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An Existentialist on Scholarship: The Idea of the University

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As with all laboratory manuals, this book does not give an exhaustive treatment of the many subjects it covers, so it has to be used in conjunction with a standard textbook of botany and notes from lectures.

The book has been divided into chapter headings. This is a departure from the prevailing custom in ordinary laboratory manuals of dividing the subject matter into a long series of consecutively numbered exercises or experiments. This new arrangement may have been used so as to help the students acquire a more unified and more logical organization of knowledge about the subject. The effectiveness of this system can only be determined by putting it into effect.

There are twenty-eight chapter headings. The first few chapters are primarily devoted to the study of the macroscopic or gross anatomical features of the flowers, seeds and the main vegetative organs of seed-plants. Most of the succeeding chapters deal in general with the microscopic structures of such organs and with important plant functions or processes, e.g., water absorption, conduction, carbohydrate synthesis, cell metabolism, osmosis, etc. The latter chapters have to do with the study of the lower forms of plants, ranging from the simpler thallophytes to the more complex pteridophytes.

The general directions are clear and easy to follow. Furthermore, guide questions are frequently asked to stimulate students to undertake a thorough and systematic study of the matter under consideration.

The book is also illustrated with drawings and photographs as teaching aids. Photographs have been used instead of drawings in cases where it becomes necessary to give a more accurate representation of the subject studied.

The authors have produced a worthwhile book, and teachers and students of botany in the tropics are indebted to them for trying to fill their needs.

JAIME C. JOAQUIN

AN EXISTENTIALIST ON SCHOLARSHIP

THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY. By Karl Jaspers. Edited by Karl W. Deutsch; preface by Robert Ulich; translated by H. A. T. Reiche and H. F. Vanderschmidt. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959.

Good psychologist that he is, Karl Jaspers is familiar with the transformation that occurs in the attitude of the typical university student. The latter comes to the university full of enthusiasm, aware

of his undeveloped potentialities, eager to become a bona fide scholar; he comes to study the arts and sciences and to prepare for a profession. The student wants to grasp the wholeness of things, which he knows the university can give him, but is impatient to achieve this goal, which can be reached only through the disagreeable effort of first grasping the details. For too many, early enthusiasm degenerates into confusion, and the student resigns himself to studying for examinations, to practicing his specialty, to giving up the quest for a *Weltanschauung*, that can be genuinely achieved only after long digging in the mines of detailed and, to him, irrelevant trivia.

Jaspers, who together with Martin Heidegger is the leading German existentialist, began his career as a university professor in 1921 at Heidelberg, was removed by the Nazi government in 1937, and reinstated as President of the University by the Allied forces in 1945.

Because of the author's personal history the reader would perhaps expect to find a somewhat speculative denouncement of government pressure and control of teaching. There is a minimum of this in the present book. This edition, however, does not give us the whole of the original *DIE IDEE DER UNIVERSITÄT*; it omits the last chapter and a half, which deal principally with conditions peculiar to Germany or to the post-war conditions of 1946. But the major section of the work is a treatment of the goals of the university, considered both from the point of view of the content of teaching, and more especially from the type of person whom the university should consider its own.

Jaspers has given us an acceptable presentation of what the university should be. In the introduction he proposes a description of the university which can serve as a unifying theme for the whole book. "The university is a community of scholars and students engaged in the task of seeking truth." It is "an institution uniting people professionally dedicated to the quest and transmission of truth in scientific terms." The quest is research, and the transmission is teaching.

This union of research and teaching is expressed in what is perhaps the best paragraph in the book.

Teaching vitally needs the substance which only research can give it. Hence the combination of research and teaching is the lofty and inalienable basic principle of the university. This combination is sound . . . because ideally the best research worker is also the best and only teacher. The research worker . . . alone can bring the student into contact with the real process of discovery, hence with the spirit of science rather than with dead results which can be committed to memory . . . Others only pass on a set of pedagogically arranged facts.

Jaspers's fundamental views on the nature of scholarship and science (i.e. the task of research) are presented briefly and are quite sound. The researcher will choose a subject for his inquiry, and this choice will determine the method to be followed. It will also constitute a definite point of view, and will determine the limits of the matter under investigation. The evidence which the research man admits, though not necessarily generating absolute and unchangeable certitude, must be

cogent in the sense that it must be purely rational with no addition of any personal commitment. At the same time the evidence must be public, i.e., it must be verifiable by any observer. University life demands hard, continuous work at learning, at mastering methods and widening one's area of knowledge. It demands new ideas, truly intuitive, which must be forever thought about. Although the university man is concerned with the present, his interest is not about what is merely fashionable; rather he must strive "for the ultimate implications of his ideas."

While it is true that the objects to be studied are coterminous with what exists in the world, still one of the aims of the university is to achieve an understanding of the unity of reality. And so while the university must supply libraries, laboratories, clinics, collections, all the tools useful for cultivating the whole province of learning, it must at the same time enable its men to see the unity of it all.

The desired unity is to be achieved by forming permanent intellectual habits within the unity of the persons at the university. The ability to ask the right questions, the mastery of the methods of research, the permanent "will to know," constitute the type of character that the university should produce. He asserts that the desire for knowledge, which should motivate research, gives meaning to the quest for knowledge; but this meaning of knowledge and the nature of the desire for knowledge cannot themselves be understood until after the knower has made considerable progress in knowledge, and is able to reflect on the type of activity he has been engaged in. One of the fruits of this process of reflection will be the awareness of the hierarchy of the sciences, and of the priority that research must take over mere actual instruction. The attainment of this awareness is a fundamentally necessary activity of the university.

Philosophy functions both as a motive from which the research proceeds, the will to know, consciously accepted, and as a view of the whole in which the meaning and context of the other sciences can be seen. Jaspers's Kantian understanding of philosophy is excessively confining. Philosophy, besides having a unifying function, is also a knowledge in its own right, with its own methods and conclusions.

FRANCIS E. REILLY

WHO READS BOOKS?

COLLEGE TEACHING AND THE COLLEGE LIBRARY. By Patricia B. Knapp. Chicago: American Library Association, 1959. (ACRL Monograph Number 23) viii, 110p.