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DISHONESTY AND THE COST OF PLAYING WITH OTHERS' FEELINGS IN ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S THE WAY WE LIVE NOW

ANTHONY TROLLOPE'UN THE WAY WE LIVE NOW ADLI ROMANINDA BAŞKA İNSANLARIN DUYGULARIYLA OYNAMANIN BEDELİ VE SAHTEKÂRLIK

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ABSTRACT

The Victorian Period, beginning in 1837 and ending in 1901, is a period when British Imperial develops and expands with an unprecedented speed. This period brings England- the first industrialized country in the world- to the highest level of develeopment. During this period, rural based life styles change into urban based economy and modern life which results in increase in wealth. Cities experience rapid growth, life styles of people differentiate, the landscape changes and massive production replaces agricultural production. Despite the prosperity and optimism in this period, some difficulties associated with the rapid industrialization emerge. Unemployment, poverty and competitive desire for social security appear causing restlessness among the members of the British society. The authors of this period from Charles Dickens to Elizabeth Gaskel and Anthony Trollope handle the issues of Victorian period and keep a critical eye on the matters changing the structure of the community. The aim of his study is to reflect the effects of rapid industrialization through Anthony Trollope's view. In his novel titled *The Way We Live Now* he presents the introduction of materaliasm characterized by a ''*great financier''* and the leakage of

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dishonesty- as the financial power- into economical, religious, social and political institutes of British Community is analyzed. This study, displays the excessive interest of both the institutes and individuals to dishonesty at the same time proves that financial benefits result in frustration. Additionally, the presentation of the cost of playing with others' feelings and the significance of love and moral values are handled.

Key Words: Anthony Trollope; *The Way We Live Now*; dishonesty; great financier

ÖZET

1837 de başlayıp 1901'de sona eren Victorian Dönemi İngiliz İmparatorluğu'nun eşi benzeri görülmemiş bir hızla gelişip yayıldığı bir dönemdir. Bu dönem dünyada endüstrileşmeye başlayan ilk ülke olan İngiltere'yi gelişmişliğin en uç noktasına taşımaktadır. Kırsal yaşam odaklı hayat tarzları, zenginliğin artmasına yol açan modern yaşam tarzına ve kentsel odaklı ekonomiye dönüşmektedir. Şehirler hızlı bir büyüme içerisine girmekte, çevre değişmekte, insanların yaşam tarzları farklılaşmakta ve büyük çaplı üretim tarımsal üretimin yerini almaktadır. Bu dönemdeki iyimserliğe ve refaha rağmen, hızlı sanayileşmeyle ilişkili bazı problemler ortaya çıkmaktadır. İşsizlik, yoksulluk sosyal güvenliğe duyulan aşırı ilgi İngiliz toplumundaki bireyler arasında huzursuzluğun belirmesine yol açmaktadır. Charles Dickens'tan Elizabeth Gaskel ve Anthony Trollope'a kadar bu dönemin yazarları, Victorian Dönemi konularını ele almakta ve toplumun yapısını değiştiren unsurları eleştirmektedirler. Bu çalışmanın amacı, en hızlı sanayileşmenin etkilerini Anthony Trollope'in bakış açısıyla yansıtmaktır. Şimdiki Yaşam Tarzımız adlı romanında materyalizmi ''muhteşem yatırımcı'' olarak sunmakta ve- ekonomik güç- olarak değerlendirilen sahtekarlığın İngiliz toplumundaki ekonomik,sosyal, dini ve politik kurumlara sızması analiz edilmektedir. Bu çalışma, kurumlarla beraber insanların da sahtekarlığa olan aşırı ilgisini ortaya koymakta ve maddi çıkarlara dayalı ilişkilerin hüsranla sonuçlandığını göstermektedir. Bununla beraber, başkalarının duygularıyla oynamanın bedeli ve aşkın, ahlaki değerlerin önemi ele alınmaktadır.

Keywords: Anthony Trollope; Şimdiki Yaşam Tarzımız; sahtekarlık; muhteşem yatırımcı

Introduction

Born in 1815, Anthony Trollope was one of the foremost and popular novelists of Victorian period and like his contemporaries George Eliot, Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray. Anthony Trollope wrote more than sixty books including forty seven novels many of which sold more than 100,000 copies that made them best sellers of Victorian age. Trollope, whose series of novels known as Chronicles of Barsethire, wrote his novels based on political, social, and gender issues and he tended to depict these issues in a realistic way. While reflecting the issues regarding political and social aspects of Victorian age in a realistic style, and Levine (2012) describes the content of the period indicating; ''Rich combinations of individuals, types, and networks can be found in the period's most sweeping realist fictions such as The Way We Live Now (p.93). Thus, instead of defining a single characterization of realism, Trollope uses his novels to represent ordinary subjects in complex social relationships employing enriched combinations of figures and events.

The Way We Live Now (1875) is one of Trollope's novels that first appeared in serialized form and in a literary sense, it is significant in that it was published in monthly parts. The satirical novel consists of 100 chapters and it portrays the financial scandals of 1870s. Being rich in sub plot, the novel focuses on greed and dishonesty caused by the scandals. These scandals were caused by sudden introduction of new comers and as Kendrick (1979) mentions; ''a traditional British enclosure is invaded by gold diggers, speculators, Jews and intruders'' (p.136). The sudden entrance of Mr. Melmotte, for instance, exemplifies how British society is occupied by a so-called businessman whose previous life is mysterious.

Anthony Trollope makes a strong link between himself and the characters he creates in his novels since he underlines the necessity to make them a part of his own life by crying at their grieves, laughing at their absurdities and enjoying their joy. According to him, it is necessary that the characters be loved or hated or sometimes forgiven. In his novel, the author employs Augustus Melmotte ''*The Great Financier''* (Trollope, 1875, p.178) having a mysterious past, rumored being Jewish and connected to failed business in other European countries. As soon as he moves to London, the city's upper class is fascinated by his arrival and the company, he sets up, aims to construct a new railway line entitled South Central Pacific and Mexican Railway and it is supposed to connect Salt Lake City and Veracruz. In fact, his main purpose is to ramp up the share price of the railway without paying anything and enrich himself regardless of the expectations of the shareholders but whether the railway will be constructed or not is a real misery. Being fascinated by the income of the line, the young baronet Felix Carbury, Paul Montague, Lord Nidderdale and Lord Alfred become the partners despite the rumors that Mr.Melmotte is a*'swindler''* (Trollope, 1875, p.197).

Under the light of what has been told so far, this paper will focus on the dishonesty represented by the despicable character- Augustus Melmotte- his acceptance in commercial, political and religious areas and the cost of playing with others' feelings. So as to make a beginning, what Trollope expresses in his ''*Autobiography"* is significant for his satirical attitude about the embrace of dishonesty by the members of the English society;

> *a certain class of dishonesty, dishonesty magnificent in its proportions and climbing into high places, has become at the same time so rampant and so splendid that seems to be reason for fearing that men and women will be thought to feel that dishonesty, it can become splendid, will cease to be abominable. If dishonesty can live in a gorgeous with pictures on all its walls, and gems in all its cupboards, with marble and ivory in all its, and can give Apician dinners, and get into Parliament, and deal in millions, then dishonesty not disgraceful, and the man dishonest after uch a fashion is not a low scoundrel* (Childers, 163,na).

Dishonesty and The Cost of Playing With Others' Feelings

Augustus Melmotte, regarded as the richest man ever seen in the country, fascinates the investors and they are seduced by the promises that the railway line will make a great profit for the shareholders. Though they are aware of the fact that Melmotte is

said to be a swindler, they do not hesitate to invest money in the construction of the new line. The shareholders (Felix, Nidderdale, Paul and Alfred) have no idea about what the rate of their shares is and whenever they try to raise questions, the Board meetings, controlled by Melmotte, end suddenly. In reality, each of the members of the board has their own problems; Felix running through his mother's savings, Paul loving his best friend's cousin and lover- Hetta- and Lord Nidderdale forced by his father and Melmotte to marry his daughter, Marie. Despite the rumours about him, Mr. Melmotte's easy access into the commercial area is quite striking since he is reflected as the boss who has the financial strength to provide each member of the Board with large sum of money. Though the shareholders gather to negotiate about the railway, they are pacified and all the issues about the railway company are conducted under the control of the so-called *great financier*. The wealthy financier begins to institutionalize his plan and he sneaks over the society step by step.

When Mr. Melmotte took his offices in Abchurch Lane, he was undoubtedly a great man, and the establishment of South-Central Pacific and Mexican Railway in Abchurch Lane had become an accepted glory of finance as well. ''The great company indeed had an office of its own, where the Board was held; but everything was really managed in Mr. Melmotte's own commercial sanctum'' (Trollope, 1875, p.267).

After seducing the people by promising them that they will gain an unprecedented amount of money in commercial area, Augustus Melmotte begins to be as dominant as he can in the area of politics. He is well aware of the fact that it is fairly necessary for a wealthy person to have a chair in the parliament for his future which will enable him to legitimize his wrong doings and strengthen his position in the English society. In order to increase his social standing, Melmotte tries to bring both aristocracy and royalty under the same roof and for this purpose, he organizes a dinner hosting the Emperor of China. According to some, Melmotte was neither a citizen of London nor a merchant or an Englishman but his willingness and affordability to spend the necessary money to organize the dinner party were what concerned people rather than his dishonesty.

This no doubt was a great matter,- this affair of seat; but the dinner to be given to the Emperor of China was much greater. It was the middle of June, and the dinner was to be given on Monday, 8th July, now three weeks hence; — but all London was already talking of it. The great purport proposed was to show to the Emperor by this banquet what an English merchant-citizen of London could do. Of course, there was a great amount of scolding and a loud clamour on the occasion. Some men said that Melmotte was not a citizen of London, others that he was not a merchant, others again that he was not an Englishman. But no man could deny that he was both able and willing to spend the necessary money; (Trollope, 1875, p. 267).

Despite the long disputes about Mr. Melmotte's dark background and the conviction that he forged the signature of landlord whose property he mortgaged, Mr. Augustus Melmotte, whose rival was Mr. Alf, is selected as member of the parliament in Westminster after being supported by some people prioritizing their long term benefits. He was fortified by Mr. Broune -the owner of the newspaper titled *Morning Breakfast*

Table- as he thought that the financier would be supported by the country at large. More interestingly, it was predicted that this support was given by Mrs. Carbury for the purpose of persuading Mr. Melmotte to allow the marriage between Felix and Marie. In spite of the information gathered from New York, Hamburg and Vienna regarding Melmotte's illegal affairs, he becomes a political hero in addition to his title which is the commercial one. In fact, before the election, Melmotte was informed about the fact that he had forged Dolly Longestaffe's signature when he purchased their property in Pickering, Caversham, but he had such a shrewd personality that he tried to stand as powerful as he could so as to get a seat in the parliament and prove everyone how courageous he was against his enemies trying to defeat him. As a result of the election, the opportunist financier having been supported by conservatives could get a seat despite his fraud.

Here was an opportunity for himself! Here was at his hand the means of revenging himself for the injury done him, and of showing to the world at the same time that he was not afraid of his city enemies! It required some courage certainly, —this attempt that suggested itself to him of getting upon his legs a couple of hours after his first introduction to parliamentary life (Trollope, 1875, p.536).

Not only merchants and political men but also religious men accepted Melmotte without any hesitation. Melmotte was presumed to be Jewish and he knew that being a Jewish in English society was not so easy. In order to be welcomed by Catholics as well as Protestants he used his economic power and made the priest- Father Barham- believe that he converted to their faith. Melmotte donates a hundred guineas for the erection of an altar of a church and this charity pleases the priest opposing Roger Carbury's conviction that it is a new dodge. Roger Carbury as Mrs. Carbury's cousin is the character who owns his own land and he is reflected as a squire. Trollope creates Roger Carbury to voice what people should not do in the English society. Roger Carbury, as the most rational character in the novel, tells Barham that he saw Melmotte giving 200 pounds to the Protestant Curate's Aid Society but the priest does not believe even a word of it and claims that Roger's disapproval is not an evidence of Melmotte's tricks. The religious institutions also do not hesitate to accept Melmotte as a convert and more dramatically, they ignore what the swindler's real personality is and describe him as *the great.* ''I would be proud of the lowest human being that has a soul, but of course we are glad to welcome the wealthy and the great'' (Trollope, 1875, p.438).

Up to now, the dishonesty, characterized by Augustus Melmotte, and its acceptance by institutions have been studied. Related to the dishonesty and corruption**,** the cost of playing with others' feelings is also worth mentioning as it is thematized in the novel. Firstly, Mr. Melmotte tends to manipulate everyone who is within his orbit and he uses his wealth and success to find partners for the railway construction, gain sympathy of the religious institutions and have a seat in the parliament in Westminster. He does not care about his creditors but centers on lavish parties which pave the way to his tragic end.

After being elected, he notices that the crime that he forged Dolly's and even his daughter's signatures has been proved to be true and for this reason he is not respected during his participation into the sessions held in the parliament. Just from the beginning,

the swindler, presented in the novel, is the center of lots of pledges but he does not reach what he aimed and commits suicide by drinking prussic acid. His suicide as Childers highlights; ‘’is not so much because he has been discredited, but because he believes he has lost his wealth, and thus his power over others’’ (p.163, na). We grasp from his death that, what concerned Melmotte was not his unreliability but the decrease in the shares of the railway which made them almost worthless.

It was asserted in Abchurch Lane that had he not at that moment touched the Pickering property, or entertained the Emperor, or stood for Westminster, he must, by the end of the autumn, have been able to do any or all of those things without danger, simply as the result of the money which would then have been realized by the railway. But he had allowed himself to become hampered by the want of comparatively small sums of ready money, and in seeking relief had rushed from one danger to another, till at last the waters around him had become too deep even for him, and had overwhelmed him (Trollope,1875, p.674).

Another figure who paid the cost of playing with others’ feelings is Felix Carbury. He is a young baronet fond of gambling and drinking in the club. Though he is one of the partners of the railway, he never says a word during the meetings and wishing to earn more money he dreams of selling his shares. Forced by his mother, he pretends to love Miss Melmotte and as a member of this society, he endeavors to improve his social rank by inheriting the money belonging to the young girl. In reality, he is not in love with Marie but being penniless and consuming what his mother has, he makes the poor girl believe that he loves her. Felix abuses Marie’s feelings. At the same time he seduces another girl- Ruby Ruggles- by lying that he loves being with her. The young baronet fails to accomplish what he wished and frustrates Marie by not keeping his promise to go to Liverpool and then to New York in order to make a new beginning. Instead of meeting Marie at the train station he gambles and consumes the money he got from Mr. Melmotte. ‘’At three o’clock in the morning, Sir Felix had lost over a hundred pounds in ready money. On the following night about one he had lost a further sum of two hundred pounds. The reader will remember that he should at that time have been in the hotel at Liverpool’’ (Trollope, 1875, p. 391).

Felix leaves Marie at the station in a desperate situation and she is brought back to Melmotte’s house. What makes Felix pay the cost of playing with others’ feelings is the event when he meets Ruby’s ex- fiancé, John Crumb. John knows that Felix does not love Ruby by heart and he just has fun dancing with her so he thrashes Felix who has to stay at home without appearing as often as he did before. Everyone in his circle knows that Felix disappointed young Marie and Ruby as well but more dramatically his mother Mrs. Carbury realizes that a future with fortune is impossible to be set up for Felix. Unfortunately, the young baronet is forced to leave London for Europe leaving all his dreams behind. He loses his innocent beauty and this leads a complete failure in his business affairs too.

Lady Carbury, who is ambitious to write novels, is not greedy for many. Since she has no money she has to work for a living but sometimes acts dishonestly. During her

whole life, she has struggled to maintain her life and provide her children with a well - established future. Her past life was full of sorrows stemming from the cruelty of her husband then her struggle in London constituted her efforts to make her son marry a girl who he really did not love. Just for the sake of making money, she continuously tried to benefit from a swindler's wealth. Mrs. Carbury gave no importance to the real feelings of her children. Young Hetta was in love with Paul Monteague but she acted against her marriage with Monteague and tended to convince that Roger was the most suitable person to marry. In her own novel, Mrs. Carbury puts an emphasis on love but when her children are in question, she ignores what their real feelings are and she rejects the validity of love for her own off-springs. In spite of her efforts, Mrs. Carbury faces the wretchedness of her son who has had failures in trade and Hetta's marriage to Paul Monteague who she did not consider to be an ideal husband because of his financial drawbacks. All in all, Mrs. Carbury has no choice but to accept her destiny and she marries Mr. Broune who she once described as an old goose.

Ruby Ruggles, appearing as a figure living with her grandfather, is a contradictory character as she is attracted by Felix and prefers believing unrealistic promises made by him. Instead of securing her life with her fiancé John Crumb, Ruby considers Felix as an inevitable love.

She had her London lover beside her; and though in every word he spoke there was a tone of contempt, still he talked of love, and made her promises, and told her that she was pretty. He probably did not enjoy it much; he cared very little about her, and carried on the liaison simply because it was the proper sort of thing for a young man to do. (Trollope, 1875, p.141)

Ruby's story resembles Marie's in that they both search for happiness by a true lover. In fact, both of them share the same destiny as Ruby is considered as a secure harbor to have fun with and Marie as a source of money by the same person – Felix. Contrary to Ruby's conviction, the man she loves is not in love with her. After witnessing the defeat of her lover and recognizing the impossibility of the difficulties of living alone as a female character, she returns to her ex- fiancé John Crumb- and she is persuaded that to marry a man, risking his life for her, is much more valuable than a fake love. But for John Crumb, Ruby would not have had a happy ending. Finally, she obeys her predestination and continues to live with the man once she criticized severely for the way he talked and dressed. Ruby plays with John's feelings and humiliates him but she loses her belief in love and learns to live with John.

Conclusion

To sum up, Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* enlightens the business dealings of Victorian era. Missing the point of financial responsibilities and not facing them on an honest level are criticized through the character Mr. Melmotte who refuses to meet the creditors lending money to him. Instead of telling his partners the truth, he uses

his fame as a rich financier and cheats them.

Mr. Melmotte, whose life consists of fraud and dishonesty, is accepted by the English society in different levels ranging from commercial, religious areas to political ones. People are impressed by his wealth and he seems to be successful till he commits suicide. Additionally, Trollope points out the ruinous ends of figures who play with the feelings of others'. At the end, we come across the sufferings of characters fictionalized as Mr. Melmotte, Felix Carbury, Mrs. Carbury and Ruby Ruggles to some extent. Anthony Trollope keeps a critical eye of the life style of mid-Victorian period through the perceptions of the people of the mentioned era.

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