

Bellamy's Utopian Vision toward Boston in 2000's as Reflected in His *Looking Backward 2000-1887*

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to scrutinize Edward Bellamy's politic, social life and economic utopia vision toward Boston in 2000 which is portrayed in his Looking Backward, 2000-1887. I use philosophical approach to analyze the story and added by concept of utopia. Subsequently, the research design that I use in this research is descriptive qualitative research. The aim of this method is to illustrate easier about the situation of the novel in form of dialogues and narration as the main data of my research which has been got from Edward Bellamy's Novel entitled Looking Backward 2000-1887. Meanwhile, the secondary data are the concepts that correspond and assist the analysis which are obtained from Books, encyclopedia, and article from internet.

As conclusion, Edward Bellamy's masterpiece Looking Backward 2000-1887 presents utopian vision of Edward Bellamy, about perfect condition of several important aspects in Boston. First of all is about economical aspects. In this novel utopian economical aspect tells about a perfect condition of economy, included a perfect industrial sector which is run by the state, the system of wage for the entire citizen or the workers. Complete awareness of the citizen to support the industrial sector and perfect and prosperous condition of the state and the society. Second of all is about political condition. The stable and perfect political condition leads Boston to leave political parties, and no politician.

Key Words: Boston, philosophy, utopia, vision

Introduction

Ideas as the result of man's thought to build a plan, purpose or principle in satisfying his need, is defined as ideal and it determine what should be. Moreover, it can be used as guidelines for measuring its performance and determining the victory of that plan, purpose or principle; he also should have great efforts and sacrifice his life. Furthermore, someone has freedom to choose in terms of ideal. He is as the decision maker of his existence in this universe. He should be aware with his choice of life, economic social etc. whether it leads him into happiness or not, one step he fails to run his choice, will influence his whole life. Aristotle supports in *Reading, Discussing and Writing the Great Book* "Man, however, can and should live of happiness, which is the life of virtue, which is the life that avoid excess..." (Steven and Musal in Puspasari, 2006 : 2)

On the other hand, to attain his ideal, man need to struggle hard and he will not get the best result without any help from his society. Indeed, his effort should be made to convert ideal by having masses helping. Human is a social creature that needs to interact with others in his society. Furthermore, in the process of interaction, essentially, human's behaviors are supported by some internal and external motivation. Therefore as a social creature, human can not be separated from society. Thus, the most part of human's live is among people where is consciously or unconsciously the social influence. Social influence is the strong influence of society, which influence physic and psyche that is happened with or without awareness (Buskist and Gerbing, 1990 : 615)

There is correlation between someone's ideas in constructing a plan and goal to be achieved in the future, with social life where the one live. Inside of literary work, a literary man sometimes pours out his idea about his vision or ideal live condition about some places. This can be resulted by his dissatisfaction toward the real condition inside of society where he live. He composes his thought into literary work in form of novel, play, poem, lyric or even a song. About ideal life inside of a novel, Nurgiantoro (2000:4), stated that, novel as one of fiction works offers a world, a world contains a certain idealized model of life, imaginative world, which are built through various intrinsic elements such as, events, plot, characters, point of view and others that are certainly imaginative.

Discussing about ideal life, every individual has his own vision of that, and so does Edward Bellamy. He was one of the well known American novelists in the 19th century. He tries to show his vision of ideal life for Boston in the year of 2000. He created such idea as his guidance in creating one of his greatest novels entitled *Looking Backward, 2000-1887*. Retno (1995:3) stated that Edward Bellamy wrote the most famous an American

"Utopian" Novel. In this *Looking Backward*, 2000-1887, a man goes to sleep and wakes up in the year 2000. He finds an entirely new society which is much better than his own. The author's purpose is really to criticize capitalist America of the 1887. He is showing his fellow Americans a picture of how society should be. Bellamy was sure society's problem could be solved by higher level of industrialization.

Bellamy's *Looking Backward* 2000-1887 contains his vision of better condition for Boston in the year of 2000. The work tries to deploy an ideal condition of the city. Everything is ideal, in very good order and so perfect. Most of his visions of Boston in 2000 are utopian vision that can not be attained. Then, it is interesting to dig up about utopian vision of Bellamy, which shows about ideal condition of Boston in the year 2000 as it shows in his *Looking Backward* 2000-1887.

Method

Bellamy's view toward Boston bad condition in some aspects leads him to pour out his vision about the better condition of Boston in the year of 2000 as seen in his novel *Looking Backward 2000-1887*. Philosophy based on Leighton in *Ilmu Filsafat dan Agama* is "a complete philosophy includes a world view or reasoned conception of the whole cosmos, and a life view or doctrine of values, meaning and purpose of human life". (Anshori, 1987 : 83-84).

Moreover, philosophy is also defined as the discipline concerned with questions of how one should live (ethics); what sorts of things exist and what are their essential natures (metaphysics); what counts as genuine knowledge (epistemology); and what are the correct principles of reasoning (logic) (Quinton, 1996:2).

Earle (1992:1-2) In *Introduction to Philosophy* stated that the goals of philosophy from love are desiring or wanting to have, while from wisdom are understanding and practice of morality, and the cultivation of such enlightened opinions and attitudes as lead to a life of happiness and contentment. Bellamy's vision about the better condition of Boston is very suitable to be analyzed by using this Philosophical Approach since Bellamy's thought which is poured out into the literary work try to tell the readers about what should Boston be. The better condition of society and the ideal condition of social life.

In the real life, men always want to have betterment in many kinds of aspects. Flew (1980:383), stated that The philosophical approach has occurred because the people involved held certain beliefs about what is important, true, real and significant and about how life should be ordered.

Discussion

Edward Bellamy's utopian vision toward Boston condition in 2000's

In analyzing the utopian vision of Edward Bellamy which deal with the condition of Boston in 2000's, I will divide the analysis into several parts, based on the kind of Utopia, so that the analysis can be arranged in a good order and can be comprehend well.

Utopian vision toward Boston Economical condition in 2000's.

Economical condition has very big influence of the development of a country or a nation. Most countries which have strong economical condition are developed countries, for instance United States of America (USA), Japan, China etc. it shows us an evident about the influence of economical condition toward the country. Good economical condition will influence the prosperity of the citizen. Inside of Bellamy's novel *Looking Backward 2000-1887*, the story brings some issues about a perfect economical condition of Boston.

First, Edward Bellamy informs about the economical condition of Boston in term of material Prosperity as it has been quoted from Juliant West statement

"in general", I said " what impresses me most about the city is the material prosperity on the part of the people which its magnificence implies" (Bellamy, 1915:29)

The statement above indicates about the prosperity of Boston and its society. Edward Bellamy informs the better condition of Boston compared with the previous era in the 19th century. The nation is rich, the condition is much better than before. The country guarantees the prosperity for all its society, as it is stated by Dr. Leete in following statement.

"The nation is rich, and does not wish the people to deprive themselves of any good thing. In your day, men were bound to lay up goods and money against coming failure of the means of support and for their children. This necessity made permisimony of virtue. But now it would have no such laudable object, and having lost its utility, it has ceased to be regarded as a virtue. No man any

more has care for the morrow; either for himself or his children, for the nation guarantees the nurture education and comfortable maintenance of every citizen from the cradle to the grave. (Bellamy, 1915:31)

Since the perfect condition of the nation, inside of this rice nation, the society will get all they want. The utopia of Bellamy informs that the nation.

Guarantees the nurture education and comfortable maintenance of all society since they were born until they pass away. The nation will take care of all society and the perfection does not inform to the reader about any economical problems of the country, such as inflation monetary crisis etc. the country has so perfect economical condition of Boston.

The point of utopian vision of Edward Bellamy can be seen from his opinion about the unimportant of money for society in Boston. As we know, money has big role as an essential medium of exchanging among citizen in the society. In his work, Edward Bellamy tells about the absence of money inside of society. There will be no function of money as it stated by dr. Leete in following statement.

"When innumerable different and independent persons produced the various things needful to life and comfort, endless exchanges between individuals were requisite in order that they might supply themselves with what they desired. These exchanges constituted trade, and money was essential as their medium. But as soon as the nation became the sole producer of all sorts of commodities, there was no need of exchange between individuals that they might get what they required. Everything was procurable from one source, and nothing could be procured anywhere else. A system of direct distribution from the national storehouses took the place of trade, and for this money was unnecessary." (Bellamy, 1915:28)

This condition is so perfect; there is no problem with the absence of money inside of the society. The absence of money informs the absence of exchange among the society. By the absence of money inside of society, Edward Bellamy proposes a substitution medium, the only medium which is provided by government of Boston. The medium is in form of card, that card is credit card which is given for all of Boston's society.

Since in Boston 2000 there is no significance of using money, Edward Bellamy strengthens his utopia by explaining also about the insignificance of bank. A very perfect condition of Boston society in economic condition result the unimportant on money and the existence of bank.

"but I think what surprised me as much as anything was not find any stores on Washington street, or any banks on state....."

"there is neither selling nor buying nowadays; the distribution of goods is effected in another way.

As to the bankers, having no money we have used for those gentry." (Bellamy, 1915:29)

Based on the quotation above, Bellamy's utopian about economic condition in 2000's is so ideal and perfect. There is no need of having business, there is no store, no bank neither the bankers. All the need of society has been provided by government in its storehouses. Government distributes the goods which are ordered by society directly to their houses.

In his utopian vision, Edward Bellamy erases the spirit of having more income by doing business. There is no motivation to buy or sell goods in store or market. To strengthen his utopia, Edward Bellamy explains also about the reason why the buying and selling activity is bad.

Utopia in Industrial Sector

Edward Bellamy economic utopia tries to reveal out that only government that is allowed or possible to run industry in Boston 2000's. From Dr. Leete's statement, the point of utopian vision can be seen clearly from the statement which tells that the nation become the sole producers of all sorts of commodities. All commodities is produced by the nation, there is no space for citizen or private company to do industrial activity in Boston. The utopia informs that the nation has a perfect power to handle all the industrial sectors.

"yes, that was something which followed as a mater of course as soon as the nation had become the sole capitalist. The people were already accustomed to the idea that the obligation of every citizen,....."

" since the nation is the sole employer, the government must fix the rate of wages and determine just how much everybody shall earn, from the doctors to the diggers. (Bellamy, 1915:24)

The government is the sole producer of all commodities. This utopian vision does not give chance or even right to the private company or even individual to actively involve in doing business of industry sectors. The only

industry is held by the government because all the needs of society will be the responsibility of Boston government. The policy does not face any difficulties to maintain the condition.

Utopia about Clerk and Wage Problem

Edward Bellamy brings about worker or clerk issue in his utopia. He informs that the year of 2000 there are no strikes which are done by the workers as it were in the 19th century. It indicates that there is no problem at all. The industries which are led by the government have solved the of worker; all the strikes have been disappeared in Boston. The information can be seen clearly from Dr. Leete's statement about the issue

"As no such thing as the labor question is known nowadays," replied Dr. Leete, "and there is no way in which it could arise, I suppose we may claim to have solved it. Society would indeed have fully deserved being devoured if it had failed to answer a riddle so entirely simple. In fact, to speak by the book, it was not necessary for society to solve the riddle at all. It may be said to have solved itself. The solution came as the result of a process of industrial evolution which could not have terminated otherwise. All that society had to do was to recognize and cooperate with that evolution, when its tendency had become unmistakable."

The utopia about the condition workers in Boston is so perfect. Edward Bellamy informs that all strikes and all problems of the workers are dismissed. The solution of the problem is only by the evolution of industry, the government hold the industry and as the sole capitalist.

Edward Bellamy's utopia states in the previous discussion that government is the only institution which runs the industrial sector. Edward Bellamy also strengthen the notion of worker problem to support the industry.

Workers are concerned much by Edward Bellamy in his Utopia. Edward Bellamy states in his utopia that all of citizen has obligation to be the clerk of the industry. It can be seen from Dr. Leete statement below.

"Yes, that was something which followed as a matter of course as soon as the nation had become the sole capitalist. The people were already accustomed to the idea that the obligation of every citizen, not the physically disabled, to contribute his military services to contribute his quota of industrial or intellectual services to the maintenance of the nation was equally evident, though it was not until the nation became the employer of labor that citizens were able to render this sort of service with any pretense either of universality or equity...." (Bellamy, 1915:24)

From the statement above, Edward Bellamy inform that all of citizen must actively involve in industrial sector, even though there is no clear law which regulate the citizen, but all of the society has been accustomed to full fill the quota, that is 24 years as a clerk. In the utopia, all citizens are aware to do so. No objection of the condition, because all the society has high awareness to do so, for the sake of all the societies live, more over their individual need. This perfect awareness of society, leads Boston in very stable condition. Edward Bellamy also states about the high awareness of Boston society to support the industry lead by Government.

Edward Bellamy brings about an issue of wage for the handicap. The dialogue between Julian West and Dr. Leete above, inform that utopia has a system of wage that give all of the society the same amount income even for the handicap one. All the society in the year of 2000's live in good condition, the feeling of social awareness is so big. They do not complaint about the same wage as the handicap one.

"That may all be so," I replied, "but it does not touch the case of those who are unable to contribute anything to the product of industry."

"Surely I told you this morning, at least I thought I did," replied Dr. Leete, "that the right of a man to maintenance at the nation's table depends on the fact that he is a man, and not on the amount of health and strength he may have, so long as he does his best."

"You said so," I answered, "but I supposed the rule applied only to the workers of different ability. Does it also hold of those who can do nothing at all?"

"Are they not also men?"

"I am to understand, then, that the lame, the blind, the sick, and the impotent, are as well off as the most efficient and have the same income?"

"Certainly," was the reply.

"The idea of charity on such a scale," I answered, "would have made our most enthusiastic philanthropists gasp." (Bellamy, 1915:47)

The dialogues between Julian West and Doctor Leete above inform that in Boston 2000's all society will get the same wage. the industrial sector led by government of Boston has brought Boston become a rich and prosperous nation so that all of Boston citizen will get wage in the same amount. The handicap, lame, blind and the sick even though they are not able to actively involve in industrial sector, in this utopia they will get the same

wage as the one who actively involve as the workers in industry. The perfect awareness of society leads the society to accept that policy and they never complain about that.

Utopian vision toward Boston Political Condition.

Economic and political condition has correlation which influence each other. The stable and conducive political condition influences the raise of the economical growth of a country. Bellamy's has set a Utopian economical condition of Boston in the year of 2000's as it has been stated in previous analysis, the rich and stable economical condition of Boston. In the notion of politic, Edward Bellamy also includes his utopian vision in his *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* as seen in this

"but all that is changed now. We have no parties or politicians, and as for demagoguery and corruption they are words having only an historical significance."

".....but with no state of legislatures, and congress meeting only once in five years,....."

"We have no legislation, that is, next to none. It is rarely that congress, even when it meets, consider any new laws of consequences, and it only has power to commend them to the following congress, lest anything be done hastily. If you will consider a moment, Mr. West, you will see that we have nothing to make laws about. The fundamental principles on which our society is founded settle for all time to strife and misunderstandings which in your day called for legislation." (Bellamy, 1915:79)

Utopian vision about Law, Crime and education in Boston.

Every individual has different need or different importance when they run an activity, and when the different comes and bother each other, it will bring big tendency of becoming a conflict. A simple picture as an example is between a pedestrian who need to cross a street and the drivers or riders who use the street. When the street is always full of the drivers or riders who pass by, and there is no bridge for the pedestrian to cross the street, it will be so difficult for the pedestrian to cross the street. When the condition keep on going, there will be conflict comes between the pedestrian and the driver/the rider, or it can be also an accident happened, if both of side do not tolerate each other. here the function of traffic lights and the law which regulate the drivers and pedestrian takes a very important role to full fill the different.

From the short instance, we can imagine that living inside of society needs a certain rule or law to balance and control the different of society. Law pervades all our lives. It provides the framework within which a successful society can flourish. Conversely, the absence of an operational legal system permits terrible injustices to be visited upon the most vulnerable members of society. At a more prosaic level, law shapes our lives in a multitude of ways. It sets the terms of our employment, provides protection from harm, compensation for injury and impinges upon our closest relationships with others. Lawyers and politicians have a joint responsibility to keep the law relevant to the needs of a changing society. As a student of law you will be challenged to think about and respond to questions which are of fundamental importance to our future. (Smith, 2007)

Edward Bellamy utopian vision toward the condition of Boston in 2000's, especially in correlation with law and crime, he clearly informs about the perfect and harmony condition of society in Boston, and also about the awareness of all citizens in doing good deed.

"we leave no possible ground for any complaint of injustice, by requiring precisely the same measure of service from all."

Edward Bellamy tells about the perfect circumstances where the society lives. Every thing is fair; all the government service for its citizen does not brings any complaint at all. As it has been explained inside of the previous analysis, both the society and official have high awareness about their obligation for the society and for the nation. In the case of law, this perfection is also tried to be displayed by Edward Bellamy.

Utopian vision of Boston condition related with law is clearly seen from those statements above. This perfection in term of law in society and the society awareness are stated in this.

".....it is because nearly all form of crime know to you are motiveless now, and when they appear can only be explained as the out cropping of ancestral straits. You used to call person who stole, evidently without any rational motive, kleptomaniacs, and when the case was clear deemed it absurd to punish them as thieves. Your attitude toward the genuine kleptomaniac is precisely ours toward the victim of atavism, an attitude of compassion and firm but gentle restraint." (Bellamy, 1915:21)

The character of utopia based on economics such as egalitarian distribution of goods, frequently the abolition of money, and citizen only doing work which they enjoy and which is for common good, leaving them with ample time, Bellamy also brings those characters of utopia inside of his work.

Conclusion

Looking Backward, 2000-1887 presents utopian vision of Edward Bellamy, about perfect condition of several important aspects in Boston. The utopia include economy utopia, social life utopia and political utopia. First of all is about economical aspects. In this novel utopian economical aspect tells about a perfect condition of economy, included a perfect industrial sector which is run by the state, the system of wage for the entire citizen or the workers. complete awareness of the citizen to support the industrial sector and perfect and prosperous condition of the state and the society. Second of all is about political condition. The stable and perfect political condition leads Boston to leave political parties, and no politician.

In term of law and crime, in this utopia, since the state and its citizen have been in prosperous condition, there is no motive to do crime, there is neither law nor lawyer, and there is no prison or jail. Since the country live peacefully, there is no war and Boston does not have army to protect the country.

Those utopian visions of Edward Bellamy give the picture of perfect life should be. Even though the idea of utopia can not be achieved, but by knowing the utopia, or the perfect ideal life, it can give spirit for many people to always try hard in order to achieve a better condition in the future. Inside of this Edward Bellamy's work, there is no religion utopia found.

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