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### Inequality Within A Society

In Edward Bellamy's 1888 novel, *Looking Backward*, Julian West is awoken from a hypnotic induced sleep and is awoken in the year 2000. At this time he realizes he has been awoken into a socialist utopia. Within in the novel, Bellamy brings up the argument that social classes within the society may be nonexistent. This would eliminate the division between different people throughout the society believing they are more powerful due to having or making more money than the lower class people. Bellamy made the guess that in the year 2000 these divisions within the classes would possibly vanish or become less divided. As seen, we still have these divisions within the classes as we live in unequal society today. Many things become a factor when deciding if people are equal within a society, money becomes a major attribute to how equal two people could be considered. Others could be having a job and education.

Money and income become a major problem when deciding if two people or a group of people in a society are equal. In Edward Bellamy's novel, in the year 2000 the society was based on financial equality. Everyone had the same yearly pay, but depending on the job or profession you chose to work in, you may have to work more or less than the others. In the end you still all got the same amount of money each year. Now, currently in the year 2014 we still do not have an

equal society. Our divisions between the social classes currently have become much larger than they were in the nineteenth century.

According to Dr. Domhoff, “As of 2010, the top 1% of households (the upper class) owned 35.4% of all privately held wealth, and the next 19% (the managerial, professional, and small business stratum) had 53.5%, which means that just 20% of the people owned a remarkable 89%, leaving only 11% of the wealth for the bottom 80% (wage and salary workers).”(Domhoff) Domhoff shows how large the gaps are between our social classes and how few people are of the upper class compared to the large amount of people in the middle and lower classes. Although there are only few in the upper class, they still consume a large amount of our countries wealth. Unlike Bellamy’s utopia, the division within our social classes became much larger over the years while also pushing more and more people to settle into the lower classes.

Another way people of society are judged as equal or unequal is through their job or profession. In Bellamy’s utopia, everyone is required to work. According to William Morris, “everybody is to begin the serious work for production at the age of twenty-one, work three years as a labourer, and then choose his skilled occupation and work til he is forty-five.” (Morris) In Bellamy’s utopia the work force was called the Industrial Army. Within the Industrial Army there were ranks that you could move up in, you could also receive medals, badges, and ribbons for the common good. Also, according to Edward Younkins, “considered to be equal to men, women served in a separate auxiliary force in the industrial army where they performed tasks best suited for their physical capabilities.”(3) Women were also given jobs in their desired field if they showed they had the abilities to keep up to the men of the work force. In Bellamy’s utopia

anyone that was able to work was expected to work, even disabled people were working. The society would find jobs for these people that they could work at their ability.

In today's society, everyone isn't required to work, it is considered a privilege to work today. Our society doesn't provide jobs to everyone like Bellamy's utopia was seen to be able to. Many of the jobs that are out there for people to get in our society are minimum wage jobs. Some people in today's society have trouble finding a job to work to make money for themselves or a family. Many of these people that cannot find jobs are living off of welfare that the government is funding through the working people's tax money.

Lastly, education is another issue to be equal to others in societies. In Bellamy's utopia people are required to go to school til the age of twenty-one, after that they are to work in the labor force. "Everyone has the opportunity to receive a college-level education and is free to choose a career after serving as a common laborer for three years." (Younkins 3) In Bellamy's utopia everyone is given the chance to get a degree in their chosen profession. This differs greatly from today's society. Everyone has the opportunity to get a college education, but not many have the money to now a days. Many people in order to go to college have to borrow money as a loan, but aren't free of paying it back like the people of Bellamy's utopia.

Bellamy's utopia differs greatly from the way society is seen and runs today in the year 2000. "Bellamy's utopia is based on the ideal of economic equality, which has the advantage of being, at the same time, morally right and the most efficient way to organize society." (Hansot 2) This keeps from one person gaining power over others due to mass accumulations of money. We see this happen as a result of someone being in the upper class. The upper class become powerful

over the middle and lower classes. Today's nation as a society is not equal in any way, we may all be given the same opportunities at some point in our lives, but we still aren't all seen as equal.

## Outline

### I. Introduction and Thesis

### II. Money and Income

#### A. Bellamy's Utopia

#### B. Our current society

### III. Jobs

#### A. Bellamy's utopia

#### B. Today's society

### IV. Education

### V. Conclusion

## Work Cited

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