

Semiotic Concepts of Editorial Cartoons

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Abstract: The study aimed to analyze the editorial cartoons of the broadsheet, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, using semiotic concepts revealing the signs and the symbol/index/icon triad, reflected in the cartoons concerning the 2013 Presidential election.

The editorial cartoons were obtained from the official website of Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI). Editorial cartoons related to the May 2013 election were selected and were analyzed using Chandler's (2011) semiotic concepts on signs and symbol/index/icon triad. The semiotic concepts were utilized to reveal the meaning of the editorial cartoons. The analyses were checked and reviewed by experts.

The editorial cartoons illustrate the Filipinos' perception of the election in relation to the concerns, anomalies and popular and the infamous personalities involved which have been the cartoonists' medium to freely mirror the views of the common folks. In light of the 2013 election, the signs that circulate within the society and which the society formed were in majority attacking the issue of the Philippines' struggle toward a clean and honest election.

Keywords: semiotic concepts, editorial cartoons, signs, symbol/index/icon triad, election.

1. INTRODUCTION

A picture is worth a thousand words (Mesina & Recio, 2012). For this reason editorial cartoons play an important role in a newspaper. It is a social, political, and economic monitor of the occurrences in the country and the world reflecting the scene from the cartoonist's surroundings (Lawate, 2012). The currency and the conveyed message of an editorial cartoon is what differs them from the other caricatures in the newspaper. "A cartoon is a drawing, representational or symbolic, that makes a critical, witty or humorous point (Low, D. and W., 2000)." Further, it was indicated that cartoons trace back their history from the era of Reformation as a means of argument and ridicule.

The means by which editorial cartoons are expressed are signs. Signs in a linguistic point of view are anything that conveys a message: words, images, gestures, voices, and even thoughts. Signs do not only portray meaning, but they also offer ideologies, worldviews, and lifestyles. "Anything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as signifying something – referring to or standing for something other than itself" (Chandler, 2011). The meanings of signs are socially constructed and likewise construct the society. The election period was a particularly influential and well-noticed event in the society. Such an event has great impact on how a society views various signs. This event was evidently a great influence on how signs are used and on how they are given meaning in editorial cartoons. The study has revealed how elections affect the use and meaning of signs and the symbol/index/icon triad in editorial cartoons to depict the certain event. The main objective of the study was to analyze and reveal the meaning of editorial cartoons using semiotics.

2. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research design was used to analyze the meaning of editorial cartoons through Chandler's (2011) semiotic concepts: signs and the symbol/index/icon triad. The materials utilized in this study were the editorial cartoons in the newspaper daily, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. The editorial cartoons gathered were related to the election period in the Philippines from January to June 2013 and were taken from the official website of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. In gathering the data, the availability of newspaper dailies was utilized from the official website of the newspaper, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. After the editorial cartoons were obtained, the data were analyzed through the semiotic concepts: signs and the symbol/index/icon triad of Chandler (2011) present in the cartoons. The analyses were peer reviewed by experts.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Semiotic Concepts: Signs (signifier and signified):

The analyses conducted in this study concerning the signs were based on Ferdinand de Saussure’s definition of a sign, composed of a signifier and a signified. This dyadic concept is made up of the form which the sign takes (signifier) and the concept it represents (signified). A sign is a distinct combination of a signifier with a particular signified. The signifier is the form whether a picture or a letter forming a word as long as it is the ‘material’ element that serves as the representation of a person’s sensory. On the other hand, the signified is the concept in mind. It is referred to as the notion of the thing and not the thing itself (Chandler, 2011). De Saussure’s concept of a sign means that the signifier is the representation and the signified is the meaning behind that representation.

The signifiers in these editorial cartoons were identified as primary, secondary and tertiary signifiers based on its level of importance or impact in the cartoon. This was based on the main characters of the editorial cartoon on which the theme was focused. These signifiers are considered primary because they are the main object of the editorial cartoon while the secondary signifiers support the primary signifiers. The tertiary signifiers, then, tie the primary and secondary signifiers, establishing relationship among the signifiers. The cartoonist drew the primary signifiers as ‘foregrounds.’ Chandler mentioned Leymore’s (1975) idea of *figure and ground* which states that selective perception allows ‘foregrounding’ and ‘backgrounding’ dominant shapes or figures. The *figure* or ‘foreground’ was considered as the primary signifiers while the *ground* or ‘background’ images and texts are referred to as secondary and tertiary signifiers. Thus, this creates the format of primary, secondary and tertiary signs in the analyses.

The signifiers were identified the way they are found in the editorial cartoons, often in capitalized and bold form. Several of the signifiers have signifieds or meanings similar to their form (signifier) because of how they are utilized in the editorial cartoon. Also, the ‘the’ article is often used in the signifieds (meaning) of the sign for the reason that it provides distinction. When ‘the’ is used, the reader or audience is instructed to locate the object being referred to in the same shared mental set of objects. The instruction to locate this object has a situational-cultural, a textual or structural basis (Hawkins, 1975 as cited by Murcia & Freeman 2010). In the analyses, the article ‘the’ has structural relationship with the signifier. It points out to the audience that the signifier being referred to is the one that can be seen in the editorial cartoon.

These concepts were applied in the analyses of the following editorial cartoons found in Table 1.

Table 1. Signs (signifier and signified) in Editorial Cartoons.

Editorial Cartoon Plate:	Primary Signifiers	Signified
1	ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS, PRIVATE ARMED GROUPS, CRIMINAL GANGS and POLITICAL RIVALS	The different armed groups
2	MEDIA CORRUPTION	The media group Corruption
3	NO TO POLITICAL DYNASTIES	Opposition to political dynasties
4	COMELEC	Comm. Sixto Brilliantes represents the COMELEC
	PCOS MACHINE	All PCOS machine used in the election
	2010 FAILURES AND ERRORS	The previous election’s failures and errors
	FRAUD	Fraud
5	PROCLAMATION RALLY ELECTION 2013	President Aquinos’ grand proclamation rally for senatorial candidates
6	COMELEC	Comm. Sixto Brilliantes represents the COMELEC
7	EPAL POLITICIANS	Politicians who campaigned prematurely
8	DEMOCRACY	Democracy in the Philippines
9	POLITICAL DYNASTIES	The political dynasties in the Philippines
10	FAKE MONEY	Vote-buying

Plate 1. The primary signifiers in this editorial cartoon are *Organized crime groups*, *Private armed groups*, *Criminal gangs* and *Political rivals*, which are written all over a pair of legs with big guns hanging on its side. All of these serve as a single signifier for the different armed groups present in the country. According to the Philippine National Police (PNP), they were monitoring 86 private armed groups (PAG) based on their surveillance maps which were dated from September 15, 2011 to January 31, 2012. Most of these private armed groups were under politicians. Being stepped on by one of the feet of the armed groups is the secondary signifier, which is a poster saying *Gun ban*. The government has implemented a gun ban during the election to avoid violence especially among the politicians, citizens and other people involved. The tertiary signifier is *COMELEC checkpoints* personified by a man with only two guns. Following its gun ban campaign, the COMELEC designated checkpoints in the country as stated in Section 1 of Resolution No. 9588,

“Comelec checkpoints.– There shall be at least one COMELEC checkpoint in each city/municipality. However, additional checkpoints may be established at the discretion of the highest ranking official of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) or the Philippine National Police (PNP).”

This resolution was promulgated on December 18, 2012 by the COMELEC for a peaceful and orderly election.

Plate 2. In this editorial cartoon, the primary signifier is *Media*. It signifies the media groups who covered the election. It is depicted through the image of a man wearing long-sleeved polo while facing a computer. The media is comprised of the television companies, radio stations and also the print. *Corruption*, another primary signifier, has been one of the major problems in the country which was supported by the Corruption Perceptions Index conducted by Transparency International. The Philippines ranked 34 from a scale of 1 to 100 with 100 being very clean (Salaverria, 2012). Corruption has been depicted in many ways but the most popular is that of a crocodile. The crocodile that was labeled *Corruption* has placed itself inside the man’s clothes. This portrayal signifies that corruption has been involved media in its endeavors. As the editorial cartoon illustrates corruption has made its way to the media, and it is being a great influence in the media’s involvement during the 2013 election. *Polls 2013* is a secondary signifier in this editorial cartoon. Taking from its linguistic meaning, it refers to the polls cast by the voters during the 2013 election. It only refers to the votes but not to the tallied results. The image of *Polls 2013* on a computer also signifies that the votes cast in 2013 are being tallied through the use of the computer. It implies the computerized election the country has been experiencing since the 2010 election. In addition, *Media organizations & Political parties* labeled on two arms signifies the groups involved during the election. This is also a secondary signifier. There are many media organizations and political parties who are monitoring the process and results of the election. Another secondary signifier, *Ethical practices and covenants* labeled on a long sickle refers to the ethical practices agreed upon by the media organizations and political parties. The media organization and political parties are patronizing and encouraging the compliance of the ethical practices and covenant among the groups involved during the elections. Prior the 2013 May election, media organization and political parties signed the “Covenant against Media Corruption 2013.” The covenant encloses that the political parties and journalists would collaborate with each other to avoid bribery and any form of corruption (Buenaobra & Reyes, 2013). Though subtly placed, the ₱ signifies money. The presence of this sign indicates that the media has been involved in the election to get money because of the influence of corruption. The ₱ sign is a part of another signified, a humongous bag, on which the man and the crocodile sit. This signifier implies that the polls of 2013 and the media are based on the money that circulates in the situation. Hedman (2010) stated that the poverty and the economic insecurity present in the Philippines has made the majority of the people vulnerable to clientelism, coercive and monetary incentives and pressure during election. This created an arena for fund-raising which benefits the politicians while they utilize resources to stay in position. The editorial cartoon implies the role of money during election.

Plate 3. *NO to political dynasties* is the primary signifier in the third editorial cartoon. It signifies the desire to oust political dynasties in the country and end their glorious reign. The image of the placard strikes away the figures of people wearing fancy clothes. This group of people implicitly refers to the political dynasties wherein they are portrayed in the cartoon as people from different ages. The cartoon illustrates the idea of putting away political dynasties from their seats in the government. The secondary signifier is *Bishops*, which signify the church leaders making their comments and critics concerning the issues in the country. The bishops and other church leaders in the Philippines have voiced their political perceptions. In a pastoral letter issued on January 29, 2013, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference Philippines (CBCP) denounced political dynasties saying that political authority is to be implemented for the good of the country and

not singularly for private and family benefits (Doronila, 2013). The editorial cartoon's depiction is an implication that the church leaders are patronizing their stand against political dynasties.

Plate 4. Labeled on the barong of a man, *COMELEC* is one of the primary signifiers which represents the COMELEC itself. The image of the COMELEC chairman is used to depict the entire committee. The man was saying, "*Minor glitches.*" It is a secondary signifier, which indicates how the COMELEC tries to assure the public that there are only minor glitches during the elections. The COMELEC conducted a mock election last February 2, 2013 in preparation of the incoming senatorial election. COMELEC chairperson Sixto Brillantes Jr. guaranteed that there were no major problems with the PCOS machines (Tubeza, 2013). Lying behind the man, the primary signifier *PCOS machine* is labeled on a machine along with the secondary signifiers *Missing chips*, *Conflicting voters list*, *Failure to read ballot* and *Paper jam* on pieces of paper and *Transmission problems* on a stick. These signifiers indicate that many errors concerning the PCOS machine were encountered during the election. It simply means that numerous errors such as missing chips, conflicting voters list, failure to read ballot and paper jam have been encountered in the election process. From a heap of rubbish, another primary signifier is written as *2010 Failures and errors*. The situation implies that the COMELEC was unable to improve the process of election from the past and learn from it. The flaws of 2010 election: missing chips, conflicting voter's list, failure to read ballots, paper jam and transmission problems, were indicated on the "Incident Reports on the May 10, 2010 Automated Elections" by the Europe Union – Center for People Empowerment in Governance (EU-CenPeg) (2010). The editorial cartoon suggests that there are no significant differences from the previous automated election in the Philippines. Another primary signifier is presented by a figure of the head of a giant man named *Fraud* overlooking the whole chaos while saying "*OK!*" which is a secondary signifier. This signifies that glitches and mishaps during the election would encourage fraud. In summary, the editorial cartoon depicts that the major glitches encountered during the 2010 election will be replicated in the coming 2013 senatorial election.

Plate 5. Just like a grand carnival with all the confetti, balloons and gimmicks, the *Proclamation rally, Election 2013*, the primary signifier, implies that the politicians hold these events with such magnificence in order to attract and excite voters to their own benefit. February 12, 2013, the day before the editorial cartoon was published, President Aquino endorsed the 12 senatorial candidates from Team PNoy in a grand proclamation rally in Plaza Miranda (Musico, 2013). A secondary signifier, *Promises* is uttered by the ring master of the proclamation rally. *Promises* are the words they utter of how they would try to improve the state of living of the voters in order to gain more votes. During the grand proclamation rally, Team PNoy directly asked the electorate to vote for the entire team to sustain and accomplish the current administration's vow on improving the country's state. Thus, this is explicated in the editorial cartoon.

Plate 6. The primary signifier of this editorial cartoon is *COMELEC* which is marked on the forehead of a man desperately trying to fix a machine. This implies that the COMELEC is having a difficult time in handling situations during the election with the PCOS machines. Among of COMELEC's many problems is the malfunctioning of PCOS machines. This is signified by the words *PCOS machine*, a secondary signifier, referring to the machine whose knots and bolts are flying around. It is an exaggerated description of a malfunctioning PCOS machine. COMELEC also says the tertiary signifier "*This is all media's fault!*" Chief Chair Sixto Brillantes Jr. blames the Automated Election System Watch (AEA Watch) and Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPeg), two media watchdogs, for sowing mistrust and sabotage on the May 2013 polls (Crisostomo, 2013). The editorial cartoon thus implies that the COMELEC blames the media for the confusion brought about by the PCOS machine.

Plate 7. *Epal politicians* suggests that there are politicians who desperately seek attention. It is the primary signifier in this editorial cartoon. The politicians referred to stick out posters in inappropriate places and outside the allocated time of campaigning. For the desire of winning the elections, they become attention-seekers and lawbreakers. In response, the secondary signifier, *COMELEC*, which is labeled on an arm holding a long sickle, is ready to implement the just punishment. With the long sickle referring to *Disqualification*, the tertiary signifier, it tears apart the posters and also the chances of winning for the politicians. COMELEC warns candidates to remove all premature propagandas and advertisements. All of these propagandas and ads are to be removed before the official campaigning which starts on February 12, 2013 for national candidates and March 29, 2013 for the local candidates or else the violating candidates will face disqualification or imprisonment (Santos, 2013). Therefore, the editorial cartoon exemplifies that the COMELEC would readily disqualify the politicians who campaigned prematurely for the May 2013 election.

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Plate 8. As the primary signifier, *Democracy* personified through a young tree with few leaves and a bird perching on one of its branches indicates that democracy in the Philippines is young and still growing. According to the editorial cartoon, one of the factors in protecting democracy is *Good governance* which is a secondary signifier in the editorial cartoon. In relation to that, a traditional image of a Filipino boy puts up the fence on which *Good governance* is labeled. This image signifies the Filipino people. Thus it suggests that the responsibility of the Filipino people to protect the country's democracy through good governance. Aside from good governance, the editorial cartoon suggests that democracy flourishes when there is a *Clean & honest elections*, another secondary signifier, as written on a watering can held by a Filipina dressed in traditional clothing. The editorial cartoon suggests that democracy would thrive if the country has clean and honest elections. In contrary, A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development conducted in Asia states that the Philippines lack education on democratic legitimacy, the freedom of implementing laws within due process, and thus creating an instable government. This contradicts the editorial cartoon's depiction of democracy as the basis of good governance (Chu & Huang, 2009). In addition, Thompson (2007) states on the article *The Dialectic of "Good Governance" and Democracy in Southeast Asia: Globalized Discourses and Local Responses* that adhering toward the advent of 'good governance' by means of democracy yielded instability and political unrest in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, due to money politics and populist challenges.

Plate 9. *Political dynasties* marked on a rather odd-looking man with a crocodile tail, messy hair, pointy shoes, a nose with hands holding candies and balloons while his two hands were playing a guitar is the primary signifier in this editorial cartoon. It signifies the political dynasties in the country who were trying to buy some votes. The kiddy stuff, especially the balloon, was labeled *Political promises* which is a secondary signifier, indicating the sweet talks and words declared by these political dynasties to bribe with the people. Playing the guitar also implies that the political dynasties try to sing people out in order to sell themselves to the public. These signifiers indicate that the political dynasties resolve to every possible trick in order to stay in their positions. The editorial cartoon also presents two little boys playing with few toys through the tertiary signifier *Immature voters*, the tertiary signifiers, who were taking a look at the kiddy stuff being offered to them by the odd-looking man. The editorial cartoon suggests that immature voters are the possible victims of political dynasties.

Plate 10. *Fake money* is the primary signifier in this editorial cartoon which is labeled on one of the numerous peso bills falling from the sky. The signified of the primary signifier is vote-buying which, as the editorial cartoon suggests, occurs during the *Election 2013*, the secondary signifier. Vote-buying has been reported as a recurrent act of politicians during Philippine elections as reported of its occurrences in Lanao del Norte and Misamis Occidental last May 2013 ranging from 1,000 – 1,500 pesos for a vote for the entire party of local politicians (Rosario, 2013). To add to that, National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) reported that candidates are offering bribe from 100, 2,000, 3,000 to 3,500 pesos in Tawi-tawi, Zamboanga Sibugay, Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte respectively. Meanwhile, Senator Juan Ponce Enrile's bailiwick had been said to offer 1,000 to 5,000 pesos for votes. In Aurora, voters were offered with 1,200 pesos to vote for candidates in political dynasties. Whereas in Cagayan and Ilocos Norte, candidates were said to go house to house, offering as much as 1,000 to 1,500 pesos per person (Tubeza, 2013). These were only a few of the vote-buying incidents during the May 2013 election.

Symbol/Index/Icon Triad:

The symbol/index/icon triad is based upon Pierce's (1867) perception of a sign which was cited by Chandler (2011) in his semiotic concepts. Initially, he define symbol as a form of a sign that is conventionally used and is given meaning by the means of habit, for example linguistic symbols such as letters. Meanwhile, a sign perceived as an index depends upon association by contiguity which means that resemblance to the object it represents is not necessary but it reflects what it does, is or has. Lastly, an icon is a replication of an entity mainly by its similarity. However, there are no 'pure' icons considering that a part of something resembling its real form is also an icon.

Chandler incorporated de Saussure's term of signifier and signified with the Pierce's theory wherein he employed the use of the signifier bearing the symbolic, indexical and iconic characteristics. This was applied in the analyses of the editorial cartoons wherein the signifiers were also classified according to its primary, secondary and tertiary importance in par with Leymore's (1975) idea of *figure and ground*.

Thus, these are the premises of which the editorial cartoons are analyzed as shown in Table 2.

Plate 1. The primary signs *Organized crime groups*, *Criminal gangs* and *political rivals* are symbols since they are conventional signs for the words. These signs are symbolic because of their linguistic use in the context. At the same time, *Organized crime groups*, *private armed groups*, *criminal gangs* and *political rivals* labeled on a pair of legs with guns hanging around are also iconic. The pair of legs and the guns makes the signs iconic because although these don't actually represent all of the various crime groups, it somehow presents how they are armed with many weapons. Thus, this primary signifier is both symbolic and iconic. As with the secondary sign, *Gun ban*, it possesses the triadic characteristic of a sign. *Gun ban* is symbolic, indexical and iconic. It is symbolic because of the use of letters as conventional signs spelling out GUN BAN. Written on a signpost that was stepped on, the sign becomes indexical because it implies the effect of the reaction of the armed groups toward the gun ban – disrespect and noncompliance. The sign is also an icon because it represents what a gun ban notice would look like when announced through a signpost. *COMELEC checkpoints* is the tertiary sign which is symbolic, indexical and at the same time iconic. Similar to the reasons behind the symbolic trait of the previous signs, the words *COMELEC checkpoints* are conventional symbols for the reason that they are used linguistically. The indexicality of the sign is indicated through its relationship with the gun ban. Since there is a gun ban, the COMELEC has to put up checkpoints to ensure the implementation of the law. The sign is iconic through depiction of the *COMELEC checkpoints* in the form of a man with two guns on its waist. As there is not a sign which is a 'pure icon,' the image somehow represents the officers in charge of the COMELEC designated checkpoints. In summary, the sign *COMELEC checkpoints* illustrates the triadic characteristic of a sign.

Table 2. Symbol/index/icon Triad Classification in Editorial cartoons.

Editorial Cartoon Plate	Primary Signs	Symbol/Index/Icon
1	ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS, PRIVATE ARMED GROUPS, CRIMINAL GANGS and POLITICAL RIVALS	Symbol & icon
2	MEDIA	Symbol & icon
	CORRUPTION	Symbol & index
3	NO TO POLITICAL DYNASTIES	Symbol, index & icon
4	COMELEC	Symbol & icon
	PCOS MACHINE	Symbol & icon
	2010 FAILURES AND ERRORS	Symbol & index
	FRAUD	Symbol & index
5	PROCLAMATION RALLY ELECTION 2013	Symbol & icon
6	COMELEC	Symbol & icon
7	EPAL POLITICIANS	Symbol, index & icon
8	DEMOCRACY	Symbol & index
9	POLITICAL DYNASTIES	Symbol & index
10	FAKE MONEY	Symbol, index & icon

Plate 2. The primary signs in this editorial cartoon are *Media* and *Corruption*. *Media* is a sign which displays two of Pierce's triadic approach to a sign. It is both symbolic and iconic. Since it uses letters of the alphabet, *Media* is symbolic in nature. Whereas it is iconic because the image in which it is presented is that of a man working in front of the computer. This is quite analogous to what the media is doing. Thus, this particular sign is both a symbol and an icon. On the other hand, *Corruption* possesses the two features of the triad. The sign is symbolic because it is a conventional sign. It is, however, also symbolic in another aspect that it is depicted through the image of a crocodile. A crocodile in the context of Philippine politics is a person who is gluttonous for fortune or fame, emphasizing that it is greedy and selfish. Thus, it is a fitting way to depict the sign *Corruption*. In a way, it is indexical for the reason that it has placed itself inside the coat of the man marked as *Media*. This supports its indexical characteristic because of the fact that it is so greedy for power that it has leaked its way inside one of the most powerful aspects in society – media. One of the secondary signs in this editorial cartoon, *Polls 2013*, is symbolic, indexical and also iconic. *Polls 2013* is symbolic through the use of conventional letter signs similar to the previous signs discussed. It is indexical in a way that the sign is labeled on a computer. This means that the Polls of 2013 are processed and tallied through the use of computer. It is an index because it displays a relationship between two things that consequently affect each other. Also, *Polls 2013* is iconic for the same

reason that it is labeled on a computer but for the meaning that it represents the votes cast during the election which is implicitly understood in the cartoons. *Media organizations & political parties* and *Ethical practices covenant* are also secondary signs. Both of them are symbols for being conventional signs as letters. However, *Media organizations & political parties* is an icon in that the conventional signs (the letters) were inscribed on two arms. These arms are a representation of the different and diverse media organizations and political parties involved in the elections. In contrast, *Ethical practices covenant* is indexical in trait because it is a result of the involvement of these said groups during the election period. Another aspect of its indexicality is the image on which the conventional signs, *Ethical practices covenant*, were labeled on a long sickle. The long sickle tries to pull away the crocodile marked with the primary sign *Corruption* from the other primary sign *Media*. This implies that the *Ethical practices covenant* illustrates the effect of the participation of media organizations and political parties to the corruption in media. Thus, the sign possesses an indexical attribute. A tertiary sign in the editorial cartoon, ₱ is a sign that possesses the three attributes of the sign. It is symbolic because it is the sign for the Philippine peso. It is implicitly comprehended as the sign for money in the cartoon which makes up for its symbolic character. The ₱ is at the same time indexical in nature because whenever this sign is present it implies wealth which is also depicted in the cartoon as a big bundle of money on which the man and the crocodile is seated on. Its iconic attribute is its exact representation on what appears on Philippine peso coins thus referring to money. All in all, the ₱ sign is symbolic, indexical and iconic.

Plate 3. "NO! to political dynasties" on a placard is the primary sign in this editorial cartoon which has three triadic attributes of Pierce's definition of a sign. It is symbolic because it is an alphabetical conventional sign as most of the signs have been. Aside from its symbolic nature, it is also indexical. This is for the reason that the particular sign indicates the resistance of the people against political dynasties. It implies a relationship between the idea and the action taken of those who are opposing. The hitting of the placards on the group of people, another secondary signifier, which are implied as the political dynasties is an effect of the people's disapproval of their stay in the government. At the same time, it is an icon because the sign "*NO! to political dynasties*" which is written on the placard replicates the placards being raised by protesters during rallies against such politicians. Hence, the primary sign possesses the three attributes of the triad. The secondary sign, *Bishops*, is a symbol as well as an icon. The symbolic nature it possesses is derived from its characteristic of being a conventional sign. Its iconic trait is illustrated through the hands outstretched holding the placard. Though it is not an accurate representation of the bishops, the sign implies the association of the church leaders in the editorial cartoon.

Plate 4. One of the primary signifiers in this editorial cartoon is *COMELEC*, which is symbol and at the same time an icon. Used as a linguistic sign, it possesses the symbolic character of the sign. Marked on a man, it becomes iconic. The man used to depict the sign is COMELEC chairperson Sixto Brillantes. In this wise the sign gains its iconic attribute. Illustrating the commission of which he is the head, COMELEC chairperson Sixto Brillantes represents the sign, *COMELEC*, in denying the obvious errors experienced during the elections while uttering the secondary sign, "*Minor glitches*." *Minor glitches* is a sign which has both the symbolic and indexical attributes of the triad. It is symbolic because it is used as a conventional sign pertaining to the alphabet. In addition, it possesses the indexical nature because it implies the effect between the flaws and glitches present in the elections and the COMELEC's denial. Summing it up, declaring that there are only minor glitches pertains to the indexical trait of the sign since it creates the connection between the denial and the COMELEC. Thus, the sign possess both symbolic, indexical and iconic nature. Another primary sign in the editorial cartoon is *PCOS machine* which is symbolic as well as iconic. Apparently, it is symbolic through the means of its conventional attribute as a sign in forming the word creating no connection and similarity between the linguistic symbols (letters) and the actual thing. On the other hand, *PCOS machine* is iconic for the reason that the sign is inscribed on a machine which is analogous to the real PCOS machine utilized during the election. The portrayal of the PCOS machine infuses the sign with its iconic attribute giving it a dual nature. Aside from the primary sign, *PCOS machine*, a secondary sign is also labeled on the image of the PCOS machine which is *Missing chips*. This sign also has a dual nature. It is both symbolic and indexical. It is symbolic for the apparent reason of being a conventional sign and indexical for the reason that it establishes the relationship between the faults and mistakes during the election and its association to the PCOS machines. Missing chip would indicate that there are some anomalies going on concerning the votes and the PCOS machines whose chips went missing supports the indexical characteristic of the sign. In addition to that, there are also papers inserted and going out of the PCOS machine on which several secondary sign are inscribed: *Conflicting voter's list*, *failure to read ballot* and *paper jam*. These sign possess the three attributes of a sign. They are all used as conventional sign thus making them symbolic. Also, these signs are indexical because these exemplify the connecting

glitches experienced with the PCOS machines. Then, these signs are iconic because they are labeled on paper which is the actual objects for the said signs. Moreover, another primary sign present in the editorial cartoon is *2010 Failures and errors* which was written all over a heap of rubbish. This sign is symbolic and at the same time indexical. Clearly, its use as a linguistic sign gives it its symbolic nature because linguistic signs are always conventional signs accepted by the society as a general idea. It acquires its indexical nature through the signs depiction. Since it is labeled on a heap of rubbish, it is implicitly understood that the failures and errors of the 2010 election is associated with a garbage dump. Being emitted from the heap of rubbish is a stink labeled as *Transmission problems* which is a symbolic and indexical sign also. Just as most of the prior symbolic signs, *Transmission problems* possess its symbolic nature because it is a linguistic sign. Then, it is indexical as its depiction of a stink illustrates effect. The sign implies that it is an effect of the rubbish or rather the failures and errors of the 2010 elections. This means that after the 2010 elections the stink or the secrets behind its failures came out revealing it to be transmission problems. The final primary sign in this editorial cartoon is the image of a giant head of a man labeled as *Fraud*. The image of the giant head implies the sign's indexical trait for the reason that consequences of fraud in the election would result to great impact and enormous issues. On the other hand, the sign acquires its symbolic nature through the means of using it as a conventional linguistic sign. Uttered by the giant head of *Fraud*, the secondary sign, "OK!" is of symbolic and indexical. The use of the sign as a conventional sign in language yet again gives it its symbolic nature. Whereas the relationship between fraud and the occurrence of election failures and errors causes the effect of encouragement and a delighted expression "OK!" among those who wanted to commit fraud.

Plate 5. The primary sign in this editorial cartoon is *Proclamation rally, Election 2013* which has the symbolic and iconic attributes of a sign. The sign possesses its symbolic nature through its use as a linguistic sign; it is iconic because of its presentation as an event similar to that of a circus. The cartoon tries to illustrate the proclamation rallies held by the politicians which are in no doubt grand and seems to look like a carnival. Marking the illustrated event in the editorial cartoon as *Proclamation rally, Election 2013* makes the sign iconic. The secondary sign in this editorial cartoon is the ring leader of the circus. It is a symbolic sign for the reason that it symbolizes the politicians who lead the proclamation rallies during the elections. Just like the ring leader or circus master, the politicians are the ones who control and organize the events that happen during a proclamation rally. Thus, the sign possesses a symbolic nature. Moreover, the circus master of the event was saying the tertiary sign "PROMISES" which is a symbolic as well as an iconic. For its use as a linguistic sign, "PROMISES" is considered to have the symbolic attribute of a sign. Being said by the circus master or rather the politician, the sign emphasizes the relationship between the promises being said and the occasion. As it is implicitly understood by the society, politicians try to impress their audience during proclamation rallies in order to gain more possible voters to their side. In this way, "PROMISES" showed its symbolic and indexical attributes.

Plate 6. *COMELEC* is the primary sign in this editorial cartoon which is both symbolic and iconic in its attribute. Once more, the sign's symbolic nature is through its conventional use as a linguistic sign. Also, just as one of the previous editorial cartoons, the sign is iconic because it is labeled on the forehead of a man analogous to that of *COMELEC* Chairperson Sixto Brillantes. Depicting the *COMELEC*, through a figure similar to his physical features, results to an iconic sign. Therefore, *COMELEC* is a sign which pertains to the symbolic and iconic attributes of the triad. A secondary sign, *PCOS machine* is also a symbol and an icon. Again, its symbolic nature is attributed through its utilization as a conventional sign in the alphabet thus a linguistic sign. The reason behind its iconic trait is that it replicates the actual image of a *PCOS machine*. Therefore, it is clearly seen that *PCOS machine* is a symbolic and iconic sign. The tertiary sign in this editorial cartoon are the words uttered by *COMELEC* which is "This is all media's fault!" This sign is both symbolic and indexical in nature. Similar to most of the signs in this study, "This is all media's fault!" is a symbolic sign due to its conventional use as a linguistic sign. On the other hand, the sign has also an indexical attribute for the reason that it is what the *COMELEC* said after not being able to repair the malfunctioning *PCOS machine*. In other words, putting the blame on media because of its inability to fix the machine gives the sign an indexical attribute. In summary, the tertiary sign of this editorial cartoon is indexical which depicts the reaction of the *COMELEC* to the issue of the malfunctioning of the *PCOS machine*.

Plate 7. Labeled on a poster with the face of a person, *Epal politicians* is the primary sign in this editorial cartoon which possesses the triadic characteristics of a sign. The sign is evidently symbolic because it is used as a linguistic sign as most of the symbols in the discussions have been. *Epal politicians* is also indexical for the reason that it is the result of what

politicians are called for being attention-seekers. It is indexical because it relates the relationship between the politicians' actions and what they are called. Moreover, the sign is iconic since it is written on a poster which indicates that the posters and fliers propagated by the politicians replicate the ones in the editorial cartoon. *COMELEC*, the secondary sign in the cartoon exhibits the symbolic and iconic attributes. For the reason of being a conventional sign, *COMELEC* is a symbol. It possesses the iconic characteristic since the words *COMELEC* is inscribed on the arms of a person. Being on the arms implicates that it represents that department of the government responsible for the nation's election processes. Thus, the sign have both symbolic and iconic characteristics. The tertiary sign in the editorial cartoon is *Disqualification* which is marked on a long sickle held by the arms on which *COMELEC* is inscribed. This sign has the symbolic and indexical attributes of the triad. Just like the other signs, the symbolic attribute it possesses is through its utilization as a conventional sign toward the forming of a word. Furthermore, the sign *Disqualification* is indexical in view of the fact that it is a result of the inappropriate time of publishing of posters by the politicians. Hence, *Disqualification* possesses both the symbolic and indexical characteristics of a sign.

Plate 8. In this particular editorial cartoon, *Democracy*, the primary sign, possesses the symbolic and indexical trait of a sign. Used as a linguistic sign, it is applied as a conventional sign, thus a symbol. On the other hand, it is also an index for the reason that *Democracy* is inscribed on a budding tree, characterizing it as young. The indexicality of the sign implies the connection between democracy and the tree which are still both developing and growing. There are two secondary signs in this editorial cartoon. One of which is *a boy putting up a fence*. This boy in particular is iconic and what he is doing is indexical. The boy is iconic since it is similar representation of a common Filipino with his sombrero and typical Filipino farmer get-up. Yet, this sign is also indexical for the reason that the boy is trying to put up a fence around the tree labeled as *Democracy*. The indexical insinuation of the sign depicts the love of the Filipino people for the democracy of the country. For this reason, he is protecting *Democracy* by putting up a fence around it. The action illustrated in the editorial cartoon is the implied indexicality of the sign. So, *the boy putting up a fence* possesses the iconic and indexical attribute of a sign. As a tertiary sign in the cartoon, *Good governance* is inscribed on the fence that was being placed by the boy. This sign is both symbolic and indexical. The sign is symbolic for the reason of using it as a linguistic sign which is no different for most of the signs that were already discussed. However, *Good governance* is also indexical because it is an effect or a result of how the boy would protect democracy as implied by its inscription on the fence. This shows that this particular sign is both symbolic and indexical. The other secondary sign in the editorial cartoon is *the lady holding a watering can* with which she waters the tree. The young lady dressed in *baro 'tsaya* is a sign which is both indexical and iconic. Similar to *the boy putting up the fence*, the image to which she was portrayed makes the sign iconic and the action she is taking makes the sign indexical. A woman on *baro 'tsaya* is an icon for the Filipino people just as the young boy was. Carrying a watering can, she waters the tree marked as *Democracy*, the primary sign. The indexical suggestion of this sign means that the Filipino people are willing to do what it takes to maintain the democracy in the Philippines. Summing it up, the *young lady holding a watering can* is a sign which possesses the iconic and indexical nature of a sign. *Clean & honest elections*, a tertiary sign, is a symbol like the other sign discussed because it is used conventionally as a linguistic sign. Also, it possesses the indexical trait of the sign triad for the reason that it is written on the watering can held by the young lady. Conducting a clean and honest election is the indexical implication of this sign. Therefore, as explained the *Clean & honest elections* is both symbolic and indexical.

Plate 9. The primary sign in this particular editorial cartoon is *Political dynasties* which possesses both the symbolic and indexical trait of a sign. As it is implied that linguistic signs are considered symbolic in nature, *Political dynasties* is a symbol. Moreover, this sign is also indexical for the reason that it is used to refer to the image of a rather odd-looking and bloated man with hands on his nose holding presents and his real hands playing a guitar. The indexical implication of this sign is that political dynasties are those who are greedy for power and wealth ensuring the vote and approval of the people through various gimmicks and manipulation. It reveals an effect on what these political dynasties do to fulfill their desires. Thus, as expounded, *Political dynasties* possesses the symbolic and indexical attribute of the sign triad. The secondary sign in this editorial cartoon is *Political promises* inscribed on a balloon belonging on one of the gifts held out by the *Political dynasties*. This sign possesses the triadic attributes of a sign. It is symbolic in the same wise as the other sign have been, by being used as a linguistic sign. *Political promises* is also an index for the reason that it displays relationship between the political dynasties and their desire to stay in position. The indexical implication of this sign suggests that the political promises are the effect or the action taken by the political dynasties. Thus, *Political promises* is sign which holds both symbolic and indexical nature of a sign. Facing the odd-looking, bloated man, is the tertiary sign *Immature voters*

which implicitly refers to the two young boys playing. This sign is also both symbolic and indexical. Apparently, this sign is symbolic because it is used as a conventional sign through linguistics forming the words *Immature voters*. Likewise, the sign is also indexical because it depicts a connection between the two young boys and the *Immature voters* in that they both cannot make proper decisions by themselves. The indexicality of the sign suggests that some voters in the country are like young children, immature.

Plate 10. Referring to this editorial cartoon, *Fake money* is the primary sign which takes the symbolic, indexical and iconic traits of a sign. It is symbolic as it is used conventionally as a linguistic sign to mean money that is unreal. The sign is also iconic in nature because it replicates how money looks like in reality. However, the twisted ₱ sign on the bills indicate that it is a fake. Thus, *Fake money* is both symbolic and iconic in nature. Receiving the falling bills with hand stretched out, the secondary sign *Election 2013* is labeled on one of these people. The sign is both symbolic and indexical. With the same explanation, the use of the sign linguistically to mean the elections of 2013 bestows on it its symbolic attribute. On the other hand, it is also indexical for the reason that being labeled on people who are trying to catch and swallow the bills which means that the fake money is being accepted and used during the 2013 elections. As expounded, *Election 2013* has the symbolic and indexical character of the sign triad.

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