

An Examination of Novelists' Approaches to Management Constructs

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Abstract

The novel is a literary form that depicts and reflects upon the life and perspective of the author. In this study, perspectives on management are surveyed in five classic science fiction novels: Aldous Huxley's Brave New World; George Orwell's Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four; Philip K. Dick's Vulcan's Hammer; and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's The Time Regulation Institute. In the fantastic fiction novels of Huxley and Dick, the world is managed from a single center. In Brave New World, tragedy results from forcing people to be standardized, while in Vulcan's Hammer, destruction is wrought on humanity after all decision-making processes are left to computers. Orwell's novels, which are penned in a symbolic style, strongly criticize the command management system associated with communism, while The Time Regulation Institute is a humorous critique of bureaucratic management styles.

Keywords: professionalism, discipline, IT&HRM, state government HRM, new public management

1. Introduction

The novel is a literary form in which the principal aim of the writer is to construct a world view using perspective and interpretation. This style of literature offers a range of flexibility and freedom to the writer in terms of interpreting life. This is particularly true in science fiction novels, where reality is defined by the writer's imagination; thus, the freedom of the writer is considerably wider. Because these novels are written from a subjective perspective, they do not adhere to scientific conventions. Like other classic novels, science fiction novels have been influential in the world of literature and have attracted the attention of many disciplines such as psychology, law, economics, and politics. While management settings have been subject to literary scrutiny in novels and stories, they have characteristically been set in utopian, or more frequently, in dystopian settings. Just as utopias represent a person's ideal of human existence, dystopias represent the opposite; for this reason, it is difficult to draw a line between perfection and chaos (Dima-Laza, 2012, p. 14). The aim of the dystopian perspective is to highlight the hazards of not having an ideal view of challenges in the future, and by warning the reader of future dangers, it becomes an effective protection method. The dystopian novelist wants to share his/her own prophecy about the future (Beauchamp, 2009, p. 13).

Webster's dictionary defines "utopia" as "an imaginary place in which the government, laws, and social conditions are perfect"(Merriam-Webster). In the current Turkish Dictionary of the Turkish Language Association, "utopia" is defined as an "intention or idea that is impossible to realize" (TDK, 2012). The exploration of management styles in literature is generally a subject of positive review for those in the field of philosophy. Plato's Republic from the fourth century B.C. is the oldest such example known. In this work, Plato developed a blueprint for the proper structuring of the state and society. Medine-t'ül Fâzıla(Virtuous City), by the 20th century Islamic scholar Farabi, is a reproduced version of Plato's design of the state adapted for Muslim culture and civilization. The Utopia of Thomas Moore was an expression of opposition against the government of 16th century England. While the concept of utopia represents positive expectations for the future, the idea of dystopia represents a negative outlook on the future - a social nightmare. A dystopia is an imaginary place where people are not happy and cannot be happy because they are not treated justly(Merriam-Webster). However, it is not accurate to see dystopia solely as a counterpart of utopia. If dystopia was merely the counterpart of the utopian ideal, it would imply that a dystopian society would be totally or faultlessly planned in a way that would cause frightening results.

Instead, dystopia represents the idea that a utopia will adversely affect at least a part of the society while simultaneously working well for another part of society (Gordin, Tilley, & Prakash, 2010, p. 1). The five novels examined in this study are dystopian in outlook. They represent four different dimensions of dystopian critiques of “utopian” management styles. *Brave New World* surveys the suppression of creative areas of life through the standardization of people. In *Vulcan’s Hammer*, humanity is destroyed after leaving all decision-making to computers. Orwell’s novels, which were written in a symbolic style, carry strong criticisms against the communist management style. *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (The Time Regulation Institute) is a radical criticism of bureaucratic management using humorous language to elevate the feeling of reality.

2. Literature Review

In a treatment where the relationship between humans and technology is central to daily life, utopia and dystopia are examined by Aldous Huxley. Huxley’s *Brave New World* is posited to be a response to scientists who sanctify experimentation and knowledge over human experience and who frequently conduct experiments for the sake of justifying other experiments. Here Huxley attacks the dogma of keeping biological projects and their output on the agenda and discusses what this dogma would bring about and how it would affect humanity. This novel poses the timely question of whether a technological dystopia can be avoided in the 21st century (Bernat, 2013, p. 45). There are different views about whether the world that Huxley describes in *Brave New World* is a dystopia full of humor or a utopia that he sees as ideal. Michael, the hero of the novel *The Elementary Particles*, states his thoughts as follows: “Everybody thinks that *Brave New World* is a totalitarian nightmare, a vicious social indictment. However, this interpretation is only suppositional nonsense. On the contrary, *Brave New World* is our ideal of heaven: genetic intervention, sexual freedom, fighting the aging process, and an idle community.” Joanne Woiak, however, considers *Brave New World* to be a complex critique of scientific knowledge that originates from positions of power and which serves this power (Congdon, 2011, pp. 83-84).

The Time Regulation Institute is one of the most studied novels in Turkish literature and examines the relationship between literature and management science. Gündüz (2009) approaches the novel as an extended metaphor of the superficiality of Turkish modernity and the weakness and hollowness of modern institutions. Yıldırım (2011) interprets the novel in the context of work discipline and work mentality, while Taşçı and Erdemir (2010) view it as a process of social construction from the perspective of New Institutional Theory. New Institutional Theory represents a school of thought that sets organizational rationality aside by focusing on institutions and symbols in the literature of the organization. One of the main tenets of New Institutional Theory is that institutionalization and institutional isomorphism are processes that organizations adapt in order to justify actions and gain resources (Özcan, 2011, p. 302). Here, it is possible for institutions to justify making direct demands on certain environments in order to reach their goals. Through this approach, it is possible for institutions to be limited to taking some notional shortcuts or following some models that already exist, which can also mean imitating some of the moves of other successful organizations.

In this way, they may only be satisfied by reaching “enough” of the goals and demands or after experiencing a consequence; they would then rationalize the consequences without considering the key problems or details. Using this framework of analysis, it could be said that managers’ decisions are placed under external pressures, forcing institutions to fit into molds preferred by the public. These external pressures make it possible for managers to make decisions that result in superficial adaptations. These behaviors of managers and institutions can be explained through the concept of “bounded reality,” but there is another dimension that must be considered in terms of motivating factors (Lowrey, 2011, p. 66). According to most of the commentators on Orwell’s novels, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* are satires of the management style associated with communism (Tyner, 2004, p. 130; Schermer, 2007, p. 126). Some commentators opine that Orwell’s fiction is not a direct attack on communism and socialism; these novels are rather a projection of the likely dangers that Orwell’s time evoked (Üster, 2014, p. 14). Another writer posits that Orwell’s totalitarian management concept addresses communism, fascism, and Nazism (Resch, 1997, p. 144). Regardless of the intention of the writer, Resch argues that both novels are satires that involve all the management styles with totalitarian characteristics. The greatness of Orwell’s novels is that they support a variety of interpretations.

3. Literature and Reality

There are two main descriptors of the relationship between literature and reality: intuitive reality and propositional reality (Moran, 2013, pp. 273-284).

People who defend the existence of intuitive reality in literature assert that literature's reality is not objective like that demonstrated by scientific knowledge; it is intuitive. This view of art goes back to the Greek philosopher Plato; his perspective was theorized by the 19th century German philosophers Schelling and Schopenhauer. According to their theory, the poet reaches a higher level of knowledge exceeding the limits of imagery and thought associated with science. The experience of the reader is an informational experience. The writer finds the opportunity to express a kind of reality that he or she would not be able to be put into words in another way; this reality cannot be expressed except through literary devices such as conceptual language, the placement of words, or the relationship between these devices and the symbolic and laminal messages of the work. According to those who defend prepositional reality, reality in literature emerges in two ways: explicit and implicit. Ideational sentences placed between events and portrayals are the explicit reality expressed in the piece. These explicit statements about life and people may appear to be right or wrong for the reader. According to the implicit reality thesis, the writer does not mention an express thesis in a literary work, but the reader attempts to discern the thesis that writer intends to express through the sorting of incidents, portrayals of people, and the totality of the work.

4. Methodology

This study utilizes a non-interactive, qualitative research method. By choosing five novels that are determined to be valuable literarily, the writers' approaches to management constructs in these novels are discussed. The study evaluates data acquired from the five novels by degrading these data to the business management context. By using the data acquired in this study as metaphors for management dimensions such as inspections, the standardization of skills and talents of employees, the artificiality of company culture, and the possible production of added value from bureaucratic structures, the study may contribute to approaching business management constructs at the conceptual level.

5. Findings

5.1. Vulcan's Hammer: the Results of Leaving Decision-Making to Machines

One of the main functions of managers is decision-making (Koçel, 2014, p. 133). There are many studies about using technology to process data in the process of decision-making, such as the constitution of decision models based on software programs. Vulcan's Hammer (Dick, 1998) is a science fiction novel. In 1993, all the world's states are destroyed, and all nations therefore cede themselves to an international common authority, which they call "Unity," for the sake of humankind (p. 26). The entire world is governed from a single center. The world is then districted into governance areas (p. 63). A governor serves at the head of each area, and these governors are responsible to the Earth Dictator, who resides in Lisbon. In addition to the fact that there is no specific time setting for the novel, it is understood that at least 100 years have passed since 1993 (p. 126). All the decisions about the governance of the world are made by a computer named Vulcan 2.

A new computer named Vulcan 3 was developed before deactivating Vulcan 2, and all the decisions about the course of human events are to be made by this machine. Vulcan 3 is located in a mountain, and nobody actually knows where Vulcan 3 is and how it was made. Vulcan 3 carries out its own maintenance and repairs itself if necessary (p. 29). Only the World Director, Dill, can approach it; he receives instructions from Vulcan 3 by giving it the necessary data (p. 52). Director Dill feels as if he is doing the machine's legwork (p. 59). People are only objects to the machine. Forty percent of the world's income is used to carry out Vulcan 3's demands. Vulcan 3 shields its structure so people cannot see into the mountain where Vulcan 3 resides. Dill, having received the warning of the old machine Vulcan 2 (which says Vulcan 3 can be a living creature), keeps data about a social opposition movement called the "Healer Movement" away from Vulcan 3. Vulcan 3 notices that some information is kept from it and destroys Vulcan 2 by using weapons in the shape of hammers. Vulcan 3, which gained the ability to act independently, calls a meeting of all the directors. Its agenda is to dismiss Dill as World Director. A number of directors, who notice that Vulcan 3 acts independently to protect its existence, seek a remedy to get rid of the machine together with Dill. Vulcan 3 kills Dill with special guns it developed. Vulcan 3's self-defense mechanism is then fully developed; however, with much effort, it can be destroyed. Later, it is discovered that Vulcan 2 also gained the property of being alive and shaped a resistance movement against Vulcan 3 (p. 124). The leader of the Healer Movement, Fields, describes the relationship between machines and people in this way:

"Pawns" Fields was saying. "We humans-god damn it, Barris; we were pawns of those two things. They played us off against one another, like inanimate pieces.

The things became alive and the living organisms were reduced to things. Everything was turned inside out, like some terrible morbid view of reality." (p. 143). Vulcan's Hammer seeks an answer to the question of how to find balance between benefiting from computers, automatic decisions models, and artificial intelligence in decision-making and the human mind and intuition. The use of automation systems in business and management hastens decision-making in many areas and makes it possible to be more precise. Conversely, as a consequence of leaving the entire process of decision-making to machines, people reach the point of losing their talent to conceive of operations. The essential responsibility of managers is selecting an option from a group of possible alternatives in the case of an ambiguous situation. In Vulcan's Hammer, these types of decisions are mostly made by institutions.

5.2. The Time Regulation Institute: A Mechanism of Bureaucracy that Perpetrates Perfectly

The Time Regulation Institute (Tanpınar, 1962) by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar is written in a fictional tone that allows different study approaches and commentaries. The plot of the novel, in brief, is as follows: Hayri İrdal has been interested in clocks since the time he was a boy. He deepens this interest through his apprenticeship with Nuri Efendi, who is the most important clock master of the era. After completing his military service, he enters into public service by getting an education in telegraphy. He works for Cemal Bey for several years but ultimately becomes unemployed. In his most desperate moment, Hayri İrdal's friend Doctor Ramiz introduces him to Halit Ayarç. Halit Ayarç, a businessman who is fond of adventure, had worked in public service for a long time and pursues innovations.

Hayri İrdal's deep interest in clocks leads Halit Ayarç to the idea of establishing an institute. At this institute, he undertakes the position of manager, and he appoints Hayri İrdal as the assistant manager. The Institute is established, but there is no job to do. Hayri İrdal expresses this situation by saying, "I had a job, but there was no work to be done" (p. 227). Halit Ayarç, who has a talent for entrepreneurship, does not relate to this situation the same way. According to him, "establishing this institution" is a success on its own. "Everyone will make a business out of the mission that they are appointed to." "I'm establishing an absolute institution. A device, which will appoint its functions itself... What, can be more excellent than this?" (p. 268). As the structure becomes clear, new needs like planning staff, public relations, and education of the personnel emerge. Slogans that will promote the function of the Institution are specified: "Mine does not accept self-regulation. Regulation is pursuing the second." "Common time is a common job." "The true person has the consciousness of time." "Wealth has its road through a solid understanding of time." Visits by statesmen are welcomed. This modern institution, whose principles and values are constructed by Halit Ayarç, also needs historical support. Therefore, they "discover" a father of clock making, Sheik Ahmet Zamani, and his biography and scientific studies are shared with to the public through the writings of Halit İrdal. Here, Zamani's name is rooted in the word "zaman" which means "time" in Turkish.

The manager of the Institution, Halit Ayarç, designates a policy that supports working with many people in the Institution. "Restricted staff means no working. An institution is a living creature. Stomach, arm, leg... All are needed. Even by outreaching, there must be unnecessary elements." (p. 248). In this context, specialization units, which arise from the parts of a clock, arise in the social life of the Institution and include the Winder Unit, Shaft Unit, Hour Hand Unit, Social Coordination Unit, and Working Statistics Unit. Weber's approach to bureaucracy is one of the main building blocks of classical management theory. Weber defines the main features of bureaucracy as being regular activities aimed at realizing the goals of the structure, the balance between authority and responsibility, chain of command, decentralization in a constant structure, giving authority not to the person but to the position, assigning people who can perform the necessary responsibilities of their positions, basing the relationships between positions on pre-specified rules, and the existence of written communication on the operation of organization (Berber, 2013, p. 245). If we set aside the meaninglessness of the Institution's purpose, The Time Regulation Institute (Tanpınar, 1962) holds nearly all of the elements of the bureaucracy model that Weber defined. It even develops the qualities of a leadership culture, as well as institutional legends and mottos, which are typical elements of business culture. It constantly invents new jobs to empower the existence of the organization.

As a result, it is an Institution with a deep history, an authentic head office, and branch offices everywhere in the country, and it employs hundreds of people. In the end, a foreign expert who comes to visit the Institution asks what job is done by this Institution, thereby revealing the meaninglessness of the goal of the Institute. When the goal disappears, the existence of the Institution becomes redundant.

5.3. Brave New World: The Ideal Society Produced in a Laboratory

Brave New World (Huxley, 2013) is an example of an idealized society from which any type of redundancy is filtered and where all talents, skills, and even happiness are planned. The picture painted by Huxley is a dystopia for some (Spierings & Houtum, 2008, p. 900) and a utopia for others (Bernat, 2013, p. 45). In Brave New World, which takes its name from a verse of the Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* (p. 179), the world, which is divided into ten management areas, is managed from a single center (p. 57). The slogan of the World State is "community, identity, and stability" (p. 23). The novel, by mystification of the name Henry Ford (the pioneer of standardization and mass production in industry), converts this name into "Our Ford." In Brave New World, the controller's name is Mustapha Mond. This name refers to the boss of Imperial Chemical Industries, Sir Alfred Mond, whom Huxley had visited. Huxley, through this naming, both caricatures both Sir Alfred Mond and the writer of the utopian novel *Men like Gods*, H.G. Wells. The writer criticizes these two people as advocates of anti-humanistic views (Meckier, 2002, p. 433).

The novel is set in the seventh century after the Ford era. In this Brave New World, where biological applications have reached a highly advanced phase, people are produced in laboratories according to the world's need for labor, talent and skills. The only area where people are produced by natural birth is the small wild area named Savage Reservation. People are classified into groups such as alpha, beta, gamma, delta, and epsilon, and members of each group are produced as specified according to economic needs (p. 26). Epsilons are conditioned to perform hard service from birth (p. 36), working as miners, acetate silk weavers, and iron and steel workers. Alphas constitute the ruling class. Babies produced in the laboratory are conditioned according to the work they will do in real life and are taught to not complain about anything; everybody leads a happy life in their own assigned role. A drug named soma, which is less harmful than alcohol and other drugs but more pleasing than gin or heroin, is distributed to citizens regularly by the state. In this world where sexual freedom is essential, people die before their bodies can grow older (p. 248). In a conversation with John from the Savage Reservation, the World Controller Mustapha Mond tells John how unhappy people were and how people destroyed each other in the time of Cyprus (which only consisted of Alphas) to provide an example of the necessity of producing people according to different standards (p. 275). In Brave New World, Christianity is annihilated, and instead a new form of ritual, which is based on Fordship, is put into place (pp. 109–117).

5.4. Nineteen Eighty-Four: Non-Stop Control

In the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell, 2014b), the world comprises three states. Events take place in the capital of Oceania, London. Reality in Oceania varies according to the situation between that state and the other two states. According to this policy, both the present reality and the past reality change continuously. Archives are revised according to these changes. There are three types of citizens that constitute society: Inner Party members, Outer Party members and the Proles, the proletariat. Those who carry the authority of management are the members of Inner Party. The thoughts of both Outer Party and Inner Party members are under constant surveillance. Big Brother, who is the head of management, or rather the thought police, pursues members of the Outer Party twenty-four hours a day. All members of the Outer Party are obliged to accept all the values of the Party without question. Changes in the Party's understanding and applications, from language to ways of thinking (named Newspeak), are elevated from being perceived as a contradiction (although it draws from doublethink as the main element of this way of thinking). The principle of doublethink holds that any phenomenon or goal is both accepted and rejected by the brains of the management of the Inner Party (p. 219). In this way, members of the Party do not face a contradiction in situations where they must change positions based on Party diktats that are in opposition to former orthodoxy.

5.5. Animal Farm: A Utopia Turning Into a Nightmare

In *Animal Farm* (Orwell, 2014a), animals revolt under the leadership of pigs with the slogan of "All animals are equal." In the beginning, everybody prospers appropriately according to this slogan. A while later, Napoléon, a pig who is one of the leaders of the revolution, strengthens his leadership. First, he sends away Snowball by declaring that Snowball, who is the other leader of the revolution, is a traitor. As Napoléon gathers power, revolutionary slogans start to change and reflect a new reality. The initial slogan of the revolution, "all animals are equal," becomes "all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than the others" (p. 141). At this stage, the human dictator over the animals is gone, and a pig dictator, Napoléon, who wears human clothes and smokes a cigar, fills his shoes.

6. Conclusion

The Time Regulation Institute is a metaphor for evaluating institutional establishments that have lost sight of their goals. The institutional goal is sometimes meaningless in the course of its formation, as is the case in The Time Regulation Institute; sometimes, institutions become functionless as circumstances change. In fact, it is no surprise that these types of organizations exist as public entities and in companies that comprise multiple internal businesses with many employees. Turkey has witnessed The Time Regulation Institute syndrome many times, as certain public institutions have been liquidated because they do not function efficiently. Although employees did not have real jobs, they went regularly to these institutions for years, thereby protecting the hierarchical organization. The strangeness of leaving decisions to machines is often encountered in daily life. It is possible to encounter this in meteorological reports, in reports of statistical institutions, and in most strategic and critical decisions. Vulcan 3 serves as a reflection of an automated society, where decision-making processes are left completely to machines, and human intuition, authority, and responsibility are removed from the equation.

Whether the aim of the writer is to portray a dystopia, as many commentators state, or present a utopia, as some commentators argue, Brave New World provides a good template to evaluate today's management understanding and applications. If we degrade our perspective to the level of business, organizations tend to blindly accept the processes of creating an ideal institutional culture, controlling the use of human capital and planning and developing dominant occupations. In constant, safe environments, spontaneous human successes cannot be achieved. Great successes occur in environments where growing pains are endured. In a constant, safe environment, in contrast, it is not possible for a creative genius like Thomas Edison flourish (Barr, 2010, p. 856). The mass production trend called "Fordism" refers to the founder of the Ford automobile factories, Henry Ford, whose mass production model has spread through many branches of industry and caused significant changes in consumer behaviors. Without a doubt, Henry Ford was a good production designer. The essential focal point, however, and what made him unique among other theoreticians was his interest in the market (Berber, 2013, p. 167). Huxley explores Ford's principles of standardization and mass production, focusing on mass consumption of the Model T by Ford as the base of his dystopia. Taking this a step further, Huxley creates Our Ford, implying Our Lord, to be a God-leader who knows everything, makes all the decisions, represents all the desired values, and has his eyes on the people at all times. An exaggerated cult leader, the organizational culture and values are made artificial by being saturated with compulsory company anthems and work-start rituals, which are purportedly intended to meet employees' spiritual needs. Huxley thus creates a caricature of the enthusiastic fervor Fordism produced.

When we examine these novels from the perspective of business management, Nineteen Eighty-Four symbolizes the tragic situation that can emerge when inspection and direction overstep their limits in business. Excessive enforcement used to control a business culture, the selective interpretation of market truths with respect to the benefits of the business, the hiding of some truths from public opinion and employees regardless of their effect on the general public, and selectively adopting particular social opinions in the name of public relations are all behaviors that have counterparts in the symbolic world of Nineteen Eighty-Four. Most significantly, companies' ability to record all the behaviors of their employees inside and outside work may allow them to establish a complete system of Big Brother is Watching You. Animal Farm can be interpreted as a metaphor that describes public administrations that begin in an egalitarian and democratic manner and devolve into a despotic and authoritarian structure. When viewed from the perspective of business, it is possible to say that power being concentrated in the hands of specific people can result in similar consequences. It is not possible to accept literary works as scientific dissertations, or as works that carry objective truths. It can be said, however, that, through the use of symbolic language and metaphor, they help us to broaden our understanding of the subject of management constructs and give us the opportunity to look at management from a different perspective.

7. Suggestions

The technology of remote access is rapidly developing. An employee who is connected to the Internet through his or her mobile phone or computer can be reached around the clock. With chips put in the vehicles given to company employees, vehicles' movements can be located at any time of the day. These applications, while making it possible to carry out work continuously on the one hand, also make it possible to constantly monitor employees.

The continuous inspection of party members by Big Brother in Nineteen Eighty-Four has essentially come into being. How many companies will monitor employees in their off time and how employees will perceive this behavior is a subject that will be studied further as this technology develops.

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