Looking Backward from Today's Cities: A Take on Bellamy's Urban Utopia

Kanak Tiwari and Zeeshan Ibrar

Kanak Tiwari is an Urban Designer from Delhi with over 12 years' experience in the urban sector. She is a commonwealth scholar and has an M.Phil in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge, UK. Currently, a consultant with the World Bank and Visiting Faculty at School of Planning and Architecture- Delhi, she likes to read and write about cities in her spare time, and her work has been published in national and international journals. Her research interests include urban governance, participatory planning, smart urbanism, and urban regeneration besides urban design and planning.

✉ tiwarikanak@gmail.com

Zeeshan Ibrar is an architect from Delhi. He completed his post-graduate specialisation in Urban Regeneration from the Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi in 2015.

He is currently practicing architecture in New Delhi. His interests include travelling and reading both about history of places and futuristic urbanism.

✉ zeeshan.ibrar@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward* has inspired a number of social scientists, economists, and visionaries in the late 19th and early 20th century. The book's premise is a Rip-Van-Winkle sort of scenario of a man who is awakened after 113 years from a deep sleep in a transformed Boston, free of all its earlier problems. It is little known that founding fathers of planning and a number of famous urban theorists were influenced by the book's ideas, which shaped their philosophies and theories. This paper discusses these ideas and influences as well as their relevance today.

Figure 1: Looking Backward 2000-1887 was one of the best sellers of its time and saw a number of releases, later editions and reprints by different publishers.
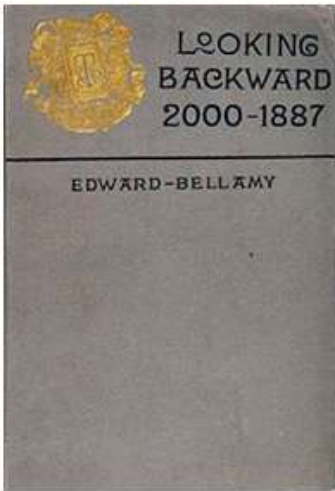
1888 cover of the first edition by Ticknor & Co.
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Looking_Backward

1926 cover in edition by Houghton Mifflin Co.
Source: http://manybooks.net/original_covers/b/bellamye/bellamyeetext96lkbak10.jpg
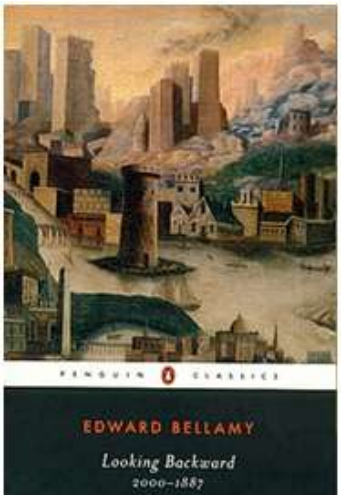
2008 reprint by Penguin Classics (USA). The cover shows a detail from A City of Fantasy (circa 1850) by an unknown artist, at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Looking_Backward

Introduction

Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward 2000-1887* was first published in 1888. It inspired as well as agitated its contemporary intellectuals[1] and many afterwards. The ideas presented in the book have been analysed and dissected extensively by economists, sociologists and political scientists for over a century now (Tichi, 1982). It is also recognised as the source of large scale social movements in America and a few other countries (Samuels, 1984). However, what is considerably less discussed is that *Looking Backward* may perhaps be the only work of utopian literature which had a significant influence on urban planning philosophy and practice also. There is evidence of Patrick Geddes, Lewis Mumford, and Ebenezer Howard of having acknowledged its influence on their writings and work. Here, we revisit the book and try to understand the source and impact of its ideas; with particular focus on cities and their planning.

A great many utopian places have been described and depicted in various media from painting and literature to science fiction, comics and cinema. These places generally possess a magical, 'un-urban' character, far
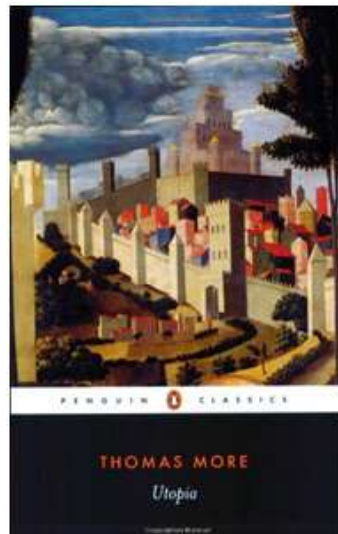
Figure 2: *Utopia by Thomas More, first published in Latin in year 1516 – 1997 cover of the Dover Thrift Editions (left) & 2003 cover by Penguin Classics (right).*

Sources:
http://www.amazon.com/Utopia-Dover-Thrift-Editions-Thomas/dp/0486295834,

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18414.Utopia

from chaos, remote and serene, where equality, peace, and fair justice systems thrive; quite unlike conflict ridden, and squalor riddled cities. Bellamy's utopian fantasy therefore stands out due to its very distinct *'urban'* nature, and also because it is not situated in some faraway land, but in the very thick of things, in a very *'real'* place, in the city of Boston, only the time is 113 years in the future (i.e. the year 2000).

This paper ponders over whether utopia can be urban i.e., are well governed, inclusive, happy cities ever used as settings of futures imagined by utopian writers? Taking Bellamy's *Looking Backward* into account, the paper analyses the reasons behind its literary success. How did the novel become an ideating basis for the founding fathers of urban planning, which was then not even a fully defined field of study? The factors that influenced the book as well as those it influenced are discussed. The paper examines which of the perspectives are relevant

even today. It concludes with overall inferences, as well as recommendations for further research.[2]

Utopia - Can it be Urban?[3]

The first image one gets on hearing the word Utopia is of a 'perfect place', and this image varies from person to person, mainly due to the difference in contexts. Accounts of 'perfect worlds' flourish in every society - whether it is the Garden of Eden or *Ram-Rajya* or Shangri-la, such societies are imagined free of all vices, evils, and unhappiness. Any Utopia emerges from the dissatisfaction and distaste with the present situation, time and place (Searle, 2015). It is a longing for change, for betterment.

The term 'Utopia', was coined by Sir Thomas More in 1516 to be the title of his famous book, which was about a perfect society on an island of the same name.[4] He describes 54 large, well constructed cities on the island i.e. an urban but secluded society. Plato's 'Republic' also

explores the characteristics of an ideal city-state, and espouses concepts such as 'just city'. It is fascinating to see that fictional utopian places from before the 19th century were mostly 'urban', but those from the 19th and 20th centuries were distinctly un-urban. This was perhaps on account of there being no exacting distinction of urban and rural in the former period, cities being important as the seats of the rulers. On the contrary, cities in the latter period were hosts to industrialisation and 'the rise of the machine', mass immigration,[5] riots, economic depression, poverty, disease, slums, and filth, and were seen as a necessary evil. Thus, most utopian fiction around the time of *Looking Backward* portrayed societies distant from cities, resplendent in the pervading calm, and in harmony with nature.

William's Four Categories of Utopia
Raymond William (1978) places utopian places into four categories, namely *'Paradise'*, located on remote islands or planets and distanced from the real cities as well as their problems of poverty, class clashes, gender inequity, war, conflict, disease, pollution etc.; *'the externally altered world'* i.e. a society created in aftermath of some forceful external factor-man made or natural; *'the willed transformation'* i.e. the sense of utopia which is achieved only after the human race feels that it failed the city and society and works towards certain required change; and finally, *'the technological transformation'*, which is achieved by the advancement of technology to provide extreme efficiency and, everything just a click away. (Williams, 1978)

While the first category commands a large amount of literature[6], mesmerising descriptions of some paradise island (Wonder

Woman comics, or the elusive Eldorado, or the heavenly Shangri-la), the second is more in

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fashion[7], the sub-genre of cli-fi[8], demonstrating a huge unexpected disaster, which happens due to excesses of human existence -something on the lines of *'pralay'* [9] from Hindu mythology; and from the ashes, a new world emerges. However, it is the third and fourth categories between which Bellamy's book can be wedged as it comprises of an imagined perfect (or at least better) society in a place that is currently existent but becomes different due to changes in the social, political, economic, and technological milieus and structures.

Ironically, it was cities and their problems that gave birth to another category i.e. dystopian fantasies, resulting in a sub-genre of utopian fiction. This anti-utopian fiction escalated in variety and volume in the 20th century due to its huge popularity. Cities with their squalor and disease, wars and poverty and dependence on technology became ideal laboratories for manufacturing of these dystopian scenarios, all exaggerated in scale and imagination to warn against extremes of different kinds. Their ability to thrill and chill also made them more popular for cinema adaptations as compared to the utopian 'happy place' scenarios.

Looking Backward **thus presents a rare 'urban' utopia** (Mullin, 1997), one that is not dystopian in character, although it does depict technological advancement.[10] It is neither situated in an imagined setting nor is it an incredible account of human like insects ruling the world! Bellamy managed to deliver a 'script of future stability and prosperity' (The New York Times,1988) in the midst of an urban uproar of poverty and violence. The 'reality' and tangibility of Boston as the setting made the understanding and criticism of the 'fictional future' convenient for the readers.

The Book, the Plot, and the Writer
Edward Bellamy was a journalist with New York Post, but took up literary writing due to health reasons. The huge success of his third novel, *Looking Backward* came as a surprise to him especially after the lukewarm response to the first two (Samuels, 1984). However, he died in 1898, at a young age of 48, only ten years after the book, having witnessed its partial impact only. *'Looking Backward'* was termed prophetic by many, and hopeful by many more.

The protagonist, Julian West is a citizen of Boston who has insomnia and is helped to sleep through hypnosis in the year 1887. He continues sleeping in the basement of his house that is burnt down. However, he remains undiscovered in the ruins and wakes up from this suspended animation (Feenberg, 2001) in the year 2000. His discussion with his host about the transformed and socialist Boston forms the central plot. The book is said to have sold more than a million copies[11], and was given great reviews as it espoused hope in millions of Americans at that time. It was translated into a number of languages. Close to

200 Nationalist Clubs were formed by "Bellamytes" *"who sought to remake economy and society through the nationalization of industry"* (Rosemont, 1988). The book also influenced

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political reform in both Nationalist and Democratic parties (Mullin, 1997).

What influenced Looking Backward?
Industrialisation and Technology
Bellamy's birth place, Chicopee Falls in Massachusetts was home to large textile industries in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. His notes have eye-witness accounts of tormented men, women and children toiling day after day in the mills, almost like animals for nominal payment. He noticed their slums, the rampant epidemics and diseases, and their daily strife for food as well as their strikes of rebellion. Bellamy's utopia emerges from *"the small town he knew so well"* (Mullin, 2003).

In his book, he therefore presents a city where all citizens have equal rights to good life, early retirement at the age of 45, working as much and as long as they want, and having the freedom to pursue personal hobbies and responsibilities of citizenship later on. All this

is possible due to advanced machines doing the hardest work. But, people still are the main part of the landscape, with the 'Industrial Army' taking care of all production – people with hardest work having the shortest workday. Industrial smog has disappeared in Bellamy's Boston, so have the chimneys (change in fuel is mentioned as reason). He also imagined a well connected system of telephones, which would broadcast sermons and musical programmes to every house. It is important to note here that Graham Bell had presented a two way transmitting telephone for the first time in 1877 in the Boston Music Hall, and the first radio would come only in 1910, long after Bellamy.

Economic Inequality, Mass Immigration and Slums
A look at American cities in the decade before *Looking Backward* would be a study of contrasts and inequalities, aptly described by Henry James as 'both squalid and gilded, to be fled rather than enjoyed'.[12] While skyscrapers were being conceived, there were places in the city so unhealthy that it was difficult to breathe in the air. Boston and New York overflowed with immigrants between 1880 and 1900.[13] Huge areas of the cities became tenements – overcrowded, dark, ill-ventilated and centres of crime, poverty, and violence. Records show that the density of some wards in New York was 1000 people to an acre (4000 sq.m) (Hall, 1984). And yet, the period of 1860-1890 was also the 'gilded age' for big cities like Chicago, Boston and New York in terms of new engineering feats in building; establishment of museums and other cultural institutions, redevelopment of rich residential districts, and laying out of

open public spaces in the cities. In Boston and Chicago, specifically, the great fires of 1871 and 1877 respectively, made rebuilding a necessity (Maiershofer, 1997).

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Thus Bellamy's text talks of tall buildings, and commercial buildings, and spectacular cultural institutions. It also talks of green open spaces, and miles of tree lined straight roads. He talks of a collective society with no economic disparity. In fact there is no 'money', just 'credit cards'!!! However, Bellamy is completely silent about diversity, may be due to unresolved issues of immigration, and attitudes towards the immigrants still evolving. In his utopia, slums were obliterated and people could choose where to live as housing was provided by the state.

Violence and Conflict
Bellamy was deeply disturbed by the 1886 Haymarket riots of Chicago (Baer, 2007). Utopian Boston is a caring, homogeneous community where equality, grace, dignity, and innocence are manifest (Mullin, 1997). The protagonist's first surprised observation is the complete absence of chimneys and smoke, and that of squalor, the fetid air, and the diseased

tenements, all of which seemed to have vanished in thin air. There are no police or legal systems as crime is almost non-existent.

Manifold Influences of *Looking Backward*

The book influenced the common public, thinkers and decision makers alike. *Looking Backward* had enormous impact on city planning and became popular with urban theorists (as there were no planners in 1888)[14] as it has touched on a number of relevant issues such as land use, industry, commerce, housing, public space, urban environment, recreation, technology, and amenities. It also addresses the connected matters of poverty, education, and inequality. The protagonist, Julian West, upon awakening from his century long slumber, says:

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

It is easy to imagine how awe-inspiring this description would have been to the readers of the book at that time when cities were reeking with fetid smells and smoke, and had narrow meandering streets, and slums packed with people. Then imagine the impact on the quasi-planners of those days, the ones looking for

solutions – they were helped with a vision of what a city could be like; the potential of a city to be productive, healthy, and beautiful – all at the same time.

Foremost among these pioneers of planning was Ebenezer Howard whose book, *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform,* was inspired by *Looking Backward.* This book was revised as the famous *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1920). His Garden Cities concept was something on the lines of Bellamy's Boston (although there are differences). Howard diagrammatised the ideas that Bellamy had written. His famous illustration of the garden cities and the three magnets brought these ideas to a stage where they could be implemented on ground.

Although one can count on fingers, the number of pristine 'Garden Cities' in the world, Howard's ideas percolated and permeated the foundation of the planning profession, which spread all over the globe interpreted and re-interpreted a million times over. The underlying philosophy of planning was discovered; that all citizens deserve not only a productive life, but also one that is healthy and happy. Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of To-morrow* echoes Bellamy's idea of industry being necessary but the city is prepared to deal with its bi-products such as pollution, urban poverty, overcrowding, low wages, dirty streets, toxic substances, deplorable public health, absence of greenery and nature. The environmental ethos of the book seems to have seeped into the Garden City concept. Howard also acknowledged the influence in some of his public lectures. According to his follower, Frederick J. Osborn, *"under the impact of the book (Looking Backward) the conception of an ideal town*
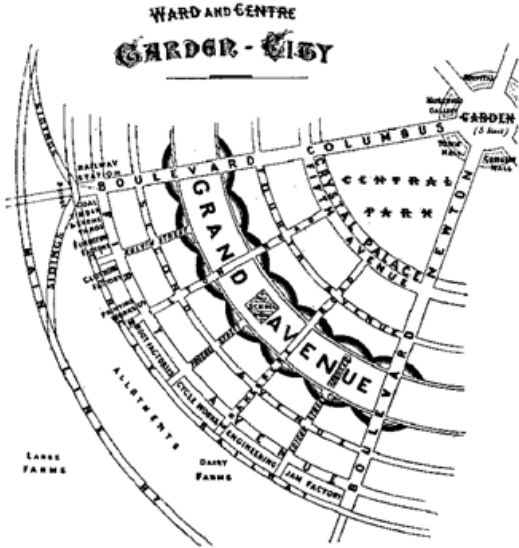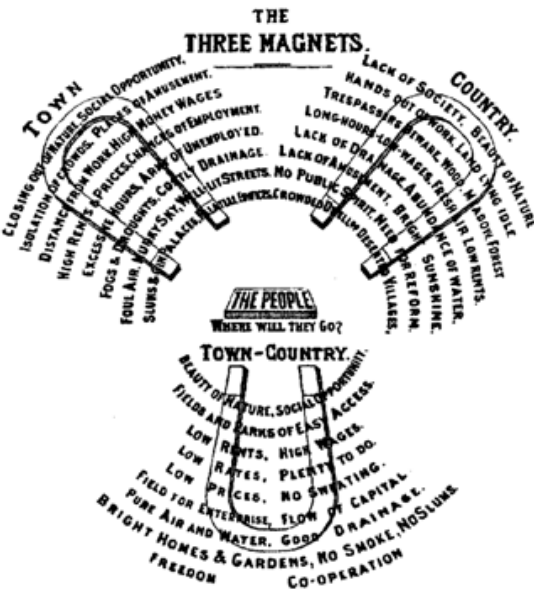
Figure 5: Sketch of Broadacre City by Frank Lloyd Wright
Source: https://growingupinamerica.wordpress.com/2011/04/10/designing-perfection-a-glance-of-frank-lloyd-wright/

came to him (Howard) as essentially a socialist community". So, while Bellamy envisioned the ideal city, Howard planned and strategised how such a city could be brought about.[15]

The City Beautiful Movement was also inspired by the book's description of urban order and grandness such as *"a great city, miles of broad streets, stretched in every direction, glistening statues, fountains, colossal buildings, architectural grandeur, and stately piles,* among others were powerful images for planners to work on. Lutyen's design for the imperial New Delhi is also said to have traces of Bellamy's utopia.[16]

William Morris wrote *News from Nowhere (1890)* as a direct response to *Looking Backward.* His ideas, however, had little impact on the

planning movements. Morris's premise is identical where the protagonist wakes from a century long sleep, only it is London instead of Boston. The lack of impact could be assigned to the 'agrarian' feel of Morris's London, where people use handcrafted products and live in the countryside. Technology does not exist in Morris's London. Any urbanist of that time would have been indignant to accept such a vision having felt the pulse and potential of the City and the role of technology as an enabler. It had become clear that cities would be the engines of growth tugging whole countries with them towards global success.

Among other visionaries who were influenced by the book was Lewis Mumford who wrote, "If one is amazed by Bellamy's utopia now, it is not

because he was so wild but because he was so practical, so close to actuality" (Mullin, Thoughts on Edward Bellamy as City Planner: The ordered art of Geometry, 1997). Mumford himself in his 'Story of Utopias' (1962) studied all the different types:

> *"Utopia has long been another name for the unreal and the impossible. [...] As a matter of fact, it is our utopias that make the world tolerable to us: the cities and mansions that make people dream of are those in which they finally live. The more that men react upon their environment and make it over after a human pattern, the more continuously do they live in utopia…"*

Mumford was a prolific writer and his famous quote, 'forget the damned motor car and build the city for friends and lovers' demonstrates his alarm on seeing cities becoming slaves to automobiles. In Bellamy's Boston, everyone walked, and this might have endeared it to Mumford, but then the automobile was only invented in 1886 in Germany, and still looked like a tricycle.[17] Not even could Bellamy's active imagination have conceived the impact of the automobile on cities and planning in the ensuing decades.

This paper would be incomplete without the mention of Frank Lloyd Wright's[18] utopian Broadacre City (1935) and Le Corbusier's Radiant City (1930), both of which shared certain conceptual and physical elements with Bellamy's utopia, only scaled up and overlaid by cars. The huge department store of Broadacre City is like the shopping centre[19] in Bellamy's Boston described as a *"vast hall full of light, received not alone from the windows on all sides, but*

from the dome, the point of which was a hundred feet above". Wright has given credit to Bellamy for inspiring some of his visions[20] (Corn, 1984). Corbusier's pet utopia, the Radiant City is quite different in appearance from Bellamy's Boston but has interesting similarities in concept. These include a completely secluded home-life with minimum socialisation - home being a refuge in both cases. Communal Restaurants of

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Corbusier's city are like the 'Elephant' or food mess of Bellamy's Boston. In Corbusier's city, it is a five hour work day; food can also be delivered at home. Bellamy also curtailed working hours, proposed communal laundries and centralised kitchens.[21] Collectivism is promoted in public sphere and individualism in private sphere in both cases. FLW, Le Corbusier and Bellamy – all replace narrow streets and meandering pathways,[22] with broad straight streets in their respective utopias.

Looking Backward and a Discourse about Cities

Is it even worthwhile to draw parallels from so old a text, written when there were no airplanes, automobiles or electrical power, all of which completely changed the world, notwithstanding the two World Wars? So many ideas of the book never materialised. Capitalism prevailed; crime, inequality, and poverty stayed on and took new forms and definitions. However, lessons from the past

always help in shaping a better, more informed future, so it goes.

In view of the authors, the most important contribution of Bellamy's text to city planning was to revive the hope of the people by recreating the image of the city as a place to be celebrated instead of abandoned. These were times when cities had become hateful and dangerous to most people. Anybody with some means and standing in society was on the way out. Most records and literature of the time give terrible accounts and heart rending descriptions of living conditions of people, for e.g.,

"Every room in these rotten reeking tenements houses a family, often two. In one[…]an inspector reports finding a father, a mother, three children and four pigs! In another,[…] found a man recovering from small pox[…] and children running about naked and covered with filth. Here are seven people living in one underground kitchen, and a little child lying dead in the same room. Elsewhere is a widow and her three children and a child who has been dead thirteen days. Her husband ….had shortly before committed suicide"

-Extract from Cities of Tomorrow (Hall, 1988).Original text from Andrew Mearn's eye-witness account in his 'A Bitter Cry of Outcast London' written in 1883.

It is impossible today to visualise London as described. The time period in which Bellamy was writing was such - of intense economic unrest, labour dissatisfaction and stagnating economic growth resulting in the *Long Depression.* At such a time, Bellamy presents his

"great city", making it the nerve centre of the people's lives, and the government, culture, housing and commerce are all situated here. It is a harmonious society with no social distinctions, which takes decisions collectively and all industries and jobs are managed by the state.[23] If one is a talented artisan, one collects recommendations from society and can get time off from work to pursue honing of that talent.

Another important contribution is that of bringing nature into the discourse about the city. People were reeling under the wonders of mechanisation and new technology, and what it could do to their world. While caution was thrown to wind given the rapidity of transformations of one's living environment, Bellamy reminds the readers of nature and public health with his descriptions of *"squares filled with trees"* and *"streets shaded with trees"*. Bellamy's Boston is smokeless and very large industries are away from the centre of the city. There is no sewage on the roads, which are wide and clean and straight.

Relevance for the Present Times

There are several pragmatic ideas of his book that are relevant even today, especially for developing countries. These include the need of more inclusive cities; solutions to problems of poverty and adequate shelter, employment, public health, government owned utilities and basic services besides utilising technology to improve quality of life; promoting collective action (if not collectivism) in making the government responsive. More, specifically, Bellamy's vision could be applied to today's development in two areas – the emphasis on collectivism, and the acceptance of technology as a means of improving society. The role of

public intervention is paramount in Bellamy's Boston (Mullin, 2003). *Looking Backward* found universal acceptance because it made people believe that there are ways of changing society, improving our well being, and making government more responsive.

Bellamy also saw technology as an enabler. In his book, the broadcasts reaching every home and every place in the city have an uncanny resemblance to Television and YouTube! Not only did he envisage a sort of rudimentary internet, he actually devises the use of credit cards for shopping from mega stores, which are something like our Tesco or Big Bazaar. The industry and urban living in Bellamy's Boston are expected to get better by further innovation in technology. It is already a society which is so efficient that corruption, greed, crime and poverty are eradicated, and there is no need for police, lawyers, or soldiers. Joseph Mullin, who has studied Bellamy extensively explains how Bellamy even after being appalled by the *"human conditions of the mill did not reject what the mill could do. He saw the potential of technology, which, once harnessed for the good of society, would be a positive part of the new millennium. His millennial City of God is indeed one where technology and the environment are mutually sustaining".*

It would be interesting to look at some significant inferences in the context of urban India. Comparing the 19th century New York and London to what they are today, one feels tremendously hopeful for Indian cities. The most significant inference to draw from Bellamy's utopia is that a healthy urban environment, with basic services taken care of, and housing guaranteed (or at least accessible in the real scenario), are prerequisites for a city

to be good. Secondly, to think that technology can automatically make cities smart (or efficient in Bellamy's case) is a fallacy. People have to understand and want the technology, and believe in its potential to improve and convenience their lives. Thirdly, people's collective ownership of the city, people's collective pride in the city needs to be developed and nurtured.

> **More specifically, Bellamy's vision could be applied to today's development in two areas – the emphasis on collectivism, and the acceptance of technology as a means of improving society. The role of public intervention is paramount in Bellamy's Boston**

This paper puts forth the idea that any urban programmes envisaged by the government for improving quality of life in cities must seem like a utopia to most of us especially in face of the fact that even daily existence is still hard for millions of people in our country. There is inequality, disease, illiteracy, and poverty. Bellamy wrote in a situation that was much worse than this, and raised hopes. What is needed is a progressive attitude towards technology as well as the belief that people are critical to the success of any programme. In our current national urban programmes,[25] the intention is visible - to make our cities cleaner, smarter, and citizen friendly. There is a decentralised approach, where states and individual cities have the discretion to make need-based and contextual decisions regarding requirement and usage of funds. There are many criticisms, but the heart of these

missions seem to be in the right place. One can see efforts at convergence to avoid duplication and wastage of time and resources, and efforts at coordination for reducing role and domain ambiguities in the multi-agency environment of our cities. The leitmotifs in any political speech of today's times are 'smart' and 'clean', terms we can align with Bellamy's fundamental idea of a technologically advanced but healthy society living in a clean environment, with lots of greenery. However, any programme or plan would remain utopian unless there is work done towards its successful implementation. Having said that, it cannot be denied that 'having a plan' is an important first step. This was how, through plans and planning of cities, that bits and pieces of Bellamy's vision became real. **'Progress is the realisation of Utopias'**, as Oscar Wilde has aptly, albeit optimistically stated. ∎

Notes:
[1] Including John Dewey, Charles Beard, Franklin D Roosevelt (The New Deal), Thorstein Veblen, John Maynard Keynes.

[2] The paper focuses mainly on physical aspects of the places and urban living as presented in Bellamy's book, and does not analyse any political ideas or economic theories inbuilt in it. A number of economists, sociologists and political scientists have analysed Bellamy's text with this purpose. However, very few have looked at the aspects in his book that impacted city planning.

[3] 'Can Utopia Be Urban' is the title of a paper by John R Mullin in the Journal of Utopian Studies.

[4] He combined two similar sounding Greek words ou-topos meaning 'no place' or 'nowhere' and a similar term eu-topos meaning a 'good place'.

[5] To American cities like Boston and New York – where millions of people just arrived on the shores of these port cities from Europe, Russia, China, Ireland etc.

[6] Especially, Feminist Utopian literature which looks at separation of women as the most important factor for realising their full potential and capabilities.

[7] In the context of the threat of Climate Change being discussed worldwide, such scenarios become relevant.

[8] Science fiction based particularly on impacts of climate change.

[9] A great flood and earthquake brought about by the Dance of destruction by Shiva, cleansing the world of all its evils.
[10] Technology invading private lives of people is a common theme of many dystopian novels – dealing with stolen identities, robotic lives, absence of human emotions and sentimentality. Technology in its purest form becomes a great dystopian equalizer with no room for individuality or peculiarities.

[11] Only a few copies less than Ben Hur and Uncle Tom's Cabin, the two most successful books of the century.

[12] Henry James's description of New York as read in Cities of Tomorrow (Hall, 1989), Chapter 2, p. 34.

[13] New York in 1890 is said to have 'half as many Italians as Naples, as many Germans as Hamburg, twice as many Irish as Dublin and two and a half times as many Jews as Warsaw.

[14] The first academic course in planning was started in England more than 20 years after Looking Backward. In fact, it became a full-fledged distinctive field of study much later.

[15] Ebenezer Howard was also influenced greatly by James Buckingham's idea of a model town, Thomas Spence's community land ownership; Kropotkin's

idea of city a unit in the region besides Bellamy's novel.

[16] There is no reference or evidence for this except discussions and analysis by planners on the internet.

[17] By the time a full blown car as we know it was driven on a city street, Bellamy was long gone.

[18] FLW also conceived another high-rise utopia of the mile-high Illinois, but discussion on that is not relevant here.

[19] The Bradbury Building, the oldest commercial building in Downtown Los Angeles, was constructed in 1893 by the millionaire Lewis Bradbury who was inspired by Looking Backward. The building's incredibly unique interior design was inspired by the shopping centre described by Bellamy in his book. Some of this aesthetic interpretation has made the Bradbury building an iconic landmark today with its 50-foot high interior atrium, beautiful carved wood, terracotta tiles, and intricate wrought-iron grillwork.

[20] Although Wright's concept has an agrarian feel to it with one acre for every family – it is definitely urban in terms of use of technology and it is grand by way of straight roads and big open spaces.

[21] In his next book 'Equality', Bellamy changes a number of things. One of them is that food can be delivered at home!

[22] According to Le Corbusier, human beings should not be expected to go meandering like a pack donkey when they can walk in straight lines, and generally are aware of the destination.

[13] This sort of state managed society, even if presented as a harmonious collective is not the best scenario, as was seen in Russia soon afterwards where everything was state-owned. The translated 'Looking Backward' was a rage in Russia.

[24] Bellamy is said to have been influenced by the

openness and greenery of Central Park in New York where he had worked.

[25] The current urban programmes in India are the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), the Swachha Bharat Mission (SBM), and the Smart Cities Mission.

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