

THE FAREWELL TO A SCHOLAR

by CARLOS P. ROMULO

TODAY WE ARE WITNESSING THE CLOSING OF A SERIES OF LECTURES SPONSORED by the Institute of Asian Studies as its expression of gratitude and esteem for a colleague and leader in research—Dr. Cecilio Lopez.

Several of our professors have earned the boon of retirement and have quietly slipped away. A few have been honored directly by the University. The University has seen it fit to grant to them the appointment of Professor Emeritus. I understand that with Dr. Lopez, whom I am recommending to the Board of Regents for appointment as Professor Emeritus, the case is enviably different. His own colleagues in the field of Asian Studies have seen fit to honor him in the best way they know—and that is, to share with us through a series of lectures, their ideas on varied aspects in the field of teaching and research to which they have dedicated their careers as members of our faculty.

I feel that it is one of the proprieties in this Lecture Series in honor of Dr. Lopez that the papers read should consist of the research by the younger faculty of the Institute of Asian Studies. Nothing could be more fitting a tribute, for the direction of Dr. Lopez's interest has always been in research.

I had, on several occasions, emphasized the significance of research in the University. I now want to outline my concept of research. Committed as the University is to the dissemination of knowledge, to the discovery of new ideas, and the encouragement of further discoveries of ideas, I feel that, corollary to the classroom concerns (which, of course, are equally important and challenging), the University should now and hereafter emphasize research work. If I succeed in getting the additional appropriation that we need, our 5-year developmental program envisages an increase from the meager ₱100,000 now allotted to research to ₱500,000 for the first year. It is through research that we come to comprehend the universe of facts and come to translate into intelligible terms the inert irreducibility of our impersonal quotidian. Taken in these terms, research must therefore be recognized as a necessary aspect of liberal edu-

Remarks by Dr. Carlos P. Romulo, President of the University of the Philippines, during the Lecture Series sponsored by the Institute of Asian Studies on the occasion of the retirement from service of Dr. Cecilio Lopez, Friday, February 1, 1963.

cation. The University needs to recall its central intelligence, as it were, to the essential quality of imagination of variousness; or, as it was said of Montaigne, strive to have a mind that is *divers et ondoyant*. The aspect of variety is for the researcher to provide and sustain. A university cannot content itself with merely the available knowledge or information it has on hand at any present time, but, in keeping with the life of culture and history, must endeavor to provide what I have referred to as its central intelligence an accurate sense of the multitudinousness of reality. I spoke of accuracy because that is how the liberal imagination could be raised upon as regards the validity of its coordinated experience. Of course Alfred North Whitehead has told us that a university education is to be conceived as essentially concerned with the making of relationships, with analysis and synthesis rather than with bits of information and details. Still, and without appearing to repudiate Whitehead, we should perhaps also say that one way by which the mind could come to recall itself from its tendency towards abstractness is through the discipline of research which imposes on it the inescapability of having to contend with facts, with what is already known and also cultivates in the scholar the courage of repudiating errors however established they are or passionately believed in.

Research must also recognize the necessity of having a creative intelligence. In recent times there has been a tendency—I don't know how pervasive in our midst—to regard research as exclusively data-gathering; annotations of obvious information, or some kind of "leg work" wherein the procedure of going to hinterlands to gather esoteric and inconsequential artifacts becomes dignified as part of a serious academic discipline. Without discounting the value of this task, which it must be acknowledged has its uses, research must also be regarded mainly as an intellectual enterprise in which the mind is challenged to transcend the limits of available knowledge into yet undiscovered areas of ideas and values. So that as the University collaborates with other institutions in the national schemes, it also participates in the task of thinking over the dilemma of contemporary culture and civilization and thus become morally engaged in the responsibilities of mankind in general.

Such a commitment on the part of the University inheres from its very nature as an institution of scholarship and learning. In the context of the nation where any university finds itself established, it is at the same time expected to provide a community for the intellect where each citizen takes an allegiance to truth and excellence. With this in mind, perhaps a direction of research interest could be started where the intelligence of the University could participate in no less than the *zeitgeist* of contemporary culture.

On another occasion, I took the opportunity to propose that we start to regard the national arts and letters as taking place alongside the whole artistic and literary phenomena in the Western world. This would imply that we should judge ourselves and our culture in terms of the best that have been achieved in the whole of human civilization. And what is applicable to the national arts and letters should also be consistently upheld in the various aspects of our endeavors so that we may evolve a culture and national tradition constituting ourselves and yet not done violence to the best terms and standards of the civilized world. And herein lies the relevance of research to even classroom work. Nothing could be more fatal than for a teacher to be implementing, even with the most perfect of methods, knowledge and information that has already been thought anew or has undergone revision, or has been completely nullified. Nor should the independence of the teacher be taken to mean imperviousness to the immediate actuality of the present state of knowledge. It is for the university to define the culture that inevitably comes to be identified with its own identity as being in a competitive relation to the already achieved culture of, say, Europe or America, or the rest of Asia. The competitive relation suggested here does not of course take the form of a violent struggle to destroy the civilized values of other cultures; nor is it the kind of competition that prevails in the *laissez-faire* world of economics. Culture and the life of ideas do not advance in this manner. But, certainly, incumbent on the University is to be aware of what has traditionally been the state of knowledge of the world and to be conscious of what it is now; what the best minds in contemporary world are thinking; what has been done to replace the disintegration of values caused by the recent discoveries about the nature of the physical universe, the new attitudes towards this state of things; and, being aware of all these, it is for the university to make its seriousness and intelligence felt, to manifest its genius, if you will, by showing that its conscience is not totally indifferent to these universal phenomena in its capacity to assimilate the implications of the present state of knowledge and to show what it can do to advance or create it.

It is for this reason that I have decided to project nationalism in the University. As a sovereign nation, we must nevertheless show ourselves enlightened in our patriotic regards and where there is merely a cult or organized movement, the University must provide an ideology. That is why any serious contribution to the world of knowledge and ideas, any achievement in the realm of excellence, should also be regarded as advancing nationalism even if the endeavor or contribution to thought does not mention the national geography or even if it does not become pas-

sionately angry over the national squalor. "Instead of being a colony, strive to be a nation," Simoun told Basilio in *El Filibusterismo*. Likewise, we in the University should define ourselves as a nation. This should be possible when our achievements in arts and letters, in science and philosophy, would be distinguished by our having paid attention to universal concerns and, instead of being content with the average, the parochial, instead of settling down to mediocrity justified by narrow patriotism, we may perhaps succeed in re-thinking ourselves and manifesting this in our commitment to the assiduous effort mankind to help itself transcend its present condition.

The holding of these lectures is not only appropriate, but it is descriptive of the temperament of scholarship on this campus. I would characterize this scholarship as one imbued not only with intellectual enthusiasm but with a much more valuable and indisputably a virtuous quality: the quality of warmth. Dr. Lopez's colleagues have expressed, through these lectures, the ardor which some of the best minds on this campus hold for him; they have likewise given an earnest, indicative of their fervor for research, and a promise to build on, to add to and enrich the area of knowledge in which the scholar and man being now honored has himself turned up so much virgin soil and cultivated much ground, bringing not only recognition to himself all over the world but prestige to the University of which he is a part and which has become doubtless a part of his life.

Let it be known that much warmth can be felt even by austere-hearted scholars. This friendship, while perhaps rare, is, to my mind, necessary; and I am very pleased to have found it here in the University. We do not wish that the University be regarded, especially by those who have dedicated the best years of their life to it, as a cold-hearted, ungrateful institution; and, perhaps, more than this, ruthless for having successfully sapped all the energies of our youth and manhood, and cruel for forgetting to put a warm and comforting arm at our elbow when, plagued by old age, we have to leave its portals with trembling knees and rickety bones. It is perhaps in fear of this fate that much scholarship can suffer and the academic life threatened by the hardening of intellectual and moral arteries.

Fortunately, we are setting a precedent today, a precedent that is not only human but just; a precedent that is in fact necessary, that should have been first in the order of things, and one of the most eloquent ways of handling farewells and goodbyes in the academic world. In the case of Dr. Lopez, how felicitous it is to say of him, never did the University give so little to one who gave it so much. As he leaves us, at least his

colleagues can try to make up for what the University could not give him.

So to Dr. Lopez—linguist, scholar extraordinary, pursuer of knowledge and seeker of truth—the University says goodbye even as it invites him to stay on as a researcher and well-loved scholar. For, indeed, we have a place here ready for you as always and that place is not only in the roster, nor can it be readily symbolized by desk or an office. For it is a place that is in the heart of everyone here this afternoon and in everyone who values scholarship and the academic life to which all of us are dedicated.