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NOTES ON SOME FOOTNOTES REGARDING ART PUBLICS AND CLASSIFICATION OF ARTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

PEARL E. TAN - PUNONGBAYAN

1. T'nalak wall hanging for sale at P300.00. Galeria Filipina, U.P. Shopping Center, Diliman, Quezon City.
2. T'nalak ikat warp process documented in Thelma Newman, Contemporary Southeast Asian Arts and Crafts, New York, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1977, pp. 90-94; featured a decade later in the videotape "The Vanishing Earth."
3. T'nalak hand bag, belly bag, purse, cap, key holder, folder, etc. for sale in mobile tiangge and souvenir shops in Metro-Manila.
4. T'nalak cloth as a "Philippine Ethnic Visual Art" in Tuklas Sining video documentary recently produced by the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), and scripted by David Barradas.
5. T'nalak as one of the Philippine ancestral weaves- Marian Pastor-Roces, 1991.
3. Pavarotti held concert at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) Plenary Hall; no "uncivilized reactions" toward sudden postponement of concert to March 21; mammoth crowd watched its live telecast on a giant screen in the open space behind the PICC building.
4. Komiks exhibit by Art Studies 195 students at the Faculty Center Gallery 2, U.P. Diliman, 7-11 March 1994.
5. Santi Bose exhibits "Marginalized Merchandise" at the CCP.
6. Exhibit of stories and illustrations by Araceli Dans Lee at the CCP, 14 December 1993 - 31 January 1994.
7. Japanese Film Festival at the U.P. Film Center, February 14-18, 1994.
8. Mabini Art still unwanted in SM Artwalk, still in demand in Pistang Pilipino and other Ermita art shops.

II

1. Joey Ayala at ang Bagong Lumad, Edru Abraham at ang Kontra-Gapi, et. al. -- from campus performances to guesting in TV variety shows.
2. Raymond Red's "Bayani" and "Sakay" shown in SM cinemas.

III

1. AAP (Art Association of the Philippines) Annual Competition; Mobil Art Awards; Arts Biennials of Venice, Sao Paulo and Paris; Gawad CCP; National Artist Award; Shell National Students Art Competition; Metrobank

- National Painting Competition; Thirteen Artists Award;
2. Republic Act No. 4165 (4 August 1964), an act creating the National Commission on Culture; Republic Act No. 7356 (22 July 1991), the "law creating the National Commission for Culture and the Arts."
 3. No space for tribal arts, pre-colonial arts, film, billboard, komiks, Mabini Art, Senakulo, PETA productions, "folk dances," and many other Philippine arts in *Art Philippines* (1992). Juan T. Gatbonton, one of its editors, notes: "... that is what *Art Philippines* is -- the collaborative work of the country's finest art historians and critics, each focusing on one aspect of the topic." Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, founder of AAP, declares: "Their book gives us a panorama of Philippine Art unavailable from any museum. With its illustrations, elegant design and engaging text, *Art Philippines* is the definitive book on Philippine Art in our time." (underscore supplied).
 4. Some artists donated work to the National Museum, according to director Gabriel S. Casal in his foreword to the catalogue of the National Museum Visual Arts Collection, 1991.
 5. President Ramos overruled the MTRCB (Movie and Television Review and Classification Board). Schindler's List was shown without cuts.
 6. National Media Production Center (now Philippine Information Agency); MsEllaneous; PEP Talk; Travel Time; Tatak Pilipino.
 7. NACIDA; Design Center of the Philippines; Department of Trade and Industry; Department of Tourism; Department of Education, Culture and Sports.
 8. Anita Celdran revitalized Bila Pottery in the Mountain Province and Elena Mirano the Subli in Batangas; Diwa: Buhay, Ritwal at Sining -- a permanent exhibit at the CCP Museo ng Kalinangang Pilipino.

The first section reminds us of a familiar conversation: "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master -- that's all." Whoever is right between the two, a crucial question no doubt, is, however, not so much our immediate concern as how the analogy applies.

T'nalak, a T'boli textile, has been regarded differently by the T'nalak publics -- as aesthetic object in itself so that it is used as a wall hanging, or a material which can have extra-aesthetic practical functions in our daily urban living so that it is fashioned into or used as enhancing element in a sundry of objects; as cultural heritage hailed as a source of national pride so that the process of production must be preserved; or as object of study in art and culture with the emphasis on the indigenous.

As aesthetic object and potentially transformable material, T'nalak has easily lent itself to fashionable everyday objects "proudly Philippine made." Its immediate public, the dealers of "crafts," are usually not its ultimate users; T'nalak becomes useful to them as they dispose of it to the buying public. The significance of T'nalak to business people is ownership of its exchange value. The actual use of T'nalak objects rests on the customers, or the eventual owners of the objects.

As traditional weave or researcher's object of study, one aim is to document the process of production of the T'nalak as faithfully as possible. The various particular aims of the scholars' work bespeak of their individual political awareness and positions regarding cultural phenomena and activities. Quite independent of aims and claims of writers who deal with the T'nalak, the quantity of publications on the subject or its sheer publicity, however, has made a place for it in establishments, academic and otherwise. Thus its popularity nowadays. Wittingly or unwittingly, therefore, writers on traditional subjects can at the same time become popularizers of what they regard as traditional. The boundaries of the "traditional" and the "popular," have become fluid, and/or perhaps, blurred.

The sites of contact with the T'nalak vary:

from stores to books to videotapes; from classrooms and museums to offices, cars, closets, and human bodies. The various encounters with the T'nalak happen among different publics owing to different interests, or to the same public on different occasions depending on one's "need" or concern at the moment. Uses and contexts spell the differences in the "meanings" or significance of the T'nalak, and the publics determine the uses and contexts in this case.

Going back to Alice and Humpty Dumpty, the case of our T'nalak answers Alice's question (or doubt) in the positive. The various publics do attach different "meanings" to the word 'T'nalak' according to the various uses of the object T'nalak to them. The assertion of Humpty Dumpty is another question, and a weightier one at that, for two reasons: first, arbitrary assignment of "meaning" to a word, i.e., according to one's whims, which can be practised as often as one likes is different from assignment of "meanings" to a word according to the uses of the object called by that word; secondly, though "which is to be master - that's all" may sound whimsical, such "arbitrary" assignment of "meanings" may involve ethical and ideological dimensions. To test whether the latter applies to our T'nalak requires assessment of the relation between the multiple "meanings" of the T'nalak and the positions and relative influences of the givers of meanings in society, that is, the socio-political statuses of the various publics of the T'nalak.

We have caught merely a glimpse of the ideological significance of words and things in the case of the T'nalak and its publics. We will attempt to follow this problem more closely in the succeeding sections, using, however, a more general subject, art publics and classification of arts in the Philippines. The ethical dimension, e.g., questions pertaining to moral correctness will not be the focus of our discussion as it entails a separate inquiry beyond the scope of this paper.

II

Let us talk about art venues. Art venues are not just places where things and happenings are shown and watched. Both artist and audience are conscious of the reputation of venues: academic and non-commercial; commercial and for

light entertainment; commercial and for serious entertainment; for intellectual elite only; for social but not necessarily intellectual elite; for the eccentric; for the rich, for the poor, or for the middle class, and so on. An art venue's reputation may also consist in various combinations of the above-mentioned characteristics.

There may not be fixed determinants of the character of a particular venue. But among those that tend to become defining factors are: geographic location or the vicinity of the venues, its physical design, technology, and the kind of audience who frequent the place.

The Faculty Center Gallery and the U.P. Film Center which are located inside the State University are academic venues. Majority of the viewing public who frequent the places are students and teachers. Artworks that are shown in these venues are expected to have intellectual substance somehow.

The Philippine International Convention Center is located inside the Cultural Center of the Philippines Complex. The plushiness of both the PICC and the CCP is adapted to the rich and/or famous, and looks uninviting to those lacking in "social graces." The rich and famous are not necessarily intellectuals, however.

SM Cinemas and SM Artwalk are located in commercial establishments, specifically, inside SM malls. The quantity and wide assortment of people who visit these malls any day of the week, and especially on weekends, define the optimum accessibility of these venues to anybody. The SM Artwalk, though located on the fourth floor of the building which is a less frequented area compared with the lower storeys, hardly exerts an exclusive atmosphere.

Pistang Pilipino is in the tourist belt and redlight district of Ermita, Manila. Besides tourists and balikbayans, its customers are ordinary citizens who can afford the relatively low-priced Mabini paintings it sells.

Finally, television as a venue is one of the most accessible because it is found right in our very homes. It is not restricted to a single location.

The particular TV show which is used as venue has its more or less steady audience. Thus, "Vimal," a musical variety show caters to the fans of Vilma Santos and other local mass entertainment audiences. Whoever uses this show as venue gains access to its established audience. It is particularly the gaining of such large audiences at one time which industrial technology has made possible. Indeed, television as a product of modern technology boasts an audience on a global scale.

The art venues do not only have their more or less steady respective art publics. What they show also influences our classification of the arts, or how we are going to regard a particular art form. For instance, the staging of the very expensive Pavarotti concert at the PICC Plenary Hall and the setting up of the giant screen outside did not only define the "high society" art public inside the hall from the middle class "high art" public who must remain outside; it also reinforced the hierarchical classification of art into "high art" or "fine art" and "popular art" or "mass entertainment." Live opera is considered an instance of "high art" which is believed to be for the "civilized." Note what the journalists wrote regarding the reaction of the prospective audience of the concert towards its sudden postponement: "no uncivilized reactions." On the other hand, the middle class audience had to content themselves with projections on the giant screen, while the rest of the masses had to catch a TV replay of the "Tres Tenores," featuring Pavarotti also, Jose Carreras, and Placido Domingo on a later date if they care to have a taste of "high culture." Here another aesthetic bias is sustained, that of live performance being better than screen showing, just like stage plays are generally regarded as having a higher aesthetic value than movies. Being "high art" had also been equated again with the market value of the concert. What with the exorbitant prices of tickets the socio-economic elite virtually claimed exclusive privilege to this "high art" -concert.

Similarly, "art films" are frequently shown at the U.P. Film Center, a haven of both filmmakers and moviegoing public who cannot reconcile art and commerce, and who wish to preserve the "integrity" of art against the lures and threats of "commercialization." This reminds us of the marginalization of the "Mabini Art" in Ermita which

is generally considered by the Philippine artworld as "commercialized." Thus, while by its location the SM Artwalk aims at a wider public and at more vigorous sales of artworks, it still refuses to sell "Mabini Art" and maintains an image of displaying and housing only "noncommercialized" and "high art."

Exhibiting quite a different attitude towards status quo in Philippine music but betraying a similar assumption of an honorific aesthetic, "alternative musicians" Joey Ayala at ang Bagong Lumad and Edru Abraham at ang Kontra-Gapi attempt to penetrate the "popular music" industry by performing at popular commercial venues like TV musical variety shows rather than confining themselves to campus performances. With their brand of indigenized music, their mainstreaming efforts contribute to redefining the "popular" and the "indigenous" and the relations between the two. The assumption, of course, is indigenized popular music is better than the dominantly Western popular music in the Philippines. The showing of Raymond Red's two full-length "noncommercialized" films in commercial moviehouses indicates a similar endeavor in the field of cinema in the Philippines.

Against the Renaissance-rooted sharp distinction between "fine art" and "applied art" and its attendant cult of the artist as genius which was carried over until the 1950's abroad as manifested in the prevailing contempt for "popular culture" and for "mass culture" at that time (see the writings of Dwight Macdonald, for instance), some quarters in the Philippine artworld seem to have recently expressed dissent. Both Arceli Dans Lee and Santi Bose used the CCP galleries, which are established venues of "fine arts," for their exhibits of book illustrations and folk technology-installations respectively. Owing a great deal to the kind of venue that the CCP is, their exhibitions in effect tried to elevate the status of the "popular" and the "folk" to gain equal footing with the "fine". The attempts can be considered progressive and yet double-edged. For in the act of trying to remove the biases against the "popular" and the "folk" the still dominant system of hierarchical aesthetic values attached to the different categories of art and imbedded in the types of art venues is at the same time reinforced.

However, if such a flexible usage of venue with regard to the types of shows would be consistently practised, all in good time the hitherto established classification of the arts would possibly no longer hold, or if it still does, the biases against any kinds of art would at least be eliminated. The Faculty Center Gallery in U.P. Diliman proves to be most liberating in this regard. Being an academic venue, it accommodates a very wide range of materials for exhibition, i.e., all kinds of art. The highly flexible usage of this venue prevents it from becoming a reinforcer of aesthetic prejudices; instead, its academic reputation lends its viewing public an educational orientation towards the show, as in the case of the komiks exhibit put up by a group of Art Studies students. If this exhibit were put up at the CCP by an established artist, it could have seemed like a condescending act of legitimizing komiks as an art form, i.e., seeking an art status for komiks. At the Faculty Center Gallery, however, student exhibitors of komiks need not assume a defensive stance. What is brought to light is the nature of the cultural product and art that is komiks.

III

Besides uses of art and cultural products, contexts of encounter with them, and venues or sites of contact, there are other mediating factors between art and its publics entered in our selected "footnotes" at the start of this paper: art contests and awards, publicity, personages, institutions, establishments, and Republic Acts creating commissions for culture and the arts. They may be regarded as constituents of a system called art world, which has great bearing on the relative statuses of artists, artworks, and artforms or types of art. The relative degrees of influence of these constituents depend on their attributes which may be one or an interplay of the following factors: power, image, aggressiveness, social status, and academic credibility or authority.

Among art contests, for instance, the Shell art competition is open to students only, presumably those who intend to make art practice a profession but have yet to shed their cocoons. The Metrobank National Painting Competition specifies in its rules and regulations that it is open to Filipino painters 18 to 35 years of age who have not previously held

one-person exhibits. It acts like an initiating body who confers official recognition on the winners of the contest and grants generous financial rewards which could serve as capital in their "rite of passage" (i.e., their first one-person show) into the art establishment. A Best Entry or first prize winner in a Metrobank competition is automatically disqualified in its succeeding contests.

If the Metrobank Art Competition sponsors baptism of painters into the Philippine artworld, the Thirteen Artists Award acts like confirmation of young artists in the mainstream. Initiated by Roberto Chabet in 1970 when he was still curator of the CCP, the awardees who are chosen biennially by a screening committee are supposed to hold a closely coordinated but self-determined show at the CCP. The show must not be commercially oriented since each of the awardees is given a cash grant for this particular project. Though according to Chabet "the succeeding shows were marked by bad choices," the opportunity to express one's ideas at a mainstream art venue unimpeded by compromises is sufficient to place the awardees in an entrenched position in the "legitimate" artworld.

Another prestigious prize to aspire for is that granted by the AAP. Since the first AAP Annual Competition in 1948, the contest had been open to members of the Art Association of the Philippines only, until it was changed to members and non-members alike. People behind the AAP art contest pride themselves on being arbiters in art in that this "traditional" practice of holding an art contest played a significant role in the artistic careers of our National Artists. Participants in this competition include amateurs as well as established artists. Winners of past AAP contests are not discouraged from joining the competition again; in fact, regular participation is a practice among many a member of the AAP. Consistent winning of prizes in the AAP competition is a sure way of earning for oneself a secure, respectable, and even influential position in the Philippine artworld.

Nominees to the Mobil Awards are seasoned and established artists. To be an awardee means outstanding achievement among contemporaries. The level of recognition is higher than an AAP award or any other art contest's prizes. It is like being dubbed as the cream of the crop.

Another prestigious acknowledgement of one's artistic achievement is to be chosen as representative to the art biennials of Venice, Sao Paulo and Paris. It somewhat defines the reputation of the recipient of the grant as one of international caliber.

The Gawad CCP is bestowed upon an artist or an individual in recognition of his/her distinction, dedication, and achievement in a particular field of cultural or artistic endeavor. It is supposed to seal the recipient's authority on a particular aspect of Philippine art and culture.

Finally, the National Artist Award is the highest award a Filipino artist can aspire for. It signifies lifetime achievement and contribution to Philippine art and culture. It is sometimes awarded posthumously. To obtain this award within one's lifetime is to enjoy the reputation of having achieved the pinnacle of success in the art profession.

Besides the nature and reputation of the art contest or award, the constitution of the board of judges and screening committees in these art contests and awards is a crucial determinant of the artworld statuses attained by the winners and awardees since the former have a direct hand in choosing the recipients of the prizes or awards. There are instances when a pattern in the winning entries can be discerned. Personal preferences, biases and interests on the part of the judges cannot be easily ruled out sometimes. Since the credibility of the contest or award depends greatly on the competence and integrity of the judges or the award-giving body, publicity of their criteria for selection of winners and awardees is important on the part of the art public who wishes to gain an honest appraisal of the results of the judging.

Winning entries and products of awardees may also influence the trends in artmaking in varying degrees depending on the newly acquired status of the awardee. Another factor which is affected by the artist's status in the artworld is the market value of his/her work. Needless to say, the price range of an artist's products rises according to his/her ascending status in the artworld.

This status consciousness within the Philippine artworld can be felt also in almost every

artist's wish to be documented or publicized. It might be surprising at first why artists, especially those of less importance, suddenly were eager to donate work to the National Museum, which lacks adequate facilities, anyway. Surely, to be documented in the catalogue of the National Museum Visual Arts Collection is more important for posterity purposes and perhaps, for projecting an image of national importance at least in the future. The National Museum and the Cultural Center of the Philippines are institutions which are relatively influential in the field of art and culture by virtue of government's support, their image of being national establishments, and more recently, because of their representation in the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Most people equate them with the national treasure house of our cultural resources and the center of activity of art and culture in the Philippines, respectively.

Another case wherein such concern for status and publicity was strongly felt was the publication of *Art Philippines* (Gatbonton, et.al., eds. 1992) which drew derisive remarks from artists who were either overlooked or barely mentioned. There is real cause for concern, however, on account of Purita Kalaw-Ledesma's endorsement of the book which says that the book gives us a panorama of Philippine Art and that it is the definitive book on Philippine Art in our time. In this regard, to be excluded from the book would be tantamount to being nonexistent, or at most, to being an inconsequential artist who deserves no mention.

This brings us to another point: visibility in the art scene and publicity by an authority or by a self-styled authority as tools for legitimation and mainstreaming, and the concomitant marginalization of certain art forms, cultural practices and practitioners, and artists and their artworks. Not only does *Art Philippines* exclude so many different artforms and artmaking activities in the Philippines (e.g., all those being done during the pre-colonial period) and thus render them virtually nonexistent, even the distribution of artistic significance among the extremely limited topics it covers is lopsided. The book which is claimed to be a panorama of Philippine art is restricted to the visual arts and devotes only one chapter to sculpture out of the eight. The rest are mostly on

painting, with the exception of "Alternative Tendencies" which is about performance art and happening written by Cesare Syjuco, a performance artist himself. This implies that what is represented as Philippine Art is only the so-called "art proper," or those that have been placed in the limelight by members of the Philippine artworld whose seat is in Metro-Manila. This further foregrounding of the so-called "art proper" or "fine arts" at the expense of all the other kinds of art in places outside Metro Manila does not only confirm the privileged status of the "fine arts," but is also an assertion of the writers' and especially the editors' legitimizing power.

Where and how members of the artworld derive their legitimizing power is, of course, another question. Some acquire it by earning a considerable degree of intellectual credibility or expertise on particular matters pertaining to art and culture. Others profess authority and try to hide their inadequacy. Not to overlook are the social climbers, socialites, and politicians who have successfully carved out their niches in the artworld by virtue of their charm and/or public relations.

Indeed, a careful and authentic representation of our culture requires more than a "collaborative work" of personages in the artworld who did not even bother to at least consult representatives of the various groups of people each of whom contributes to a whole gamut of cultures. With a self-constituting artworld not exactly devoid of mediocre critics and writers, the artistic value of an artist's works should not be equated with his/her artworld status. What the artist's status in the art world actually determines is the commercial value of his/her work. As suggested earlier, artworld status also plays a significant role in setting up and/or reinforcing particular aesthetic standards. It is not a rare case where regardless of the artistic value of an artist's work, i.e., whether meritorious or not, he/she is able to set a trend in art by virtue of his/her status in the artworld.

It follows that careful and competent cultural researchers should be granted a stronger voice and a greater space in our artworld in order to maximize knowledge of our arts and systematize its development along suitable and rightful directions. For instance, efforts should be made so that

important studies such as the "Subli" by Elena Mirano and the "Bila Pottery" by Anita Celdran could safely reach (i.e., without losing their spirit along the way) various publics, especially those who directly participate in charting the course of our arts. The permanent exhibit of arts and rituals at the Museo ng Kallinangang Pilipino, a venue with a rather limited audience, may not be an altogether vain attempt, but surely such dynamic processes must not be made to look like dressed-up fossilized heritage? Perhaps the CCP staff could supplement it with something that uses a dynamic audio-visual medium like the one that they used in the Tuklas Sining series, that is, if they must stick to static museum as venue and exhibition as medium. Such dissemination of information about processual aspects of culture indeed requires a considerable amount of rethinking if the mode of delivery must not be an impediment in approximating the subject.

While it is important to remember that the venue can be part of the medium as in the case of the museum, and the medium can serve as the venue as in the case of the television, we must also consider the fact that they are part of a network that is subject to government intervention, or control, for that matter, depending on the political climate.

The government machinery as regards culture and the arts involves among others the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), various departments such as those of tourism, education, culture and sports, and trade and industry, various agencies, television programs and other mass media, and institutional infrastructures. The extent of its powers and functions includes legislation, administrative management, planning and financing, budgeting, implementation of programs, training of personnel, dissemination of information, education, coordination of various cultural agencies, and mediation in cultural conflicts.

In the Republic Act No. 7356, for instance, we note some of the functions of the NCCA: to formulate and implement policies for the development of culture and the arts; to coordinate the implementation of programs of affiliated agencies; and to administer the National

Endowment Fund for Culture and the Arts (NFFCA) which give grants for the development and dissemination of Philippine culture and the arts. Besides giving financial assistance such as the subsidies and artist funds, it is also mandated to extend recognition of artistic achievement through awards, grants and services to deserving artists and cultural groups.

Among its fourteen commissioners are the undersecretaries of the Department of Tourism and the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports, the director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the director of the National Museum, and the head of the Subcommittee on Cultural Communities and Traditional Arts. The NCCA also advises the president on matters pertaining to culture and the arts, prepares budget and submits it to the President for inclusion in the annual General Appropriation Act, and receives funding from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), the Philippine Tourism Authority, and government corporations, among others.

Based on this information alone, we can be sure that the NCCA can and does exert various forms and degrees of influence, directly or indirectly, on our system of classification of the arts, on the directions of the development of our arts, and on the exposure of the various publics to them. Though it is an independent agency and a body distinct from the artworld because of its close affiliation to the government, it has a wider range of power than the inner circle of the artworld, e.g., critics, curators, collectors, gallery owners, et al. However, it can also exert influence on the artworld because some of the commissioners are main participants in the artworld.

Another case which shows government as an intervening factor in art development is the institutionalization of some "traditional arts" under the supervision of various establishments. This has caused significant changes in forms and meanings of the "traditional arts." Whether they are positive or negative changes depend on the personnel in charge. The National Cottage Industry Development Authority (NACIDA) and the Design Center of the Philippines of the Marcos administration gave the so-called "folk art" and the "ethnic art" a new developmental context which

to a certain extent has been carried over to the present and has been expanded and sometimes modified. The "tangkilikin ang sariling atin" may be variously felt in our export industry of "native products," in the mainstreaming of the "indigenous" by "alternative" artists, not to mention the promotion of "folk cultures" under the auspices of the Department of Tourism and by privately owned TV magazines. From the time of the Marcoses through the administration of Cory Aquino and up to the present, we have witnessed the births and deaths (including a resurrection and a reincarnation) of TV magazines. While these efforts bring the "ethnic" and the "folk" to the public all over the country, and are thus "popularized," the tendency to emphasize or overdevelop the aesthetic aspect of the "folk and ethnic" to the exclusion, if not minimization, of their extra-aesthetic functions and contexts seems to be irresistible. The result almost always is the products look arty.

An example of direct and overt government intervention in conflict pertaining to culture and public viewing is when President Ramos, in response to public clamor, exercised blanket authority in overruling the decision of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) not to show Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List" without cuts. The general effect of his summary act was a pacified public on one hand and a more lenient MTRCB on the other. The award-winning "The Piano" which otherwise could be considered explicit in some parts by certain sectors of the viewing public was consequently shown in full. Accessibility of the public to such films is thus no longer as limited as before. But again the moral and legal issues implicated in this intervention by the President in the conflict between the MTRCB and the viewing public are not the subject of this paper. What I wish to illustrate by this particular instance is the directness of intervention and immediacy of its effects.

In trying to establish relationships between art and its publics, we discover a network of interstices punctuated with nodes and circles of various densities, intensities, and extents. Some of these we have tried to identify. Uses, contexts, venue, medium, and artworld are only five of these mediating variables that influence the distribution and consumption of the arts, which inevitably affect

their production and classification, too.

The traffic along these paths is at least two-way. On one hand, the consumers of art are reinforcers of production and some are direct producers of art, too. On the other hand, the producers of art are also consumers at one time or another. For artists are the first audience of their work. Indeed, the flows through the consumer-producer networks are circular and mutually inclusive, and more and more the phrase "art and its public" seems like a misnomer. So now, the question is, whether there can be art without a public. Or, the question is, art is only 'art' -- that's all.

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