Critique of education: Educator in the work of Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe Named *Faust I*

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**Abstract**

Education has a significant impact on shaping of individuals. The decisive one is how education shapes institutional factors. The general education definitions made by instructors, have same opinion that education is a process to change individuals’ behaviors purposefully. In parallel with the studies of perfect education, positive and negative critics against the existing educational system are also one of the focus discussions. Education-oriented critics, kept agenda continuously by especially instructors, students, critics and parents, are the starting point of solution in addition to criticism function. The critical method, scientific, by rejecting the view that education and training are outside politics, focuses on that education must be based on cultural, historical and societal. This kind of definition, criticism and analysis efforts have been subject to many literary works. Goethe’s Faust I, representing German Literature worldwide successfully in every period in the field of classical works, is one of the leading masterpiece in -day conception of universal education and also supports undeniable thesis of intellectual information in a literary works on behalf of the emergence of beauty, truth in education. In this work, Goethe, as an instructor critic, has supported that critic is not a fact to be afraid or escape, but a scientific phenomenon to be used. He has ideas which can lighten present education system, with some deficiencies. This idea is discussed according to text based method.

**Keywords:** Storm and urge; Faust; Education system; Education; Educator

1. Introduction

Generally, the definition of education made in many countries and numerous works of scientists for many years is almost the same: “a process of making desired changes in the behaviour of individuals for a particular purpose.”

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The association of such a definition of education with the concept of the school is in the form of a place in which life opportunities are planned and implemented in order to eliminate students’ undesired behaviours in accordance with the predetermined aims of the school. Shortcomings of education system and increasing the dose of criticism about both the educator and education are an ongoing phenomenon in each period. Despite much discussion on the incomplete issues in question, access to what is related to education and the success of solving the problems have not been achieved yet. In those, countries have tried to create their own education and education systems because concrete solution to the complaints, such as: the system urges students learning by heart, it doesn’t give them responsibility, imposed knowledge makes them away from everyday life, has not been achieved fully. Many of the critical methods don’t accept the contrary opinions defending that education and instruction are a process different from politics and as an antithesis they emphasize that education can’t be independent from cultural, historical and social atmosphere. Goethe has critically addressed these issues in this work.

2. Forming of Faust

Goethe’s multidimensional masterpiece Faust which he tried to complete during his life and described as “The greatest Work of my life – Opus Magnum” has a big role in German Literature’s taking precedence among the World Literature. Because the work was written within more than six years, it has traces from the German Storm and Urge (Sturm und Drang), Classic and Romantic periods in which high quality Works were written. This poetic play of the poet has an important place among the world classics because of its special features. This work consists of two volumes as Faust I and Faust II. Goethe began to write the first volume at the age of 21 and completed it at the age of 57. Afterwards, he completed the second part at the age of 83.

First written of Faust in history, the first comprehensive work considering the life of Dr. Johann Faust Johann Spies in 1587. There are some rumours like Dr. J. Faust giving his name to the book, staying in many regions of Germany in the first quarter of the16 century and introducing himself as an alchemist, a preacher, a philosopher, a doctor and a fortune teller there, repeating “the miracles of the Jesus”, rewriting the lost Works of Aristotle and Platon, being dismissed of the teacher position of the Church with the reason of teaching unorthodox things, escaping from the teachings of Trimethius, the abbot, whom he met one of his trips by chance.

Faust series have been counted among the most widespread works of European Literature since 16th century. Faust series returning in very differently published forms contains Faust’s struggles to gain knowledge and power, agreement that he made with devil and his sexual passions. Although Faust image was described as insanity or charlataney in popular culture, Faust series have begun to gain importance since 18th century. The main theme of the work is the suspicion brought forth between powers of human belief and reliability of scientific understanding. Character named Faust is generally considered as a man trying to exceed his borders and being in the middle of a struggle between trying to prove himself as a self-centralist and learning sociality. Why Goethe wrote Faust can be related to many things. One of them is the effect of the judged and guillotined maid having murdered her illegitimate child in despair because of being raped and getting pregnant close by Frankfurt in 1771. This story, depending on reality, also contains mixture of his other works. This proves us that tragic event is interconnected with the reality of the work. In this drama Faust also represents the renascence man running after the knowledge. He is
guarded by the devil because of the struggles for the sake of knowledge. Actually, intelligent artists and scientists symbolizing Faust shouldn’t be negative figures. But in this work, characters were handled in both positive and negative aspects. As a result of having been translated into English, Dutch, French, Czechoslovakian language and today almost all of the world languages, the work was opened to the world (See http://www.oglena.blogcu.com). As clearly seen in the work, Goethe tried to emphasize education problem with the character named Mephistotales. Such that: aiming him pulling into his own way Mephistotales wanted Faust to abandon knowledge and caused a university student going of education through various lies. He also mentioned about the reality of the student in this period and emphasized the types drinking in a morally wholesome atmosphere, not mentioning about science, university, education and most importantly won’t be useful to the next generation.

In this work Goethe gives the art of criticism intensively in dimension of the educator and education. Criticism can be separated into two types as constructive and destructive. When considered from the point of criticism method, it is perceived that the work gives the message that man should benefit from criticism instead of escaping from it. Especially in maturity period, Goethe selected a writing style parallel to the view protecting its validity also in today’s world: who he fear from criticism, can’t renovate them. German literature has met with literary criticism especially since the period of Storm and Urge (Sturm und Drang). When the type of appearance of criticism is generally considered, it has been seen that criticism began with the emerging of human being and social differences between them and it is hard to put up with it. Experts of this field generally defend the view that critical thinking should not only criticize or reject the facts and findings, but also perceive the truth properly and bring together an alternative approach to it.

Goethe’s criticism related to many fields of life and science can be seen clearly in this work and Aytaç gives his perspective of criticism like this:

“The image of critic - biting dog in the history of German literature is because of Goethe’s a youth poem. In one of his poems written in the spirit of a literary movement, Storm and Urge (Sturm und Drang) giving importance to creativity, Goethe simulates the critic to a shameless guest, living on the works of creative writer and eating on his table and then talking out of place outside about his meals on table. He says that this man is a dog that must be chucked out and kicked out as soon as seen.

Sometimes I had harboured a man. He wasn’t counted much as a guest. There was usual food on the table. The fellow glutted his belly and also ate the thing that I had saved as sweet. As soon as he was full up, he vamoosed to the neighbour to criticize my table maliciously. Pepper of my soup might have been more, meat more fried, wine older. God damn it. Defeat him. He is critic” (Aytaç1995:34).

Goethe’s Faust works intensifies in direction of the desire to reach knowledge and live different experiences. Couldn’t reach the desired universal knowledge on his own, Faust had to get himself accepted and this condition carries the scientific tragedy to the summit.

3. The Critic of Education-Educator

This work includes from place to place merciless and superficial critics about professions and professionals. Between these criticized systems, education system takes an important place. Goethe criticizes not only education system but also educators and students who are a kind of actors of this system.
It is generally accepted that ideal educational process has to be a process which develops children in every respect considering their abilities. But in the period that the book was written, in Germany this kind of educational process was not applied. Hence in Faust, Faust nearly plays the role of changing society by criticizing some individuals who are related to educational system calling up also dark forces, merely with the manner of a community engineer. While Goethe performs this technique, he aims to change the educational system in particular, and the communal, economical and moral environment in which he lived. But the political authority in that period cannot set an educational system which does not raise people that are not accord with its own ideas, feelings and practices. They do not provide opportunity to the educators for setting up that kind of educational system. So, the fact that Goethe fictionalizes the character Faust as a character who objects to system cannot change the educational system.

In this work, the author gives place discussions about the relationship between “word-speaking”, “thought-meaning” and which of these notions is more important than another in language and language teaching, and at what point “action” stands between these two notions, discussed by the educators and scholars in the first place in the period before the author lived and that the author lived. Likewise, this subject is also the research subject of well-known philologists, Hamann and Herder who lived in the same period with Goethe. Generally speaking, Faust, which represents many of the Goethe's the ideas, finds happiness in the world in activity (See Minor 1900: 37). In the whole world, while these kinds of researches were performed, the student typology that was raised by educational system is excluded from the discussions. They only care drinking, gamble, flirting with the girls and enjoying the day. The quotation below sets examples for these arguments:

A STUDENT
Deuce! how they step, the buxom wenches!
Come, Brother! we must see them to the benches.
A strong, old beer, a pipe that stings and bites,
A girl in Sunday clothes,—these three are my delights. (Faust: 27)

THE FIRST
(...)
Quick! lest our game escape us in the press:
The hand that wields the broom on Saturdays
Will best, on Sundays, fondle and caress. (Faust: 27)

It is possible to see conversations with similar content in many parts of the work. The frequency of such dialogues shows that the world of thought of the students of this period based on only drinking, having fun and flirting with girls. That the students of the period be detached from the society and uninterested in the problems of the society shows that educators fail to raise ideal person and provide an ideal training.

However, the majority of the layers of society, especially the peasant class feels great loyalty and respect for the educated people especially who help them. For instance, that an old peasant does not still forget Faust and his father who tries to help them is one of the indications of that:

OLD PEASANT
In truth, 'tis well and fitly timed,
That now our day of joy you share,
Who heretofore, in evil days,
Gave us so much of helping care.
Still many a man stands living here,
Saved by your father's skillful hand,
That snatched him from the fever's rage
And stayed the plague in all the land.
Then also you, though but a youth,
Went into every house of pain:
Many the corpses carried forth,
But you in health came out again. (Faust: 32)

As Faust who represent the profile of scientist of the period spent his early years away from social life, in a small study, among the dusty research materials, after a time he began to have a longing to some social needs like his love that he lost past year, some fun that was appropriate for his age and the era. Then he realized that his attitude until that time was wrong, and he began to live as he missed. So his new attitude ruined him and he made a fool of himself in society. Because, some life styles have to comply with social norms, individual’s age, social position and physical reality. At this point we can say that Faust displays an appropriate character with Goethe’s Storm and Urge (Sturm und Drang) period which coincides with his childhood. So, he is ambitious and stubborn. But, when Faust and other scientists realize what they lose and try to live different, they fail because both they have physical handicap and they are found strange by society. For instance, the fact that Faust drinks the elixir of youth, loves a girl who is much younger than him, being under the guidance of evil from time to time, causes the girl he loves to be a murderer, has fun in places which is not appropriate for his age and social position bring him in a very low position in the eyes of public. Faust’s incorrect and lascivious behaviour which is not appropriate for his age and social position can be seen in many parts of the work, and also in the following quotation below:

FAUST
O fortunate, for whom, when victory glances,
The bloody laurels on the brow he bindeth!
Whom, after rapid, maddening dances,
In clasping maiden-arms he findeth!
O would that I, before that spirit-power,
Ravished and rapt from life, had sunken! (Faust: 48)

The expression of Mephisto below shows us in a cynical way that the educators of the period can be tricked easily by lustfulness in particular and earthly pleasures.

MEPHISTOPHELES
(…)
Dragged through the wildest life, will I enslave him,
Through flat and stale indifference;
With struggling, chilling, checking, so deprave him
That, to his hot, insatiate sense,
The dream of drink shall mock, but never lave him:
Refreshment shall his lips in vain implore--
Had he not made himself the Devil's, naught could save
him,  
Still were he lost forevermore!( Faust: 56)

The fact that Mephisto, posing as a university teacher, shows his pleasure when a university student acts in a respectful way to him shows that both the educators like behaviours like these and the students acts in a very respectful way to the educators:

**METHISTOPHELES**
Your courtesy doth flatter me:
You see a man, as others be.
Have you, perchance, elsewhere begun? (Faust: 56)

**STUDENT**
Receive me now, I pray, as one
Who comes to you with courage good,
Somewhat of cash, and healthy blood:
My mother was hardly willing to let me;
But knowledge worth having I fain would get me. (Faust: 56)

It is understood that the environmental factors like appropriate buildings and green fields are important and remarkable for a university student but the universities of the period does not have these qualities. The fact that physical conditions in education and training are the important factor for the students’ intellectual development is one of the primary issues that pedagogues are of one mind.

**STUDENT**
I’d like to leave it, I must avow;
I find these walls, these vaulted spaces
Are anything but pleasant places.
Tis all so cramped and close and mean;
One sees no tree, no glimpse of green,
And when the lecture-halls receive me,
Seeing, hearing, and thinking leave me. (Faust: 56)

The schools of education are often neglected especially in the social and emotional dimensions, natural social environments of schools are lack of being made up for socializing. Mephisto, view of a scientist, recommended strongly his student to use time well and not to plunge into fun, but in real life it has seen that university students have some behaviour like time wasting, failing lessons, drinking too much and always having fun. Another remarkable point is, at the beginning of the methods which he used for distracting hardworking scientist to his side, exercising them leisure time activity and drinking. It is obvious that this behaviour is a weapon of Mephisto to keep people from doing good things and also top of weakness habits of people.

**METHISTOPHELES**
Here is the genuine path for you;
Yet strict attention must be given.

**STUDENT**
Body and soul thereon I’ll wreak;
Yet, truly, I’ve some inclination
On summer holidays to seek
A little freedom and recreation.

Mephistopheles
Use well your time! It flies so swiftly from us;
But time through order may be won, I promise.
So, Friend (my views to briefly sum),
First, the *collegium logicum*. (Faust: 57)

It is understood from the dialogues between Mephisto and the student that the most preferred and advanced sciences of the period were logic, mathematics, law, medicine and theology. From the dialogues, it is made a statement about how students must study in the university system of the period and curriculums, on the other hand it is understood that scientist are humiliatingly criticised. Among the courses which students must choose, metaphysical is priority located.

Mephistopheles
And after--first and foremost duty--Of
Metaphysics learn the use and beauty!
See that you most profoundly gain
What does not suit the human brain!
A splendid word to serve, you'll find
For what goes in--or won't go in--your mind. (Faust: 58)

In particular, his advices like students’ attendance to classes, their respect to scholars and the lessons and that they should come to class by having prepared are suitable recommendation for ideal training courses. The most serious criticism against educators is their insufficiency in their training and discipline. Ranking his counsels to students, Mephistoteles emphasizes this deficiency. But Faust can not find happiness tutoring and studying in college, finally he begins to think a word of Bible. So, which one is the first work of creation, a “word”, a “meaning”, an “activity”? As a result of the research, Faust finds human happiness from activity (See Müller 1972: 29). For many years even today, the work also includes these discussions that almost all countries of the world education system makes students memorizer and not gain responsibility. This reality can show us this problem will continue for many years.

It is seen in the work and personality of Faust that it is not possible for scientist to administer not giving to ideal education method to student, not being an example of private life, away from social life, not reflecting his/her discovery and change to society, not knowing social features of society and not living according to these whatever system he/she is in. The success of scientists of the period, flying balloon invention by Montgolfier Brothers was a subject in the work and was congratulated. It is showed that Goethe doesn’t criticise all scientists, he gives importance to scientist who produces new work:

Mephistopheles
We'll spread this cloak with proper art,
Then through the air direct our courses.
But only, on so bold a flight,
Be sure to have thy luggage light.
A little burning air, which I shall soon prepare us,
Above the earth will nimbly bear us,
And, if we're light, we'll travel swift and clear:
I gratulate thee on thy new career! (Faust: 62)

Faust, Wagner and posed as a college professor Mephisto represent the instructor character in the work. Goethe, couldn’t express failures of education and instructor in real world, he expresses deficiencies of instructor and educations with a simple, critical style by the agency of these characters. Faust studied on many of the current science of his era. According to him, there was no science to study. But, Faust, as a result of this exhausting and troublesome education, realized that all these knowledge had no benefit to humanity. The desire to find the truth, contrary to learning and obtaining the knowledge, he leads to learn these knowledge through soul miracle (witchcraft) which he saw as a hope gate for himself. Faust, as a character survived from medieval conservatism but changed his knowledge to self-righteousness is a symbol of worldlytype people. At the same time he is an example of negative image in different environment of life. The instructors, who show negative images in different environments of life, specified Aristotle’s methods of cheating in the following statements:

MEPHISTOPHELES
My thanks! I find the dead no acquisition,
And never cared to have them in my keeping.
I much prefer the cheeks where ruddy blood is leaping,
And when a corpse approaches, close my house:
It goes with me, as with the cat the Mouse (Faust: 16).

As it is seen clearly in the statement, Mephisto sorted evil practice tools which he made to weak characters like Faust and other scientists. The most important of these is applied to Faust, habits like caressing proud, praise unnecessarily, lust to world’s taste, drink, pull and cool them to the spiritual life. The students, educated by college scholars of the period, aren’t the example of benefit to the country because of their life style. Students tag slang expressions to each other and talk about the issues like woman, drink and fun. Their distance from real life and interests of the country is a deficiency of educator as responsible people. Because, when we look into life style of Faust and Wagner, their studies in their rooms didn’t reflect daily life. The negative effects of this kind of lifestyle can be seen lives of students they educated. Another criticism towards to instructor in the work is they still depend on the period of Enlightenment, dominated by rational philosophy of Kant. The period of work, Storm and Urge (Sturm und Drang) period justified this criticism:

I’m cleverer, true, than those fops of teachers,
Doctors and Magisters, Scribes and Preachers;
Neither scruples nor doubts come now to smite me,
Nor Hell nor Devil can longer affright me.
For this, all pleasure am I foregoing;
I do not pretend to aught worth knowing,
I do not pretend I could be a teacher
To help or convert a fellow-creature. (Faust:17-18)

As it is seen in this quote, scientists away from social life and pessimistic attitude of his will take him several wrong ways in his future life. In the work it has seen that Goethe emphasizes via Faust using thesis-antithesis-synthesis method would bring success especially sciences like philosophy, logic, law and medical.
He tells that the professors, who do not use this method, spend the life and lessons as nonsense and rote system. They dictate to students same known information and students loose time in vain, they can not renew themselves. And also he criticises that they want to have only glory, fame and interest of their own (See Batman 1942: 115). Educators, quoting science, are accused of misquotation by Goethe especially on religious issues. According to him, religion has two aspects. One of them is “Flower”; the second one is “poison”. Because of the reason that scientists have failed to fulfil the responsibility to tell these truths, the discussions about this subject has continued and he shows with Faust’s life example that people are away from the spiritual emotions.

The concept of the God of the earth used by him for the scientists indicates the importance given to scientists. However, especially emerging in the period of the Enlightenment, "mind above all things" refers to the idea of critical. Because the philosophy of literary period of The Storm and Urge in which the work written brings to the fore the enthusiasm which is the opposite to the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Thus, the poet, through Mephistotales, makes a critical approach on the maintaining of the scientist for seeing the human as an emotionless machine in other words preferring and separating the mind to the emotions (See Aytaç 2001:126). In the following quotation, advice given by Faust to the scientists is parallel with the philosophy of the period of The Storm and Urge:

**FAUST**

You'll ne'er attain it, save you know the feeling,
Save from the soul it rises clear,
Serene in primal strength, compelling
The hearts and minds of all who hear.
You sit forever gluing, patching;
You cook the scraps from others' fare;
And from your heap of ashes hatching
A starveling flame, ye blow it bare!
Take children's, monkeys' gaze admiring,
If such your taste, and be content;
But ne'er from heart to heart you'll speak inspiring,
Save your own heart is eloquent! (Faust: 22)

However, the motif of education and instructor appeared at the work is at variable with the above-mentioned ideal method. When we observe the behaviours and the habits of the students who must be educated and a part of the community by the scholars and the instructors, it is seen that the realities in practice is not like that.

4. Conclusion

Faust, the most important work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe having special features can be examined and taken up from many aspects. When the issues such as educator and education are analyzed with the method of comparison in a critical context, it can be determined that problems of Germany and Europe during that period have the same features as those in many countries even today’s world. As a result of analyzing mainly with the text based method, it is seen that critical thinking is not an innate characteristic but a teachable and explicable system that can be easily applicable on request. It is seen that system can be applicable only when the education system is suitable to this and educators and teachers are also aware of the critical thinking. And also for the solution everybody in this field should be open to
criticism. It is seen in the work that both educators and the students they have taught neither do the works they have to adequately, nor satisfied with their location. Because the educators don’t develop themselves, the memorizing based system they applied lost the validity. Therefore, enrichment of courses can’t be provided by applying the student-centred and active learning method. There is a gap or obstacle between outside world and working chambers of Faust and Wagner, the representatives of scientists. There is a cliff between public and scientists isolated from outside world. So it is revealed by the lifestyle of Faust that scientists’ lightening the world people or managing them by the force of expression is impossible. This impossibility is perceptively seen in the behaviours and dialogues of Faust and Mephisto, masquerading himself as a scientist. Because Faust is intellectual, he can’t combine thought and action.

"One of the meaning of the word “Faust” is "happiness" in Latin, but Faust represents a character who has never been happy throughout his life, pessimist all the time, has prohibited for himself all pleasures of the earth and could not have reached his goal although passing his life in that way." This dilemma of Faust, shows the situation of Goethe’s life actually, conflict with one’s own, relationships with God and the community, location in nature and conflicts… This conflict and isolation, Faust represents the person who didn’t perform flow of life timely, falls a fool in society and the inner world of himself because of passed time when he wanted to perform his desires. He is the prisoner of devil’s i.e. soul, pleasures of the world, so his efforts to be a good person and his knowledge which he devoted himself for years become unsuccessful. The main reason of this, Faust’s unbalanced material and moral life failure in his youth, to be overly ambitious, and he wants to live enjoy of world that he didn’t have on time because of not being with his society.

One of the critical issues against educators is that especially they don’t guide the students from coming outside, away from families, knowledge background which is very important for education, landscaping, bright classrooms, transfer format of the courses, transferring outdated information etc. It is understood from these deficiencies that there are too many deficiencies in this era in Germany of the period. Although these deficiencies are discussed, courses haven’t been comprehended yet because of not improving by using active, student-centred and critical thinking. One of the reasons is political authority of the period because they didn’t allow the young people to question, generate alternative solution because they were afraid of quaking their power. The best example of this, the university students educated by the scholars of the period failed in the lessons. Because of the reasons like lack of world and country problems, lack of academic ethics and development, using alcohol, gambling and fun with simple women that they can easily make people off the road.

As a result, the work completed by Goethe through all his life envisioned in terms of identifying many facts of community and criticism; but Goethe, as a scholar himself, showed with a critical method the situations of education and educator, failures and solution ways with Mephisto in this work, which has features of German Storm and Urge, classical and romantic literary revolutions more heavily than other problems.

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