[In]Justice is Served

An Analysis of the Concept of Justice of Political Prisoners and their Experiences of the Philippine Justice System

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Introduction

The situation appears to be simple to comprehend. If you’re someone the government finds threatening because of your criticisms and actions showing your dissent, the government puts you in jail to silence you.

From a bird’s-eye view, this phenomenon of imprisoning dissidents seems like that’s all there is to it. However, if you take a closer look at the actual happenings, you’d see that there’s so much more unknown to be revealed.

Political prisoners are those people who choose not to believe in the government or in the political system because of their principles. They choose not to adhere to the strategies and means employed by the government in doing its jobs. They choose not to stay quiet about this dissent. This is why they are in jail.

Contrary to the claim of Edwin Lacierda speaking in behalf of the government that there are no such people, political prisoners exist and are among us. According to a report made by Karapatan Alliance for the Advancement of People’s Rights (2013), there are 136 political prisoners under the PNoy regime as of April 30, 2013. These people were illegally arrested and were charged with fabricated cases. However, political prisoners are not only deemed nonexistent by the government, they also are perceived as enemies of the state. With the trumped-up charges tagged on them, they are seen by the public as bad people.

Political prisoners play the role of proof of the unjust activities done by the government. Looking into their situation can reveal the power play between them and their oppressor, the government. In fact, a study made by Lawson et. Al (1996) says that there is a link between prisonization and the powerlessness of political prisoners implying the apparent existence of power play. Political prisoners are human rights violation victims and not criminals. It may not be known to everyone, but rights are
being denied of these people. One of which is the legal right of a person to due process of law provided in the 1987 Constitution Article 3, Section 1.

In a statement released by Alan Jazmines, a political prisoner, he tells on the lapses of the Criminal Justice System in giving these people due process of law. Some lapses are:

“concocting false non-bailable criminal cases just to indefinitely keep them in jail, charging them as different persons, presenting false witnesses, intentionally letting court processes proceed at a snail’s space, maneuvering to change court venues and/or filing new trumped-up cases when political prisoners are still able to get their cases dismissed, or simply ignoring legal processes” (Jazmines, 2012).

With the kind of unjust treatment these political prisoners have received and are receiving, it is understandable that they resort to other means of continuing the fight even while inside prison, through a practice called prison writing. From these prison literature, one could see how they see the situation they are in. One could understand how they understand the challenges that they are facing.

It is in this light that this research aims to inquire into how political prisoners’ experiences with the Philippine Justice System influence the perception they have on the concept of justice which shows in their prison writings. It seeks to divulge on the quality of legal rights being given to or being deprived of these people.

The study will not only expose anomalies and inconsistencies with regard to the government’s presupposed purpose of protecting rights but it will also provide ways in order to have the practices and process involved be scrutinized, corrected and improved. As this research proceeds, it will also seek to increase awareness on what kind of criminal justice system the Philippines has.

**General Research Question**

**How is a political prisoner’s perception of justice influenced by his experiences with the Philippine Justice System?**
Specific Research Questions

1. How does a political prisoner perceive justice?
2. How does the Philippine Justice System operate?
3. What are the experiences of political prisoners with the Philippine Justice System?
4. How are the prescribed criminal proceedings as stated in laws observed in the case of political prisoners?
5. What is the role played by the Philippine Justice System in the formation of a political prisoner’s perception of justice?
6. How effective is the Justice System in its performing its functions and operations?

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine how the Justice System functions and operates based on existing laws
2. To look into the political prisoners’ actual experiences on the Justice System’s lapses and malpractice
3. To look into political prisoners’ understanding of justice through the use of literary discourse analysis
4. To ascertain the role played by the criminal justice system in forming the political prisoners’ perception of justice
5. To evaluate the performance of the Justice System in its functions and processes
Research Paradigm

The study will make use of a post-positivist paradigm. In Ann Ryan’s Post-Positivist Approach to Research, she enumerated key tools that can be utilized in using such approach. These are (a) the concept of discourse, (b) the concern with power, (c) the value of narrative and (d) the need to be reflexive (Ryan, n.d). All these tools will be useful to the study of analyzing the influence of the criminal justice system on the perception of political prisoners shown in their literature. In answering the research questions, the post-positivist approach provides the most appropriate principles to be used.

Addressing the research question also necessitates the reconstruction of the social reality of the participants. Social Scientific Hermeneutics provides a theoretical framework that can be used in order to answer the questions. SSH is known to be bound with the principle of written data which makes it suitable for the research topic.

The study involves the questioning as to how political prisoners understand the concept of justice. SSH could provide a strong ground for analysis as it provides assumptions that can be found in the research topic. The participant’s definition of this concept being asked will demarcate his or her means of social construction given that he or she has her own milieu inside prison.

Another notable feature of SSH which could be used in the study is the role of the interpreter. Through this approach, the researcher will also play a significant role in understanding their understanding.

The study will also make use of discourse analysis, particularly, the Critical Discourse Analysis. As used in other literatures such as Gallardo (2010) and Mayr (2000), CDA will provide the study grounds for the interpretation of language in the context of power and inequality.

The features of CDA that complements the study are the following: (a) CDA addresses social problems; (b) CDA focuses on the way discourse enacts, reproduces or challenges relations of power and dominance in society; (c) CDA functions ideologically; (d) language should be analyzed in social context and; (e) rather than describe, it tries to explain discourse in terms of social interaction and especially social structure (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002 & Van Dijk, 2008). According to Teun A. Van
Dijk (2008), CDA could be used when one’s theme is to interpret, reveal and ultimately challenge social inequality.

The study will make use of justice as the major concept in answering the research questions and attaining the research objectives. This will be justice.

*Justice*

The concept of social justice consists of the theme due process of law and equal access opportunities and rights (NPBRC, 2011) which in the case of political prisoners are deprived of. In a democratic country where the government is seen as an institution that has a responsibility towards its constituents, the inaccessibility of social justice to political prisoners can be deemed as a significant problem.

**Methodology**

The research employed critical discourse analysis on the literary pieces written by political prisoners in the search for their perception of justice. Marianne Jorgensen and Louise J. Phillips in 2002, elaborated on discourse analysis and have enumerated three major theories and methods on how to do discourse analysis. Among the three, this research will utilize Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak’s Critical Discourse Analysis which delves on the concept of power and change in discourse. Fairclough constructed a three dimensional model which covers “the linguistic features of the text (text), the processes relating to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practive) and the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs (social practice)” (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p.68).
Data Collection

The data were gathered from political prisoners through their literary pieces. The researcher asked permission first and foremost before analyzing the works. After being given the consent, the researcher went on with discourse analysis.

The researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews with the informants and was able to triangulate the interpretations of the researcher of their perceptions of justice and was also able to acquire their actual experiences with the justice system.

The actual accounts gathered from the informants will be structured in a case study style so that the data will be organized and easier to analyze. The case study will have the following format:

Case 1

Political Prisoner A

1. Account of arrest

2. Experiences with Justice System

3. Perception of Justice
In order to assess the performance of the criminal justice system in pursuing its goals and in carrying out its processes, the researcher also interviewed informant from the side of the government which is the Commission on Human Rights.

**Informants**

**Political Prisoners.** The informants chosen are all political prisoner writers who have experienced different lapses in criminal proceedings and due process of law.

1. **Ericson Acosta**

   Ericson Acosta is a former political prisoner who has written numerous works while inside jail in his online blog entitled Jailhouse Blog and has been released from jail earlier this year. He also wrote a lot of poems and essays while he was inside prison. His being charged with illegal possession of grenades when in fact his bag only contained a laptop while conducting research in Samar proves to be an interesting story and point of view which could be shown in his works.

2. **Eduardo Sarmiento**

   Eduardo is the first ever peace negotiator to have been convicted after the Marcos dictatorship era despite the fact that there was a joint agreement on the immunity of peace consultants. Like Acosta, he experienced being illegally arrested and tortured. He wrote children’s stories and also made illustrations while inside prison.

3. **Angie Ipong**

   Angie is a strong willed woman who experienced illegal arrest, solitary confinement, sexual molest, false charges and more. She wrote A Red Rose for Andrea while she was in prison and collected other prison stories from her inmates.

**Other informants.**

- Atty. Brenda Canapi, Attorney 6 of the Commission on Human Rights
Works analyzed

The researcher analyzed A Red Rose for Andrea by Angie Ipong, Mula Tarima Hanggang by Ericson Acosta and Susmatanon by Eduardo Sarmiento.

Tools for analysis of literary works

The analysis is made up of three parts – discursive practice, text and/or visual analysis and social practice. Following Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis framework and method presupposes that in discourses there are always indicators of ideology and power play (Jorgensen and Phillip, 2002). These were used in analyzing the text written in the context of political imprisonment.

Other tools that were used are tone, use of words/phrases and topicalization. Through the use of these tools, the researcher was able to bring out the concept that was needed to answer the research questions. Visuals were also analyzed by detail and use of color.

Research Findings

Research Objective No. 1:

To determine how the Justice System functions and operates based on existing laws

Legal Bases Analysis

Legal frameworks provide guidelines on how criminal proceedings should push through and what rights does a person have, the rights before even having been accused and the rights as an accused person.

Bill of Rights

Article III or more known as the Bill of Rights of the 1987 Constitution contains provisions on the rights that are innate in a person.
According to it, no one should be deprived of liberty without due process of law (Section 1). No one should be subjected to torture, violence, threat and intimidation and no one should be held incommunicado (Section 12.2). No one should be detained for the reason of his political beliefs and aspirations (Section 18.1).

However, these did not seem to apply to the case of political prisoners. They have been denied due process of law, tortured, and detained incommunicado because they are political dissents.

**Social Justice and Human Rights**

Article XIII entitled Social Justice and Human Rights, of the Constitution states that the government should provide highest priority to the protection and enhancement of the people’s rights. Contrastingly, this is not what happened with political prisoners. Accounts of their arrests demonstrate the violation of their rights and what’s even more disturbing is the fact that this has been done by a government institution.

**Criminal Justice Process**

![Diagram of the Philippine Criminal Justice Process](Photo source: DOJ Parole And Probation Administration)
In accordance with the Rules of Court, this illustration shows the process of handling cases in the Philippines. However it is the failure to issue warrants that has been the most problematic part of the process.

According to Section 5 of Rule 113 of the Rules of Court, arrest can only be done without warrant in the following cases:

(a) When, in his presence, the person to be arrested has committed, is actually committing, or is attempting to commit an offense;

(b) When an offense has just been committed and he has probable cause to believe based on personal knowledge of facts or circumstances that the person to be arrested has committed it; and

(c) When the person to be arrested is a prisoner who has escaped from a penal establishment or place where he is serving final judgment or is temporarily confined while his case is pending, or has escaped while being transferred from one confinement to another.

Rule 115, on the other hand, states the rights of an accused person:

(a) To be presumed innocent until the contrary is proved beyond reasonable doubt.

(b) To be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation against him.

(c) To be present and defend in person and by counsel at every stage of the proceedings, from arraignment to promulgation of the judgment. The accused may, however, waive his presence at the trial pursuant to the stipulations set forth in his bail, unless his presence is specifically ordered by the court for purposes of identification. The absence of the accused without justifiable cause at the trial of which he had notice shall be considered a waiver of his right to be present thereat. When an accused under custody escapes, he shall be deemed to have waived
his right to be present on all subsequent trial dates until custody over him is regained. Upon motion, the accused may be allowed to defend himself in person when it sufficiently appears to the court that he can properly protect his rights without the assistance of counsel.

(d) To testify as a witness in his own behalf but subject to cross-examination on matters covered by direct examination. His silence shall not in any manner prejudice him.

(e) To be exempt from being compelled to be a witness against himself.

(f) To confront and cross-examine the witnesses against him at the trial. Either party may utilize as part of its evidence the testimony of a witness who is deceased, out of or can not with due diligence be found in the Philippines, unavailable, or otherwise unable to testify, given in another case or proceeding, judicial or administrative, involving the same parties and subject matter, the adverse party having the opportunity to cross-examine him.

(g) To have compulsory process issued to secure the attendance of witnesses and production of other evidence in his behalf.

(h) To have speedy, impartial and public trial.

(i) To appeal in all cases allowed and in the manner prescribed by law.

It is in these rules that the justice system failed to accordingly comply in the case of political prisoners. Especially in the issuance of warrant of arrest and the informing of what were the causes of the accusation among other violations, political prisoners seemed to have experienced the unjust processing of the justice system.

**Hernandez Doctrine**

Probably not known to many, but there is an actual doctrine ratified by the Philippine government that prohibits the criminalization of rebellious offences and this is called the Hernandez Doctrine.

In Enrile v. Amin, the function of the Hernandez Doctrine was laid down:
…that Hernandez remains binding doctrine operating to prohibit the complexing of rebellion with any other offense committed on the occasion thereof, either as a means to its commission or as an unintended effect of an activity that commutes rebellion.

This doctrine makes the tactic of the government to blur rebellious offences with criminal ones illegal.

Failure to comply to the actual supposed processes, rules and rights of the persons involved reflect something about our justice system and the government it works in. Obviously, the government’s influence over the justice system manifests in their choosing of who to be unjust with.

Research Objective No. 2:

To look into the political prisoners’ actual experiences on the Justice System’s lapses and malpractice

Case 1

Angie B. Ipong

There are but a few stories that capture your interest because of the unbelievable turn out of events. There are those which manage to leave you in awe and disbelief at the same time after hearing the story. There are those stories in which you can't help but be enthused by the individuality demonstrated by the character. There are stories you don’t hear every day but once you do, will give you the inspiration to surpass whatever it is on your way.

And Angie Bisuña Ipong’s story is one of those.
Before her incarceration, Angie was a peace advocate and community worker who helped educate peasants and lumads by teaching them how to read and write and organizing them to stand up for their rights whenever issues came up.

However, in the middle of a meeting with other peace advocates and lay missionaries on March 8, 2005, a group of armed men came barging in, introducing themselves as elements of Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), took Angie, dragged her into a van and blindfolded her. She recalls asking for a warrant of arrest but none was given to her. Later she found out that the men brought her to the headquarters of the 1st Infantry Tabak Division in Zamboanga del Sur.

She was placed in a locked room for interrogation. No one outside the headquarters knew where she was. This lasted for four days. She was then transferred to the Southern Command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Zamboanga City by means of a helicopter. There, she was placed in a small air-conditioned room which seemed like a torture chamber. There were no windows. There was a huge one-way mirror one one side and a big chain which seemed to handcuff prisoners on the other side. She was locked here and was later on forbidden to leave the room to use the comfort room.

It was also in this room where she experienced the inhumane acts of her handlers. She was being forced to say that she was the Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Knowing nothing about this, Angie denied. This went for many hours until. A new batch of men came in the room and started hitting Angie with thick rolled paper while interrogating her and punching her. A next round of torture came and this time she was sexually molested. The men intentionally touched her private parts while she pleaded them not to. She asked them to think of their mothers and sisters and give her the respect she deserves as a woman but the men, unmoved by this, did nothing but laugh at her. She remembers feeling so frail at this moment until the men halted from what they were doing. But before the men left the room, they turned the air-conditioner full blast. This added up to the horror of her ordeal as she was shivering all night.
She then thought of what to do. All she could think of was she wanted her freedom. This prompted her to stage a hunger strike. For 12 days, she refused all offers, enticements of whatever kind by the military to join their side. She also managed to not eat anything until something was done about her case. This was her way of protesting.

It was only then that her captors brought her to a jail. On March 17, 2005, Angie was placed in the Ramon Magsaysay Municipal Jail where she saw her charge sheet for the first time. She then reiterates and emphasizes that from the time she was abducted to March 16, she had been held incommunicado and locked up without charges. She found out that she was charged with two rebellion cases, double murder, double attempted murder and arson. She couldn’t believe she was being charged with criminal cases. This really disheartened as she reflected on what she has been doing all her life which was helping the needy and serving the people only to be jailed and treated as a criminal.

She stayed in the municipal jail for only a day and was later transferred to Pagadian City Jail which was under Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, a larger prison institution, because according to her captors she was a ‘high-risk’ detainee as she was a high-ranking officer of CPP.

For five years, she stayed in this prison institution. She began growing a vegetable garden together with her inmates. She also started other livelihood projects such as card and garment making. She channeled all her energy to being productive. And this did not only benefit her, but also her inmates.

On another note, hearings were sources of mixed feelings for Angie. She remembers feeling both anticipative and worried about going to courts for hearings because these are crucial for her release. Although in reality, hearings are most of the time deferred due to all possible reasons — absent witnesses[, death of a relative of judge, flood, seminars, unavailability of military trucks, etc.. In Angie’s case, she was brought to three different areas once in a month or every two or three months. Another issue she raised was the presentation of false witnesses. She thought it was ridiculous. The prosecution sides apparently lacked in orienting their set-up witnesses as these have been consistently giving off answers in the hearings.
After five long years, without being informed beforehand, she was told that she will be transferred to Misamis Occidental Reformatory Jail in Oroquieta City. This enraged her. She asked why but she was not given explanations. But as usual, she was helpless. There was nothing else to do but follow. She stayed in this prison institution for a year. One day, she was harvesting planted vegetable when she saw her lawyer and her friend nuns. Her lawyer signaled a thumbs-up sign and she readily understood what this meant. She was finally dismissed of her charges.

Even to this day, she expresses her sadness to have lost those 6 years. But she shakes these negative emotions and looks at the brighter side of things. She no longer sees the experience as something that will drag her down, she views it as an experience that has taught her a lot of things. After all, she came out even more empowered and with even stronger principles.

**Experiences with the Justice System**

Evidently, Angie experienced a lot of lapses with the justice system. The term ‘lapse’ doesn’t even fit the experience because lapses would denote that these were done unintentionally done. In Angie’s case and other political prisoners as well, what she experienced was a tactic by the government with the military as the front liner to suppress those critical of the government.

The following have been experienced by Angie:

- She was not informed of the reason for her arrest at the time of her arrest;
- She was denied the right to counsel;
- She was subjected to prolonged interrogation for not more than 12 days;
- During interrogation, I was physically, psychologically and sexually tortured;
- The prosecutor side presented false witnesses;
- She was detained in a military camp, which is not of civilian jurisdiction.
- She experienced the turtle pace of the progress of her case.
When one is faced with the threat of death, one usually succumbs to the fear and surrenders. But for Ericson Acosta, who was almost executed as he was illegally arrested, the peril of dying did not kill his spirit to sustain his principles, advocacies and beliefs.

Ericson Acosta is a cultural worker and an activist who was doing research on the violation of human rights and protection of environment in Samar when he was illegally abducted. It was February 13, 2011 and he was traveling to the town proper of San Jorge accompanied by a barangay official and other villagers. It was then that they saw military men coming their way and asking them to stop. The military men asked for directions as to where they could get water. So the barangay official gladly answered. When they were about to leave, the military men eyeing Acosta’s backpack began asking what was inside. They checked the bag and saw a laptop. This triggered a violent and suspecting reaction in the soldier. He quickly suspected Ericson of being an NPA because he possessed such gadget. The soldiers then quickly checked and inspected Ericson and looked for weapons but there was none. One soldier asked him to turn the laptop on but he explained that its battery was drained. When he pushed the button, another soldier shouted at him saying that the laptop may be the weapon and that pushing the button may trigger it to self-destruct.

Ericson kept on explaining that he was a researcher and that was the reason why he had a laptop. But the soldiers did not listen. When the women villagers asked where will Ericson be taken, the soldier replied with an order for them to leave. So the barangay official and the villagers were left with nothing to do but to leave Ericson with the soldiers.
He was then dragged by these soldiers and was told that they were going to the headquarters in Barangay Blanca Aurora. They traveled across a rocky terrain while the leader of the platoon, Madarang seemed to be looking for signal for his mobile phone to contact his superiors.

After seven hours of looking for signal, Madarang finally got to talk to his superior. Ericson heard what they were talking about and quickly understood it. It appears that the person on the other line was saying to Madarang to charge the arrested in an encounter. Meaning, the superior was giving an order to kill him right then and there and make it appear that he died in a military-NPA encounter. Madarang, on the other hand, politely explained that Ericson might be valuable to them because he has a laptop and might probably be a high-ranking NPA member. After that phone conversation, Madarang told his men that Ericson was to be brought to the headquarters. He was leashed in the waist and was given a jacket so that when he was walking with the military men, it would cover the leash and he’d look like he’s one of them.

When he arrived at the headquarters, the company commander talked down on him asking him to be grateful that he wasn’t charged in an encounter. Ericson then said to them that if they had a complaint about him, it would be best that they bring him to the nearest police station and that he be assisted by a lawyer. But the soldiers did not pay attention to what he was saying.

While waiting for the battalion commander, Ericson overheard the company commander orienting his men and ordering them not to leak outside the HQ that they captured Ericson. It was also told that they should anticipate that human rights group will soon be looking for him but strictly no one should know that he was there.

When the battalion commander came, Ericson knew that it was time for his interrogation. Again, he told them to just bring him to the nearest police station and he will need the assistance of a lawyer. The soldiers scolded at him and refused to do what he suggested. The interrogation went on and he was
not even given much time to sleep for two days. February 15 came and he was then brought to the San Jorge Municipal Police Headquarters. This was when he saw a grenade on the table and again, he had a hint that his charge will be related to that grenade. Later on, he was told that he was being charged with illegal possession of explosives.

He was then placed into a detention cell. He asked a soldier to at least allow him to make one phone call but he was denied of it. He was later brought to the Calbayog City Hall of Justice for inquest. At that time, he still was not able to make a phone call. So while they were walking inside the hall, he made a scene shouting that he is an activist and that the soldiers shouldn't be arresting him and that he needed a lawyer. The commander acting as if he did not know this made it appear that he was offering his phone. It was only then that Ericson was able to contact his mother, but as soon as they went out, unfinished telling the details to his mother, the phone was immediately taken from him.

After these happenings, Ericson was brought to the San Jorge Jail.

The progress of his case, just the same as other political prisoners, was turtle paced. Adding to his situation is his experience of being constantly harassed by military men. A platoon of military men would guard his cell and would sometimes even verbally abuse him. He also was made aware that his parents were given death threats. The military men even conspired with some of the inmates to spy on him. Ericson emphasizes that in his case, military influence and presence had been very much felt.

It was July 2011 and Ericson began spotting blood in his urine. He asked in court if he could seek medical attention, but his lawyer told him that this could probably be approved by January 2013. September 2011 came and along with his lawyer, he filed a petition to review his criminal case. In January 18, 2013, Ericson was granted temporary release because he needed medical attention. He was placed in the National Kidney and Transplant Institute. In January 31, 2013, the Department of Justice gave a resolution to dismiss his case due to lack of legal basis and evidence.
Experiences with the Justice System

Ericson Acosta encountered having his constitutional and human rights violated. According to his counter-affidavit, these violations were:

- He was arrested without warrant while not committing any crime or doing anything illegal;
- He was not informed of the reason for his arrest at the time of his arrest;
- He was denied the right to counsel;
- He was denied a phone call and prevented from contacting his family or his lawyer;
- He was subjected to prolonged interrogation for 44 hours;
- During tactical interrogation, he was physically and psychologically tortured;
- He was deprived of sleep, threatened, intimidated, coerced and forced to admit membership in the NPA;
- The evidence against him, “the grenade”, was planted;
- The complaint against him was filed in court only after 72 hours and 30 minutes after his arrest; and,
- He was detained in a military camp, which is not of civilian jurisdiction.

Case 3

Eduardo Sarmiento

Channeling all the heartaches and agitations to creative juices –this has been Eduardo Sarmiento’s tactic to fight the oppression inflicted on him when he was illegally arrested.

It was February 23, 2009 when Eduardo, more commonly known as “Ka Edong” was riding a bus to a peace negotiation consultation in Alabang when he was arrested without warrant. H was blindfolded,
dragged into a van and was held for interrogation and torture for 24 hours. He found out later on that he was being charged with illegal possession of explosives and arson. The arresting officer claimed to have found a grenade in his bag, which he does not recall having. Since then, Ka Edong was detained for five years in Camp Crame.

All these violations and the fact that he is a peace consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines add up to the frustration of the political prisoner. Supposedly, consultants should not be harassed or harmed or arrested because they are people who are in charge of negotiating with the Government of the Philippines when it comes to peace talks.

Last December 11, 2013, Ka Edong was sentenced with 20 to 40 years of being imprisoned based on his charge of illegal possession of explosives.

He is the first peace negotiator to be convicted and imprisoned after the Marcos regime.

**Experiences with the justice system**

- He was not given a warrant of arrest at the time of his arrest
- He was tortured
- He was subjected to prolonged interrogation for 24 hours
- The evidence against him was planted
- He was detained and even convicted despite the existence of a joint agreement between the NDFP and GPH that peace negotiators should have immunity from harassment, detention, surveillance and torture.
Research Objective No. 3:

To look into political prisoners’ understanding of justice through the use of literary discourse analysis

Angie Ipong’s Conception of Justice

Angie Ipong sees justice as:

- Justice as something that has been taken away
  In all her statements regarding justice in her literature, Angie seemed to have seen it as something that has been taken away, something that is missing. It is something that was denied of her as she was imprisoned and considered a criminal and an enemy of the state.

- Justice as something deprived of political prisoners by the justice system
  Ironic the situation may be, but as Angie sees it, the justice system of the Philippines is not going to help her attain justice. Instead, she believed that the very justice she yearned for had been intently taken away through the justice system. She constantly reiterated in her writing that the justice system is an instrument of an oppressive state and thus, this won’t be the institution that will help her obtain justice. Instead, she perceives it as a fake dispenser of justice.

- Justice as the end goal
  Angie has consistently implied in her prison writings that justice is what political prisoners ultimately search for. She perceives justice as something that needs to be demanded, for it will not be given to them effortlessly. She sees all the struggles done in the name of the endless search for justice.

Ericson’s Conception of Justice

- Justice as something valued by the masses
  The masses, according to one of his writings, easily fall for personages who include justice and peace in their platforms or advocacies. Apparently, these are concepts valued by the masses.

- Justice is sometimes used for making a political career
  In one of his writings, he expressed disgust over a political candidate who used the abstract concepts of justice and peace so that he’d have support.
• Justice as something not being experienced by political prisoners

Majority of Ericson’s poems and literary works mentioned the experience of injustice. Meaning, all the struggle and hardships, all experiences Ericson had inside the prison was far or nothing like his understanding of justice. Instead, these experiences are the opposite. Also, he expressed in one of his works that he himself is a concrete manifestation of injustice.

• Justice as an element attainable only for those with power

In Ericson’s writings, there has been consistent underpinning of power play. Not once did he forget to include hints of oppression by the powerful, in this case, the “fascist” government. Drawing from his writings, justice has been deprived of political prisoners by those who can because they can.

• Justice is freedom

Although this was not explicitly stated, it could be understood from the way he has written about injustice and freedom, that justice is freedom. One is tagged alongside the other and when one is denied, the other is denied as well. He expressed in his poems that in the end, freedom is what he desires, but as long as acts of injustice are there, this freedom will be far from his reach.

• Justice is change

Ericson is and has always been a advocate of change. He criticized the system and the government in control of it because evidently, it has always been a government working for the people in higher social classes, paving way for the oppression of the needy and powerless. In some of Ericson’s writings, change was depicted as one of the end goals and it seemed fitting that a change in the system would do justice to his experience of being imprisoned.

Ka Edong’s Conception of Justice

• Justice is something that could be restored

Ka Edong’s view of justice as implied by the children’s stories he wrote and illustrated is something that is attainable. With the preparation, cooperation and determination of the people altogether, justice, which can be equated with the victory of conquering the monster, is definitely not impossible.

• Justice is change
Ka Edong also gives much importance to the value of change. He believes that once one’s eyes are opened to the right ideals and mistakes, one can see that change is the best thing to have. A change although drastic could give not only the person but others as well the equality and justice they need to have.

**Research Objective No. 4:**

To ascertain the role played by the justice system in forming the political prisoners’ perception of justice

It is beyond doubt that the justice system plays a crucial role in political prisoners’ conception and understanding of ‘justice.’ Primarily because the justice system was established to dispense justice, yet the political prisoners were deprived of it. The justice system was supposed to comply with rules, laws and constitutional provisions but as political prisoners have experienced it, they were the ones who violated state legal frameworks. With this form of injustice taking place, the plight of political prisoners as shown through their actions and through their writings are made even more reasonable. Also, it was pointed out in the discourse analyses and interviews that it is the very problem of the authoritarian nature of the government that seeds out why there are political dissents. Imprisoning political dissents just strengthens the fact that the government has a unjust way of dealing with them by silencing its critics or physically removing them from the outside world.

However, it was consistently shown in the findings of discourse analysis and interview data coding that the justice system alone is not responsible for the political prisoner’s perception of justice. It was always the case that they would point out that this faulty justice system is attached to an even faultier political system. It appears that these political prisoners believe that the justice system is only a means for the government to oppress opposing people, same as the military. Political prisoners have this holistic view of the scheme of things and see these institutions as interconnected; therefore, if one wants to promote justice, one should not only focus on the justice system but on the entire system.

This need for a system overhaul that is being advocated by political prisoners explains why they see justice as something that cannot be fully realized even after being released. They believe that this
society they are in is a bigger jailhouse confining them to societal and national problems caused by the incapacity of the government to prioritize the needs of the masses. Political prisoners understand justice as something deeper and something more difficult to achieve. All the justice system did was worsen their view of the government and strengthened their will and principles to surpass any kind of oppressions whatsoever.

**Research Objective No. 5:**

To evaluate the performance of the Justice System in its functions and processes

The justice system will be evaluated based on its performance in accordance with its goals. The following are the goals of the justice system:

a) To make sure that there are no wrongful convictions and that the right person is identified and convicted of the crime he/she committed; that both suspect and victim have access to remedies; that they are provided with a speedy and impartial process that ensures the protection of their human and legal rights, and equal treatment before the law; that the appropriate remedy is applied to the convicted; and, that while serving sentence the convicted is accorded humane treatment and adequate support to enable him to develop or redevelop his capacity as a good and productive member of the community.

b) To gain and sustain the trust and confidence of the community, and engage the community as an active and effective partner in solving crime, and in facilitating the provision of remedies particularly through restorative justice.

c) To develop capacity of communities to demand accessible, speedy, impartial and quality justice, and in particular the appropriate remedies for their grievances (UNDP-SC, 2006).

When it comes to the first goal, the justice system has noticeably not been able to carry out the protection of human and legal rights and the implementation of equal treatment before the law. Even Commission on Human Rights lawyer, Atty. Brenda Canapi, stated that it was wrong that political prisoners are being treated as criminals instead of having their cases unconfused as rebellion ones. Also, they were not able to give humane treatment to the accused.
The second goal seems a bit tricky. To be able to measure this, one must measure the trust of the people in the justice system. Apparently, in this criterion, the justice system fails again in the case of political prisoners. What they have experienced definitely removed their trust and confidence in engaging with the state forces. An expected reaction from them will be fear or anxiety or rage.

The third criterion which involves the development of “accessible, speedy, impartial and quality justice” has not also been successfully accomplished by the justice system. Even in the case of ordinary prisoners, justice has been very difficult to obtain. It is not accessible especially to the poor; it is not speedy because it takes years for cases to progress only to find out that the accused is innocent; it is not impartial because it favors powerful people or state forces and the if ever justice was ‘dispensed,’ it is not of good quality because it is normally just compensation or punishment of the other party but a deeper idea given by Ericson Acosta (2014) views quality justice as social justice. It is equality for everyone, not just for the powerful but also for the poor.

In a nutshell, the justice system was not able to perform its function and processes, especially in the case of political prisoners. This brings a realization that reforms and changes are needed to be brought about.

References:

1987 Philippine Constitution


Enrile v. Amin, GR No 93335


Appendix A

Critical Discourse Analysis 1

A Red Rose for Andrea

Angie Ipong

I. Discursive Practice (How the text was produced and consumed)

A Red Rose for Andrea is a collation of prison writings by Angie Ipong and other political prisoners. The book contains Angie Ipong’s six year experience under the justice system we have in the Philippines. This book is a few of the existing works in the country that could be classified under prison literature.

Ipong narrated how she was never that interested in writing but her sister wanted to know how she was inside prison and asked her to write about this. Succumbing to the request, she eventually began to write. She began with just a diary style of writing everyday happenings. It continued until her release in prison and until there was enough to create a book out of it.

The book was then made possible by her friends, and so was the selling of it. Human rights group such as Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (SELDI) helped her sell the copies of her book as it was also their way of increasing awareness on the situation of political prisoners in the Philippines.

II. Text Analysis

Introduction

I am now ready to tell my child, my family and everyone who loves justice and freedom, that although imprisonment may be an inevitable consequence of our commitment, “prison wall and iron bars can only lock away or bodies but not our minds, our thoughts and what we stand for.”

But our task is not over, there are still many political prisoners languishing in jail. Let us help them find justice. Let us work for their immediate release, especially the women political prisoners.

Let us also remember our martyrs who gave their lives for the cause, the victims of extrajudicial killings and the desaparacidos -their deafening silence wails for justice.

Tone

Throughout the writing, the author was optimistic and firm. She incorporated being positive in her belief that imprisonment should not result to losing one’s principles. It was also significantly pointed out that despite the fact that they are physically imprisoned, their minds, thoughts and principles remain free. She was also determined in urging the readers to do something about the situation and help the victims find justice.

Use of words/Phrases

...imprisonment may be an inevitable consequence of our commitment…

The word ‘may’ denotes the level of sureness the author feels for her statement.
The use of ‘inevitable’ to describe the consequence in the statement stresses that this phenomenon of imprisonment is a known and common fate to political dissents. The term ‘commitment’ shows how she sees and values her work. The word captures the element of dedication and loyalty she has for her line of work.

But our task is not over…

The word ‘task’ firmly implies that there is something that needs to be done. It comes with a hint of a challenge. Using the personal pronoun ‘our’ directly includes the readers as a part of the actors who need to do the task.

...languishing in jail...

The word ‘languishing’ paints a picture of suffering. The use of this word strongly underscores the experience of the political prisoners in jail.

Let us help them find justice. Let us work for their immediate release, especially the women political prisoners.

Using ‘us’ directly urges the participation of the readers. Justice is seen as something that needs to be searched for. It was used in the sentence to imply that one needs to exert effort so that one could attain justice. For the author, to ‘find justice’ is for the political prisoners to be immediately released.

The emphasis on women political prisoners to be released immediately suggests that women may be in an even worse situation and the need...

...our martyrs...

The martyrs identified in the text were the victims of extrajudicial killings and the desaparacidos. The word underscores that these people have willingly accepted their fates of death or suffering just to stand up for their principles.

...defeaning silence wails for justice...

This was phrased in a way that justice can be perceived as the main goal, or the endpoint. This suggests that justice is what the victims ultimately desire. The use of ‘defeaning silence’ insists that even though these victims are not among us, they have this strong effect that is felt. They are a manifestation of something that is alarming. The use of ‘wails’ to express the sorrow of the victims also asserts the strong demand for justice.

Power Play

There is no direct expression who the agent of power or the oppressor is. It’s like the author assumes that the readers are aware who this is. However, power play could be underscored with the use of words. Some words that denote power play include imprisonment, lock away, task, justice, release and martyrs.

Style

The author writes in a direct, almost casual yet serious way in addressing the readers. And she made sure that the readers are not only reading and knowing someone else’s story, but are also involved in the points made.

Topicalization

The author, in general, was talking about political prisoners and what should be done to help them.

The Release
First, I want this book to be able to tell the world what it is to be a prisoner, especially a political prisoner. I want to share with others what life is inside Philippine prisons, let the people know what Philippine prisoners are all about, and how the courts and the entire justice system works as an instrument of oppression.

I want to tell human rights and peace advocates, international solidarity groups and prison ministry workers to continue to work hard to help political prisoners find justice so they can be released as early as possible.

**Tone**
The author sounded free and unrestricted in writing what she wanted to share. She also is determined that her goal is to help political prisoners find justice.

**Use of Words/Phrases**
...tell to the world...
The author expands her audience - that they need not be from the Philippines but also across boundaries.
...what it is to be a prisoner, especially a political prisoner...
The author used a verb in present tense. This denotes that what she wanted to share applies in the present time and situation of the political system.
The emphasis on political prisoners suggests that there are differences between political prisoners and ordinary prisoners that need to be shed light on.
The author stresses her point on political prisoners and wants to have the readers understood that it is important that people learn about political prisoners.
...share with others...
This time, she did not specify an audience but with this, she’s saying she wants to share her writings to anyone other than her.
...Philippine prison..
The author contextualizes the situation and emphasizes that the issue or situation occurs at the national level.
...how the courts and the entire justice system works as an instrument of oppression...
This time she reveals are the political prisoners oppressed. The phrasing ‘the courts and the entire justice system’ may imply that she may have more experiences of oppression in courts than in other agencies of the justice system. The word ‘instrument’ implies that someone is using the justice system as a whole to accomplish that someone’s goals. The term ‘oppression’ is a strong word used to denote the unjust exercise of power.
...human rights and peace advocates, international solidarity groups and prison ministry workers to continue to work hard to help political prisoners find justice so they can be released as soon as possible...
In this sentence, she identifies the groups or the network of people who helps political prisoners, insisting that they unify to help political prisoners. The use of the word ‘continue’ means that there are already existing efforts to address this issue. The phrase ‘work hard’ says that finding justice won’t be easy. Again, ‘justice’ was portrayed in the sentence as something that needs to be searched for. Efforts are imperative. She also used the phrase, ‘as early as possible,’ denoting a sense of urgency to release the political prisoners.
Power Play
The agent of power remains unnamed but this time, an instrument was identified, which was the justice system. The ones being oppressed were explicitly expressed in this chapter and these are the political prisoners. Being imprisioned and all, a political prisoner is unable to fight the oppressor alone but with the help of networks, it might just be possible. Power loaded terms include instrument of oppression, justice and political prisoners.

Style
The author is indirectly conversing to the audience the objectives of writing her book.

Topicalization
The author is talking about what she could offer by sharing experiences with the justice system and the Philippine prison. She also identified the key actors who could significantly contribute to the release of political prisoners.

Prison Life

Visits

Full of Joy
(to my loved ones)

Full of joy your visit has given me
My sisters, brother, daughter, nephews, nieces and friends
Coming all the way from far away places

Not minding the distance, the expenses, the tiresome trips
And the work that you have left
Just to hug and inspire your imprisoned sister

Provisions and variety of news you have brought
Heart filling words full of inspiration
One strong message you all want to say
COURAGE, HOPE may you always have dear sister
    Till justice and freedom will be won.

The day of the visit would have been over
Joy and courage will always be there
For I know I am not alone in this endeavor
You are all with me in this journey
The masses are all waiting for me to be free

    Thank you! Thank you so much.
    Your boundless love and concern
    This I will cherish deep in my heart.
This poem shows the importance of visits to prisoners. It demonstrates so much optimism and will. The author shows through this poem that she can surpass this experience because she knows that her family, friends and the masses are with her. She also says that, in order for justice to be attained, one must be brave and hopeful.

There is still the undertaking that justice has been stolen or taken from her by someone else, although not stated. The line “Till justice and freedom will be won” underscores the power play between the author and an unnamed agent of power.

The poem was written as if she was directly conversing with her family and friends.

**Hearings**

*Almost all political prisoners and all prisoners for that matter suffer prolonged detention because of the failure of the justice system to provide the necessary means to hasten the resolution of cases.*

*Tedious court hearings, false prosecution, fabricated and trumped up charges, presentation of non credible, role-playing witnesses and many other delaying tactics—these gave us a picture of the absurdities of the justice system. All these cyclical motions are a pretense to hasten justice, but in reality, it is pure and simple denial of justice.*

**Tone**

The author has written these paragraphs in an agitated and critical tone. She states what are being done by the justice system and evaluates them. In the end, she firmly expresses her disbelief in the system as the promoter of justice.

**Use of words**

The use of ‘absurdities’ to describe the doings of the justice system strongly implies her lack of faith in it.

*All these cyclical motions are a pretense to hasten justice, but in reality, it is pure and simple denial of justice.*

There is a high degree of certainty in her belief that the actions of the justice system are facades for them to attain justice. She states this as she has experienced reality, and that she herself experienced being denied of justice. Again, *justice* was denoted as something rightfully hers that was stolen or taken away.

**Power play**

There is an apparent power play between the prisoners and the justice system. We could see the author’s perspective that because the justice system has a hold of power, it is able to perform tactics on how to preserve the status of the legal cases of political prisoners.

**Topicalization**

The main focus of this selection is the refusal of the justice system to be just on political prisoners.

*The transfer*
But then I told myself while alone in the van on the way to Misamis Occidental, why should I be so affected when from the very start I already knew that the prison institution was a coercive instrument of the state. What they did to me was really just what they are supposed to do. For security reasons, they had to make sure this “high risk criminal” did not have any hint of the transfer plan. No considerations, whatsoever, just like the courts supposedly “dispensing justice,” but in reality delaying and denying justice. So with the AFP and PNP, which are institutions created to be “protectors of the masses,” yet these are the very instrument violating the rights of the people.

**Tone**
There is a hint of feeling betrayed and disappointed in the writing as she states what the AFP and PNP were supposed to do but then they do the opposite. It was also written in a sad tone as she was rationalizing what she was undergoing and convincing herself that that’s how it’s supposed to be. She’s accepting the fact that the courts, the prison institution, the military and the police are agencies not expected to respect rights and uphold justice–they are the opposite.

**Use of words**
...prison institution was a coercive instrument of the state.
With the use of the word coercive, power play is being explicitly expressed. It’s a strong word to describe the nature of this instrument of the state.
The word instrument was used to denote that the state is entirely responsible for the control of this institution for its agenda. And that it was being utilized to achieve such agenda.
...the courts supposedly “dispensing justice,” but in reality delaying and denying justice.
The structure of the sentence focuses on the courts as fake dispensers of justice. The author firmly states through this sentence the deception that these courts perpetrate.
Consistently, the author expresses her notion of justice as something rightfully hers that is denied.
So with the AFP and PNP, which are institutions created to be “protectors of the masses,” yet these are the very instrument violating the rights of the people.
The author confidently sees these institutions as frauds. AFP and PNP, to her are the primary violators of rights of the people and this can be seen with her modifier ‘very’ in describing the institution as an instrument of oppression.

**Power play**
There was a lot of power play depicted in the writings. Instruments of power play were enumerated such as the courts, prison institutions, the military and the police. It could be noted that the author believes that all these institutions were intentionally made to hinder their attaining of justice.

**Topicalization**
The main focus of this selection is the deception created by the courts, the prison institutions, the military and police as defenders of justice whereas in reality, the author believes otherwise.

**Support from friends and prison ministry workers**
We must try to find all means to seek justice for them and work for their immediate release. The political nature of their case, being prisoners of conscience, is much different from those of ordinary prisoner.
Tone
The selection is persuasive and firm. We could detect the author’s wish to hasten the actions and efforts to help political prisoners be released immediately. And there is conviction when she stated that the nature of political prisoners’ cases is utterly distinct from ordinary ones.

Use of words
The word justice, again, has been described as something missing. The political nature of their case, being prisoners of conscience, is much different from those of ordinary prisoner.
This sentence emphasizes the urgency of the political nature of this situation that political prisoners are in.

Power play
When the author stressed the nature of political prisoners’ cases, there was an implicit expression that someone of political power has control over the phenomenon.

Topicalization
The writing was about the urgency of helping political prisoners because of their much different situation.

Letter to Political Prisoners and a Postscript
How long will this wait be for justice and freedom? This was my cry during those six long years I was inside those prison walls. But you are not alone. We are here with you on vigil, hopeful and confident that someday, you will all be free.

The struggle of political detainees is a struggle for justice. The cause of our detention is a mighty cause. We were jailed because we are critical of the existing order. We want to change things for the better and follow the path of righteousness.

Commendable are the militant struggles of prisoners in fighting for prisoner’s rights and pushing for reforms in the whole justice system and the prison institution.

Regarding the various cases we are facing, we are all aware of how the Philippine justice system works. It is full of delaying tactics and absurdities. Before we know it, we have been in jail for years. We know and even the prosecution knows that these charges are all fabrications.

The very aim of the state is to delay justice, to make us rot in jail. It deprives us of the freedom we treasure the most, hoping that eventually, these damaging measures would empty or kill that spirit of struggle burning inside us.

Regarding our families, friends, loved ones, this is the best time to explain to them, to make them understand the fascist character of the state especially towards its critics, about police brutality and the inutile justice system.
Tone
The author was writing in a determined, motivated and agitated tone. We could see all these as she expresses her feelings toward the system, her commendations of the militants and the aptness of their cause.

Use of words
Justice
As the book comes to an end, the use of the word justice was depicted in a consistent way. There is a struggle to achieve it. There is a struggle to get it back. There is an instrument being used against political prisoners being used by the state to deprive them of justice. And the justice system preposterously does the opposite of what it should do.

…Spirit of struggle burning inside us…
The use of this phrase emphasizes the strength of the motivation political prisoners have in fighting for justice. This denotes that justice is indeed an important thing to win back and is the end goal for such struggles.

Power play
It was incessantly expressed in this last part of the book that the justice system is being used to silence those who are critical of it. That the state, holder of power, can imprison dissents and can deny justice so as to kill the cause living inside the hearts of dissents.

Topicalization
The letter was about the need to know that the state uses the justice system to silence critics. And a clear manifestation of this is the existence of political prisoners.

Style
This part of the book was written as a letter addressed to political prisoners.

APPENDIX B
Critical Discourse Analysis 2
MULA TARIMA HANGGANG
Ericson Acosta

I. Discursive Practice
The literary work analyzed below was written by Acosta while he was inside prison. However, these poems and essays have not yet been published and reproduced for the public’s consumption.

II. Text Analysis
PART 2: Mula Tarima Hanggang
Mga Tula Mula Sa Piitan
2011-2013

Astig
Para kay Tirso “Ka Bart” Alcantaras
This poem was dedicated to Tirso Alcantaras, an NDFP consultant who was tortured, imprisoned and whose request for transfer was denied.

Noticeably, the poem depicts Ericson Acosta's agitation and persistence. The poem denotes the hardships a political prisoner like Acosta encounters under a fascist government but despite this, he won’t step down.

The metaphors used were ‘dibdib’ which could be interpreted as the political prisoner's principles. Also used were ‘talampakan,’ ‘tuhod at siko’ as the parts inflicting the suffering on the principles of the political prisoners. These parts of the body could be equated to the institutions or instruments of oppression of the state.

The author used ‘bakal at kongkreto’ to describe the firmness of his beliefs and principles. And this is his armor in facing a fascist government.

There is an apparent power play seen in the picture painted by the poet. From this, we could imagine how a state makes use of its powers and instruments to suppress those who has differing opinions or those who are critical of it. And the mere usage of ‘pasismo’ denotes that there is an undemocratic and dictatorial way of exercising power.

This poem revolves in the idea of sturdiness –that despite injustice, hardships and sufferings, one who has firm principles will never be defeated by a domineering agent.

**Tatoismo**

Tatuan mo ‘ko, Kosa, sige na.
Tatuan mo ako ng mga kabibe.
Tatuan mo ‘ko ng anahaw, ng waling-waling.
Tatuan mo ako ng kalabaw, ng bagwis, ng ulap.
Tatuan mo ‘ko, punuin mo ‘ko ng mga pilak na bituin.

Tatuan mo ‘ko, Kosa, sige lang.
Tatuan mo ako ng mga gasera.
Tatuan mo ‘ko ng abaniko, ng kudyapi.
Tatuan mo ako ng isang tanagang alibata.
Tatuan mo ‘ko, ibabad mo ‘ko sa gintong mga silahis.

Tatuan mo ‘ko, Kosa, sige pa.
Tatuan mo ako ng mga kamao.
Tatuan mo ‘ko ng maso, ng karet, ng tabak.
Tatuan mo ako ng bangkaw, ng AK-47.
This poem made use of a lot of metaphors and symbolisms. There is a common notion that people with tattoos are tough people. In this poem, the author asks his inmates to tattoo him various symbols to toughen him up.

The symbols used varied largely. The first stanza used ‘kabibe,’ ‘anahaw,’ ‘waling-waling,’ ‘kalabaw,’ ‘bagwis,’ and ‘ulap.’ And although it wasn’t obvious what the connecting element of these symbols was, it could be interpreted that these were used to symbolize nationalism.

The words are only some of the wonderful creatures found in the country.

The second stanza made use of symbols of culture and arts –‘gasera,’ ‘abaniko,’ ‘kudyapi,’ and ‘tanagang alibata.’

The lines “…punuin mo ‘ko ng mga pilak na bituin” and “…ibabad mo ‘ko sa gintong mga silahis” involved stars and rays which can be found in the Philippine national flag.

In general, all these symbols point out to the author’s love for the country.

The last stanza, however, used words such as ‘kamao,’ ‘maso,’ ‘karet,’ ‘tabak,’ ‘bangkaw,’ and ‘AK-47.’ These symbolize the ideology of the author which is extreme left. With such use of symbols, the author was able to portray his feelings of agitation and conviction in his ideals. He sees these symbols of his beliefs as his source of inspiration and courage.

Although there was no direct inclusion of a power play scenario in the poem, there is an image of empowerment with the practice of tatooing. It’s as if the author is gathering all the necessary motivation and strength from his principles and therefore this will toughen him up.

The ‘kosa’ was portrayed in the poem as a friend -someone who’s willing to give hope and courage to a fellow prisoner like him.

This poem wanted to express that inside prison, a political prisoner like Acosta gathers strength from each other and from the nation. Also, in order to surpass this endeavor, one needs to be strong and hopeful.

_Halaw ng Buyonero: Kriminal_

_Sa gitna ng aking paglalampaso_
_anong kaya kung silipin ako ngayon dito_
_ng isa sa nag-interogueyt sa akin?_

_Maari siyang umilling-ililing,_
_panggilidanan pa nga ng luha_
_sa sinserong pagkahabag sa aking kinasadlakan._

_Sayang ka, matalino ka pa naman at may pamilya._
_Kung bakit naman kasi hindi ka pa naki-cooperate…_

_Maari ko siyang sagutin ng:_

_Ang pakikipagsabwatan sa pasismo_
_ay malayung-malayo sa katalinuhan._

_O ng:_
_Walang saysay ang talino_
_kung hindi para sa makatarungang pagbabago sa lipunan._
O ng:
Ang pamilya ko'y ang laksang anakpawis.

Pero hindi na lang.

Sisipulan ko na lang siya ng Awit ng Peti-B o ng Curacha Mayor habang winawalis-tingting ang tubig na naipon sa isang bahagi ng sahig papunta sa kubeta.

Maari siyang mangalampag sa rehas, umalulong, humalakhak ng sa tingin niya ay siya nang pinakahuling halakhak.

‘Yan ang dapat sa gaya mong kriminal – ang mabulok kasama ng kapwa mo kriminal at walang pag-asa sa buhay!

Hindi ko na ipagtatanggol pa ang sarili. Pero kailangan kong magsalita para sa mga kakasa:

Ang mga kosa ay wala pa sa kalingkingan ng mapamwersang aparato ng estado, ng malalaking panginoong maylupa, ng mga burgesya komprador, ng mga imperyalista, kung krimen at krimen lang din ang pag-uusapan. At ang pag-asa ng mga nasa bilangguan at ng buong sambayanang bilanggo sa bulok na sistemang malapyudal at malakolonyal ay nasa bagong demokratikong rebolusyon.

Pero kahit hindi na.

Aalukin ko na lang siya ng bahaw. O hihingan ng dos pambili ng chlorine.

In this poem, a hypothetical scenario was illustrated. The author was anticipating a conversation with an interrogator. Although what was written never really happened, this poem seemed to be the way for the author to explain himself. He was rationalizing his actions but later on, he believed that he does not need to prove to others these beliefs, so he just kept it to himself.

The following lines indicate his rationalizations of his decision to not cooperate with the military to be able to escape the situation and return to his family:

"Ang pakikipagsabwatan sa pasismo ay malayung-malayo sa katalinuhan;"  
"Walang saysay ang talino kung hindi para sa makatarungang pagbabago sa lipunan;"  and  
"Ang pamilya ko'y ang laksang anakpawis"

He also anticipates the chance that the visitor will speak cruel of him and his inmates. With the use of witty lines, he was able to turn the statement around and point out in agitation that his inmates should not be in any way compared to the criminals perpetrating the impaired system –the landlords and imperialists. And that these said criminals are the ones imprisoning the masses and the only way to defyhis system is through a democratic revolution. There is an implied call to stand up against these criminals.
In this poem, we could identify the ideology of the writer. Although not explicitly stated, it was implied through his choice of words that he believes that class struggle endures. Those who belong in higher social classes who possess economic and political power are those holding the fate of the majority while the majority remains helpless and confined. Certainly, power play between the classes was shown.

The writing had an agitated, witty, sarcastic tone to it. It is possible that the mere writing of this poem is a manifestation that the author could not possibly answer in such manner when faced with a verbally abusive visitor. We could see the effect of being imprisoned in the writings as we see the author utterly possessing the power and exercising freedom to whatever extent he wants to. The physical confinement pushed him to write in such a way that refuses to accept the fact that he is not free and defies the current situation.

**November 13, 2011**

*Nine months ago today the state took from me the following: a cellular phone the make and features of which my wife once described to be impossibly antediluvian; a computer notebook blamelessly made in China and functioning; and one particular non-gadget, belonging in fact to the category of the non-object yet whose loss can be so dreadfully concrete you’d swear never again to spell it in small unpunctuated letters – F!R!E!D!O!M!*

This entry is the author’s way of saying that he is keeping track of the time he’s been robbed of his freedom. By reading it, one could sense the resentment the author has for the state who has unjustly taken what was rightfully his.

The author intently indicated the state as the performer of the oppression showing his agitation and anger towards it. He portrays the state as the more powerful agent who is capable of easily depriving anyone of their precious freedom.

The author could not emphasize more his longing for his freedom. The capitalization and spelled out word stresses his rage that freedom was denied of him.

The author also attempted to downgrade his material belongings by describing these using the words “antediluvian” and “made in China,” making them seem not grand and not as important as the abstract belonging. Emphasizing that it is his freedom that he wants back and nothing less.

**Mga Kuko at Paliwanag**

*Andyan lang sa harap mo nakahandusay yung biktima –
 o sa kaso na ‘to, di nga lang isa, ilagay na muna natin sa lima;
 di natin masabi kung ilan talaga kasi… pano ba ‘to?
 …kasi nga… pira-piraso,
 ata-atado na yung mga bangkay na nakahanay sa pader at dumikit na yung hiwa-hiwalay na parte nung mga katawan
 at yung malapot, malagkit na dugo nila yung glue –
 pero alam mong wala kang clue kung sino ba eksaktong yung may gawa nito;*

*Sa pader
 na barubal yung kalburo,
 sa gitna mismo nung pader
 wala na ngayon dun yung anino
 nung taong pumatay –
 kanina pa siguro s’ya sumakay
 sa bulok na hangin,
 sa gabok, sa usok,
 pabalik sa kung sanmang sulok
 para subukang tumumog
 pagkatapos maghugas ng kamay.

Ganyan naman madalas
 yung tagpo ng krimen, hindi ba
 (lalu pa kung kinalas
 yung CCTV camera)?*
mangihina yung loob mo,
ang lakas kasi nung kutob mo
na hindi kayang hulihin sa hula
yung hayop na salarin
kahit sobra ka pa ngang magtiwala
sa mga hinala mong praning;
 mangilingko ka sa bagang,
maluluha ka na lang sa hilo
kasi huli na malamang
ang lahat.

Yan ang drama mo habang wala pa
yung mga kelangang humabol sa
eksena,
mga rerespondeng naka-SOCO t-shirt,
mga correspondent, mga taga-research,
mula sa dyaryo, radio at TV,
mga OJT sa Criminology,
yung mga dapat mangulekta
ng positibong ebidensya,
humimay sa motibo
o anupang sirkumstansa,
bumuo ng scenario
o aktwal na istorya,
magpangalan sa wakas
sa mga suspetsado
o maglabas ng abiso
kung ano nga ba ang itsura
ng susmaryosep na mga ‘to.

Kaso nga ganito:
kung tungkol na rito sa pader,
sa gitna mismo ng pader
na di mo matitigan nang matagal,
ang kaduda-duda, walang duda
kung sa’kin lang naman,
With this poem, the author wanted to show the absurdity of their situation. The ‘surot’ and
‘kuko’ happening in the poem is a metaphor for crime that has been framed upon
the political prisoner. That although there are lots of agencies in charge of investigating the
crime, dissents will magically appear as the suspects. It was also stated in this poem the
tactic of the state that is to criminalize the offences so that people won’t know that these
are cases political in nature.

The poem had a sarcastic and witty tone to it. The metaphors needed deeper contextual
information before being comprehended. It also expressed the frustration of the author, that
the situation of being imprisoned for one’s beliefs is too much, and to add the fact that he
or she is being treated and branded as a criminal.

In this poem, the interplay of different bodies could be seen. The investigation teams, the
media, the government and the justice system. All of which were not able to help protect
the rights of a political prisoner, and instead, were the ones propagating reports that
imprisonment is the right thing to do.
Disyembre 8, 2011

Ang hunger strike, ang sabi, ay desperasyon.


Ang hunger strike, ayon sa iba, ay inspirasyon.

Anu’t anuman, dumating sa akin kahapon mula sa Mendiola ang balita ng mga pagkilos ng iba’t ibang sektor, at sa gitna ng aking pag-ayuno ay ilang beses akong binusog ng ahitasyon. Gayundin ang hatid sa akin ng bagong mga kwento ng pagtatanggol at paglusob ng mga magsasaka sa mga nayon.

Wala akong alinlangan, desperado at inspirado, lalaya tayo, mga kasama, at ang buong bayan.

Hunger strikes are commonly practiced by political prisoners in participation with militant movements outside prison. The author expresses what hunger strikes mean to political prisoners. Two notions were stated. The first sees hunger strike as a negative result of issues. The use of the word ‘desperasyon’ denotes the necessity for action. The author could no longer take the injustice shown in different forms. Particularly, the author conveyed frustration over lagging cases, being treated as a criminal, suffering of their families and denying their existence.

In the selection, injustice was portrayed as a wall that needs to be broken down. It manifests in different ways and one of the results is for political prisoners’ hunger strike.

The second notion of hunger strike says that it is an inspiration. The author says that as long as he learns of the demonstrations and movements outside prison unifying all basic sectors, the agitation he gets is enough to get him going.

This entry denotes the very need to act upon a power play that exists. In this power play, it is the masses versus the perpetrators of injustice.

Just like the other selections, this entry has an agitated and determined tone to it. The author seems firm of his decisions and actions and he could no longer tolerate the injustice being done to the political prisoners.

Pebrero 13, 2012


Kakatwa pero may mga pagkakataong nakadarama ako ng pagkaawa sa aking mga dalaw sa labis nilang pag-iwas na maawa sa akin. Maging ang napakasimple’t inaasahang “Kumusta na?” maraming beses ay tila alangan sila sa pagbigkas. May ilang matitigilan
In this entry, the author tells more about himself. The entry is centered upon him and his feelings. He first tells about the discomfort his visits feel whenever they want to ask him how was he. Later, he spills on how he's really doing fine and that amid suffering, someone like him should not falter.

The tone one could sense from this entry is empathy of self. He came to accept in this entry that in his situation, it is natural to be depressed, to be worried and to be angered because he himself is a concrete manifestation of injustice. He convinces himself that he should not succumb to this and gathers strength from the people who are freedom lovers.

A casual way of telling about his visits and speaking in first person can be underscored. In this entry, he is optimistic about his situation. He refuses to feel pity for himself just like others feel for him. In this entry, he shows himself as a victim of injustice of a cruel and unjust state—who has taken away his freedom and inflicted suffering, sadness, despair and anger upon him.

In the end, freedom is what he desires. There is a need to fight, to resist and to stand up for what is right.

**Sipi**

_Bago sa akin ang bersyon ni Marcus Simeon ng “A Change is Gonna Come.” Gaya ng orihinal ni Sam Cooke, may pambihira't otomatik na piral sa puso ang piyesang ito._

_May pinapaalala rin ito sa akin._

_Util ko itong inawit nang totoo, at di sa isip lang, mahigit isang taon na ang nakararaan. Pumayag noon ang panahon na maitodo-hataw ko ito sa palyado kong falsetto._

_Wala namang nalikhang usapin ang ganitong pang-aabuso. Wala naman din talagang nakapansin ni isa sa mga kasama kong taga-Bay-ang dahl sa lakas ng buhos sa talon sa aming harapan. Pagapang naming inaakyat noon ang isang pader na bato na may apat hanggang limang palapag ang taas at may mga bahaging bahagyang nakadudulas._

_Bago nito, sa ibaba, sa ilog na siyang buhay ng baryo, kakakaway ko pa lang sa tatlong paslit na sa tantya ko ay pawang mga anim na taong gulang._

_Nakasakay sila sa isang makitid na bangkang walang katig. Halininhan silang nananagwan pasalungat sa agos na sapagkat kauulan pa lang ay mas malakas kaysa normal._
Saglit ako noong kinabahan. Pauwi sila mula sa igiban at halos lumubog na ang bangka sa dami ng kargada nilang galunan.

Hindi na ako nasanay, sa loob-loob ko. Sa mga lugar na gaya ng baryo Bay-ang, parehong alam at di alam ng mga bata ang kanilang ginagawa.

Walang gaanong halaga (pangangambahan pa ngang maaring pagmulan ng bulag na pagkabulid sa bulaga ng ideyalismo at metapisika), ngunit sadyang may mga sandaling dumaratal gaya noon na sa tining ng isang pakiramdam ay bigla’t walang anu-ano’y kakantiin ka ng kanta. Mamamangha ka na lang nang tuluyan sakaling tumugma kahit paano sa anumang kagyat na tema at pagmamalas ang ilan sa mga linya:

I was born by the river
in a little tent
and just like the river
I've been runnin’ ever since...

In this entry, the author seemed nostalgic and positive. He reiterated experiences of living in far barrios, the very real yet unnoticed life of the ones living there. He also recalled that it has already been a year and 4 months since his arrest.

He also related the state with the word ‘kapraningan’ meaning paranoia. He describes the state as irrational and obsessed of defeating its critics and thus, his situation of being imprisoned.

But what’s most notable in this entry is his positive outlook for change. Consistently, he has written about the unacceptable power play ongoing between the state and the masses and his hope that he will soon have freedom again but change was not much given spotlight. In this entry, he uses a song lyric to denote his sureness that change is going to happen.

Rehas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ang rehas</th>
<th>ay bagwis</th>
<th>na kumot.</th>
<th>Ang luha</th>
<th>Ang gubat</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ay palay</td>
<td>sa langit.</td>
<td>Ang</td>
<td>ay hamog</td>
<td>ay lalim</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ang langit,</td>
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<td>sa rehas.</td>
<td>ng isip.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ng puso.</td>
<td>dagat,</td>
<td>ay kristal</td>
<td>ay baging</td>
<td>Ang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ang puso</td>
<td>makapal</td>
<td>na luha.</td>
<td>sa gubat.</td>
<td>dagat,</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Gayunman, sabi nga ni Cooke at ni Simeone, o ng teorya ng rebolusyon:

It’s been a long, long time comin’
but I know a change is gonna come...

In this entry, the author seemed nostalgic and positive. He reiterated experiences of living in far barrios, the very real yet unnoticed life of the ones living there. He also recalled that it has already been a year and 4 months since his arrest.

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salamin ng langit.
Ang langit, manipis, kulambo. 
Kulambo ay usok sa gabi.
Ang gabi ay itim na dugo.
Ang dugo ay anggi sa rehas. 

Jazmines
Canda
Tawa-ay
Alegre
Caloza
Antalan
Araza
Laylo
Cruz
Navarte
Esguerra
Verdan
Macasina
Carag
Bao
Pareja
Tomada
Beliesa
Alcantara
Segura
Matricio
Tobias
Montajes
Ramada
Ungsod
Alcon
Granado
Paniamong
an
Dosmanos
Gaviola
Lingan
Verzosa
Yambot
Vidar
Marbella
Solangan
Barado
Rodas
Navarro
Rolido
Villanueva
Villacorta
Guatba
Alejandro
Correjado
Tuardon
Santiago
Bodino
Vidar
Lreno
Caballero
Lacang

Pangilina
n
Ceriola
Sionicio
Lumantas
Villar
Itas
Daguit
Pajanosta
n
Fulgar
Mahinay
Delosantos
Balawag
Malolot
Sarad
Inocerta
Andrade
Abdulhamid
Abubakar
Abdurasid
Ajuron
Albani
Alonto
Amin
Antonio
Arawangs
a
Asaha
Atulan
Ayyub
Baha
Binang
Buenbraz
o
Galo
Hairal
Hadjili
Hasim
Hussin
Ikliman
Irají
Jul
Jumain
Kasim
Lagayasa
n
Limbong
Lisada
Majiril
Macrohan
Muner

Namuh
Palili
Ramizo
Saharin
Saliddin
Samih
Samsawi
Taraji
Tayong
Tumangu
g
Ukani
Wong
Yacob
Yusop
Bansil
Harid
Hassan
Lusani
Mango
Mustapa
Espedido
Reyes
Valero
Legaspino
Latagan
Sahak
Elizer
Manatad
Gamara
Borbe
Espinilla
Lomangay
a
Macandong
Hansol
Mariano
Idzmar
Dawani
Said
Lonarda
Palaw
Gumbahal
i
Aralun
Daud
Deki
Lim
Abdulajid
Saraman
Ali
Harun
Iskandal
This poem made use of a lot of metaphors, some were even repeatedly used but for each stanza, one theme of feeling emerges. The first stanza depicted sadness. The second one painted a dark picture of cruelty. The third captured the feeling of stagnancy and the last stanza saw ‘rehas’ or ‘bars’ as an evidence of the problem. All throughout the poem, ‘rehas’ was used. This brings to mind an image of a man in despair and calling for help as he wants to be released from this depressing situation.

To note, the tone of this poem is gloomy. He also listed down the names of all political prisoners in the Philippines. He then left the list as is, as if it no longer needed explanation. This will then help the reader understand that the fact that he was able to name all these political prisoners means they do exist, and that Acosta is not alone in combating such kind of fight.

**JEREMY’S SPOKEN**

*Si Jeremy (tawagin na lang natin siyang ganyan), makakaliwa malamang, hayun sa bandang kanan ng background sa may bungad ng backstage; nakapreset sa malalim, tabinging mala-sulok at halos para lang paspasang kinat-out at pineyst sa isang kurtina ng gaussian blur.*

*Mabilis at malaki ang galaw ng bibig ni Jeremy, kung-fu-style, malayung-malayong naka-sync sa kung ano ang naririning nating ibinugta ng dambuhaling tore ng PA—ilang linya ng berso sa isang milya ng reverb na tungkol kalakhan sa dakila’t walang-kamatayang katapata’t pagsusumikap ng kasalukuyang pamahalaan upang makapaghatid sa mamamayan ng hustisyang panlipunan at mapangalagaa’t maipagtanggol ang kanilang karapatang pantao at matiyak ang kapayapaan sa kasalukuyang magpakailanman... o ilan pang ganyang pag-uumpaw ng walang-dudang class-A na bullshit at kaputahan.*

*Pumasok na ang koro matapos irekta ng kick drums na ‘kala mo ay kulog at ng mga bassline na kasing-subsonic ng iyong kaluluwa, habang winawalis ng lensflare—orange, pula—ang buong arena. Nakapasak na rin sa aking mga tenga ang magkabila kong daliring pangarap—alam kong imposible hindi ako masaklot at mahataw sa dumadagundong na tugtugan, pero ang gusto ko lang naman kasi ay basahin ang mga labi ni Jeremy na tuloy pa rin sa pagkiwa: PA...SIS...TA...*

*Pucha! Titirahin ng mga hayop si Jeremy...*

This selection is a profile of a politician. Acosta portrays a person with the grandeur and charisma that can fool people into thinking that he/she is someone who values social justice, human rights and peace. Whereas, Acosta believes that this politician speaks of nothing else but fascism.

The author’s tiny hints of sarcasm and remarks regarding the deception the politician executes make this entry witty. The casual profiling tone with detailed description shows that Acosta is well aware of this person. He’s quite sure that a politician acts this way.

In this entry, the reality behind society is unraveled. People are easily pursued with personality, grandeur and a little bit of mentioning of abstract concepts such as justice and peace. Because
people like the idea of having a leader who values justice and peace, without actually knowing the ideology of the politician, they are easily deceived.

This entry says a lot about Acosta’s ideology. He sees the manipulation of a powerful person of the majority who are not as educated as the politician. He sees the dictatorial tendencies of politicians despite the charming personality whatsoever. And he does not see hope in people like Jeremy.

**ALIMPUNGAT**

*Kung nais ko kayong maiyak,*  
*Walang gayak-gayak*  
*Ay agad kong babanggiting*  
*May mga araw pa rin*  
*Na ako’y nagigising*  
*Nang maling-mali –*  

*Limang kisap ng mata at kalahati*  
*Kutob lang ay dalamhati*  
*Pagkat lahat ng iba pa*  
*Ay sadyang lingid na*  
*Sa aking pakiwari:*  

*Kung anong lunan ito eksakto*  
*Ako ay bobo’t talunan;*  
*Kung aling kwarto, kung ilang kanto*  
*Bulag ako at bulaan.*  

*Nakabitay ang bombilya*  
*Sa kisameng kabelya*  
*Ngunit di ako tiyak*  
*Kung ito ba ay galak*  
*O nag-aagaw-buhay;*  
*O kung ang mga tanong ko’y tuwid pa*  
*O tuwad na ngang tunay.*  

*Gaano kakapal ang mga sapot sa itaas*  
*At ang balat ng gagambang papatakas?*  
*Sa kasilyas ng mga ipis*  
*Gaano kaya kanipis*  
*Ang nag-iisang hiyas na pisi ng silahis*  
*Na tinatawid ngayon ng gabok at hamog*  
*At lamok at langong mga kaluluwa?*  

*Nangagsalabid ang mga anino*  
*At hindi ko masino*  
*Ang mukha at lawas ng mga katabi,*  
*Hindi mapiho na s’ya nga pala kagabi*  

*Ako ay natulog*  
*Hindi sa liwasan*
This poem exhibits the misery of the author. That despite all the courage he has shown, there are still nights that carry out reality check—that he was not with his family or anywhere he wants to be. Those nights remind him that he was suffering alone because of the fascist characteristic of the government.

In the fourth and fifth stanzas, the author sounded like he was doubting himself. He was no longer sure whether he could take it or how much hope he had to surpass this experience. Although there was no explicitly stated what he wanted to do about it, there is a hidden message where he pleads to get himself off the hands of the fascist government.

Again, power play is evident. The word ‘sakal’ strongly depicts manipulation and control over him. The use of ‘pasismo’ also suggests involvement of the ever powerful government.

**STATISTICS**

*Kung nais ko kayong Bumilib sa akin Sa bilang marahil Dapat na bumaling*  
Zero: Bilang ng kaselda  
Na kaya akong talunin  
Sa dama  
(mag-iiba ang pigura  
Kung kasado ang pusta).

*Fifteen: Bilang ng lamang ko sa taon Sa average na edad Ng kosang nagba-basketball.  
Six: Average na score ko Sa isang ten-point Three-on-three Basketball game (pumapalo ito sa tatlong puntos  
Kung kakampi si Pasimos  
O tirik ang araw at walang ulap).
The author was able to show his cleverness through this poem. With a humorous tone, he gladly shared on personal experiences inside prison involving inmates and other friends. He began the poem with such amusement with his encounters and ended it with a fierce statement.

The last paragraph, apparently, shows the hatred Acosta feels for Edwin Lacierda when he denied the existence of political prisoners.

If examined more deeply, the declaration that there exist no political prisoners means that everyone who is in prison is a criminal. And Acosta certainly did not like this idea being propagated by the Palace. Power play could be seen in the production of knowledge. Since the Malacanan Palace has legitimacy and power, any news that comes out of them are more likely to be believed by people. Using this legitimacy and power, they are able to pull off making people believe that there are no political prisoners in the Philippines.
Kung nais ko kayong magalit
Isusumbong ko sa inyo si Mabalasik.
Noong Marso, nang nagmamamtas na rito't rumelyebo
Ang kanyang iskwad ng mersenaryo,
Sinilip niya sa selda sa unang pagkakataon
Ang kanyang kalaboso.
Ganito ang paramdam ng tarantado:

Ikaw ba si Acosta?
Red Lolong ka raw, sabi nila ...
Naku, patpating mokong lang pala, hehehe.
Wala akong pangalan, hahaha.
Bakit, mamamatay ka ba kung di mo malaman
Kung 87IB kami o 34th o 14th?
Daldal mo rin, ano?...
Bobo, hindi Mabalasik ang pangalan ko;
Bansag yan ng yunit
Kaya nasa t-shirt, tanga.

Wala ka nang babalikan, Acosta.
Huwag ka nang umasa pa.
Wala na ang mga poste n’yo sa San Jose.
Anong di mo alam yun?
Alam na alam mo yun.
Binomba na namin at tinunaw
Yung mga base n’yo sa Matuguinao.
Ano ka ngayon? Daan-daan ang patay.
Naintindihan mo? Daan-daan! Patay!
May alam pa kayong strategic stalemate na kalokohan.

Hindi ako laseng, eng-eng.
Inggit ka lang dahil di ka maka-inom.
Aba, gago pala ‘to e...
Pati ‘yun pakikialaman mo –
Nagbabayad naman kami, baket?
Inggit na inggit ka
kasi di ka na nakakakantot.
Salsal! Salsal! Hahaha!
Pero sabihin mo lang,
Pwede ka naming ikuha.
Baka ilibre pa kita, hahaha!

Kulit mo, di pa ko laseng, bading.
Kawawa talaga kayo,
Si Joma inom nang inom sa abroad
Kayo nakakulon.
Huwag mo ‘kong ini-ingles-ingles,
Pak yu ka! Pak yu ka forever!
Pinag-aral ka sa UP ng gobyerno
Ngayon lalaban-laban mo.
Wala kang utang na loob.
Umayos ka, hayop ka
Hindi ko makakain
Huwag kang pasaway, Acosta,
Alam mo yung aksidente?
Sige gusto mo aksidente, kolera ka?
Masuwerte ka hindi Scout Ranger ang kaharap mo
Kundi kanina ka pa naaksidente,
Demonyo kang kalambre kang bayot kang
NPA kang salot-sa-impyerno kang Komunista…

As Mabalasik speaks in the poem, he reveals Acosta’s ideology. However, in his denouncement of Acosta’s ideology, his own ideology emerges. Therefore, both ideals can be seen in this poem.

In the poem, Acosta did not indicate his replies to Mabalasik. Although with the lines of Mabalasik, one could make hunches regarding what Acosta said. One general notion obtainable from the poem regarding Acosta’s ideology is that he dissents government policies or actions. Mabalasik, on the other hand, hates the fact that Acosta opposes the government, he even uttered:
“Pinag-aral ka sa UP ng gobyerno
Ngayon lalaban-labanan mo.
Wala kang utang na loob.”

There were a lot of explicit language used by the character of Mabalasik as portrayed by Acosta. With the way the poem was written, one could feel the detestation Acosta was feeling while this was being said to him.

Certainly, there is power play underscored in this selection. The mere way Mabalasik converses with Acosta in the poem suggests that he is in the position of power whereas Acosta was the one being subjugated.

The poem, nonetheless, shows how a military treats a political dissent and how a political dissent views a military. Their image as protectors of masses and promoters of human rights and peace can no longer replace the image Acosta has now of them.
I. Discursive Practice
This was created by Eduardo Sarmiento when he was still detained in Camp Crame. The following stories and illustrations have been publicized by Free All Political Prisoners campaign in Facebook and was also used in a story telling event to help increase awareness about the situation of Sarmiento.

II. Text and Visual Analysis

Susmatanon is a Waray word for folktales (in Tagalog, it is known as kwentong bayan). Choosing to use Waray dialect for a title portrays the love the author has for the place where he came from.

The colors used in the cover page provide a vibe kids will find attractive. This reiterates the subtitle of the book ‘Mga kwentong Pambata’ and expresses that this book’s aim is indeed to attract kids and whatever stories inside have messages or values he wants to impart with children.

The foreword is an emotion ridden paragraph that states how much he as a father wants to be able to tell stories to his children –something that he was not able to do because of being imprisoned. This was able to capture how much he loves his children and just the same how much he wants to share his values to them.
Baryo Maligaya typifies Sarmiento’s ideal Filipino community. The way the place was envisaged in the title page says how much Sarmiento appreciates the rural communities. It also portrays how much he believes that in these places, where life is simple and peaceful, a community is more conducive to thrive.

In his ideal community, people are always happy because there were no problems when it comes to food. There also exists no misuse of resources or exploitation of fellow members of community. He also described it as a place where unity is valued. There is also an indication of the type of leader he wanted to have. The leader must possess kindness, industry, intelligence and courage. Also indicated was the means of selecting the leader, in this case, there was a democratic way of choosing because everyone in Baryo Maligaya had a say who he or she wanted to be the leader.

The way Baryo Maligaya has been described also depicts similarities with the Filipino culture. Filipinos are known for being cheerful in nature. Sarmiento wanted to capture this along with his attachments of his ideals. The mere fact that he did not miss the detail regarding the selection of the leader means that this is something he really did want the readers to be aware of.

In this case, he wanted to show the children his ideal community where unity, unselfishness and democracy are valued.
In this page, a predicament is introduced. What’s notable is that even when talking of problems, Sarmiento wanted to portray it as something that affects everyone. And in showing that a problem like this affects everyone, he highlighted that the whole town became sad because of the situation.

Sarmiento may have wanted this problem to reflect what’s happening in the Philippines. What was once full of resources that the people enjoyed was now no longer the situation. He emphasized the frustration this had brought to the people.

The next set of pages introduced a red bird character. This character paved way so that the leader of the community finds out who is doing the stealing of their food, animals and water. This character led Mang Pedro by singing him a melody until he’s shown the real cause of the problem.

“…nakakakilabot na halimaw na may tatlo ang ulo, parang dambuhalang atas o buwaya, na may nanililisik na mga mata at bunganga na may matutulis na pangil at bumubuga ng apoy.”

This was how the monster was described. Technically, it’s a monster and all that needs to be said to describe it is that it is horrible. But a deeper look at the description could provide us with how the author views this monster.
The three heads could indicate the three branches of the government. The snake-like or crocodile-like appearance depicts the corrupt and deceptive characteristics of the ones in the government. The eyes could denote that these people have an eye for riches, resources or power while the sharp fangs and fire-breathing features of the monster could denote the monster’s hostility and dangerousness.

To sum it up, the monster in the story as told by Sarmiento is the entire corrupt and deceptive, greedy and hostile government.

Meanwhile, the red bird signifies the people who work to open the eyes of the people to the works of the government. The color red signifies courage, determination and passion. (Bourn, 2011). Just the same, Sarmiento sees these characteristics in activists, advocates and community workers. They are the ones who willingly show the people what is being done to them behind their backs and point to them what they should face.

The next part of the story captures the part when the leader undergoes the realization and then shares it with his fellow villagers.

The author through Mang Pedro explicitly states here the damages that have been done to the community because of this monster. Then, he calls for an action towards the destruction of this monster.

Just the same, activists and opposers of the government constantly increase the awareness of the people about the exploiters and the thieves in position. In this case, the people believed their leader and went on with what the leader suggested.

The next part of the story involved an enraged group of people ready to overcome the monster. The group included men, women, children and old-aged. There were no exclusions. Everyone was asked to participate and prepare their own weapons.

In this part, courage and unity were portrayed to be possessed by the members of the village. However, violence can also be underscored. The use of weapons was not something Sarmiento believes should not be taught to children. Meaning, for him, as shown in this story, there is nothing wrong with violence as long as what’s being fought is for the right thing.
Next was the actual killing of the monster. This was a rather graphic description of what happened to the monster. Everyone, including the kids, had their part in destroying the partner. Sarmiento wanted to tell this to the children, that even they have a part in doing something about our own monster of a government.

Victory can be seen in the next part of the story. The monster was now defeated and success was nonetheless seen as a result of unity, intellect, courage and determination of the people. Gratitude to the eye opener activists/opposition was also given. Justice was restored.

The ending of the story depicts the returning of the community to how it was in the beginning – ideal and perfect.

Ideology
With the use of symbols, metaphors and turnout of events, one can easily see the ideology of the author. Definitely, he is one who sees a small vs. big player conflict and one who sees armed revolution as a solution. Sarmiento believes that an ideal community/state can only be achieved if the people come together to oust the current system of government.

Power play
If we cluster all the people into one versus the monster, we could see the power play ongoing – the monster being the oppressor and the people being the ones oppressed. However, at the end of the story, the people were empowered and because of this, they were able to successfully conquer the monster.

Values Taught
The story aims to teach children of the value of unity, determination, intelligence and courage. It also wanted to encourage the children to take part in the movements to make the place we live in become a better place.

Ang Uwak

Ang Uwak is a story about a selfish kid named Gilas who always gets his parents’ harvest and refuses to share with his family. One day, he went on with his greed and mischief, took their family’s harvest and hid as he consumed what he got. His family came looking for him, but he was nowhere to be found. He then turned into a white crow. He regretted doing such mischief as he saw his family sad. To make up for the mistakes he did, he would bring fruits to his siblings every day. He also guarded the plants they had from pests. Later on, he turned back into a kid. This made him and his family very happy and caused him to change himself.

This story shows the value of selflessness and the value of change. As someone who has been on the side of the masses for a long time, Sarmiento wanted this value to be learned by children. He did not want them to turn into selfish beings when they grow up. Also, he wanted to express that change is possible. As long as one realizes what’s wrong with oneself, he could commence the change and become a better version of himself.

Relating this to Sarmiento’s views, he wants the kids to be selfless in a way that they would serve the people. Greedy and corrupt officials dominate our government and this is something that Sarmiento wants to avoid. On another note, he wanted change. Just like any other person who is critical of the current status quo or system society has, Sarmiento wanted to change this. He wanted a society where everyone shares and no one dares to get ahead of the other.
Apparently, the downside to being greedy was shown. And to make up for that, the crow needed to act on his bad personality. This could relate to Sarmiento’s view of justice. It could not be attained until change occurs.

Lastly, the white crow, a creature which is difficult to find in the Philippines, symbolizes people who are willing to change for the betterment of the system. For Sarmiento, people like these are definitely hard to find in the Philippines but a little awareness will get them there.

Ideology
Clearly, Sarmiento believes in social equity and social change. This says something about his principles and beliefs when it comes to his ideal political and economic state.

Visuals
The illustrations were very much detailed, showing everything that has been indicated in the text and helping the reader visualize the scenes the same way Sarmiento does. Sarmiento made use of a lot of colors to denote emotions and deeper implications but nonetheless made it still comprehensible.
Social Practice (Contextualization- Under what discourses were these texts created?)

Prison writing is a discourse the captures the freedom of thought of someone who is behind bars. This has been a practice among political prisoners way, way back. Incarcerated to be physically silenced, these prisoners defy the idea of being jailed and continue exercising their freedom through writing.

Consistent and evident in these writings are the struggles and the manifestations of power play between the state, its instruments and the ones being oppressed.

In the Philippines, political prisoners are those who are imprisoned because of their critical stand of the government.

Angie Ipong

A Red Rose for Andrea was written in an environment deliberately created for someone to feel confined. She was imprisoned and was literally behind bars. She accounted how hard it was to live inside jail but as a woman with strong spirits, she was able to surpass it. She came in as a strong willed person never giving up her principles and went out even stronger.

The issue being expressed in the book is an issue Angie Ipong wants everyone to be aware of. She believed that imprisoning a community worker who is critical of the government is a manifestation of how preposterous this system we have in the Philippines.

Although not originally her idea, writing became one of the ways Angie was able to freely express herself. She was asked by her sister to put into writing her daily experiences, and later on, she thought that these writings could be of good use in making people aware of the plight of political prisoners. She then continued writing about anything she experiences inside prison.

Ericson Acosta

Ericson Acosta is known for his witty poems however he recalls that prison writing could be very difficult. Not only was the environment unconducive, but the situation was also suppressing his ideas. He remembers sometimes being deeply engulfed in depression and agitation. But he eventually gave into the practice and is now about to launch a book entitled Mula Tarima Hanngang.

Eduardo Sarmiento

Eduardo Sarmiento is known for his artistic capabilities. He was able to create a children’s book that he dedicated to his children whom he has not seen for a while. Writing Susmatanon while detained in Camp Crame unfolded Sarmiento's ideas on what values should be taught to the children. Apparently, prison writing has been one of his ways of expressing himself and gripping firm into his principles.
APPENDIX D

Transcription of Interview with Angie Ipong

*Paano po ba yung mga nagging karanasan nyo nung kayo ay naaresto? Pwede nyo po bang ishare yung mga experiences*


And then, after all, all these, there was a time, we were having a meeting, mga women leaders. Kasi international women’s day din nun. Pumasok doon sa isang parang village may seminar house maypumasok, tong mga nakabonet. Sa kubo naming inaanuhan, pumunta doon. Tapos, E yun na nga! Hinanap ako agad. Pinosasan ako agad! Sabi ko “ano ba kayo! Anong pakay ninyo, sino kayo. Nasan yung ano ninyo, yung inyong warrant of arrest” haha wala na daw. Wala daw. Sabi kong pwede bang ano muna, kasi natutulog, poarang nagrerest ako, yung nagnanap, kasi alas dos pa di pa kami nagsisimula, yun bang nagnanap, pwede bang mag ano ako, magchange ako ng kasi nakapantulog ako. Sabi nila “ay din a kailangan!” dinrag ako nila. They dragged me into a van. Sakay ko na sa van sabi ko ah nagtatatanong ako hindi ako nagsasalita. Sino ba yung komander ninyo di ako nagsasalita. Tas pinirining ako. Nakapiring ako. Tas dinala ako ewan ko
ko naman yan hinahanap. Hinahanap ko ang lawyer ko. Pero alam mo may mga bumibisita sakini hindi ako pinapakita. I was incommunicado talaga.

Di rin sinasabi na nandun kayo?


Kasama sa trabaho, tapos yung nga bibili ng gulay, ano nakapagpropaganda din ako. Organic na pagkain, healthy foods. Ganyan. Tapos. Yung propaganda nga na “prison walls, iron bars and barbed wires can only imprison the body but not the mind” sabi ko. Sabi ko which is better yung magbebeg tayo, kasi dun sa prison the usual thing is you beg. Sa mga dalaw, pahingi? Which is much more yung may dignity ka yung mag trabaho ka use your hands rather than that demeaning asking for.. Totoo nga naman. Everyday day, I ate salad. Merong mga kamote, kung ano ano day. So all of this, I shared. Binigyan ko yung mga kasama ko. Atsaka yung mga guard ng mga singkamas na malalaki. So sabi ko parang nagging way to bond. Its not just the garden garden. Isang pamamaraan para maging mapalapit ka sa kaniya tsaka masabi mo yung buhay mo talaga sa knila. Pero may appreciation din sila, yung mga ginawa doon. Nagsimula ako nakita ako ng makina. Sabi ko sir pwede kaya ito gamitin? Sabi nya sige! Pinaayos ko yun. May tahian na naman kami day! Yung mga kapatid ko, bumasita sa akin nagpagawa kami ng parang ganito kalaki. Naging parang livelihood area. Dun kami nagluto. Etc.So meron kaming ganun. May patahian kami. So lahat ng ano sakin magpatahi. May mga kasama kami na nagtatahi, May nagluluto ng merienda. Meron kaming cooperative. Tas ako, may card making ako. Yung mga weeds don ipress ko yun tas gagawa ako ng cards. Tas pag may bumasita sabihin ko magdala ka ibenta mo to sa labas. Mga Free all political prisoners. It was a way to tell them that there are political prisoners. Hindi ka naaano na freedom mo iano mo yun. Kaya natatawa ako, imbis na kayo ang magbigay sa amin, kami pa way yan. Kayo pumupunta kayo tuwang tuwa kami. Kami rin, kasi bilang pol prisoners meron din kami pinagligiran task din. Kaya mga kapatid ko nga, kasi once a year yung sila pumunta. Pero may kapatid ako galign Canada. Pumunta yun. Bisita lang. Sabin g brother ko, yung mga pamangkin ko. Ako gagawa ng mga salad. Sabi nila, wag ka na mag ano ano jan! Sabi ko, hindi. Kasi sabi ko, maganda yun. Pero sabi ko sa tingin ko, yung ganun, nakaano din sa mga kapatid ko. Naintindihan nila Ano ba yung fascism without telling them without lecturing or somthing. But the idea na nandoon ako bakit ginanoon ako yung nangyayari saknat yung nangyayari sa akin is enough for them to understand. This kind of system. This kind of justice system is so unjust. That was, more than a million words they understood. What fascism is. Pero 6 years, I had to. 6 years, until they transferred me to another jail. Pagtransfer ko sa ibang jail, it was a terrible feeling. Kasi sinabihan lang ako at that evening. Alas dose may counting kasi kamang alas dose. After four and a half years nay un sabi nanay you prepare kasi you will be transferred. Sabi ko ha? Hindi. Imagine naman after nun hindi man lang ako pinirepare. Madami akong questions. Sabi nila don’t be asking kasi we are just following. Magprepare ka nalang. Kukunin ka ng army. Every hearing kasi kukunin ako ng army. Sabi ko my god. Imagine. Naano ako para naman akong luggages na binibitbit. May lump ako ditto. Ang sakit sakit. I want to shout. I want to cry. Terrible. All the while I kept thinking bakit ko naman isipin yun alam ko naman na ganto talaga yung sitwasyon ganito talaga yung prison institution it’s an instrument para isupress ka bakit naman ako mageexpect. Suddenly nandun na ko sa bagong jail. Pagdating naman doon. Naku, anong mangyayari saknat dito.Walang garden, walang space. Lahat semento. Pano ako.


_Eh sa kasong pero ano po nangyari?_

Ahh oo nga pala kasong ko nakakatawa. Tatlo kasong area kong pupuntahan. Iba iba. Every time, kukunin ako ng army dadalhin ako dun. Dipolog imagine from pagadian pa yun. That is 5 hours. Pabalik 5 hours ulit. Ala una palang kukunin na ko. Alas dos aalis kami. Its terrible talaga kapagod. Gustong gusto kong lumalabas. Kasi pa glalabas nakakatawa din. One time pumunta


I never, hindi ako nanghingi. It was all self reliance. It is my way of being creative and resourceful. Yung iba, wala silang activity. Buong araw silang nakatunganga. Alam mo, prison, its terrible. Its demeaning and then talagang pagsubok sa buhay. Walang mapapala sa isang taong nasa prison. Ako rin, di ko maubos maisip na kaya ko palang gawin yun. Basta nagging creative lang ako.
Ang ibig sabihin, it was a way to be creative, to bond with people and to make your stay hindi grudging. Ako yun ang unang unang ano, kailangan mo magkabuhay. Even here in prison you have to share or something parang ganun. So sabi ko “bloom where you are planted” kung nasaan ka hindi ka magisip. Kung ansan ka, dun ka magsimula hindi yung paglabas ko nalang dun ako magissimula. Mag aadjust ka rin kung san ka nilagay. E nalagay ako sa prison kaya ano ang aking gagawin? Kaya yung experience ko, positive padin.


**Nung time na naaresto kayo, ano pong alam ninyo sa legal rights ninyo? Diba po dapat may warrant of arrest, yung right to lawyer?**

Oo! Lahat ng aking ano, illegal arrest! Wala naman silang pinakitang ka-hit ano! Sinabi naman ako sa prisohan. E 14 days ako incommunicado, yun lang e paglabag nay un.

**E yung lawyer po gano katagal?**

Ah Later nay un! Nung hinahanap hanap na ako nila! That was the time na they brought me a lawyer. 14 days yun nung nakita nila ako, nun may kasama na silang lawyer.

**Yung proseso ng kaso, tama naman po ba yung tinakbo?**


Well, para akong nagbakasyon ng anim na taon. But it was an experience.

**Pano nyo po ide describe ang pagtrato ng justice system sa mga pol prisoners?**

Ay naku, unang ununa ang justice system natin, napaka unjust. Lalong lalo na s apps, bakit. They are considered enemies of the state. Because we are enemies of the state, gagawa nila lahat. Totorturin ka talaga nila. Ang tindi. All of uspps, have experienced that. Tapos ang gagawin nila, iccriminilize nila ang kaso. Meron tayong law, Hernandez doctrine, lahat ng kaso nay un, patayan na yan. That is subsumed into a rebellion case. Ang rebellion case, bailable yan. Ako, rebellion ang kaso ko, okay nay un political case. Tapos nilagyan pa ko ng double murder they are all criminal cases. Most of the cases are criminal cases. Ngayon, sabi ni Pnoy, nawala namangpps sa bansa, ito, they are all criminals. Imbis na rebellion, convicted na. Double life imprisonment, reclusion perpetua. Criminalize, yan ang pinakamatinding injustice sa isang. Kasi itong pps, they are giving their lives for the people to change the system. And yet there it is, dahil enemies of the system sila gagawin nila iccriminilize nila mara maimprison. Yun ang worst thing that could happen to a person. Paratangan ka, bigyan ka ng kaso, ikulong ka. Kaya ako, pupunta punta ako sa bilibid, yung iba jan ang tagal tagal na 18 years, nakakaawa. Ako ang ano ko, dumalaw tayo sakanila. Siguro kahit ako, kahit naong lakas mo, ganun. Kaya saludo din ako sakanila. Kaya ako bisita din ako ng bisita sa kanila.

**Pano po ba ang ideal justice system para sa inyo?**

Unang una, ano ba ang ginagawa ng isang tao kung maayos naman. Mayron kasing status quo, ayaw nila ng change. Gusto nila magpatuloy lang ang nanjan. A real justice system is one that is open to change. Mali na nga yan. Hal ngayon. PDAF, DAP. Mali! Gusto mo talaga ichange yan! Magrekallo tayo, meralco, price hike. Sa HL, mali yang ginagawa nila. Nangangamkam sila ng lupa. You stand for this. Kasi mali. You stand for the truth. Tas dadakpin ka. Kasi you are against the status quo. Kasi you are against these people. Ayan ang justice system natin. Hindi, ang tunay na js is one that recognizes the truth. The just. Ano ang just doon? Tama ba ang DAP? Ang corruption? Kaya nga nagreklamo, kung tama bay an. Wala nang magreklamo. A just justice system is good for the people. Pag good for the few, hindi yan just. It should be good for the many. Tignan mo kalagayan natin sa bansa, walang employment, walang land reform. 7 out of 10 farmers, landless.Sabi successful daw ang CARP, san ba yang successful? Yan ba ang klaseng sistema natin? Ayaw natyan yan. So gusto natin istraitghetn, the moment you do that, you could be an enemy of the state.

Kaya din yung mga tao, nag aarm struggle talaga. Kung wala kang arm struggle sa bukid, Land kinuha mo sa landlord, nakipag away ka sa landlord, pag wala kang armas, pano ka? Papatayin ka ng landlord! Pero the fact that these people have their armed force, matatakot din yan. Aalis

**Ano pong grade ang ibibigay ninyo sa justice system natin?**


**Pwede po ba kayo magshare tungkol sa pagsusulat ninyo? Matagal niyo nap o ba itong hobby?**

Dun lang ako nagsulat. Im not a writer. But you know, ang pagsusulat naman hal sa prison. Yun lang. Wag na magi sip ng mga hyphaluting words. Yun siguro mga feature writing kayak o siguro yun.

**Sino ba ang target readers ninyo sa mga sinulat ninyo?**

In the first place, wala akong nag isip isip nun! Di ko naisip yun. Basta ginawa ko lang yun. Kasi later na, parang marami namang use to. Para s apps, sa mga kumikilos din. Wide reach nga e. Maraming interesado din! Its for everybody. Lalo sa mga kumikilos. Yung second ko nga, tungkol talaga sa justice system and how it can help. Pero tingin ko, alam mo kailangan talaga ng overhaul. Dapat ioverhaul buong sistema. Kasi yung sa prison, part and parcel lang yun ng buong sistema. Kailangang ichange yung buong pol system, tas related din yun sa economic system. So hindi lang isang part ng system ang iisipin mo, it should be a radical change of the whole structure of society. That would be the time na magkakaron ng pagbabago.

**Last nap o, ano po yung gusto ninong mensaheng iparating?**
Unang una, sa mga apps. I want them to read my book and share my experiences. Makapagbigay naman siguro sakanila ng idea na wag tayo mag isip na katapusan na yun, let us keep our minds and hearts. And think big. Think bigger. Secondly, tingin ko kasi nasa jail tayo malilit na jail. Pero ang lipunan natin, jail yan. Tingin ko, nasa loob ng jail, gawin mo gusto mong gawin, paglabas mo, jail padin yan. Malaking jail yan. Continuous yan. Kaya nagkakaron ng pps, ng mga lumalaban. Kasi there will come a time you will also exp what I have exp don’t think that this is the end of it, let yur mind soar and then let yourself be free. Para sa mga advocates, mga kumikilos, nagbibigay ng buhay, para sa change. And to the existing order, wala nang mapapala dun. Wala kayong makapal na at tatawila.

APPENDIX E

Transcription of Interview with Ericson Acosta

Pwede nyo po ba ishare yung experience nyo ng pagkaaresto?

Okay so nasa Samar no, sa san Jorge, sa isang, actually mga interior na area ng Western Samar. Mahaba yung experience ng mga communities dito sa human rights violations sa militarizations. Yun yung aking ginagawa. Yung pagsasali dito sa experience. Just to give you an idea kung ano yung karanasan nila dun. Ayun may isang particular na insidente, may isang youth leader, pinaslang na ng militar, pero because yung unit ng military, they needed the smoke signal para makaland yung kanilang helicopter, ginamit nila yung bangkay ng yung youth leader na yun. So I think that should illustrate yung extent ng military atrocity dun sa area nay un. Ayun din yung mga kaso na sinasaliksik ko. So on my way back, sa town, may kasama akong mga officials ng barangay, nakasalubong kami ng isang platoon ng Philippine army. Yun, hinuni ako. And nakakita ng laptop sa aking bag. Yun ang kanilang main reason for suspecting that I was member of a rebel unit. Hinuni ako for mga ilang minutes din na inan, right there and then, sinaktan. Especially nung ano, nung sabi kasi nila buksan ko yung laptop ko, sabi ko wala na drained na yung battery nya. Pero to prove to them na wala na, pinindot ko. Dun nila ko sinimulang saktan, dahi sabi nila baka yung ginawa ko daw was some way para magself destruct yung laptop. So apparently, these guys have been watching too much hollywood movies. So dinala nila ako. Mga ilang hours din ng malayong lakaran. Going to their headquarters. On our way, yung kanilang officer isang sarhento, 2nd lieutenant, naghahanap sya ng signal. So maginge kung gano kainterior yung lugar na to kasi walang signal. Pero he needed to report to his superior, meron silang nahuli. The first time na makahanap sya ng signal narinig ko yung conversation nila, okay may nahuli. The officer was reporting to his superior na may nahuli sila. They were planning to charge me to an encounter. When somebody’s charged to an encounter, ibig sabihin nun, palalabasin nila may confrontation, kasama ako, lumaban ako, namatay ako. In other words, right
there and then, paslangin. Pero naglolobby sya na no no pwede po bang dalhin nalang naming jan. 4:46 Pero hindi, ah kailangan na daw ano, pero nagano parin sya. Naghanap parin kami, second ganun padin. Third time, hanap ulit sya signal. Sabi nya may nakakita. Tas sabi nya ano po to, singkit! Matangkad, maputi at di marunong ng language doon. Baka maraming information na makuha tayo ditto kasi sya ay may laptop, kasi yun yung basic equation ng military sa countryside. Laptop +forest = high ranking CPP NPA official. That was around 11, nung nadakip nila ako, nakaratig kami sa hq nakatali ako nito. Mga gabi na, yun and then nagstart yung interrogation and then torture. I was isolated from the world siguro mga 3 days incognito I was interrogated. For three days. So I would refer you, just to make the long story short. Meron naman akong mapprovide na links specially affidavit ko nandun naman kasi mas detailed na narration. Okay lang bay un?

**Ano po yung alam ninyo sa legal rights nyo and legal process?**

I was telling them if they have any complaints against me then bring me to the nearest police station. Then I will have to contact my lawyer my family lalo na hindi ako taga ditto. Ang layo layo ko. Never nilang kinonsider yun pero lagi kong sinasabi yun. Sa loob ng 3 days, di nila binigay yun. Pero I heard yung isang officer orienting yung kanyang mga tauhan. Okay nobody should know that I was there. Even yung mga sari sari store sa kampo nila shold not know. And expect na siguro after a day or two some human rights group will try to look for me pero hindi nila inano yun. Definitely I know ang aking rights. I definitely invoke that they respect my rights pero di nila ginawa. After 3 days, dun nalang nila ako dinala sa police station. Dun din no, iba pa yung violation ng police dun sa violation ng military. Dun, ganun padin padin signal. I needed my lawyer. Pero dun ko nalaman na they were charging me with the crime of illegal possession of explosives. Dun ko nakita yung Granada. Pero I knew no nay un naman kasi yung kasinga alam ko yung ganung modus I was just in fact waiting kung ano isasampa ng mga gagong ito. Ganun din no, so yung mga police dir in ako pinapakinggan. The next day yun na yung schedule ng aking inquest sabi nila pero the next day di padin ako pinapayagang kumontak to anybody na pamilya ko or whoever. Inquest, ihaharap sa fiscal then the fiscal will determine if there is probable cause. In other words, pag sinabi na may prob cause sasampahan na ng kaso. A full blown case starts. So ang rule naman dun is for the fiscal the police itself should conduct preliminary investigation and the report of the police and mag uusap pa eh magdecide yung fiscal if there’s prob cause. Anyway nung dinala ako, napakadeliberate nun ano. Alam nila walang fiscal. Dahil walang fiscal, Dahil walang fiscal kailangan muna akong dalhin ulit under some custodial arrangement sa military. Pumalag na ko. I actually made a scene sa hall of justice. Nagsasalita ako dun, kasi yung mga nagdalang military sa hall of justice sa minisipyo nakacivilian, di mo malalaman na military sila. So I called the attention ng mga tao dun, mga ordinary employees, ako ay isang aktibista. Hindi ako pwede kunin ulit ng mga militar. Anyway, buti nalang tumugon na sila. At nireklamo ko, at nga ako pinayagang tumawag. Yung coronel, ah di ka ba pniyagang tumawag? Eto yung phone! So kinuha ko agad yung phone, I was able to contact my mother. Ang nangyari, in the absence of a fiscal pwede naman daw idirekta sa judge and wait for the judge to decide. Basta ang point is hindi ako dalhin sa militar kasi marami na naman silang pwedeng gawin sakim. Tinorture na nga nila ako so ganun. Kumbaga nabitin pa sila sa interogasyon gusto pa nila ako mahawakan. Kumbaga yung max na number of hours that legally they are allowed to hold ako without presenting to civilian authorities. So ayun, dinala na ko sa kulungan.
Ano pa po yung mga naging karanasan nyo throughout the case?

In my case, ganito yung legal remedy na parang tactic ng legal counsel is to immediately file a motion of reconsideration sa DOJ kasi after magsabi yung fiscal na okay may probable cause and I was scheduled for arraignment yung babasahan ka ng sakdal basically it's your first more or less hearing mo e sa korte in front of the judge. So babasahin sayo yung kaso and then pakikinggan ka lang anamn do you plead guilty or not. If you say no, dirediretso yun isschedule hearings later on. Immediately hindi ako nagpaaraign at diniretso to sa DOJ. Pero jus the same, tumagal ng taon yun sa DOJ. DOJ did not act on it immediately. Pero I had other concerns that needed hearings. Or actually the prosecutor, the fiscal and military, had their own concerns against me that needed hearing. For example, yung fiscal nagfile ng motion for me to be transferred to another prison facility kasi I was detained sa Calbayog. Gusto nialang ilipat ako sa catbalogan ang kanilang reason was I may be rescued by armed groups. So kailangang ilagay daw ako sa mas fortified na detention. Dun lang daw sa provincial jail e maari ako akong irescue ng aking mga armed comrades. Pero actually they just wanted to mas masupress ako. Nakakulong na ko, pero mas taasan na nila ang kanilang pagbabantay sa akin. And my visitors also, ganun din nahaharass din. So yun, may hearing yun. Pero dirin naman nagprosper ang kanilang scheme to transfer me.

You know what, we’re talking about legal procedure no? In cases like these, di uubra nay un lang. Di nga uubra kahit magaling abogado mo e. Napakalaki ng tulong ng isang pol campaign. The campaign itself creating awareness sa aking kaso. I think I was very fortunate na may ganun. Ditto and sa ibang bansa. Anything na maggigipit sa akin ng husto makakatulong yun to deflect mga ganung bagay. Anyway totoo yun, mga hearings hindi natutuloy yan. Tapos by july 2011, nagsimula na kong umihi ng may dugo so nakakaapekto na ang aking kalagayan. So kinailangan maghearning kasi dun ko iaappeal na dalhin ako at bigyan ako ng medical attention pero di binigay yun. Di ako ginrant ng ganun. Mangyayari yun so jan 2013 na. So ibig sabihin kaya din ang aking kalagayan. Pero labas sa aking karanaan, totoo yun. Kasi yung mga inmates doon, kaya tumatalagal ang kaso, walang mahusay na sistema sa pagproseso ng mga kaso. Halos Masaya na an sa meron pag merong hearing monthly pero hindi pa, mga 2-3 months walang hearing. Kung may hearing man, absent ang kung sino. Uuwi sila ng wala lang. I mean babalik sila from jail going to the court meron ka nakasched nah earning biruin mo inabangan mo yun for months pero pagdating dun, walang mangyayari, or walang dadalo. Or kun g meron man nangyari, the lawyers ay hindi man lamang magpapaliwanag sa kanilang client. Im talking about the ordinary prisoners, ito yung mahihirap na prisoners that are charged of common crimes. Kasi sa Calbayog jail I was the only pp there ano. I was among common detainees. 18:41 Nakita ko yun. Halimbawa, meron dun, ang kaso nya is nagnakaw daw sya ng isang alimango. Naabutan ko sya dun, limang taon na sya dun, wala paring desisyon. Siguro mga 18 years old sya. Imagine ano, nasira na yung youth nya. Pero after 5 years, madidismiss lang naman yung kaso nya. Na wala pala syang kasalanan dun sa alimango. Imagine dahil sa alimango, 5 years ang suffering! Meron isang matanda nakulong dahil sa pagnanakaw ng 3 niyog. At nakulong sya for 3 years, madidismiss lang anamn din at napatunayan na wala syang kasalanan pero imagine no? isang niyog per year. Napatunayan ko yun no, sa aking mga kasama. Labas pa sa aking kaso.

Pano nyo po idedescribe yung treatment sa political prisoners sa ng justice system?

Para po sa inyo, ano po ba ang ideal na justice system?

lipunan ay makatarungan. We’re not merely talking of yung procedure sa korte. Ofcourse, yugng mga korte naman ay magagamit mo lang pag may kapangyarihan. At nagasisibbi nga yung mga batas para sa kanila. Although meron malaking role for judicial reforms no. kapag mapabilis yung prosecution of cases pero yung system hindi eh. Nakatungtong kasi ang gulong ng justice system sa bulok na political system. Pwede tayo manawagan for reforms. Maaring possible in various circumstances pwede sya. Pero hindi rin sya magiging makabuluhan kapag malakas parin ang umiral.

Ano pong grade ang ibibigay ninyo sa justice system?

Singko e. Walang duda.

Pwede po ba kayong magshare tungkol sa pagsusulat nyo in prison. Dun pos a mga sinulat nyo in prison, sino po ba yung mga target readers ninyo and ano po yung mensaheng gusto niyong iparating?

Yung mismong nakatarget dun sa campaign, sa pagpapalaya sa akin at sa iba pang political prisoners. Yung Free Ericson Acosta Campaign. Pero parang I really tried. I also became the campaign’s chief spokesperson. So ako yung subject pero I really had to do something kahit na habang gumagawa sa labas yung mga organisasyon. Yun sa tingin ko yung best na magagawa ko. Na yung mga sulatin ko ay makaabot sa labas. Na maikwento ko yung karanasan ko ng injustice, etc. yung aking light at ng marami pa. you know, sa aking kalandahan, napakacasal na. pero marami pa talagang mas masaklap. In fact may hindi nga nabibigyan ng papel at panulat. Or yung iba yung mga individually wala naming support group or special campaign. Nagging ano ko na rin, gamitin yung kampanya para sa pagpapalaya sa kampanya ng free allpps. Tawag nga nila parang poster boy e. kasi nga maingay. It so happened na before ako makulong marami ako akong kilala na artist and writers. So minsan nga ngugult po ako dahil sa dami daming ppps, lagging sa akin.

Transcription of Interview with Atty. Brenda Canapi of CHR

**Ano po ba yung duties and responsibilities ng CHR?**

Yung duty ng CHR is to protect and uphold human rights. Ngayon pagdating sa political prisoners, ang obligation ng CHR, ang mandate nyan to investigate if there are violations on the rights of political prisoners yun ang number 1 namin. To investigate violation of human rights. To include the violation of the rights of political prisoners. And also to monitor government’s compliance to the international human rights instruments ratified by the Phils. Like for example the Intl’l Covenant on Civil and Political Rights this was ratified by the phils nakalagay ditto yung mga rights. No torture. Ahh.. Respect the right to life of an individual an many other rights. So minmonitor ng CHR nagcocomply ba yung Phil government sa obligation nya na walang halimbawa walang citizen na natotorture or arbitrarily deprived. So yun yung mandate ng CHR.

**Kasama po ba dun ang legal rights? Rights as an accused person, kasama din po ba yun?**

Yung detained person, political prisoner di naman ibig sabihin pag nakulong sya wala na syang rights. Natanggal ng CHR yung karapatan because human rights is inherent in a person. Kaakibat na ang pagkatao ang hr magmula ng isilang ang tao hanggang sya ay mamatay. Di porket napostpone sa korte, nakulong, wala na yung karapatan nyan. Right to life, right not to be tortured. Right to be treated humanely. Right to health habang nasa loob ng kulungan. Pol prisoners still enjoy these rights. Right to visitation. Right to religion kahit nasa loob sya the prisoner has the right to practice religion. So yun yung mandate ng CHR.

**Paano nyo po nakikita ito? Bakit po ba nangyari ito?**

Kasi maraming maraming dahilan kung bakit, inaaresto itong mga political prisoners yung mga cause, they use force, halimbawa sa pakikipagstruggle para ipaglaban sina yung mga causa nila merong nanakaw na, merong nacommit na crime, halimbawa arson. Arson yung panununog. So halimbawa itong mga political prisoners, they resort to armed struggle para ipaglaban yung mga causa nila so syempre yung mga military ano nila isusuppress nila yung rebellion, yung mga kumakalaban sa gobyerno yung mga causa nila. So pag nagcommit itong mga political prisoners, nakapatay sila ng suntalo or civilian, pwede silang ngayon makasuhan ng mga ordinary crime, yan yung ginagawang tactic ngayon ng militar para yung mga political prisoners, sinasampahan ng mga kasong Murder, arson.

**Pero iba po ba ang kasong pag rebels? Rebellion po ba dapat ang kasong nila?**

**Ano naman po yung stand ng CHR ditto sa issue na to?**

Syempre ang issue ng human rights, ano nga, minimonitor nga if the rights of political prisoners are being violated. Ang ginagawa ng CHR we do jail visitations isa yan sa mga mandate naming bumibistia kami sa mga kulungan. We have 17 regional offices, so yung mga regions merong opisina ang CHR dun, nagacoconduct din sila ng jail visitations, kami rin ditto sa metro manila nagacoconduct din ng jail visitations. Binibisita naming itong mag political prisoners, tinitignan naming yung sitwasyon nila. Kung hindi ba naviviolate yung mga rights nila.

**Ano po yung mga actions or programs?**

Investigate human rights violations and monitor government’s compliance and then we do human rights education sa mga police sa mga military, sa mga bureau of correction personnel, sa DOJ, yungBOC, yung mga convicted na. Halimbawa naconvict yung pol prisoner, dinadala sila sa BOC. Nagacoconduct din kami ng human rights education sa mga police, militar, bureau of jail management and penology. Yung mga law regarding human rights para maiwasan ng mga government authorities na maviolate yung rights ng mga citizen.

**Ano nga po ulit ang ginagawa ng BJMP?**


**Pag naconvict po, may chance pa bang magappeal?**


**Ano po bas a tingin nyo yung dapat gawin para maaddress tong issue na tong violation of human rights sa mga pol prisoners?**

Ang kailangan ng government talaga iensure na yung basic needs nung mga tao natutugunan, kasi kung basic needs nanjan, nasasatisfy, may trabaho mga tao, nakakapagaral mga anak nila, malelessen itong number ng political prisoners. Kasi yung mga pol prisoners may ideology sila e, diba. Gusto nila ano tumugon yung gobyerno sa social problems. And then kung natutugunan ng
gobyerno, mababawasan number ng political prisoners. So yun yung mas dapat tugunan ng government. The government must ensure that the basic needs of the people are met. May mga trabaho yung tao, maayos na tirahan. Yun ang pinakabasic na kailangang gawin.

APPENDIX G

Interview Coding

Angie Ipong Interview

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They are considered enemies of the state.</td>
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<td>Political Prisoners</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sabi ni Pnoy, na wala namang pps sa bansa, ito, they are all criminals</td>
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<td>Political Prisoners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>They are giving their lives for the people to change the system</td>
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<td>Political Prisoners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>So gusto natin i-straighten, the moment you do that, you could be an enemy of the state.</td>
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<td>Political Prisoners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Totorturin ka talaga nila. Ang tindi. All of us pps, have experienced that. Tapos ang gagawin nila, iccriminilize nila ang kaso. Meron tayong law, Hernandez doctrine, lahat ng kaso na yan, patayan na yan. That is subsumed into a rebellion case. Ang rebellion case, bailable yan. Ako, rebellion ang kaso ko, okay nay un political case. Tapos nilagyan pa ko ng double murder they are all criminal cases. Most of the cases are criminal cases.</td>
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<td>PLIGHT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Criminalize, yan ang pinakamatinding injustice sa isang pp</td>
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<td>Political Prisoners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wag tayo mag isip na katapusan na yun, let us keep our minds and hearts.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Political Prisoners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to action for people</td>
<td>Ako ang ano ko, dumalaw tayo sakanila. Siguro kahit ako, kahit naong lakas mo, ganun. Kaya saludo din ako sakanila.</td>
<td>Political Prisoners</td>
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<tr>
<td>How is justice attained</td>
<td>Even armed struggle has a place in this unjust society. There you can find justice. Kasi ang mga tao, naghahanap sila ng hustisya. Pano nila mahahanap ang hustisya kung wala namang magdedefend sa kanila</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Justice System</td>
<td>A real justice system is one that is open to change. Gusto mo talaga ichange yan! Magreklamo tayo. You stand for this. Kasi mali. You stand for the truth. Tas dadakpin ka. Kasi you are against the status quo. Kasi you are against these people. Ayan ang justice system natin. Ang tunay na js is one that recognizes the truth. A just justice system is good for the people. Pag good for the few, hindi yan just. It should be good for the many. Pag may just system kasi, just kasi ang sistema may change, walang magreklamo. Makikita mo dev. Not for just a few but dev for the many.</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views of Armed Struggle</td>
<td>Kung wala kang arm struggle sa bukid, Land kinuha mo sa landlord, nakipag away ka sa landlord, pag wala kang armas, pano ka? Papatayin ka ng landlord! Pero the fact that these people have their armed force, matatakot din yan. Aalis din yan! Even armed struggle</td>
<td>Armed Struggle</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Prison walls, iron bars and barbed wires can only imprison the body but not the mind.**

**PLIGHT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS**

**Call to action for people**

**How is justice attained**

**Ideal Justice System**

**Views of Armed Struggle**

**POLITICAL PRISONER’S PERCEPTION OF JUSTICE AFTER HAVING EXPERIENCED THE PHILIPPINE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

**ARMED STRUGGLE AS A RESULT OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The change that should occur</th>
<th>Systemic Change</th>
<th>THE NEED FOR AN OVERHAUL IN THE SYSTEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tingin ko kasi nasa jail tayo maliit na jail. Pero ang lipunan natin, jail yan. Tingin ko, nasa loob ng jail, gawin mo gusto mong gawin, paglabas mo, jail padin yan. Malaking jail yan. Continuous yan. Kaya nagkakaron ng pps, ng mga lumalaban. Kasi there will come a time you will also exp what I have exp don't think that this is the end of it, let yur mind soar and then let yourself be free. Para sa mga advocates, mga kumikilos, nagbibigay ng buhay, para sa change. And to the existing order, wala nang mapapala dun. Wala kayong mapapala dun sa style na icriminalize. There will always be people who will be against the unjust system kaya magbago na kayo!</td>
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| Problems faced by masses | corruption  
Cct  
Yolanda  
meralco price hike  
hacienda luisita land grabbing  
walang land reform  
walang employment | Systemic Change |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|

has a place in this unjust society

There will always be people who will be against the unjust system kaya magbago na kayo! Kasi may magrebeldre talaga! Tama yung ginagawa ng mga NPA.

Pero tingin ko, alam mo kailangan talaga ng overhaul. Dapat ioverhaul buong sistema. Kasi yung sa prison, part and parcel lang yun ng buong sistema. Kailangang ichange yung buong pol system, tas related din yun sa economic system. So hindi lang isang part ng system ang iisipin mo, it should be a radical change of the whole structure of society. That would be the time na magkakaron ng pagbabago.

The change that should occur

Systemic Change

THE NEED FOR AN OVERHAUL IN THE SYSTEM

Evaluation of Justice System

Failure! Failure! Wala namang pagbabago. Kung titignan natin ang society natin.

Justice Systemic Change

Problems faced by masses

Systemic Change

THE NEED FOR AN OVERHAUL IN THE SYSTEM
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sa dalaw, ukod dun, pati mga dalaw hinaharass</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yung parents ko binibigyan din ng death threats</td>
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</table>
Meron pang mga times, may dumadalaw sakin mga dalaga, mapupungay ang mga mata na parang mapapansin mo drugged. Sasabihin sakin, ah okay nap o pinayagan nap o tayo dun daw pot ayo sa kusina. Apparantly, mga sex workers na kinuha ng mga sundalo para akitin ako at parang gusto akong iset up kung akoy macompromise sa isang sexual act. Mga ganun ba. Para madiscredit ako or marami, marami silang spies na pinakawalan para sakin. Yung iba mga inmates din. Minsan pati mga dalawan magsasabit sila ng mga device. Bukod pa dun sa actual harassment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View of military's treatment of political prisoners</th>
<th>Sabi ng ating consti diba, yung supremacy ng civilian authority over the military</th>
<th>Political prisoner Prison Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So yung justice system is mas magiging para sa mamamayan at hindi magiging pang api.</td>
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<td>Ofcourse, yugn mga korte naman ay magagamit mo lang pag may kapangyarihan. At nagsisilbi nga yung mga batas para sa kanila.</td>
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**Remark/Observation of Justice System**

- Anti-Poor Justice System
- Anti-Poor Justice System
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences of ordinary prisoners with justice system</th>
<th>Justice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nakatungtong kasi ang gulong ng justice system sa bulok na political system.</td>
<td>ANTI-POOR JUSTICE SYSTEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilang yung experience sa mga ordinary saihin natin yung ano nagcommit din sila ng offences. Pero grabe no, kita mo yung kahirapan nila. Hindi sa ineexcuse natin sila sa ginawa nila. Pero definitely victim talaga sila ng society. Imagine no sa mga inmates dun, ang laking porsyento. Saihin nating 50% hindi marunong magsulat magbasa. Ano yung equality sa batas jan, pano ka iseserve ng batas na most of he time nakasulat sa ingles. Yun nga yung sinasabi ko, pupunta sa ano, babasahin nila mga sakdal sakanila tagalong man o ingles, di nila maiintindihan dahil di sila marunong magbasa. Yung procedures nila sa legal system, dir in nila alam. They are very ignorant of these legal procedures. Illiterate sila.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kasi yung mga inmates doon, kaya tumatalag ang kasol, walang mahusay na sistema sa pagproseso ng mga kasol. Halos Masaya nay an sila pag merong hearing monthly pero hindi pa, mga 2-3 months walang hearing. Kung may hearing man, absent ang kung sino. Uuwi sila ng wala lang. I mean babalik sila from jail going to the court meron ka nakasched nah earning biruin mo inabangan mo yun for months pero pagdating dun, walang mangyari, or walang dadalo. Or kun g meron mang nangyari, the lawyers ay hindi man lamang magpapaliwanag sa kanilang client. Im talking about the ordinary prisoners, ito yung mahihirap na</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of justice system</td>
<td>Singko eh. Walang duda.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideal System</td>
<td>We’re not merely talking of yung procedure sa korte. Nakatungtong kasi ang gulong ng justice system sa bulok na political system.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

EN: Evaluation of justice system

1. Singko eh. Walang duda.

EN: Ideal System

- We’re not merely talking of yung procedure sa korte. Nakatungtong kasi ang gulong ng justice system sa bulok na political system.