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BLURRING THE LINES

THE historical concept of higher education in Malta is being obscured by new crude mental attitudes of people without a sense of tradition and history who are disregarding the very *raison d'être* of every university, which is, research and teaching.

The emphasis on technological education is not without its justification, especially in a rapidly changing society that is seeking its economic survival in industrialisation. We not only feel the need for this new orientation, we heartily support it because, after all, we cannot afford to live in an ivory tower.

As we ourselves have enjoyed the benefit of a liberal education, which we would like others to enjoy for their own good, we have been so mentally conditioned by this educational background that, luckily, we can appreciate the need for a two-pronged type of education, differently graded and differently inspired within the framework of a broad national education. We still believe in a liberal education because it is this type of education that liberalises the human mind, opens up new horizons and provides wider terms of reference for comparative thinking and evaluations which is so essential for mature value judgements.

We support a well planned educational programme which will strengthen the traditional subjects described as the humanities for leadership and enlightenment (education for life) and, at the same time, support an utilitarian education for the practical purposes of material living. Polytechnics, more than the degree conferring institutions known as universities, have to concern themselves mainly with the latter purpose, precisely because their subject-matter is technological and hardly ever speculative. The problem is how to convince some policy-makers that what Malta needs is not the

elimination or even the demotion of the humanities, as if these were the hall marks of an élite, (what nonsense), but the parallel promotion of these two types of academical and technological education without any blurring of the line of demarcation.

Maltese society, like any other progressive society, needs the knowledge that comes from a university proper, largely intellectual, and that which comes from technological institutions, which is largely mechanical. While the liberally-trained scholar who has an open mind understands the need for a parallel promotion of academical and technological education, the man with an illiberal mind, mainly because he himself received an illiberal or mechanical education, concentrates on technological education as an exclusive priority at the expense of an academical education. This is where the red light is. This is where the bungling begins.

We have to be on our guard all the time against the erosion of the status of a university proper lest the line of demarcation between it and a technological institution will be so blurred that in the process the university in its traditional and historical sense will disappear and we shall be left with one type of mediocre so-called higher education. This is perhaps not only Malta's problem but, as we live in Malta, we must face our own problems and solve them without having to wait for the rest of the world to solve its own problems or for our bunglers to mess them up!

THE EDITOR

NIETZSCHE'S BIRTH OF TRAGEDY AFTER A CENTURY

(A lecture given at the Royal University of Malta, Friday 29 October 1971)

by HANS S. REISS

It is a great honour to have been invited to give three lectures on German literature and thought. I am particularly sensible of this privilege since these lectures, so I understand, are the first public lectures ever to be delivered on a theme from German studies in this ancient university which, by a happy coincidence, was founded at the same time as my own *alma mater*, Trinity College, Dublin.

The subjects on which I am going to talk are 'Kant's Political Thought', 'Politics and Drama in Present-Day Germany' and 'Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. After a Century.'

* * *

Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* is a classic. But like many classics it is little read. This is not surprising, for it is not a readable book. Although it contains some most impressive passages, it is confusing and at times even confused. A most perceptive contemporary critic recognized these features when, less than fifteen years after its first publication, he called it:

an impossible book ... badly written, awkward, embarrassing, with a frantic and confused imagery, sentimental, in parts sugary

¹It is, of course, the last of these three lectures given on October 25, 27 and 29 respectively, which, at the very kind request of Professor Richard J. Beck, of the Royal University of Malta, I have written up for publication. The text printed here does not entirely correspond to the lecture, but has been revised with a view to publication. I am indebted to Dr. H.B. Nisbet, Mr. M.C. Morgan and Dr. Estelle Morgan for their criticism and scrutiny of my text. A longer version of this lecture was published in German in the *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, XIII, 1973. This article also contains more comprehensive notes. I should like on this occasion to acknowledge my appreciation of the splendid, indeed, royal hospitality offered to me by the Royal University of Malta during that last week in October, 1971 for which I am most grateful.