the benefits of the modern society, tackling the questions and explanations that Julian requires one by one. His logic is sound, and his speech so educated that Julian is won over at each point. Further, Dr. Leete's responses are supported by what Julian sees around him in this imagined future.

It is important to note that the workers and the industrial army are always referred to in the male, as "he," "his," "man" or "men." Since Julian is coming from the Boston of 1887, he would understand and expect this language. To this point of the book, no mention is made of a female component in the workforce.

The note added in by Julian West at the completion of the chapter is in a smaller print and seems an obvious addition after the events. This note also serves as a subtle kind of foreshadowing, warning that Julian has had time to consider his previous thoughts and to go back and make addendums and commentary on his experiences.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

When Julian retires for the night, Dr. Leete goes with him to explain the set-up of the musical telephones, telling him that he'll set the device for eight in the morning. Julian no longer is bothered with insomnia, and he dreams of a banquet hall in Alhambra with harem dancers and Moorish decorations. He awakes to the strains of the Turkish Reveille. After relating his experience to Dr. Leete, Julian discovers that many of the morning's music programs are purposely scheduled to be upbeat and energy-inducing.

Julian and Dr. Leete begin another lengthy discussion about the changes in society that have occurred since Julian's day, with Julian asking how international trade is conducted. Dr. Leete informs Julian that most major countries in the world have formed an alliance organized on the same principles of American economy. There is an international council that oversees transactions. Trade is done without money or currency. Nations import and export goods as the government deems it necessary to the general good. Whatever the nation charges its citizens for a product is exactly the same price that the nation charges other nations. The goal is to have total unification of all nations some day, "the ultimate form of society."

If the accounts of two nations do not balance out in import and export, then one nation might equalize the debt by importing goods for another one. For instance, if the U.S. hadn't exported as much to France as we had imported from them, we might balance out the difference by exporting some of our goods to a nation France had contracted with. Since money does not exist, national staples are utilized for commerce.

Julian asks Dr. Leete about questions of immigration. Since the nations are all operating on the same principles, a person can transfer from one nation to another. In a kind of even trade, if a person moves from one country to another, the native country no longer has to support him, and the country to which he has immigrated gets a worker and issues a credit to the country of the man's origination. For purposes of travel and leisure, the credit cards are good anywhere. They are simply taken to the country's office and exchanged for the same value in the foreign country.

Edith suggests that Julian dine with the family at the Elephant, the public dining facility that offers food for the evening meal. Julian agrees, and in the hours preceding dinner, Edith offers to introduce him to "friends" from his own time. Julian is uncertain about what she means to do, but she takes him to the library where he can read the works of the writers of his own day - his "friends." The first volume he picks up is by Charles Dickens, but each line is made doubly meaningful because of how time has now altered. Dickens' pleas for the poor and impoverished have more meaning to Julian because poverty has now been eliminated. As he reads, Julian remembers a poem by Tennyson that talks about "dipping into the future." When Dr. Leete finds Julian in the library, he notes that both the 19th century man and the 21st century man find Dickens

to be a genius. Dr. Leete especially feels that Dickens understood the trials and misfortunes of the poor man who was trod upon by a cruel and unfair social system.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Edith is anxious to please and soothe Julian by providing for his needs. She offers him camaraderie in the form of books by the authors who were his contemporaries, thus building on the sympathy and compassion between them. The library serves another function when Dr. Leete emphasizes the wrongs of the 19th century society by highlighting Dickens' appeals for the poor and impoverished through literature. Nothing can be seen to be wrong with the Boston of 2000, and according to Dr. Leete and Edith, it is a utopian place without problems.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

During the afternoon, a heavy downpour drenches Boston, and Julian believes that the family will not be able to dine out because of the inclement weather and the impassability of the streets. He is surprised, however, that when the time comes, the women in the family appear without boots or umbrellas. Once outside, he discovers that the streets have all been covered and enclosed by portable awnings. Edith is amazed that it hasn't always been this way. Dr. Leete points out that the difference between the two time periods is that in Julian's time, it was individual interests that mattered, so thousands of individual umbrellas would be raised over thousands of individual heads. In the year 2000, the collective society is the most important concern, so one cover is raised over the collective head.

The family continues on to the dining hall. Like the warehouse where Julian and Edith shopped the day before, the dining hall is a massive, beautiful, luxurious building. Money is spent on public areas that benefit all citizens. The family goes to a small dining room with their name above it. Julian is informed that each family in the ward can have a dining room for a small monthly fee. They call in their order the night before, and the food is prepared and served according to their preferences. Julian observes the waiter and comments that he finds it hard to believe that the young man serves others so agreeably in such a menial position. Dr. Leete is stirred by Julian's obvious inability to grasp the philosophy of the modern day society. No such thing as "menial" labor exists. All service is good as long as it is for the common welfare, and no one occupation is better than others. Dr. Leete is further angered by the whole concept that not only did the society of Julian's time impose what was considered to be unpleasant tasks, but they also held people who did those jobs in contempt, something that is just incomprehensible in current times. Waiters are part of the industrial army, serving in the first three years of general labor. Dr. Leete himself served as a waiter in the same dining hall more than forty years ago.

An additional note is added by Julian to the above chapter, commenting that in his day, young men who worked as waiters for extra money while going to school often had to defend themselves from critics who said they could not be gentlemen if they did that work. Looking back, Julian cannot understand why waiting tables would seem any worse than any other kind of work.

Chapter 14 Analysis

The difference between an individualistic society and a collective one is illustrated. Boston in 1887 was based on private enterprise and individual interests. Boston in 2000 is a collective society, focused on the interests and welfare of society as a whole. The

focus on the common good is reflected in the beauty and magnificence of the public buildings.

The Boston of 2000 as described by Dr. Leete is a utopia indeed. The world is unified in trade and philosophy. No one is in poverty or struggling to be fed or housed. Everyone contributes to the society. Education, music, employment and health care are no longer a concern. Household chores like cooking, cleaning and laundry are done by the industrial army, and every man is truly created equal and treated as such.

A second end-note to the chapter is attached. As in the previous note, this is Julian's commentary on what he has learned about his own age and the changes that occurred in the next century. In this chapter, he reflects on how unfair it was that the young men earning extra money by waiting tables were criticized for their lack of gentlemanly behavior.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

After dinner, the Leete family takes Julian to the library. Mrs. Leete tells Julian that his position is enviable because he has a whole century of great literature to experience for the first time. A footnote in the text appears where Julian comments on the absolute accessibility of the library and the freedom of everyone to read its works, instead of the 19th century system which kept books away from the multitudes and required red tape and effort to get to read them. Both Mrs. Leete and Edith comment on their favorite works, and the discussion leads to questions about the publishing system. Julian comments that government-run publications don't allow for any criticism of the existing social structure, and he needles Mr. Leete by saying that unless your system is truly perfect, such a system cannot be fair and equitable. Mr. Leete agrees that such a statement is true, but he then explains that the government does not control the printing of any publication. Anyone can publish a book, provided the cost of the printing is taken out of the author's credit. However, royalties, the fee which is set by the author, are added back onto the card. An author is exempt from the work force for however long his royalty payments support him. In this way, writers are awarded time to work on future works, and good authors are able to support themselves by their writing instead of remaining in the workforce. The same is true for artists. The population votes on and chooses statues and artworks to hang in public places, and an artist receives royalties for his work. The newspapers and magazines are no longer controlled by the government or by the rich capitalists of Julian's day. Instead, any group of people can band together to form a subscription group. The price of their subscriptions then supports the publishing costs and the editor's salary. Editors are elected by the people who pay subscriptions, and anything can be printed without regard for government policy, since it is funded by the people who support the publication.

The highest reward for any artist, author, engineer, inventor or physician is to be awarded the red ribbon of greatness, chosen by the people's vote. Julian's next question deals with the inability of the average worker to escape work in pursuit of leisure. Dr. Leete agrees that no able-bodied man is now able to shirk working, but he points out that there is a great deal of flexibility in the system for re-education, switching professions or transfer to other locations. Furthermore, if a man wants to get out of the industrial army before the standard age of forty-five, he is able to do so if he agrees to support himself on half the credit that someone who worked longer would receive.

At the end of the evening, Edith brings Julian a book in case he can't sleep. It's by the man she mentioned as her favorite author, Berrian. Julian is enthralled by the novel and stays up until the very early hours reading it. He says that the writers of 1887 would never have been able to write a book without the inclusion of the social ills that existed during his time: poverty, inequality of classes and status based on wealth. However, the modern work he has just read was a rich, powerful story focused only on what hearts and souls can do when not impinged on by artificial constraints of his day. The book by

Barrian helps all that he has learned from Dr. Leete become a unified picture of the world he now inhabits.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Julian continues to voice questions and possible objections to the society he's been awakened to, but Dr. Leete is able to explain everything, showing how there is no difficulty of any kind with the present structure. Julian's objection about the impossibility of a free press if controlled by the government is squelched by Dr. Leete's explanation of the people controlling the publications by election of editors and contribution of subscriptions.

Julian and Edith continue to interact in an interested, sympathetic fashion, as Edith shares her favorite novel with him.

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Awaking early the next morning, Julian goes downstairs only to be met by Edith, who makes several comments about him rushing out to walk on his own. Julian denies that such is his intention. Edith, who has been rising very early every morning to watch out for Julian, tells him that she just wants to make sure that he is over the terrible despair that he experienced when he first came to the Boston of this century and walked the streets on his own. In an emotional admission, Julian claims that she is an angel who saved his reason and mental stability, something he values almost more than life itself. Edith blushes and tells him that she doesn't know how she would have handled it if she were faced with the same circumstances that he is. She points out that his situation is much stranger than theirs is. Because she and her family have previous knowledge of the past, an understanding of history and an awareness of the changes in society, Julian's actions and words make sense to them. They know where he comes from. On the other hand, Julian has not had any previous experience of the future, and everything is different and comes as a surprise to him. He admits that it is much harder to move into the future than to understand the past.

Thinking of the linkages between the past and present, Julian suggests that perhaps he knew Edith's great-grandparents and could give her some insight into their characters. Dr. and Mrs. Leete enter the room, and Edith says that perhaps sometime she'll tell him about her ancestors.

Julian engages the doctor in a discussion, admitting that he knows that he doesn't belong to their society yet and is unsure how to attain official entrance to it. Dr. Leete laughs, admitting that they did not plan for entry into society by any means other than birth or immigration. The doctor assures Julian, however, that even though to this point, he has been sheltered by the Leete family, others are aware of his existence. The discovery of his sleeping form was not secret, and many people want to know more about him. Julian expresses frustration because as a member of the idle rich, he has no skills or training to bring to the industrial army and be supported as a contributing member of society. Dr. Leete tells him that he is the preeminent historian of the 19th century, far exceeding the knowledge of those who have merely read about it. He will be offered a lecturer/historian position at a college, a proposition that relieves and excites Julian.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Julian's integration into this new and exciting culture is more obvious as he admits to Dr. Leete that he is here for good and wants to adjust to his new surroundings by finding his place. The burgeoning relationship between Julian and Edith is highlighted by their emotional discussion of his gratitude to her for saving his sanity on that first dreadful

morning. The plot of the novel continues to shift between focusing on discussion about society between Julian and Dr. Leete and the evolving connection between Edith and Julian.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Dr. Leete takes Julian to the distribution center, and on the way, they discuss how inventories are kept, how production is regulated and how men rise to leadership positions.

Production of goods is based on a simple supply and demand system. Since all products are distributed through a common warehouse system, an exact figure of inventory is always available, and goods are produced or held in stock depending on the inventory. Since figures are updated daily, if an increased demand is demonstrated, more product can be made immediately. Ten departments exist, and each department incorporates various industries. Each department has a leader who is in charge of overseeing the production and inventory of goods. If very few people want a product, it is still produced, but the cost is higher. Julian, knowing that there is no such thing as competition or money, asks how costs are higher for certain products. Dr. Leete explains that the costs are based on the hours of the workers. In very difficult occupations where the workday is shorter because not as many workers want to do that job, then the cost of production is higher. Dr. Leete remarks that it is easier "to do things the right way than the wrong."

The conversation between Julian and Dr. Leete continues. Julian asks about the president of the United States and is informed that this is the highest office of the land, but that his duty is to be at the head of the industrial army. The president must make his way up through all three grades of the workforce. From there, he will serve as the general of his guild. From there, he would advance to being genera of his division, one of the ten people who form the council of the president.

The president passes through each of the stages above. The generals of the guild are chosen by the members of the same guild who have already been retired from the industrial army and are therefore "honorary" members. Members who are forty-five or older always remain closely connected to their guild and their colleagues there, often meeting and socializing in the public guild halls built for each group. It is the honorary members, the old-timers, who vote on the general of the guild. Each of the ten men who lead the divisions of labor are voted on by the generals of the guilds.

The president will have served as one of the ten heads of departments, but he can't be elected until he has been out of office for several years. This time period enables him to study the entire industrial army and to focus on all divisions instead of just the one he came from. He is elected from the honorary members of all the industrial army, but not the men currently serving. At the end of his five-year term, the president reports to the national congress, and if the report is approved, the president is elected to serve another five years as the U.S. representative to the international council. Reports from all ten industrial generals are also reviewed by congress, and if any of those are

unacceptable, that general would not be eligible for president. Dr. Leete suggests that because there is no poverty and no accumulation of wealth, there is also no corruption. The only reward is honor of the nation.

Julian asks about the liberal professions like teachers, doctors, writers and artists, which are not included in one of the ten divisions. They do not belong to the industrial army, having attained remission of service, so while they vote for the president, they are not eligible to be elected to the office.

Julian comments that the election of officials by the retired members is similar to the system in place in many universities and colleges of his day. Dr. Leete is fascinated by that, since no one has ever been able to determine where the original idea came from.

Chapter 17 Analysis

The description of the utopia continues through Dr. Leete, who acts as the spokesperson for this new and improved version of society. The chapter shows the evolution of politics and positions of national leadership, giving power to the wisest and most experienced men of the work force. Again, everything in this utopia is male-oriented, with no mention of the role of females to this point.

Julian's future role in the society as a professor of history is enhanced by the snippet of information he delivers, comparing their system of voting to the old system of colleges and universities where the alma mater and/or alumni voted on leadership offices.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Julian and Dr. Leete discuss what happens after a man retires from the workforce at the age of forty-five, with Julian commenting that it must be a real hardship for an energetic man to be mandated to retirement. Dr. Leete claims that this enables men to pursue the higher spiritual and recreational prowess that there's not enough time for during their working life. In fact, the later years are seen as the height of a man's life, a time to renew youth. There are no such things as professional athletes or monetary prizes. However, fierce competition exists between the various trade guilds, and men compete for the sheer glory and enjoyment.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Dr. Leete's superior attitude and views are noticeable in his language to Julian West. When Julian wonders if men are discouraged or frustrated by the early retirement, Dr. Leete expounds: "My dear Mr. West...you cannot have any idea of the piquancy of your nineteenth-century ideas have for us of this day, the rare quaintness of their effect. Know, O child of another race and yet the same...." He always stresses the superiority of the Boston of 2000 to the 1887 Boston of Julian's time.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

On an early morning walk to Charleston, an area of Boston, Julian notes that there is no sign of the state prison that had previously been located there. Dr. Leete admits to having heard of the old prison, which was abolished at least fifty years before. He claims that there is no need for the prisons anymore. Any kind of "atavism" is treated in hospitals. He uses the term "atavism" frequently, meaning that crimes are committed only by those with some kind of genetic link to a behavior in the past. These people are treated in hospitals, not held in prisons. Since crimes of the 19th century were most often committed only because of lack of money, the greed for more money, the need for material provisions or the absence of basic human requirements of food, warmth and shelter, crimes rarely occur in a society where these are no longer issues.

Because of the rarity of crime, the Boston of the year 2000 no longer needs lawyers, and the court system is completely different. The few criminals that exist plead guilty, and any person who denies guilt goes to trail. The society, however, abhors falseness so much that very few people do it. Julian says that if no one lies anymore, then this surely must be paradise, a suggestion that Dr. Leete says is prominent these days. If, however, a person pleads not guilty, a judge appoints two other judges to look at both sides of the case. Both men have to agree that the resolution is just. Judges take turns serving on the bench and reviewing the sides of the cases that go to trial. Since judges are impartial and no lawyers exist to sway the evidence one way or the other, and because no profit is made by winning a lawsuit, lawyers and juries are no longer needed. In fact, no such thing as law school exists anymore, since there's not a specialized system needed for understanding of the law. Appointed by the president, judges serve after the age of forty-five. Each year, the president appoints a certain number of judges from the class of men who have just retired from the industrial workforce. Terms are for five years, and judges cannot be reappointed.

Another function of the judges is to listen to complaints from the industrial army. Should a worker say that an officer is unfair, the judges investigate the claim. Even rudeness or impoliteness might cause an investigation. Because the country is dependent on the industrial work force, discipline must be enforced, but each human being deserves polite respect. Even discipline should be conducted in a genial, humane and mannerly way.

Julian asks Dr. Leete about the role of state governments. No state governments exist anymore, according to Dr. Leete, since the country is one unified entity. There is no need for military branches and no taxes or revenues from separate states. When Julian asks about the legislation, again Dr. Leete says that there is no need. There is simply nothing that needs to have legislation created for it. Private property legalities of the 19th century no longer have any bearing on society. Municipal governments do function,

but they are connected to the one central government. Each town can retain workers for its own public works from its quota of labor from the national force.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Dr. Leete reinforces the image of the society of 2000 as a utopia. All problems have been erased, and day-to-day life is one of benevolence.

Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Edith asks Julian if he has been to see his old home and the unearthed sleeping chamber where he was found. He admits that he has stayed away, just in case the sight was too much for him. He reasserts his feelings of warmth and gratitude to her for helping him through his mental stress and dislocation when he first arrived, and he says that now that he knows where he is and has a better understanding of society, he really wants to see his old sleeping room. Edith agrees to go with him for moral support. Julian is astounded that he isn't moved emotionally by the sight of it and that it doesn't seem strange to him. He has no emotional connection to his former life.

Edith asks if he would have had many people to grieve his passing, and he confides to her about his fiancye named Edith. Edith Leete is so moved by this that her eyes fill with tears, and she commiserates with Julian's long-lost love by remarking on how heartbroken she must have been. Julian then gets emotional, moved by Edith Leete's show of compassion and tender-heartedness. He shows her a picture of his fiancye from a locket on a chain around his neck. Edith looks at it, agreeing she was a lovely woman and commenting that her pain has been over a long time. As they leave the chamber, Julian notices the safe and comments that he had several thousand dollars of gold and wealth accumulated there. There is irony in this fact. He would have thought the money would have provided for him anywhere he went, and yet he ended up somewhere where all the money in the world can't buy him a loaf of bread. Edith doesn't understand the connection between money and bread.

Chapter 20 Analysis

The emotional bond between Julian and Edith Leete is strengthened by their shared ventures out into the world. Again, the reader is reminded that both the women in Julian's life are named Edith, that he is attracted to both and that Edith of 2000 has compassion for her predecessor. The irony of the wealth in the safe, which Edith doesn't fully understand, emphasizes the distance between the two.

Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

The following morning, Julian and Dr. Leete go to the educational institutions. Dr. Leete explains that education is now available to everyone through the age of twenty-one. The society now believes that educating everyone to a higher level benefits everyone. Because all men's work is valued, no one views himself as being too educated to undertake manual labor, as they did in Julian's time. Furthermore, because all citizens are educated, there is no strife between classes, no divisions between the rich and poor, the educated and uneducated. The wealthy, educated class no longer exists, isolated from the rest of humanity by their superior education and financial assets. Culture and knowledge now applies to all people. Julian notes that in addition to the other changes, one notable difference between the modern system and the system of his day is in the strength and physical fitness of the populace. The educational system is responsible for education of mind and body, so students have twenty-one years to learn and practice multiple forms of physical fitness. When Julian states as much to Dr. Leete, the doctor's response is animated. He's excited that Julian can attest to the changes that before had just been speculation on the part of modern citizens without proof. Dr. Leete also points out to Julian that because of the physical and mental education of its citizens, suicide and insanity have now almost vanished.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Julian's experience with life more than a century before the time period he is experiencing now gives him authority and expertise on "historical" insights. Dr. Leete appreciates and calls attention to Julian's contribution to their knowledge. The society continues to be highlighted as a perfect utopia without problems. In this vision of a society without conflict, the conflict of the book rests on the intellectual discussion about the differences in the society of more than a hundred years ago and the present time.

Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Chapter 22 delves into the issues of national product and how the country generates enough income to support so many citizens in such a bountiful way. Dr. Leete explains that they have no military to support, no national debt, no bankers and no private merchants. The amount of money spent on washing and cooking is negligible, since it's a cooperative venture for the entire society. The modern distribution system services the entire nation with 1/80th of the manpower and cost that it would have cost in Julian's time.

Dr. Leete holds that one reason for a reduced national product is that business is no longer a competitive and cutthroat venture. The old system created waste through four causes. The first cause was mistaken undertakings. Because there was not the certainty of discerning supply and demand that exists in Boston of the year 2000, many businesses were begun without knowing what people wanted or would buy. Two competing businesses might duplicate each other's efforts and overproduce a product. The second cause of waste was the competition between businesses, in which one person would purposely sabotage another's market share, a mentality that is not understood in Dr. Leete's time. The constant cyclical nature of business done in Julian's century was a third reason for national waste. Businesses would decline, recoup and then grow strong, but they would soon decline again based on the interconnected factors of the global world. Down times caused cataclysmic losses. Finally, Dr. Leete explains, the fourth factor of waste in Julian's century was that of the labor force. When industries or businesses were in a crisis mode, people lost jobs. Then they had to move and search for work all across the country, leaving some ventures without necessary workers and others with a great surplus. Because in the Boston of the year 2000 one entity oversees all the industry, the functions are interwoven and managed with the utmost efficiency. The compilation of the needs of the nation into one mechanism controlled by the government has created a standard of living for everyone unrivaled or un-thought-of of by the people of Julian's age. Each person has more than enough means to have a home, food, warmth and education. The money spent by private individuals for ostentation is now spent by the government for the recreation and betterment of the people as a whole. The nation spends its labor and its resources on public buildings, theater, art, transit systems, social systems and clubs that enhance the lives of the people.

Julian contemplates the fact the men of his generation did not, in fact, make much money compared to the current system. Dr. Leete points out that the system of Julian's day was based on selfishness and competition, neither of which were good for the nation.

Chapter 22 Analysis

The use of money and national wealth are discussed. Again, the conflict of the book is based solely on Dr. Leete's explanation of the present system contrasted to what Julian West's society was like.

Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

While listening to music in the evening, Julian hesitantly poses a question to Edith, asking her about what he heard when he was being awakened from his long sleep. He remembers Edith's voice making her father promise "not to tell." Julian wants to Edith to tell him exactly what it was that should not be revealed to him. Edith is embarrassed by this discussion. She avoids disclosing anything, blushes and declines even to promise to tell him at a later date. She does admit that whether he is told or not depends on himself. Julian goes to bed that night, unable to sleep as he ponders what mystery Edith is hiding. Her rosy glow and her nearness to Julian, however, only continue to intrigue and interest him.

Chapter 23 Analysis

The structure of the novel is based on an alternation between chapters. The evolution of society from 1887 to 2000 is discussed between Julian West and Dr. Leete. This interaction is then followed by a brief chapter that focuses on the relationship between Edith and Julian. This chapter foreshadows future events when Edith's refuses to answer Julian when he asks about the "promise" he heard upon awakening.

Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Julian seeks out Edith first thing the next morning, but he can't find her. He wanders over to the foundation of his old home and goes into his sleeping chamber, where he discovers the newspapers and magazines of his day. He brings them back for Dr. Leete to read. Edith joins them for breakfast, as Julian embarks on a discussion with the doctor about the outcome of what he calls "the followers of the red flag," the anarchists. Dr. Leete tells Julian that the current opinion is that the anarchists of the previous time period were funded by business monopolies to head off reforms. Julian notes that there's no clear reason for the anarchists, but in a footnote, he expresses his doubt that Dr. Leete's theory is correct.

Dr. Leete explains that the national party won over the majority of opinion and was named for its intention of nationalizing the distribution and production processes. From there it evolved into the governing body that held the good of the nation - and not of private individuals - as the primary concern.

Chapter 24 Analysis

The footnote supplied by Julian West suggests that he doubts Dr. Leete's theory. It's important because the note is added to the narrative as an afterthought, and it expresses a contrary opinion to Dr. Leete's, something that is uncommon in this work.

Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Because of Julian's interest in Edith, he asks Dr. Leete about the role of women in the workforce. Dr. Leete explains that women do form a large portion of the workforce, but they operate as a force separate from the men's group. Freed from the petty housework of an earlier century, and fully educated and trained, women elect what vocation to follow just as men do. Their careers are not hampered by marriage, since the household chores fall into the public realm. Dr. Leete points that out that husbands are not babies to be cared for by women. While women may not be encouraged to follow pursuits that require brute strength or manual labor, they do work at whatever trade they are suited to. Women have shorter work hours and vacation when needed, and they form an allied workforce with their male counterparts. The leadership of the women's industrial force is carried out by a female general who sits on the president's council.

Dr. Leete declares that because the modern society gives women all the same advantages of men, and because they have the education, the sustenance and the encouragement for valuable work, women are much healthier and happier than they were in Julian's day. Women are free to have ambitions and careers in addition to marriage. When Julian suggests that because women's work hours are often less than men, they receive smaller amounts of credit, Dr. Leete is appalled. Julian just doesn't understand the system if he can't see that all people are treated equally in the Boston of 2000. He argues that if there were inequalities in the system of credit, women would be granted more since there's nothing more important than the delivering and raising of children to support the society in the future. Women are not dependent on males, and parents are not dependent on children anymore. Instead, each person is provided for and chooses with whom and how to live. These factors produce more honest, satisfying and fulfilling relationships between the sexes than was possible during Julian's time.

The relationship between males and females in Julian's day, Dr. Leete points out, was centered on a marriage which made the female dependent on the man, but which benefited her more than it did him. This situation made it important for the man to always be the initiator of conversation and attraction. In the Boston of 2000, men and women are both free to show their feelings, without one sex being in the aggressor. Julian sees the advantage of this modern state of relationships because now marriages exist only for love, not for economic or social factors. Dr. Leete points out that the inherent sexual selection process of humans can now work the way it is supposed to. People choose who they love, not who they need, and therefore pass on the traits of those they love and admire to their offspring. The resulting generations reflect improved physical, mental and moral states. The ideals of individualism that predominated in Julian's day are no longer prevalent. Instead, women operate on an enhanced ideal of duty for nation and for the recurrence of life in future generations.

Chapter 25 Analysis

For the first time in the novel, the role of women is discussed. The utopian society allows total equality between the genders and more fulfilled emotional, sexual and moral relationships occur. Julian also asks about the role of females because he wants to know and understand how Edith Leete has been brought up. Her role and her expectations are important to him.

Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

In Julian's narrative, he states that because of his circumstances, it would be understandable if he lost track of the days of the week. Furthermore, he wouldn't be surprised if the whole system of counting days had changed, but upon asking, he discovers that weeks are still calculated every seven days. Figuring that this is a Sunday, he asks whether the modern society still has sermons, and if so, does the nationally oriented country have a national sermon?

Appalled by the suggestion, the Leetes assure Julian that people are free to worship as they please and listen to all kinds of sermons, either in churches or through the telephone wires. Just as musicians have studios to broadcast from, various churches and pastors have telephone wires to use for the delivery of their message. The clergy are handled just as journalists and the press are. Anyone who wants to listen to a preacher's message pays a portion of their credit to the government for the loss of the pastor's uses to the industrial workforce. As long as enough people subscribe to the message, then the preacher is supported, and the government has no control over what he says.

When offered the opportunity, Julian chooses to go with the Leetes to their music room where the service is turned on and Mr. Barton's sermon is selected. Mr. Barton's opening paragraph refers to the presence of Julian in their society and to the retrospective attitude this situation has inspired in much of the society. At this point, Edith suggests that Julian might feel uncomfortable listening and that another sermon could be chosen, but Julian opts to hear what Mr. Barton has to say.

Mr. Barton's sermon is a summary of the progression of the society from 1887 to 2000, emphasizing the harsh, ugly side of the early Boston and noting that while the nation was primarily Christian, the fundamentals of competition, selfishness and antagonism toward others were the driving factors of the society. Barton's sermon stresses the evolution of a society that is focused on brotherhood and goodwill, on education and equality, on advancement and enhancement of the world. Barton uses an analogy of a rosebush when discussing the society of 1887. He suggests that the society was like a rosebush planted in a bog, polluted with toxins and chilled with poisons at night, never able to produce blooms or live to its potential. When planted anew in good soil with pure light and adequate nutrients, it produced amazing blooms with a fragrance that refreshed the world. The rosebush is like the rebirth of society, which now grows closer to God and heaven.

Chapter 26 Analysis

The chapter serves as a summary of the entire book, condensing the changes that have occurred in a century to a sermon for the people. The sermon's message reiterates all the previous discussions by Dr. Leete which show how the society is problem free and a utopia on earth. The sermon demonstrates the extensive problems of 19th century America.

Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

Julian admits that in his "old" life, he was frequently depressed on Sundays. This Sunday is worse than ever because after listening to Mr. Barton's sermon about the selfishness, degradation and poverty of his era, he feels like the Leetes can only look at him with loathing and pity. Because Julian is attracted to Edith, his feelings of despair are even more intense. In an attempt to ease his pain, Julian walks back to his old homestead, where he laments that he doesn't belong in either era. His old home is long dead, and he is not like the people of the city around him.

Edith, worried about Julian's low spirits, follows him. He tells her that he doesn't want her to pity him. Edith admonishes Julian for overreacting to the sermon, telling him that the people who truly have come to know him understand and value him. When she extends her hands to him as she did on that first instance of his despair, Julian tells her that her kindness is not enough to make him happy; he needs her love, since he has fallen in love with her. Edith's response implies that he must be blind if he can't see that she feels the same way. Immediately, though, she apologizes because he must feel that she is being too forward. He must think it unrealistic that she would fall for him so quickly. Edith takes Julian to her mother for an explanation.

Mrs. Leete tells Julian that Edith is the great-granddaughter of Edith Bartlett, who married fourteen years after what she thought was the death of Julian. She gave birth to Edith Leete's grandmother. The story of Edith Bartlett's lost love is notable family folklore. When Mrs. Leete gave birth, she named her daughter Edith after the grandmother she had never seen but had heard much about. The family owns a portrait of Edith Bartlett and a package of letters from the fiancy, Julian West, who died. Edith Leete grew up reading the letters and looking at the picture of her great-grandmother. As a young girl, she was so touched by the letters that she told her parents that she would never marry until she found a lover like the old-fashioned Julian West. When Julian West was recovered from his century-old sleeping chamber and the locket he wore with Edith Bartlett's picture was opened, Edith Leete already felt like she knew him and could therefore give her love to him more quickly than conventional relationships.

Julian goes to Edith with joy, and both are thrilled with their love. Both people have fused the past and the present into their personalities. Julian has experienced life in two centuries and love of two related women, and Edith has some of her great-grandmother's genes and a compassion for and understanding of her life. Edith Leete urges Julian not to love her too much for herself, but to allow a little love for her great-grandmother. She also coyly asks if he is jealous that Edith Bartlett eventually married. Her question shakes away a strange tinge of jealousy that Julian had, but it is obliterated when he recognizes that without his first sweetheart marrying someone else, he would never have found Edith Leete. Dr. and Mrs. Leete are thrilled with the match. Julian figures out that the promise Edith extracted from her father of "not to tell," was

about her relationship to his century-old fiancye. Happy and elated, Julian and Edith part for the night.

Chapter 27 Analysis

The mysterious comment at the beginning of the book about promising "not to tell" is revealed. The coincidence of both women being named "Edith" is made clear, and Julian's attraction to Edith Leete is understandable. The developing relationship is culminated in the promise of a lifelong relationship in a happier era.

Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

Chapter 28 begins with the words of Sawyer, Julian's manservant. He is arousing Julian and telling him that he has had trouble bringing him out of his sleep. Julian is groggy, remembering with utter clarity the dream of the future Boston and its utopian society. He dresses and reads the newspapers, noting the bad news of murder, corruption and greed. He wanders around the city, looking at the thousands of merchants who are duplicating their efforts, the many manufacturing plants that compete and actually try to steal business from each other. He sees the vast differences in wealth and poverty by noticing the difference in clothing and attitudes of the people. Julian is horrified to notice the uncaring attitude toward the sick and poor on the street. The excessive advertisements, the push to make people buy things they don't need and the reliance on an artificial device like money appalls Julian. At the end of the day, he ends up on the doorstep of Edith Bartlett's luxurious family home and is invited to join the family and multiple dinner guests.

When Edith and the other guests ask Julian what's ailing him, he launches into a tirade against the systems of modern society, urging for pity on the poor and a stoppage of the waste of wealth. He uses the analogy of their society being an arid desert that is not watered, but could easily produce if it were irrigated with the labor of all men. As he argues for the common good, the guests begin to call him a fanatic, and Mr. Bartlett orders him removed from the property. Julian is crying with his frustration over not making people understand that the world could be changed.

Writhing and sweating, Julian awakes to find that he has been dreaming. The nightmare has been of the old life that is now gone. He does, indeed, belong to the future Boston. Remembering the Boston of 1887 and his wealthy, uncaring attitude toward others, Julian begins to feel unworthy and undeserving of the gifts of modern society. He laments that he did nothing to change the ills of his era. Edith Leete, however, accepts him totally.

Chapter 28 Analysis

The "It-Was-All-a-Dream" ending is a common one in literature. The beginning of the chapter leads to the belief that the Boston of 2000 was all a dream, a utopia that isn't possible in real life. Julian West's speech to the wealthy Barletts and their guests is the climax of the book and the only scene of great conflict.

The impact of the novel comes from the double-dream ending. Julian returns to Boston of 1887 in a nightmare. The Boston of 2000 is the real world. While the first dream ending may be expected, the second dream is not. The conclusion of the book in the

utopian Boston of 2000 promotes hope for the future and an encouragement for people to change the ways of society.

Stylistically, Julian's nightmare scene is a counterpoint to the sermon in Chapter 26. His seemingly real-life awareness of the evils of 19th century Boston is exactly what Mr. Barton's sermon had presented. The Boston of 1887 also is used to compare the enormous strides the society has made by the year 2000.

The one mystery of the book, i.e. the "secret" that Edith made her father promise not to tell, is used to tie together the characters over more than a century. Past and present is reflected in both lovers, creating a fusion of time and the knowledge that the future is forged from the past.

Postscript: The Rate of the World's Progress

Postscript: The Rate of the World's Progress Summary

A postscript is included. This is a letter from Edward Bellamy, the author, to the editor of the *Boston Transcript.* Bellamy states that the biggest complaint from a reviewer of his novel is not the strides that society might make in the future, but about how quickly those changes came about in the book. The reviewer thinks that at least seventy-five centuries would have been necessary to make this kind of progress.

In argument, Bellamy cites other rapid - and unpredicted - historical changes, such as the independence of America, the uniting of Germany and the elimination of the institution of slavery. Bellamy believes that the influences are at work in America to cause these changes if men would just decide to change. Knowing that society can change for the better or worse, Bellamy urges for a shift toward a future Golden Age.

Postscript: The Rate of the World's Progress Analysis

This is a written, rhetorical response to a criticism of the novel. Bellamy continues to argue that such changes as outlined in the novel are possible. Further, Bellamy suggests that men can be called upon to demonstrate the better part of their nature by working toward social change that will benefit all people for generations to come.

Characters

Edith Bartlett

Julian West's fiancée in the nineteenth century. She is from a wealthy family and becomes the great-grandmother of Edith Leete.

Mr. Barton

A "telephone" preacher, his lengthy sermon is the author's way of including a discourse on morality.

Doctor Leete

Julian West wakes up from his 113-year trance in the home of Doctor Leete and his family. Doctor Leete then becomes West's main source of information about society in the year 2000. This information is conveyed almost exclusively in long conversations. Conveniently, Dr. Leete is retired, so he has plenty of time to spend with West, and, as a physician, is critical to the plot in that he is able to bring West out of his trance. Critics wonder that Dr. Leete has such a thorough knowledge of all aspects of the workings of his culture.

Edith Leete

The daughter of Doctor Leete, Edith is named after her great-grandmother, Edith Bartlett, and has a great affinity for this ancestor. She keeps this information a secret from West because she wants to win his affection on her own and not as a replication of the nineteenth-century Edith. Nonetheless, she believes that she may be a reincarnation of her great-grandmother so that the first Edith can fulfill her commitment to West. Edith Leete instantly falls in love with West and is often his companion and guide.

Mrs. Leete

The wife of Doctor Leete and the mother of Edith, Mrs. Leete makes only a few brief appearances in the novel. Her major role is to tell West about the connection to Edith Bartlett.

Doctor Pillsbury

A mesmerist and "Professor of Animal Magnetism." Because Pillsbury leaves Boston permanently for New Orleans on the night he places West into a sleep-inducing trance, he is not available to tell anyone about West's subterranean chamber when West's house burns down. Consequently, West is assumed dead and not found for 113 years.

Sawyer

Described by West as his "faithful servant," Sawyer was taught how to awaken West from Dr. Pillsbury's trances. It is assumed that Sawyer perished in the fire that destroyed West's house. Since only Sawyer and Pillsbury knew about West's basement bedroom, and Pillsbury had left town, there was no one to tell rescuers where to find West.

Julian West

The narrator of the novel, Julian West is a thirty-year-old man of means in 1887 Boston. He has no family but is engaged to an upper-class woman named Edith Bartlett. Their marriage awaits the completion of their new house. A severe insomniac, West sleeps in an underground bedroom to keep out noise and often solicits the assistance of a mesmerist, Dr. Pillsbury, to put him to sleep. Only Pillsbury and West's servant, Sawyer, know of the existence of this chamber. By coincidence, Pillsbury leaves town the night he puts West into a deep trance, which is the same night that West's house burns down and Sawyer dies in the fire. Consequently, West remains in his trance for 113 years until he is discovered by the Leete family. Thus begins his new life in Boston in the year 2000. His description of what he sees and learns in the first week is the story of the novel. He finds himself in a socialist utopia that seemingly has solved all the problems of the world he knew in 1887. He also falls in love with Edith Leete, who turns out to be the great-granddaughter of his previous fiancée, Edith Bartlett.

Themes

Alienation

Julian West experiences time travel, not space travel, so he does not awaken to a world of aliens. Nonetheless, he finds himself in a different world, for the Boston of 2000 is as foreign to him as another planet might have been. Nationalism has transformed America into a culture foreign to that which West knew in his own time. He feels alienated as all strangers do and asks Edith, "Has it never occurred to you that my position is so much more utterly alone than any human being's ever was before that a new word is really needed to describe it?" He then calls himself a "strange uncanny being, a stranded creature of an unknown sea." But in his dream that takes him back to the nineteenth century, he realizes that he has become estranged from that time, too. Knowing that Edith's love will cure his loneliness, he then gratefully embraces his new life in the better world of 2000.

Commerce

Related to the discussion of industry, Bellamy details the exchange of goods and services. He describes the local stores in each ward, the district warehouse, the delivery system and so on. Bellamy's theory was that if business were nationalized, the lack of competition would eliminate greed and the procurement of goods would be much simpler and more convenient.

Gender Roles

When Bellamy advocated equality for all citizens in *Looking Backward*, he included women. At a time when Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were publishing *The Revolution*, the rights of women was certainly a topic that would concern a man like Bellamy. However, his forward thinking was cemented in nineteenth-century attitudes, and his attempt to be fair remains severely chauvinistic. Nonetheless, for a book written in 1888 to give women occupations outside the home and equal wages is truly striking.

Human Rights

Bellamy promotes the cause of human rights throughout his book. He summarizes his philosophy when Dr. Leete tells Julian West,

> 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.

It is accepted in Bellamy's 2000 that if you are a human being, regardless of nationality, race, disability, or gender, then you are entitled to full citizen benefits, an education, and freedom from want.

Industry and Labor

The first inquiry that Julian West makes about the new century in which he finds himself is "What solution, if any, have you found for the labor question? It was the Sphinx's riddle of the nineteenth century." The Industrial Revolution brought great wealth to a few tycoons and misery to many laborers. A utopian novel not only pictures how things could be, but also, by contrast, points out how bad things actually are. Bellamy's intent in *Looking Backward* was not just to dream of a better future but to cause his contemporaries to think about solutions for the problems of the times. Consequently, most of the book is devoted to discussions of the industrial "evolution," the Industrial army, the assignment of labor, and the equal distribution of wealth.

Innovation

Since Bellamy used a futuristic novel to promote his nationalistic ideals, he needed to make predictions about the year 2000 other than the social and economic state of affairs that were his primary concern. After all, nationalism would not appear successful if there were not also technological advances and other innovations resulting from the creative freedom his utopia allowed. Although Bellamy did not approach the accuracy or imagination of Aldous Huxley or Jules Verne, he made some amazing predictions, including credit cards, skyscrapers, piped-in music, speaker phones, and mass broadcasts.

Love

While *Looking Backward* is undeniably a treatise on social reform, Bellamy makes his long lecture palatable to the reader by weaving in a love story. On one level, the book is a romantic novel about a young man who loses love when he is strangely transferred from one century to another, only to find love again in the person of his sweetheart's namesake and great-granddaughter. Besides romantic love, this book espouses the theme of love for humankind. Bellamy believed that people are capable of sincerely caring about each other's welfare, and so, in his utopia, people willingly sacrifice personal gain for the benefit of all.

Morality

Among the many superior facets of Bellamy's fictional twentieth century is the morality of its citizens. In addition to being from a long line of New England preachers, Bellamy was extraordinarily sensitive to social justice issues. Naturally, then, his utopia is a

culture of honesty and compassion. All citizens are equal, the disabled and the criminal are treated with dignity and understanding, and there is no greed or envy. Bellamy's idealistic book advocates that humans are basically good and decent and will subjugate individual desires for the common good.

Perfection

What distinguishes utopias from other imaginary places in literature is the supposed state of perfection achieved by government and society. Bellamy tries to sell his plan for perfection by repeatedly using phrases such as "perfect organization," "the system is certainly perfect," "a paradise of order, equity, and felicity," "heaven's vault," and "golden century." Furthermore, the question and answer dialogue device Bellamy uses allows West to present problems from the nineteenth century and always have them answered by the Leetes with the "simple" solutions that the superior twentieth century society has devised.

Relational Time

Julian West is not a time traveler in the sense of using a time machine or manipulating temporal physics to transport himself from age to age. Nor does he continue to age as he sleeps, as Rip Van Winkle did. He stays thirty years old during his 113-year trance. Bellamy wanted to write a book that described wonderful possibilities for the future, and West's trance was the means Bellamy devised to move him from 1887 to 2000. For its time, *Looking Backward* was a futuristic novel. Now that time has passed 2000, it is a study in the relationship of time, civilization, and social/technological evolution.

Social Classes

In the first chapter of *Looking Backward*, Bellamy provides the parable of the coach as a means of describing the differences among the social classes of his time. Thus the heart of Bellamy's concern for society is established and carried throughout the book as he explains how a nationalized system of commerce and a moral concern for each other could eliminate class divisions. He reiterates the abuses of the class system at the end of the book when he dreams of returning to the nineteenth century and once again observes the disparity of life between the squalor of poverty and the excesses of wealth.

Socialism/Communism

Bellamy was very careful not to use the word "socialism" when espousing his philosophy of government. Nonetheless, the "Nationalist" movement he started with *Looking Backward* was very closely related to both socialism and communism because it gave the state control over commerce, espoused economic and social equality for all citizens, and featured centralized government.

Style

Allegory

One of the most famous elements of *Looking Backward* is the coach allegory in the first chapter. In an allegory, the writer tells a story, or parable, in which the people, things, or events described have a different meaning; that is, they are symbolic of the lesson or explanation the writer is giving. Bellamy compares the society of the nineteenth century to the image of a "prodigious coach" to which the masses are harnessed and driven by hunger, while the elite sit on top trying not to fall off and lose status.

Diction

Bellamy's diction—that is to say, his manner of writing and of the speech of his characters—is nineteenth-century prim and effusive. His book on the year 2000 might still be read as widely as George Orwell's *1984* if its language were easier for a modern audience to read. Other notable writers of Bellamy's time largely used ordinary language, but perhaps Bellamy's proper New England upbringing was too deeply imbedded in his manner of speaking for him to make the transition. It is ironic that a writer who wanted to save the masses could not write in the language they used.

Didacticism

Bellamy's style is didactic, in that *Looking Backward* was intended to be morally instructive. Although the reforms that led to his utopian society were in government and industry, it is obvious that Bellamy believed that the elimination of poverty and greed would result in a completely moral and humanitarian society. Dr. Leete tells Julian West, "The only coin current is the image of God, and that is good for all we have." In effect, then, Bellamy was telling people that they needed to live a morally sensitive life such as the one he described, and that his proposed reforms were a means to achieve this heaven on earth.

Genre

Looking Backward is a utopian novel. The first and perhaps greatest example of utopian literature is Plato's *Republic*. The term *utopian*, however, originated in 1516 with Sir Thomas More's book *Utopia*, which is about an imaginary place with an ideal political state and way of life. Since then, all such books have been called "utopian," and most use the structure of an adventurous traveler finding some remote country. The fact that there have been many different versions of utopia illustrates that one person's concept of paradise is not necessarily synonymous with that of another person. Further examples include: *New Atlantis*, Francis Bacon, 1627; *News from Nowhere*, William Morris, 1891; and *Lost Horizon*, James Hilton, 1934.

Point of View

Bellamy uses a first person point of view in *Looking Backward* so that the narration will seem more like a real story being told by someone who lived through the experience. Since Bellamy was espousing his own views on socio-economic issues, it was probably also easier for him to use "I" because the message of the story was coming from him, not the character.

Setting

Bellamy sets *Looking Backward* in Boston, but a Boston one would find hard to recognize because it is the city as Bellamy imagined it in the year 2000. Therefore, although the reader is given a recognizable name and a few familiar landmarks, the setting is a city of Bellamy's own creation. It includes magnificent public buildings, covered sidewalks during inclement weather, virtually no crime, and no chimneys. Material prosperity was evident because Bellamy needed to show the success that nationalism would bring.

Historical Context

Looking Backward was written in the late 1800s about the late 1800s. America had just been through two very difficult decades: the 1860s brought the War Between the States and Reconstruction; the 1870s saw an agricultural depression, a labor panic in 1873, and a major railroad strike in 1877. The power of corporate trusts and political machines seemed uncontrollable. Banks and railroads exploited western lands and the people who lived there. Coal smoke choked the air and gave miners black lung disease. Anarchists blew up buildings and threatened political stability. The Labor Movement and the Women's Movement gained momentum as labor problems continued to boil and female suffrage became a major issue. Militant political groups such as the Grangers and the Populists came into being.

The demand for labor brought many new immigrants to America and many farm families to the cities. The conditions of the urban tenements were horrific. People lived amid filth, noise, and danger. Several families might live in one small apartment with inadequate sanitation. Disease was rampant. With no laws to protect them, women and children, as well as men, worked very long hours under unsafe conditions. Children were sometimes beaten. Eventually, the poor rebelled. For example, in 1886, a rally for an eight-hour workday turned into the bloody Haymarket Riot in Chicago. Boston, the setting of the story, was virtually paralyzed by strikes by the mid-1880s. Bellamy brings this factor into play in the story when he mentions that West's marriage is delayed by the strikes that prevent workers from finishing his new house.

It was a time of social upheaval as the Industrial Revolution led to enormous wealth for a few while grossly exploiting the labor force. Working class violence and Gilded Age opulence greatly disturbed the middle class. Americans wanted a better world, and they were in love with utopian stories that gave them hope for a peaceful and prosperous future. Consequently, an eager audience rushed to read Bellamy's book denouncing capitalism and describing a system that he claimed would lead to equality and contentment.

The impact of *Looking Backward* has never been matched by another American publication. Like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it touched upon the issues that most deeply disturbed the American public. As a result, Bellamy Clubs organized around the country to discuss the potential of Nationalism. Political party platforms adopted some of Bellamy's ideas and translated them into legislation that still affects America today. The book was published in millions of copies and translated into all major languages. After Marx's *Das Kapital*, it became the most influential book on socialist systems in the world.

Bellamy's influence on American and world culture has been enormous. A list of those who have acknowledged a debt to Bellamy includes many notables: educator John Dewey, labor leader Eugene V. Debs, politician Clement Atlee, and writers Jack London, Carl Sandburg, Upton Sinclair, Erich Fromm, H. G. Wells, Leo Tolstoy, and Maxim Gorki. Bellamy's first biographer was Arthur E. Morgan, an engineer who became chairman of

the Tennessee Valley Authority under Franklin Roosevelt and later president of Antioch University. Morgan asserted that the creators of the New Deal in the 1940s were also influenced by ideas proposed in *Looking Backward*.

The popularity of *Looking Backward* led to a multitude of other utopian novels. Both notable writers such as William Dean Howells (*A Traveler from Altruria*) and previously unknown writers had their own ideas about what would constitute a utopian society. Dystopian novels also abounded as people began to suspect that the future could be worse instead of better. Even though several of these works are now much better known than *Looking Backward*, the phenomenal impact of this work on American thought is still given respectful credit.

Critical Overview

While *Looking Backward* may have sold millions of copies and had worldwide influence, its enthusiastic reception in 1888 was based on the ideas for social and economic reform Bellamy proposed, not the book's literary merit. As a treatise on social reform, the book is generally admired. However, negative criticism abounds concerning Bellamy's omissions and misinterpretations.

Gail Collins points out in her 1991 article for *The Nation* that, although Bellamy believed technology would make life easier in the year 2000, he fails to show anything but a few innovative gadgets, and the rest is much the same as it was in 1887. "We learn that factories are no longer dirty but we never see them in action.... The industrial army does the washing and the cooking, not washer-dryers and microwave ovens," says Collins. Collins also notices that, "Throughout the book, West manages to tour the city . . . without ever speaking to anyone except the Leetes, or encountering any blacks, Catholics or other descendants of the working class."

From the beginning, critics have also found Bellamy too idealistic about human nature. An 1889 article by Nicholas Gilman in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* thought Bellamy's futuristic society impossible to achieve as long as human nature remains the same. It is naïvé to think that people will respond en masse to logic and reason or to an altruistic desire to share. While good may be able to overcome evil, greed and the desire to feel superior will live on. In addition, Bellamy underestimates the importance of incentives if he thinks that simple honors or increases in rank will motivate workers to improve their efforts. Furthermore, as Linda Simon asks in a 1999 profile on Bellamy for *World and I*, "If life became too easy, if one's needs were met by a paternalistic government, what would motivate men and women to achieve greatness?"

Martin Gardner says in an article for the *New Criterion* that, "though admirable in its indictment of unfettered capitalism and in its enthusiasm for building a better world, it projected a cure as bad as, if not worse than, the disease." Many critics agree. While Bellamy's ideas are intriguing and have had sufficient merit to affect the development of socialism, the bottom line is that his system is not voluntary. Everyone attends school until a certain age. Everyone must enter and leave the Industrial Army at a certain age on a certain day, and so on. There is apparently little room for diversity, a limited choice of music and goods, no variety of restaurants, and no change of atmosphere.

Another area that is stifling is the choices given to women. Bellamy's segregation of the sexes is the most controversial topic of his novel. It offends modern readers and was a source of consternation to feminists of his time. Still, his contemporaries hailed the relative freedom and equality that he foresaw for women as a definite improvement over the conditions of the times. They felt that they could work with the idea of economic equality and go from there.

In a 2000 article for *Harper's Magazine*, Russell Jacoby finds a multitude of faults in Bellamy's utopian novel: monopolies have merely been replaced by one "gargantuan

state trust"; the idea of being mustered into the Industrial Army is not appealing, nor is the argument supporting it persuasive; the idea of marrying for love alone is fine, but not if it is celebrated as a step toward sexual selection to improve the species. Nonetheless, Jacoby forgives Bellamy because he is, like all of us, "a creature of his time, and his willingness to imagine a future radically different from his present did not absolve him of some typical nineteenth-century prejudices. The willingness is what makes him different from us."

Articles and books about *Looking Backward* have been produced in every decade since its publication. A number came out in the year 2000 to compare Bellamy's projections with the actuality of the landmark year. William Dean Howells panned the novel in 1888 in *Harper's*, then wrote his own utopian novel. Howells disliked the book because he thought socialism dangerous. William Morris wrote in *Commonweal* in 1889 that the book was dangerous because it might turn people away from socialism if they disliked Bellamy's personal version of it. These differences of opinion are typical of critics, especially concerning a work as controversial as *Looking Backward*.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Kerschen is a writer and public school district administrator. In this essay, Kerschen concentrates on Bellamy's references to women in his novel and how his attempt to liberate women failed to understand the full extent to which women can participate in the world.

Of the twenty-eight chapters that comprise Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, only one is devoted to the discussion of the role of women in the society of the year 2000, and that is not until the twenty-fifth chapter. This lack of attention to women is somewhat understandable, as the book was mainly intended to promote Bellamy's ideas on economic reforms. Nonetheless, the lack of inclusion of women in a more substantial manner and the paternalistic elements that Bellamy maintains in his new society indicate that he was limited in his ability to think beyond the tenets established by his breeding, social status, and gender.

Looking Backward is about rebuilding the structure of government and industry in a centralized, nationalized form such that all people would share equally in the nation's wealth. Bellamy believed that if privation could be eliminated, then the innate good nature of people would lead them to pursue endeavors that would benefit society as a whole instead of constantly pursuing money for personal survival. The connection to women's rights is that, once the motivation for greed and competition no longer existed, a more generous society would be inclined to treat each citizen equally, even women.

Bellamy supported women's suffrage, but he contended that, without economic equality, the vote would not have sufficient impact to give women full citizenship. According to Daphne Patai in her introduction to the book *Looking Backward 1988-1888*, Bellamy repeatedly emphasized in his writings that economic equality was an

> indispensable prerequisite for any pursuit of justice and political equality. For all his lack of attention to the myriad ways in which women's subordinate status vis-à-vis men is articulated, Bellamy noted that this status rested first and foremost on an economic dependence that must be abolished.

An important benefit that results from economic independence is the freedom to marry for love instead of wealth and social position. Dr. Leete guesses correctly that the dependence of women "must always have remained humiliating" and resulted, in effect, in women having "to sell themselves to men to get their living." He questions why it did not occur to the people of West's time "that it was robbery as well as cruelty when men seized for themselves the whole product of the world and left women to beg and wheedle for their share."

In addition to being cognizant of the social pressures on upper-class women, Bellamy was aware of the misery suffered by working-class women in the nineteenth century. Thus, his intent was to eradicate all poverty, exorbitant wealth, and class distinctions. Bellamy felt that the new social order must arise from the middle class to combat the excesses of the very wealthy and, in turn, to take care of the poor who did not have the education or the means to effect their own liberation. The feminist movement in Bellamy's time was comprised mostly of literate, middle-class women, so Bellamy wanted to recruit these other social reformers to his cause with *Looking Backward*. With that in mind, Sylvia Strauss concludes in her article "Gender, Class and Race in Utopia" that Bellamy cast his socialist program in the form of a conventional romance, to "further attract female readers who, more than men, were drawn to the novel as a source of entertainment and enlightenment."

Nonetheless, a chauvinistic attitude is evident from the tone of the first mention of Mrs. Leete and Edith. The description is entirely about their attractive appearance and seems more generated by desire than detail. From that point on, Mrs. Leete is almost invisible, and Edith has a place only as the romantic interest. Almost all of the conversations discussing modern society take place with the other male, Dr. Leete. The only thing Edith gets to explain about their way of life is, stereotypically, shopping. Edith is described as an "indefatigable shopper" who prefers to spend her money on pretty clothes, and there is an assumption, on her part as well as his, that women, past and present, did the shopping.

Oddly enough, the clothes that she wears seem to be of the same style as that of the women of the late nineteenth century. Bellamy tells the reader in a note in chapter four that "the differences between the style of dress and furniture of the two epochs are not more marked than I have known fashion to make in the time of one generation." Why such little change after several generations? Bellamy knew that the feminists of his time wanted to change styles to allow for more comfortable activity. Some were already advocating, and wearing, pants and shorter skirts. Perhaps Bellamy did not want to expend the energy to think of a new style of dress for the year 2000 when his intent was to discuss government and economics. Perhaps he wanted his nineteenth century audience to be able to identify with the characters in his book. Either way, he merely avoided the issue by claiming that styles had not changed.

Another practice that seems not to have changed since the nineteenth century is that of men convening in a room separate from their women to smoke cigars and discuss weighty issues. One has to wonder why the women did not have sufficient intellectual curiosity to ask dozens of questions of a man who came from another century. Early in the novel, "Dr. Leete, as well as the ladies, seemed greatly interested in my account of the circumstances under which I had gone to sleep in the underground chamber. All had suggestions to offer to account for my having been forgotten there." Beyond the initial excitement of the mystery, however, the women in this novel are dismissed as having interest only in being good hostesses or in a romantic relationship.

Throughout the story, the ladies always retire earlier in the evening than the men. Not only did this traditional practice allow the men to stay up drinking and smoking without

interference from the women folk, but it also stemmed from the belief that women, as more delicate creatures, needed more rest than the sturdy men. Consequently, when Dr. Leete explains the differences between the occupations of men and women, he says

> Women being inferior in strength to men . . . the heavier sorts of work are everywhere reserved for men, the light occupations for women.... Moreover, the hours of women's work are considerably shorter than those of men, more frequent vacations are granted, and the most careful provision is made for rest when needed.

The continued existence of male dominance is revealed by Dr. Leete's explanation that women are "permitted" to work by the men of their day only because it has been found that a "healthful and inspiriting occupation" is "well for body and mind."

When Julian West inquires about housekeeping, the traditional occupation of women, he exhibits further sexist expectations, in that he turns from Dr. Leete to direct his question to Mrs. Leete. She replies that there is "none to do." Laundry, cooking, and sewing are all done by public workers. Mrs. Leete adds, "We choose houses no larger than we need, and furnish them so as to involve the minimum of trouble to keep them in order." Keeping the houses in order sounds like housekeeping. Bellamy does not appear to consider dusting, making beds, mopping floors, washing dishes or the myriad of other tasks that comprise housekeeping. But what would a man of Bellamy's time and social station know about such things? He's never done any housework. To him housekeeping is "woman's work" and a world with "none to do" must be "a paradise for womankind!"

After all, two of the feminist writers of Bellamy's time, Abby Morton Diaz and Marie Howland, had established freedom from housework as a goal of women's liberation in their books *The Schoolmaster's Trunk* and *Papa's Own Girl*, both published in 1874. Patai concludes that their influence caused Bellamy to incorporate their ideas into *Looking Backward* , believing that they articulated the dreams of all women.

> But Bellamy did not give women much scope for the leisure time they had and which both Diaz and Howland provided for in their respective books. Dr. Leete, Bellamy's surrogate in the novel, does not have a high regard for women's intellect, capacity to govern, or ability to pull their weight equally with men in the labor force.

West assumes then that, if women do not have housework to do, they must have nothing else to do. He says, "I suppose that women nowadays, having been relieved of the burden of housework, have no employment other than the cultivation of their charms

and graces." Dr. Leete replies, "So far as we men are concerned, we should consider that they amply paid their way . . . if they confined themselves to that occupation." Neither has any inkling that he is being insulting to women.

In fact, Bellamy departed radically from the others in the suffragist movement, for he believed strongly that the two genders have different talents. Dr. Leete, speaking for Bellamy, tells West that, "The lack of some such recognition of the distinct individuality of the sexes was one of the innumerable defects of your society." Child care is still the sole responsibility of women in the year 2000. Women in the industrial army are segregated into certain types of work, not only because of supposed physical limitations but also because of assumed differing inclinations. Furthermore, top leadership positions are available to men alone.

Through Dr. Leete, Bellamy advocates "giving full play to the differences of sex rather than in seeking to obliterate them." To avoid women seeking careers that would put them in an "unnatural rivalry with men," Bellamy created a society in which women have "a world of their own." Sadly, the declaration that "they are very happy with it" comes from Dr. Leete and not from one of the women whose testimony would have carried more credibility and less paternalism. To further confuse the situation, neither Edith nor Mrs. Leete ever seems to go to work or do anything more laborious than flower arranging or shopping.

It is to Bellamy's credit, however, that women are included in the industrial army at all, and that they do not leave upon marriage. The latter factor indicates that Bellamy understood that marriage is no more an occupation for women than it is for men. Nonetheless, what positions of leadership women do have in his 2000 society are reserved for wives and mothers "as they alone fully represent their sex." To state that a woman is somehow incomplete if she is not married or a mother is as insulting as implying that grace and charm are all a woman needs to succeed. There are many different ways to find fulfillment in life, and all people would have to have the freedom to choose their own path if there is ever to be a Utopia.

Since the beginning of time, there has been a belief among most cultures that it is a law of nature that women are responsible for maintaining morality. As a man, and one with strong moral convictions, Bellamy accepted the primordial notion that the favors of a woman are a reward for a man's good behavior. Therefore, he incorporates into his utopian society a sexual system of motivation for the laborers. "Our women sit aloft as judges of the race and reserve themselves to reward the winners." "Radiant faces" are averted to laggards. Celibates are "almost invariable men who have failed to acquit themselves creditably in the work of life." By this means of sexual selection, as in the animal kingdom, only the hardest working and those with the most admirable attributes become husbands and fathers. Thus, with "a sense of religious consecration," women serve as the "wardens of the world to come."

There are multiple flaws in *Looking Backward*. It is not great literature. It is, however, one of the most influential books in the world, which just goes to show the power of a good idea. Although Bellamy did not really understand women and failed to give them

true equality in his book, he did give them an economic equality that has not been achieved to this day. He also caused the people of the late nineteenth century to give new consideration to the role of women in society.

Source: Lois Kerschen, Critical Essay on *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, in *Novels for Students*, The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay, McClay discusses the setting of Bellamy's utopian Boston, with an emphasis on martial and economic themes.

Given the connection Bellamy made between martial valor and solidarity, it is of considerable importance that the story of *Looking Backward* opens in Boston on Decoration Day, the holiday honoring the memory of Northerners who fell in the Civil War. Julian West, the protagonist-narrator, has paid his respects at the Mount Auburn grave of his fiancée's brother, who had been killed in the war, and has returned to dine that evening with his fiancée, Edith, and her upper-crust family, the Bartletts. We soon discern that Julian is a deeply troubled man. Some of his plaints stem from the disordered state of the times, which were marked by increasing class division, accelerating social tension, and labor agitation and strikes. Not that the well-insulated Mr. West Feels any sympathy for the insurgent laboring classes; indeed, at the height of his exasperation, he wishes (as Caligula wished of the Romans) that "they had but one neck that he might cut it off." He especially resents the strike-related work stoppages that have repeatedly delayed completion of his new house and have thereby postponed his marriage to the lovely Miss Edith Bartlett.

But there are clearly deeper sources for Julian's trepidation. He has been fighting a battle with chronic insomnia, regularly finding it impossible to sleep for two or more consecutive nights. To combat this problem, he built a secret sleeping chamber beneath his old house, a subterranean refuge into which "no murmur from the upper world ever penetrated," and which, because of its inaccessibility and secrecy, was also an ideal place for him to protect his valuables from theft or fire. But even with the help of this bunker-like enclosure, wherein he found himself enveloped by "the silence of the tomb," secure in the knowledge that his hoarded wealth was safe nearby, he still often found himself unable to sleep and frequently had to call on the services of a mesmerist to lull him into slumber. Julian's unease, then, stems not from a disordered world but from a disordered soul. His dark, private sleeping chamber is a figuration of the deathly grotto of the purely individual life, which cuts itself off from the "upper" world in frantic pursuit of personal peace and worldly ease.

As night falls on Decoration Day in 1887, the agitated Julian finds he must once again go to his mesmerist for relief. But after he finally drifts off to sleep, a fire apparently sweeps through his house and consumes its contents—including, it was believed, Julian himself, in fact, however, Julian survives the inferno and continues to sleep undisturbed until the year 2000. At that time he is finally discovered and is taken into the household of a Dr. Leete, who proceeds to revive him, and then introduces him to the spectacle of a drastically transformed and perfected Boston. Thereafter the book alternates between long, highly didactic discussions between Julian and the Leetes about the operating principles of this radiant new world and the melodramatic episodes in the subplot of Julian's psychological development. The latter revolves around Julian's anguish over his now-riven identity and his growing romantic attraction to Dr. Leete's daughter, who is, like his nineteenth-century fiancée, named Edith.

From the beginning, the descriptions of utopian Boston offered by the Leete family touch characteristic Bellamy themes. He never missed an opportunity to contrast the sordid spectacle of nineteenth-century selfishness and wastefulness with the lustrous twentieth-century ideals of solidarity and efficiency. That contrast is prepared by Bellamy's justly celebrated comparison of nineteenth-century American society to a "prodigious coach" in which men and women scrambled and clawed at one another for the sake of a few privileged seats on top, where they could be pulled along in airy comfort by the tightly harnessed "masses of humanity," men and women reduced to beasts of burden. Dr. Leete's discourses develop that theme: the need to overcome competitive individualism through a spirit of cooperation and combination. When the disbelieving Julian is allowed to view the new city of Boston from Dr. Leete's rooftop, he finds himself especially astonished by the orderliness and opulence of the city's streets and buildings. Yes, responded Dr. Leete, he had heard of the squalor of nineteenth-century cities, a result of that era's "excessive individualism," which had prevented the sustenance of any meaningful "public spirit."

The utopia of *Looking Backward* did not set out to overthrow industrialism to humanize and purify it. Consider, for example, the labor problem that so bedeviled the world Julian had left behind. The great labor disturbances of the nineteenth century, Dr. Leete patiently explained, had merely been inevitable outgrowths of the increasing concentration of capital under a more and more consolidated industrial system. Although that system had resulted in enormous social inequities and degradation of labor, it was also productive of staggering economic efficiencies—efficiencies that made thinkable, for the first time in human history, the universal dispersion of a high level of material wealth. Thus, such a system was not to be abandoned.

The key to managing this problem lay in the very process of economic consolidation that "had been so desperately and vainly resisted" by those who yearned for preindustrial simplicity. Consolidation was not the enemy; it was, in fact, "a process which only needed to complete its logical evolution to open a golden future to humanity." In other words, the nineteenth century's enormous pains and dislocations should be attributed, not to the forces of consolidation, but to an *unfinished* consolidation.

By the early twentieth century, however, "the evolution was completed by the final consolidation of the entire capital of the nation," whereby the governance of the nation's industry and commerce was turned over to a single syndicate representing the people and therefore devoted to pursuit of "the common interests for the common profit." Indeed, the nations itself had become "the one great business corporation □ the one capitalist □ the sole employer □ the final monopoly." Perhaps most remarkable of all, this colossal transformation had occurred without pressure of violence or coercion; indeed, it had been proposed by the great corporations themselves and was readily accepted by a people who had gradually become convinced of the virtues of large-scale enterprises. The epoch of industrial consolidation, the era of trusts, found its consummation in the establishment of "The Great Trust."

In this new order, the diffuse energies of solitary selves found a home where they fused with the new social order, coalescing from an aggregation of ordinary men, singly so

feeble, into a single magnificent body, a coursing river of blue. And Bellamy could not adequately describe this new order without returning, again and again, to military imagery. Once the nation had come to assume proprietorship of all industrial enterprises, a citizen's service in "the industrial army" became a universal obligation, precisely analogous to the obligation of universal military service. The industrial army follows a military organizational chart, divided into ten great departments; the chief of each division is comparable to a commander of an army corps, or a lieutenant general, with generals of separate guilds reporting to him. These ten officers form his council for the general in chief, who is the president of the United States. The president is chiefly responsible for administrative oversight of the industrial army and the Great Trust; his political duties (as well as those of the Congress) have dwindled down to few or none.

This military style of administrative bureaucracy had evidently yielded economic advances unimaginable even under the highly productive regime of nineteenth-century capitalism. Bellamy did not hesitate to define those benefits in the language and imagery of warfare. "The effectiveness of the working force of a nation, under the myriad-headed leadership of private capital," explained Dr. Leete, "as compared with that which it attains under a single head, may be likened to the military efficiency of a mob, or a horde of barbarians with a thousand petty chiefs, as compared with that of a disciplined army under one general—such a fighting machine, for example, as the German army in the time of Von Moltke." Of course, the mere achievement of such efficiencies, however remarkable, would not have been enough to satisfy Bellamy's deeper moral concerns, But these concerns, too, were answered by the recon-ceptualization of the nation as an army. The martial virtues of unselfish valor could now be expressed in the ordinary labors of the ordinary civilian. "Now that industry," Dr. Leete tells Julian West, "is no longer self-service, but service of the nation," it follows that "patriotism, passion for humanity, impel the worker as in your day they did the soldier. The army of industry is an army, not alone by virtue of its perfect organization, but by reason also of the ardor of self-devotion which animates its members."

How appropriate, then, that the social-reform ideology and movement to which *Looking Backward* gave rise adopted the name of Nationalism—even if Bellamy used that term to evade the opprobrium, as well as the unwanted emphasis upon class division and class conflict, attached to the word *socialism*. But Nationalism was more than just a prudent name; it was also an honestly descriptive one. It acknowledged the degree to which the national principle, victorious over all other contenders in the clash of the Civil War, served as the animating principle for Bellamy's social vision. The purpose of the "national party," explained Dr. Leete, "was to realize the idea of the nation with a grandeur and completeness never before conceived"; it was not to be merely "an association of men for certain merely political functions," but it was to be "a family, a vital union, a common life, a mighty heaven-touching tree whose leaves are its people, fed from its veins, and feeding it in turn." The national party sought "to raise patriotism from an instinct to a rational devotion," by making their country into "a fatherland, a father who kept the people alive and was not merely an idol for which they were expected to die."

With the book's concluding chapter, the plot suddenly takes a new turn, as Julian finds himself suddenly transported back to the nineteenth century. It appears, for the moment, that his entire experience of utopian Boston has been nothing more than a dream. Now he finds himself cursed by his glimpse of glory, for he must see the social iniquities and horrors of his native century through eyes informed by a vision of twentieth-century perfection.

Julian's journey backward thus becomes a journey through hell, in which the disparities of wealth, the shameless cynicism of advertising, the programmatic wastefulness of a capitalist economy, the disarray of industry and labor, the "debauching influence" of money and banks, and the "drawn and anxious" faces of the people in the streets overwhelm him with horror and pity. He wanders the streets of the city in a dazed, aimless, disoriented state. The only moment of comfort comes, characteristically, when he happens upon a military parade marching down Tremont Street. He responds to the sight with intense relief: "Here at last were order and reason, an exhibition of what intelligent cooperation can accomplish" through "perfect concert of action" and "organization under one control." Stumbling upon this small-scale Grand Review reminded him of his own glimpse of the New Jerusalem.

Finally Julian somehow turns up at his fiancée's house on Commonwealth Avenue and is invited to join the family and its guests for dinner. Like a sonata, Julian's tale has returned to the place where it began; but the recapitulation has shifted into an agitated minor key. After his experience in the street, he finds himself nauseated by the splendor of the Bartletts' table and by the jolly spirits of the complacent diners. Like a biblical prophet who cannot contain his disgust, he explodes into a condemnation of them for their indifference to the suffering all around them: "Do you not know that close to your doors a great multitude of men and women, flesh of your flesh, live lives that are one agony from birth to death?"

But the stunned company, far from being moved to self-examination by this reproach, becomes impatient and then angry with Julian. Finally Mr. Bartlett has him thrown out of the house. At that climactic moment, Julian awakens and discovers he has been saved: to his great joy, he finds that he is still in Dr. Leete's house. His harrowing return to the nineteenth century had been the dream; the splendor of the twentieth century was the reality. As the book concludes, a tearful Julian kneels before his beloved Edith Leete and confesses to her his unworthiness "to breathe the air of this golden century."

Bellamy's persistent religious sensibilities were especially evident in these final pages. The scene at the Bartletts resounded with biblical overtones, not the least among them being the language and symbolism of crucifixion. ("I have been in Golgotha," raves the half-mad Julian at his dinner hosts; "I have seen Humanity hanging on a cross!") But the crucifixion becomes his own, a symbolic death suffered when Mr. Bartlett casts him out of the house; being thus ostracized and forsaken becomes the price of his intercession. But blessed are those persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; and Julian's passion is followed by resurrection, in the form of his awakening to the "real" world of the year 2000. His social death fulfills the dictum that one must die to world and self before entering into new life.

This logic also recalled the religion of solidarity, which proclaimed that the infinitude of the "upper world" inhabited by the "second soul" was more real than the finite realm occupied by the ego-personality. Such, too, was the superordinate reality possessed by Bellamy's cherished vision of the New Jerusalem, a consolidated social order in *this* world to which the troubled and inadequate ego could turn and yield itself wholly. Yet that last analogizing step, from "upper world" to perfected social world, was a giant one, challenging the essential meaning of the dictum about dying to the world. It was essentially the same step that would be taken by the proponents of the Social Gospel, reform-minded liberal Protestant ministers such as Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch, who argued that the redemptive mission of the Incarnation had come properly to rest in the social and economic reorganization of this world, the making of an earthly paradise.

To any apprehension that so monolithically centralized a state might be a formula for tyranny, *Looking Backward* seemed almost incredibly oblivious. At times, Bellamy's innocence seems so extreme that the modern reader can read them only with a grim smile. To readers in the late twentieth century who know the harm that such fantasies can produce in the hands of an aggrandizing state, Bellamy (and his readers) may seem laughably naive for having failed to ponder the enormous abuses to which *Looking Backward* 's prescriptions could lead.

There are two points to be made in this connection, however. First, there is the obvious fact that Bellamy's era's concerns are not ours; the passage of time has dramatically changed our aims and our fears, and it will do so again. Second, and more relevant to the present day, is the fact that the discontents of Bellamy, and perhaps those of his readers, were ultimately far more spiritual than political in character. Bellamy was not merely seeking social and economic justice in proposing the wholesale reconstitution of the social order. He was seeking answers to problems of ultimate meaning in individual lives, answers that would rescue the Julian Wests of the world from their grottoes of sleepless misery. *Looking Backward* was so wildly popular partly because it was able to trade so effectively upon the fading cultural capital of American Protestantism, even as it was transforming that capital into something new and worldly.

Such a transformation, however, may do justice to neither religion nor politics. In appealing to the idea of the nation as a great community, a great trust, or a great family, Bellamy touched a profound emotional chord in his readers, who longed to see their society transformed into a vessel of connectedness and love. Few of us are immune to such longings, and there is much to cherish in them. But there is also much to distrust. It is surely significant that Bellamy found military images, especially the idea of compulsory national service, to be more compelling figures of solidarity and sacrifice than those of family or community, which compete with the unitary state. It is perhaps a coincidence, but an irresistibly meaningful one, that Bellamy's perfect solidaritists came from the planet Mars. Bellamy's redirection of a self-sacrificial imperative toward the reform of the social order ran the risk of corrupting both religion and politics by effacing the line between them.

The desire to find meaning in life by sanctifying one's social world and the objects of one's labors should not be scorned. But it runs two risks. First, the risk of making us the self-conscious creators, rather than the discoverers, of what is sacred—a typically modern exercise in narcissism and futility. Second, the risk that, in seeking too ardently for a politics of meaning, it may lose sight of the meaning of politics. Even the founder of Bellamy's religious tradition insisted upon rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's. There is more than one lesson in that.

Source: Wilfred M. McClay, "Edward Bellamy and the Politics of Meaning," in *American Scholar*, Spring 1995, pp. 268-71.

Critical Essay #3

In the following essay, Abrash looks into the public acceptance of Bellamy's Looking Backwards*.*

A certain nineteenth-century writer, also active in journalism, created an extraordinary utopian vision in which all productive facilities were owned by society. Unlike the great majority of earlier utopian proposals, this one was specifically applicable to full-blown industrial technology and organization which, under centralized rational direction for use rather than profit, was presumed capable of providing all the world's people with the material necessities of a good life. This writer also envisioned an egalitarian incomes policy and the elimination of social classes. His vision spread rapidly and became part of western civilization's heritage of powerful ideas.

The summary thus far clearly fits Edward Bellamy—and just as clearly fits Karl Marx. But when we move ahead to the reception of their doctrines, a sharp divergence appears. Marx was fiercely attacked, harried out of one country after another, and his name became among respectable people a byword for social and economic iniquity. Bellamy, on the other hand, became an honored citizen, and his formula for utopia was accepted even by its opponents as within the bounds of legitimate American political discourse.

What accounts for so dramatic a contrast in American reaction to visions sharing similarly radical institutional features? To the individualistic American mind, in fact, Bellamy's regimented industrial army should have seemed more outrageous than the Marxist withering away of the state. But *Looking Backward* found advocates in factories, farms, colleges, and New England drawing rooms alike. Why should it have commanded respectful attention from such disparate elements of a citizenry notoriously resistant, then as now, to economic or political programs straying very far from the middle of the road?

Obviously Bellamy succeeded in domesticating Marxist ends and means so that they seemed compatible with American ideals and traditions—no mean feat. Even more remarkable is that he apparently accomplished this more or less incidentally. He did not set out to tame Marxist theory as a whole, or to take the sting out of particular fear-inducing elements, for the good reason that he was not a student of Marxism. Surprisingly enough, he had probably not even read Marx at the time he wrote *Looking Backward*.

Although there is no sure proof of this proposition, we have Bellamy's own word for it that "I have never been in any sense a student of socialistic literature, or have known more of the various socialist schemes than any newspaper reader might." This disclaimer receives support (although at a much earlier date) from a line in his review of Nordhoff's *The Communistic Societies of the United States*: "The words socialist and communist fall unpleasantly on American ears, being generally taken as implying atheistic and superstitious beliefs and practices and abnormal sex relations" (Edith

Leete's hyper-Victorianism arouses readers' concerns about *any*, sex relations in Boston 2000, without worrying about abnormal ones.) Nothing in Bellamy's writings up to *Looking Backward* indicates awareness of the subtlety, scope, and intellectual rigor of Marx's scientific socialism.

The long chapter on *Looking Backward* in Krishan Kumar's recent survey of utopias concludes that Bellamy had not studied Marx before writing the book, but did so afterwards. That may be the most plausible scenario. It means, however, that Bellamy, through coincidence or intuition, succeeded in defusing every incendiary feature (in American eyes) of Marxism without any clear idea of what Marxism was. If Bellamy had been an expert on Marx, and had deliberately set out to restate each threatening element of Marxism in a form acceptable to American sensibilities, there is scarcely anything, as will be explained below, that he would have written differently in *Looking Backward*.

It should be noted first, however, that deliberation does seem likely in the extraordinary care taken not to portray any mass or collective aspects of Boston 2000. Readers get so absorbed in the utopian substance of what Julian West is *told* that they fail to notice that direct depiction of the society in action is virtually absent. The astonishing fact is that, insofar as *Looking Backward* tells a story, there are no people in Boston other than the Leetes; the only exceptions are a sales clerk and a waiter, neither of whom has any lines of dialogue or is otherwise individuated. The Leetes seem to have no relatives and no friends. No one ever visits them, even though they have the hottest attraction in town on their premises. When they walk to the dining house—or when Edith and Julian go to the ward store—they do not run into acquaintances. The entire novel takes place, after Julian finds him self in the year 2000, in a city which is, for all novelistic purposes, unpopulated except for the three Leetes.

Bellamy goes to great lengths to maintain this isolation. Julian is taken to a school and a warehouse, but about the former he cautions, "I shall not describe in detail what I saw in the schools that day," and comments only upon physical culture instruction. The visit to the warehouse receives a single paragraph in which Julian provides an analogy in lieu of description. Typically, the reader gets more information on the subject (not much in any case) from what the Leetes tell him elsewhere than from what he observes on the spot.

Furthermore, the telephone transmission system of which Bellamy makes so much has undermined two important nineteenth-century forms of public social interaction: apparently no one goes to concerts and few to church (the hugely popular Mr. Barton, be it noted, preaches *only* by telephone). "At home we have comfort, but the splendor of our life is, on its social side, that which we share with our fellows," says Doctor Leete, but nothing in the novel illustrates this.

It is, in fact, the comfort of home which establishes the tone of the new society for Julian. And a thoroughly bourgeois home it is: father works, mother runs the household with the aid of public facilities and (if necessary) hired help, and daughter shops. Levelling of society? Common ownership? Dictatorship of the proletariat? Free love?

Few of the proletarian attributes of Marx's communism—whether ascribed by boosters or detractors—find lodgement in these benign pages. Not only do the working classes not rule in *Looking Backward*, they are shunted even further out of the sight of Bellamy's contemporary middle-class reader than their real-life counterparts of 1888. It is significant that the nearest Julian gets to proletarians is at the warehouse, where the work consists of order filling and distribution rather than production. Of labor or laborers in factories, there is not even a pretence of first-hand description anywhere in the book.

The only scenes with great numbers of people in the novel—in fact, virtually the only ones with more than five—are in the Boston of Julian's nightmare. Here Bellamy vividly portrays "throngs" and "swarms"—what an ingenious reversal, that it is *communism* which will obviate mass action and provide the individual with the physical and social space needed for the good life! This is characteristic of the way in which *Looking Backward* soothes a whole range of fears that assailed most Americans (and to a large extent still do) at the mere mention of Marxism.

For example, the fundamental assumption of unresolvable class conflict is sidestepped by the happy assurance that you can "make ten times more profit out of your fellow men by uniting with them than by contending with them." This, Doctor Leete explains, failed to be perceived by a nineteenth century blinkered by individualism. Once the principle of maximum efficiency through cooperation is recognized, desire for gain becomes a reason for consensus, not conflict, and the industrial army's hierarchical organization is deprived of class attributes.

The expropriation of capital, which sent chills down the spines even of many Americans who had little to be expropriated, was rendered benign by two facts: the big capitalists, in the form of corporations, voluntarily accepted the new arrangements, and the arrangements themselves could be expressed in the familiar image of corporation and stockholders, made reassuringly analogous to nation and citizens. After all, captains of industry and industrial army generals share similar executive characteristics, and it is a fair guess that the latter were initially drawn from the former.

The fear of stagnation resulting from the elimination of monetary incentives is combatted with a variety of alternative inducements. Public esteem, wider career choice, prestigious awards, and, most effective of all, the fact that "our women sit aloft as judges of the race and reserve themselves to reward the winners," encourage excellence in the industrial army. Actually, in this regard Bellamy shrewdly appealed to better instincts than Marx, maintaining that human beings are as capable of responding to considerations of honor and pride as to those of material benefit or historical inevitability.

One of Bellamy's most successful modifications of what was popularly assumed to be Marxist doctrine was in the matter of uniformity. Satires on Marxism (and, in fact, on *Looking Backward* as well) make much of a dull sameness descending upon society as a consequence of a single noncompetitive supplier filling the needs of a population lacking differentials in income, education, and basic outlook. Bellamy, however, neatly end runs this by allowing each person to apportion income as he or she chooses, so

that equal incomes need not mean uniform patterns of consumption. Furthermore, new products and activities can be introduced by means of clusters of individuals pooling their incomes for whatever joint purpose they please, even to the extent of starting a newspaper or a religious congregation of any persuasion. *Looking Backward* makes much of the variety of fulfillments among its citizens, as well it might; this was one of Bellamy's most brilliant strokes in making Americans feel comfortable with goals passionately condemned when championed by Marxists.

Even the regimentation inseparable from the industrial army is lightened by the delightful prospect of complete release at age forty-five from the necessity of making a living. If Bellamy and Marx had run against each other for public office, Karl would have had a lot of trouble topping that one. ("To each according to his needs" is pretty dry compared with—to invent a Bellamyite slogan—"Fully alive after forty-five!")

But of course Marxism was disreputable less because of its visionary institutional features and social policies than because of its insistence upon materialism, determinism, and political revolution. Materialism gets its comeuppance in Mr. Barton's sermon, which ends in an evocation of something rather like the culminating starchild in Arthur Clarke's *2001*. "For twofold is the return of man to God 'who is our home', the return of the individual by way of death, and the return of the race by the fulfillment of the evolution, when the divine secret hidden in the germ shall be perfectly unfolded. The long and weary winter of the race has ended. Its summer has begun. Humanity has burst the chrysalis. The heavens are before it." When Friedrich Engels wrote in 1877 of the Marxist utopia: "It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom", he coined a neat secular slogan, but not one to soothe the fears of upright citizens who equate materialism with atheism.

Determinism is undercut by Doctor Leete's pronouncement that the system under which humanity lives in 2000 is "entirely voluntary, the logical outcome of the operation of human nature under rational conditions." A "logical outcome" might be considered determinism of a sort, but the role of reason is more decisive than in the case of historical inevitability. Bellamy presents the breakthrough into utopia as the result of intelligent human choice made under the guidance of a benevolent yet practical ethic—all more temperate and flattering than the rigid impersonality implied by historical determinism.

Those attributes of choice and reason also exorcise, in Doctor Leete's narration, the most immediate bugbear of nineteenth-century Americans in regard to Marxism: the necessary overthrow of the government. Bellamy dismisses the whole issue of revolutionary violence with breathtaking offhandedness. No sooner does Julian West conjure up the specter of the "great bloodshed and terrible convulsions" that must have occurred during the massive transition to the world of 2000, than Doctor Leete, no doubt casually tapping the ash off his cigar, assures him that there was "absolutely no violence." Everyone—masses and corporations alike—understood that the time had come for the great change; "there was no more possibility of opposing it by force than by argument." The rest of his little speech—the only time the actual changeover to utopia is referred to—is replete with phrases describing scales dropping from eyes:

"they came to realize," "were now forced to recognize," "had come to be recognized as an axiom." The new dispensation, one gathers, was not only not resisted, but was welcomed on all sides as, if anything, overdue. No threat to law and order in *this* revolution!

Thus were put into acceptable American terms all the major aspects of Marxism likely to arouse unreasoning hostility—"artfully" put, one would say, except that the weight of evidence is that Bellamy was not even aware he was doing it. Then what accounts for the extraordinary aptness of his treatment of the radical themes he shared with Marx? The answer surely lies in the fact that the two men were working within profoundly different traditions, German philosophical systematizing in the case of Marx, American pragmatism in that of Bellamy.

Marx presented his utopian future as the capstone of an ineluctable historical progression fueled by complex interactions between mind and matter. Bellamy's utopia is simply the outcome of a rational society's elimination of malfunctions through the logical application of existing organizational techniques, subject to an ethical code that already commanded a consensus. Marxism was, as far as its possibilities of acceptance in America went, mired in abstruse theory promising universal upheaval in practice; *Looking Backward*, in contrast, is blissfully free of theoretical framing, its communism could be assimilated to American ideals and traditions because it was presented as a platform of pragmatic reform to be acted upon by enlightened consensus. The crowning touch in its appeal, it may be speculated, lay in the fact that it sounded as if it would "work"—not "had to" or "ought to," but *would*. With that, Bellamy's inadvertent Americanization of Marxism was complete.

Source: Merritt Abrash, "*Looking Backward*: Marxism Americanized," in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 30, No. 3, Fall 1989, pp. 237-42.

Adaptations

Looking Backward has been recorded in unabridged form by Blackstone Audiobooks. It is available for both rental and purchase at http://www.blackstoneaudio.com

Topics for Further Study

Although the dream structure was only an intermittent part of the novel, the reader is momentarily led to believe that what is happening in the year 2000 is a dream. What other novels or films use the dream structure throughout (Examples: *The Man*)? *Wizard of Oz* and *The Family*

Make a list of the developments, both technological and social, that Bellamy predicts. Note those that have come to pass in some form or another. Why did his other predictions fail to come true?

Compare Bellamy's proposed economic and governmental system to that of communism. What are the similarities? What are the differences?

How would you rewrite this story to make it a better and more interesting novel? What elements of composition (dialogue, action, characters, scenes, etc.) would you change or add to make this more a work of literature than a social commentary?

Research the labor situation of the late 1800s and compare it to that of today. What improvements have been made? Name some laws that have been passed to protect the workers.

Compare and Contrast

Late 1800s: Booming industrialization demands a large, cheap workforce. The numbers of women and children laborers increases dramatically, but living conditions for poor families often remain squalid. Demands for better pay and working conditions lead to strikes and violence. Between 1881 and 1905 there are approximately 37,000 strikes across the country.

Today: Labor unions and laws protect worker interests. Children are prohibited from working until a certain age, and all workplaces have regulations about safety, hours, and wages.

Late 1800s: Monopolies and trusts control most of the industrial power in the country, and enormous wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few such as Rockefeller (oil), Vanderbilt (railroads), Morgan (banks), Carnegie (steel), and Duke (tobacco).

Today: Antitrust laws prevent the use of unfair competition by conglomerates to drive small businesses out of the market. The most notable recent antitrust case involved Microsoft.

Late 1800s: Many new inventions appear, including the typewriter, the telephone, electric street lamps, electric streetcars, the first electric generating plant, the gasoline motor, and the transatlantic cable.

Today: Patents continue to be issued at an astronomical rate. Computers, word processors, solar and nuclear energy, automobiles, airplanes, and cell phones have evolved from the industrial age, as well as thousands of new technologies that Bellamy could not have imagined.

Late 1800s: The Gilded Age is in its prime. Besides ruthless graft in business and government, the age is distinguished by the conspicuous consumption of America's wealthiest families. Notably, massive "summer cottages" are built in Newport, Rhode Island, at the cost of millions each.

Today: Very few of the Newport mansions are still used as homes. The most extravagant are now historical museums that bring a large tourist industry to the seaside town, including the Duke estate and the various Vanderbilt mansions. The fortunes connected with these families are either dissipated or in foundations.

Late 1800s: The women's suffrage movement is active across the country. The National Woman Suffrage Association is founded in 1869, the same year the Wyoming Territory granted women the right to vote. In 1878, a constitutional amendment for female suffrage is introduced in Congress but is not passed until 1920, the same year that the League of Women Voters is organized.

Today: Women not only vote but also hold public office and are members of virtually every occupation. Nonetheless, salaries for women lag behind those of men, despite Bellamy's dream that by 2000 women would receive equal compensation. Women are still greatly outnumbered by men in government and corporate positions of power.

1887: Edward Bellamy introduces the idea of the credit card to pay for goods and services in his book *Looking Backward*.

Today: The first comprehensive credit card was introduced in 1950 by Diners Club. Credit cards are now readily available and can be used for almost any kind of transaction.

Late 1800s: Edward Bellamy proposes universal education to the age of twenty-one in his book *Looking Backward*, but in 1890 only four percent of young people ages fourteen to seventeen, mostly male, are enrolled in school.

Today: All children must attend school until approximately the age of sixteen (varies by state). More women than men attend college.

What Do I Read Next?

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889) is Mark Twain's time-travel novel. After being knocked unconscious in nineteenth-century Connecticut, Hank Morgan wakes up in the Camelot of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. What ensues is both an enjoyable comedy and a disturbing satire about human society.

The Time Machine, by H. G. Wells, is the ultimate time travel story. First published in 1895, it is still a popular publication. Wells paints a dark picture of the future of civilization as he transports his Time Traveler to the year 802,701 when there are only two races of human-like people left in a world of horror. The traveler's quest is to find his stolen time machine so that he can escape.

Equality is Edward Bellamy's sequel to *Looking Backward*. Published in 1897, this novel clarifies some of the theories that Bellamy proposed in the first work. However, the large buildings and mass services of the city are replaced by technologically connected small villages where the advantages of community are enhanced by more space and a closeness to nature.

Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905) provides an excellent picture of society in the Gilded Age. This novel illustrates many of the class status problems outlined in *Looking Backward*, most specifically those of women who are forced to marry for social and economic security instead of love.

The rise of realism in American literature in the late nineteenth century resulted in Hamlin Garland's *Main-Travelled Roads*, a collection of short stories about Midwest farm families published in 1891. In these stories is a heartrending description of the desperation of the hardworking rural laborers alluded to in *Looking Backward*.

In 1932, Aldous Huxley published his predictions about the future of humanity in *Brave New World*. A dark portrayal of the effects of science on human nature, this dystopian novel is eerily accurate to a much greater extent than the few technological predictions that Edward Bellamy made.

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1946) uses animal characters to portray the tragedy of the human condition. Based on the Russian Revolution, this book is a satire on the utopian hopes of the people and the corruption of their communist leaders.

An example of the dystopian novel is *1984*, published by George Orwell in 1949. A utopian novel such as *Looking Backward* promotes the belief that humans will rise to the greater good and achieve peace and prosperity. But Orwell's vision of the future was one of perpetual warfare and totalitarian control over the actions and thoughts of the people.

Published in 1982, Arthur Lipow's *Authoritarian Socialism in America: Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement* traces the Nationalist movement from its background in

post-Civil War reform movements to the democratic changes made in the 1890s. Lipow reminds readers that Bellamy, like Thomas Jefferson, felt that reform would come from the educated, not the working classes.

Further Study

Bowman, Sylvia E., *Edward Bellamy*, Twayne Publishers, 1986.

Considered one of the best of the Bellamy biographies, this analytical study covers his life, his philosophies on reform, and the impact of his works.

Halewood, W. H., "Catching Up with Edward Bellamy," in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 3, Spring 1994, pp. 451-61.

Halewood examines the elements of *Looking Backward* that have caused it to become a relatively unknown work today despite its enormous original impact.

Patai, Daphne, ed., *Looking Backward, 1988-1888: Essays on Edward Bellamy*, University of Massachusetts Press, 1989.

This collection of eight essays from critics who were contemporaries of Bellamy to modern critics provides an insightful variety of views about Bellamy and his works.

Trahair, Richard, "Looking Backward: 2000-1887, 2nd ed.," in *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Spring 1997, pp. 118-20.

This book review of a new edition of Bellamy's primary work by Bedford Books is a quick but excellent overview of the novel and its influence.

Weinberg, Robert L., "*Looking Backward, Going Forward*," in *Nation*, Vol. 272, Issue 5, Feb. 2001, pp. 32-35.

This short but good review of Bellamy's book includes speculation about what Bellamy might think of the actual year 2000.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

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A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

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