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Correspondence:

The Local Dialects, English and Tagalog

Editor's Note

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Correspondence

THE LOCAL DIALECTS, ENGLISH AND TAGALOG

Immaculate Conception Church
Jasaan, Misamis Oriental
March 20, 1958

Dear Father Bernad,

Here is a related fact... by way of footnote to Mrs. Democrita Cena's article in the March issue on the local vernacular as the medium of instruction in the primary grades.

In the Archdiocese of Cagayan it is prescribed that the classes in Optional Religious Instruction in the public schools be conducted in the Visayan language, and all our textbooks for these classes are in Visayan. The reason for this regulation is the fact, supported by both experience and common sense, that the children learn the catechism best when they understand what the teacher is saying. The person responsible for this regulation, incidentally, is an American Archbishop [James T. G. Hayes S.J.] whose own native language is English.

This is merely being realistic, for in this area Visayan is the ordinary medium of communication for everybody, including the most educated, and among the latter English is *de facto* a mere secondary language to be resorted to only when the educational background of the speaker has not provided Visayan vocabulary for the subject under discussion. In most subjects such persons as school teachers and municipal officials can express themselves with equal facility in either Visayan or English, and I can better express myself in English than in Visayan: yet such persons normally converse with me in Visayan. If I open the conversation in English, they will follow in the same language but will soon drop unconsciously into Visayan or a hodge-podge of both languages; and when they do, I find myself unconsciously following them. With some subject matters, English comes

more naturally with educated people because they learned about the subject in that language, but when they possess a Visayan vocabulary in that subject, they invariably turn to Visayan as the "main-stream" language.

Tagalog, however, seems to have a better chance than English of becoming the common language and pushing the vernacular into a secondary position, if we can classify as supporting evidence the fact that people here prefer Tagalog movies to English movies. Only a few years ago this seemed impossible because of an aversion for Tagalog inspired by sectionalism. But my impression at present is that this attitude seems to be on the decline. In proportion as people in this area seem to be losing their aversion to Tagalog, they seem to be also losing their enthusiasm for English. About the only people here who persist in speaking English to me are semi-educated persons among whom a smattering of English is still considered an educational achievement; which achievement, well educated persons with a fluent command of English do not trouble themselves to display.

In Corde Jesu,

JOSEPH I. STOFFEL S.J.

(Editor's note.—Father Stoffel is an American Jesuit missionary whose vigorous and continued struggle with the Visayan tongue has given him a command of that medium. His notes on the structure of the language are on file for future publication in this Quarterly.)

OTHELLO COMES TO TOWN

Paul Klapper Library
Queens College
Flushing 17, N.Y.
February 19, 1958

Dear Father Bernad:

Have you by any chance an offprint of... "Othello Comes to Town: Orson Welles and Edmund Kean," which appeared in a 1956 issue of *Philippines Studies*? If so, we should appreciate a copy to strengthen our collection of special literary studies.

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT A. COLBY
Head, Language, Literature
and Arts Division

THE CAMPION AWARD 1958

101 Fifth Avenue, New York
May 6, 1958

The Editor
Philippine Studies

Dear Sir:

We think that you will be interested to know that Reverend James F. Brodrick, S.J., will be awarded the Campion Award on May 14th. We enclose a release on the award . . .

The Campion Award, presented annually to a Catholic author by the Catholic Book Club in recognition of a distinguished and longtime contribution to Catholic letters, will be given this year to the Reverend James F. Brodrick, S.J., historian and biographer, at a testimonial dinner at the Prince George Hotel in New York City on May 14th.

Father Brodrick, who resides in London, will fly to New York to receive the tribute. This marks the fourth presentation of the Campion medallion to an outstanding Catholic writer; previous recipients have been Jacques Maritain, Helen Constance White and Paul Horgan.

A writer of rigorous and sound scholarship whose body of work on Church history and Saints is considered to be among the most penetrating, illuminating and masterly in its field, Father Brodrick is the author of the following books: *The Life of Saint Robert Bellarmine* (1928; first published by Kenedy and now issued by Newman Press), *The Economic Morale of the Jesuits* (1934; Oxford University Press), *St. Peter Canisius* (1935; published by Sheed and Ward), *The Origin of the Jesuits* (1940; Longmans, Green), *The Progress of the Jesuits* (1946; Longmans, Green), *A Procession of Saints* (1949; Longmans, Green), *St. Francis Xavier* (1952; Pellegrini and Cudahy) and *St. Ignatius Loyola* (1956; Farrar, Straus and Cudahy). Father Brodrick is presently at work on the second and final volume of his life of St. Ignatius, which will be published by Farrar, Straus and Cudahy.

Sincerely,

Marlene Breitbart
Publicity Department
Farrar, Straus & Cudahy Inc., Publishers

Editor's Note.—

We wish to congratulate Father Brodrick on this signal honor. Our review of his Saint Ignatius Loyola which appears elsewhere in this issue, was already in page proofs when we received word of the award.