

Review of Fernando's Essay

Fernando's AP takes on the form of an academic paper, contrasting his more letter like CP. He roots the crux of his argument into what he focused on his CP: his Filipino heritage and discussing parallelisms between the politics of the Philippines and the American prison system. Importantly, he uses the previous discussion between scholars in that context to pivot to a discussion of solving mass incarceration, and specifically due to the opioid epidemic.

- The paper does a great job of establishing itself as a proper successor the CP while still being focused on solutions of mass incarceration and the steps that can be taken towards abolition. It becomes more and more of an academic paper as it goes on, making it feel like a natural gradient between the formal letter of the CP and the academic and precise AP.
- It is not immediately clear as to what the goal of the paper in the beginning but becomes more evident as it goes on. I think it would be useful if the paper laid out in a more clear and direct manner in the introduction of where it will start (a.k.a. the ending of the CP) and what direction it will take those ideas in. This will make reading through the first half of the paper a lot easier and improve overall flow.
- The incorporation of evidence is great and everything has an associated source, really strengthening the positions the paper is laying out. I will say that the ideas being presented could be even stronger if the commentary/analysis was modified. Often the analysis would be muddled by very long comma separated sentences that would be hard to follow. Just like the use of evidence in the paper, make your analysis and commentary more direct and don't be afraid to use simpler sentences if it serves to make the point more potent.

Reflection

The feedback Andy and I received for our Zines was mostly positive. The only major feedback we got to act on is to take what we had planned out and fully execute on it. Neither of the zines are fully completed yet so we are going to work to have both done alongside other creative extras if time allows. The following are changes Andy and I intend to incorporate as we continue:

- Instead of an academic abstract, we will look at the possibility of creating a paragraph "publishing pitch". That is, some quick blurb with the intent of trying to convince say a real publishing company for funding to produce a run of the zines we are making.
- Create supplementary stickers that pertain to a specific section of a zine. These theoretically could be packaged with the zines if they were actually published/printed.
- Potentially limit the scope of the zines. Currently they are concerned with a more comprehensive overlook of the arguments for abolition and then 3 major alternatives to prisons. It may be more advantageous to have more specificity. On the flip side it may be more fitting in a handout zine to address more issues, just potentially less in depth.

Overall we need to first finish the zines then we will focus on potential supplementary material to create a potentially real collection.

Fernando

Fernando's essay was a hybrid between a letter to his family and a more academic paper, tapping into his Filipino heritage and discussing parallelisms between the politics of the Philippines and the American prison system, successfully motivating the importance of why one should care about prison abolition. His arguments were strong with consistently supported claims. The following changes I believe would potentially make this good essay clearer

- Directness in transitions: transition words like "firstly" to open up a paragraph often can be changed or cut to produce a more direct flow.

- Headers: The headers do provide a good road map to the structure of the essay. I also believe the transitions if treated more directly could remove the need for headings, making the letter flow continuously in its arguments. Hence I think headings aren't exactly necessary but that is a stylistic choice more than anything.
- The thesis statement could probably be placed earlier in the essay, or potentially a “prototype” thesis that matures and develops over the course of the introduction that then is fully fleshed out and stated at the end of the intro.

Andy

Andy's essay was an academic paper that focused on how the prison system of America is deeply rooted in the racism and oppressive history of slavery with those in power (capitalists, white supremacists, and bureaucrats) with the prison acting as a system that only serves to forcefully remove those from society that go against societies “status quo”. Andy continually integrated quotes and evidence into his claims in a way that read very clearly and concisely. My recommendations for him is to flush out the paper by completing and similar strong analysis of another author and to search for just a few more sources to potentially highlight the strongest or most damning arguments and claims.

Reflection

My current draft arguably only contains a guiding thesis and one flushed out section of a single author's arguments. Therefore I intend to first and foremost develop the arguments of another one of the writer's of interest and play their ideas off one another. Additionally I will provide a better contextualization of the “why” behind prison abolition for me personally and for why objectively it needs to be addressed. There are no changes or suggestions I was offered that I disagree with, so I intend to include or attempt to include all the ideas I was offered.