

Money and Art in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* **Douglas Baird**

In Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, Julian West goes to sleep in 1887 and awakens in the year 2000. Written in the first-person, West explains to his twenty-first century audience how their world compares to his own and provides a rich description of how life at the dawn of the twenty-first century compares to life in the Gilded Age. After *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it was the most popular American novel of the nineteenth century. Bellamy used fiction to explain how a truly egalitarian society might come into being, a society in which economic equality was as natural and agreeable as political equality. Bellamy marked a path for social reform. And, initially at least, he succeeded. Dozens of Bellamy societies formed to promote the ideas of the novel. In 1935, American historian Charles Beard and philosopher John Dewey each ranked *Looking Backwards*, along with *Das Kapital* and the *Golden Bough*, as one of the most important books of the previous half century.

Utopian fictions commonly present worlds in which art flourishes, money disappears, and laws are unnecessary. But, given his commitment to showing that his utopia was possible, Bellamy could not resort to hand-waving. He had to provide a convincing explanation for how such a society might work, and it is in trying to explain how art comes into being where he encounters trouble. Focusing on Bellamy's vision of art, money, and law simultaneously reveals the thin thread that holds his utopian vision together.

Counterfeiting Confidence: The Problem of Trust in the Age of Contract **Susanna Blumenthal**

"As if it had been a theatre-bill," the passengers on the steamboat *Fidèle* crowded around a placard "offering an award for the capture of a mysterious imposter," who may or may not have been the title character of Herman Melville's 1857 novel, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade*. Tacking between "the comedy of thought" and "the comedy of action," it plays out on a single April Fool's Day. Although skewered by critics at the time, the work has since been reassessed and accorded a prominent place in cultural histories of capitalism; it is viewed as a peculiarly American expression of the disorienting effects of a paper economy, evoking the theatricality of this market society, within which banking and counterfeiting blurred into one another, as did salesmen and swindlers. Containing no visible signs of authority, Melville's fictional "ship of fools" is said to reflect "the anonymity and anarchy" of antebellum life, a democratic free-for-all regulated only by the doctrine of *caveat emptor*. This paper offers a reconsideration of the law's role in both text and context as it explores how licit and illicit money-makers are distinguished in *The Confidence-Man* and the "nation of counterfeiters" it is so often taken to represent. Attention is particularly drawn to the exchange between the Confidence Man and a barber, who promises to give as good a shave as any Wall Street broker, inviting comparison with such real-life counterparts as Charles B. Huntington, whose sensational trial for forgery in 1856 is considered by way of conclusion.

Gatsby's Greatness and Douglas's Goodness

Justin Driver

This Essay juxtaposes the tales of two ambitious men, both born in the American West, who moved East to New York in an effort to make names for themselves during the 1920s. The ambitions of Jay Gatsby — as recounted in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* — and William O. Douglas — as recounted in his autobiography, *Go East, Young Man* — led the two men in very different directions. Where Gatsby turned to lawlessness, Douglas instead turned to law. The distinct journeys and distinct fates that Gatsby and Douglas experience yield insight into the significance of class within the United States, and also offer significant complications of the American Dream.

Money, Law and Status in Trollope's England

Nicola Lacey

In this paper, I will examine the range of very different conceptions of money and its legal and social significance in the novels of Anthony Trollope, considering what they can tell us about the rapidly changing economic, political and social world of mid Victorian England. I will concentrate in particular on *Orley Farm* (1862) - the novel most directly concerned with law among Trollope's formidable output - and *The Way We Live Now* (1875) - the novel most directly concerned with the use and abuse of money in the early world of financial capitalism. The two novels present some interesting contrasts in terms of their conceptions of money and its significance, with money or wealth deriving from social status gradually displaced by social status deriving from money. I will suggest that this tells us something about changing conceptions of property in a world in which industrial capitalism (which features little in Trollope, but large in Dickens and Gaskell, for example) sat alongside practices of speculative investment geared simply to the multiplication of money. The books also present some fascinating thoughts on the gendering of both money and law as concepts in the Victorian imagination.

Commerce, Law, and Revolution in the Novels of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë

Alison L. LaCroix

The 1840s and 1850s witnessed the publication of three great "condition of England" novels: Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849) and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1854). All three novels examine the consequences of the Industrial Revolution in England, and all are critical in their appraisal of its effects on individuals, society, and the national – and even the international – realm. All three focus on the world of commerce and manufacturing, but the realm of law is never far away. Yet there are differences: in *Shirley*, Brontë delves into the interior lives of two very different female protagonists, while Gaskell's narrative is more concerned with economic and social injustice. Brontë set *Shirley* during the Napoleonic Wars of the early 1800s, a period of British imperial struggle and ultimate triumph. Gaskell placed the action of *Mary Barton* a decade prior to its writing, but in *North and South*, she depicted her current moment, with a consequent sharpening of her critique. This essay examines the

novels' treatment of a set of interconnected themes: commerce, law, and revolution, with reference to related questions of politics, gender, and time.

Regulating Greed: Biographical Markers in Dos Passos' *The Big Money* **Saul Levmore**

John Dos Passos' *The Big Money* (1936) is hardly the only important American work to see greed as a cause of the stock market crash and then the Great Depression. It is packed with the problem of distinguishing greed from ambition, and it raises the question of the right social response to unattractive impulses. Prior to losing his idealistic fervor, or exchanging it for conservative passion, Dos Passos freely associated ambition with corruption, and acquisitiveness with anti-social self-interest. His deployment and biographical sketches of industrialists and other notable Americans suggest the difficulty of distinguishing avarice from ambition. Dos Passos' treatment of ambition presupposes an economy where one person's gain is at the expense of another; artistic accomplishment is, however, freed from this assumption. The novel speaks more to individual excesses than to their regulation, but it offers an opportunity to think about both.

Wealth And Warfare in the Novels of Jane Austen **Jonathan Masur and Seebany Datta-Barua**

All but the last of Jane Austen's novels were written during the Napoleonic Wars. Numerous characters have commissions in the army or militia, and several central characters enlist in the navy. The distinction between these two services was important. Officers in the army and militia were paid wages. Sailors, on the other hand, were entitled not just to wages but also to a share in the value of any "prizes"—other ships and their cargo—that they captured at sea. We theorize that this prize system existed because naval officers and crew needed to be given equity shares in their endeavors in order to create incentives for aggressive action.

This distinction between how soldiers and sailors were paid has a profound effect on the development of Austen's characters. The army is a force for the status quo. The navy, on the other hand, is the only real mechanism of social advancement (other than marriage) to appear in Austen's novels. Even though the Industrial Revolution had begun at the Austen was writing, social mobility remained relatively stagnant and opportunities for professional advancement were few. Austen also uses the choice between services to show the character of the individuals who enlist. Static characters self-select into the militia; enterprising young men with good character self-select into the navy. Austen thus uses the navy's prize system both to reveal her characters and to inject an element of social dynamism into her novels.

***The Grapes of Wrath* and the Role of Luck in Economic Outcomes**
Richard McAdams

Economic success and failure is always, to some degree, a matter of luck. The degree of randomness and luck involved in economic outcomes is, for most people, relevant to their support for schemes of social insurance. But a substantial amount of psychology research suggests that westerners, especially Americans, systematically and significantly underestimate the role of luck in economic outcomes. Systems justification theory and just world theory suggest that people are motivated to avoid cognitive dissonance by interpreting good and bad outcomes in the world as being more merited or deserved than they actually are. With this social science perspective, I interpret John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. The novel is most obviously a story about the struggle of labor in a capitalist world, about which much has been written. But the story was provocative and subversive in another way: because it strongly counters the tendency to underestimate the role of moral luck in economic outcomes. Contrary to conventional story-telling, as well as the reactionary counter-novels it spawned, hard work and moral decency are not rewarded.

"Irish [and Dutch and American] Poets, Learn Your Trade: The Political Economy of European Poetry since 1900"
Deirdre McCloskey

The puzzle is why poetry has so little contact with the business of ordinary life. Robert Frost is an exception, but even so ideological a poet as Auden refrains from being bleared with trade. Yeats in particular, a conservative, disdained trade, though urging poets to learn theirs. The very word "poetry," of course, is from "thing made," and the puzzle deepens. St. Thomas Aquinas had raised making by people to the dignity of God's making, at least poetically. And yet. We have *The Oxford Book of Love Poetry* and *The Oxford Book of the Sea*, with battles and botanical observations ("Nothing gold can stay"), and yet the economy, even after the invention of economics by the Scots in the eighteenth century, is set aside. It has left poets and their readers in law and literature and politics proud to be thus ignorant. The sacred and the profane in fact are entangled.

The Morning and the Evening Star: Religion, Money, and Love in Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* and *Elmer Gantry*
Martha C. Nussbaum

Freud said that Americans are immature because they channel their libido into money-making. In *Babbitt* (1922), Sinclair Lewis seems to agree. It is generally thought that his 1927 novel *Elmer Gantry* continues the critique, exposing American religiosity as itself fundamentally commercial. I argue that Lewis's project is deeper and more complicated than the standard reading admits, and that it derives ultimately from Dante's idea of the aspirations and errors of love. (Dante is a favorite author of Lewis's, and

figures in *Babbitt* as the one notable from the past who is conjured up in the Babbitts' séance.) Novels that shock are often read crudely at first, and Lewis's novels are no exception. I argue that Lewis ultimately agrees with Elmer's sermon: Love is indeed "the morning and the evening star." As in Dante, so in Lewis: love can aspire, but it can also be deflected and stunted in many ways. Money-making is one form of stunting, excessive interest in sex is another (and a better one in Dante's view, because closer to what really matters). And perhaps worst of all, it can be blinded by intellectual pride, a vice from which the agnostic novelist, and former ministerial student, was in no way free. The novel does criticize George Babbitt the avaricious, it does criticize Elmer Gantry the libidinous, but it reserves its deepest and saddest condemnation for the Lewis surrogate Frank Shallard, who cannot find anything worthy of his love.

Raisin, Race, and The Real Estate Revolution of the Early Twentieth Century **Carol Rose**

Lorraine Hansberry's hit play of 1957, *A Raisin in the Sun*, centered on the decision of an African American family in Chicago, the Youngers, to move to a house in a white neighborhood. The play is set in the post WWII era, but many of its scenes and actions relate back to real estate practices that began at the turn of the century and that continued to evolve into the mid-century and to some degree beyond. During those decades, housing development and finance increased dramatically in scale, professionalization and standardization. But in their concern for their predominantly white consumers' preferences for segregation, real estate developers, brokers, financial institutions, and finally governmental agencies adopted standard practices that excluded African Americans from many housing opportunities, and that then reinforced white preferences for housing segregation.

Many seemingly minor actions in the play events reflect the way that African Americans had been sidelined in the earlier decades' evolving real estate practices—not just the family's overcrowded apartment, but also more subtle cues, such as the source of the initial funds for the new house, the methods for its finance, and the legal background to the white homeowners' effort to discourage the purchase. This paper pinpoints these and other small clues, and describes how standardizing real estate practices dating from the turn of the century effectively crowded out African American consumers like the Youngers, with consequences that we continue to observe in modern patterns of urban segregation.

The Second New Deal and the Fourth Courtroom Wall: Law, Labor, and Liberty in The Cradle Will Rock **Laura Weinrib**

In Marc Blitzstein's 1937 labor opera, *The Cradle Will Rock*, the courtroom is a site of simulated justice. Since its famous first production—a pared down performance in which actors delivered their parts from the house, improvised when the WPA canceled the scheduled opening of the controversial project—critics have emphasized *Cradle's* indebtedness to German playwright Bertolt Brecht, to whom Blitzstein dedicated the

work. Consistent with Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*, Blitzstein distances the audience from *Cradle's* characters, substituting rational understanding for unreflective empathy. Like Brecht, he employs this theatrical device to expose the cultural and economic underpinnings of familiar social practices, including capitalism.

Imported to the United States context, the Brechtian reimagining of theatrical conventions resonated with a corresponding attack on formal legal justice. At the height of the New Deal's crisis of legal legitimacy, *Cradle* depicts a judicial system baldly beholden to wealth and property. The anti-union steel magnate at the show's center bribes and manipulates journalists, professionals, and public officials to promote his concept of "liberty," namely, freedom from organized labor.

This paper draws attention to Blitzstein's use of Brechtian distancing to de-naturalize law. It explores the parallels between *Cradle's* fictional unionization drive and actual organizing efforts—especially in Mayor Frank Hague's Jersey City, where defenders of arrested CIO organizers explicitly analogized to the piece, and which Blitzstein in turn invoked in the revised script. It also examines changing perceptions of Blitzstein's work in the wake of the Supreme Court's newly favorable labor decisions in the spring and summer of 1937, which simultaneously softened hostility to the judiciary and eroded confidence in legal objectivity. To Blitzstein, the solemn theatrics of the American justice system were every bit as deceptive as Aristotelian drama. By amplifying the effects of economic interests on legal outcomes while undermining empathy with the characters who facilitate and legitimate repression, *The Cradle Will Rock* invites the audience to consider its own complicity in law's injustice.

Bartleby's Consensual Dysphoria **Robin West**

The paper seeks to understand the common bond struck between the Occupy Wall Street protestors, in 2011, and Bartleby, the dysfunctional Scrivener from Melville's *Story of Wall Street* -- who was embraced by many of the the OWS'ers as a fellow traveler in their movement. I first situate *Bartleby the Scrivener* in the context of Classical Legal Thought, expanding on some claims put forward in a seminal article on *Bartleby* by Brook Thomas, in the 1980s. I then argue that Melville's scrivener suffered from a psychic and political condition i call "consensual dysphoria." Bartleby suffered from consensual dysphoria in extremis. The WSO'ers recognized this; thus the otherwise inexplicable empathic bond between them. Consensual dysphoria, as depicted by Melville, and as suffered by Bartleby, I will urge, is a part of the debilitating legacy of Classical Legal Thought that persists today, and in an even more developed and exaggerated form.

Looking Backward: 2000 is a utopian novel by Edward Bellamy, a journalist and writer from Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts; it was first published in 1888. It was the third largest bestseller of its time, after Uncle Tom's Cabin and Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ. It influenced many intellectuals, and appears by title in many socialist writings of the day. "It is one of the few books ever published that created almost immediately on its appearance a political mass movement".