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# THE MARCOS YEARS: CREATING A CULTURAL CENTER FOR THE PUBLIC, OR PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE CULTURAL CENTER

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The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) is one among the many cultural infrastructures and institutions identified with the Marcos administration. To be more specific, with the then First Lady Imelda Marcos. The vision for a cultural center started out as the Mr. Marcos's solution to his wife's need to "shed off her '65 campaign image as a politician's wife" (Hosillos, 1970: 343). Its inauguration in 1969 formalized her role as the "Patroness of the Arts" and pursued in the succeeding years.

This paper aims to discuss the nature of the CCP as a state institution. It will focus on the conditions surrounding its existence in the martial law years. It does not, as yet, aspire to evaluate its role of the CCP in the Philippine art scene. Instead, it is a preliminary study on the executive and legislative framework crucial to its scope and functions.

Before going further, it must be noted that preliminary data for this article were based on two earlier studies. These were focused on cultural policies in the Philippines (Quizon, 1988) and the Cultural Development Fund or the CDF (Salamanca, 1984). Quizon's unpublished paper traced the directions of cultural policy in the Philippines. This study was largely based on the constitution, relevant legislation, and executive issuances. These documents were supplemented by other references such as speeches and statements by policy-makers. Salamanca's article

discussed the rationale behind executive orders relevant to the status the CCP and the Cultural Development Fund (CDF). This was a result of his earlier investigation on the Philippine War Damage Special Fund for Education (SFE) which was eventually revealed to be the origin of the CDF (Salamanca, 1984) — a public fund administered by the CCP.

The proceeding discussion hopes to extend the implications of these findings. Policies for culture and the arts must also be placed in the context of national goals. These are not an end in themselves but largely a part of any government's thrust towards national development. Development programs pursued by the Marcos administration underscored a direction towards internationalism. In this context, the arts and culture became an instrument of the martial law regime to be recognized by the international community.

## PATTERNS OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Governments have the power to fashion artistic and cultural production for its own needs. These are needs constructed from their respective assumptions of art and culture. Through legislative and executive means, the state provides support to artists sometimes more extensive than those of private patrons. Policies and programs are instruments of selecting artistic practices consistent



with the interest of the state

The objectives of cultural policies may be summed up into three, namely: 1) to encourage artistic creation; 2) to raise and maintain (national) standards of excellence; and 3) to make the arts accessible to its public (Dunbar, 1973: 86). These may seem clear and simple enough yet its implementation has raised controversies and criticisms. Questions regarding which artforms/artists to promote and based on whose standards imply a process of selection. Choices are then based on criteria set by those in control of government resources.

Public support for the arts comes in direct and indirect forms. Indirectly, the states provides tax exemptions and benefits — privilege designed for non-profit (public and private) cultural organizations to augment their resources and attract prospective donors. This form accounts for the sizeable percentage of private donations to or even the creation of museums in the United States. Exemptions may also be applied to the importation of materials for artistic production. A condition most advantageous to a wider range of artists by extending resources made available to them.

Direct support, often synonymous to outright intervention in production, comes in a variety of forms. The government can act as a direct purchaser of art. Public agencies in the Philippines, such as the Government Security and Insurance System (GSIS) and the Central Bank of the Philippines have acquired a sizeable art collection through the commercial art market — galleries/dealers or directly from artists. Similarly, services of artists can be hired for public performances or for commissioned projects.

In most countries, a department of culture is entrusted with its national programs. While agencies are created specifically for the distribution of public resources through grants and subsidy (Netzer, 1978: 43). Examples are the National Endowment for the Arts (USA), the Arts Council of Great Britain, and our own National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). In response to private initiatives, these agencies extend subsidies to individual artists and non-governmental organizations. In line with the goal of promoting

artistic excellence, they evaluate and determine projects deserving of state support. Although described as adopting an arm's-length policy, such agencies have been criticized as dipping their arms at length into the pool of artistic creativity. Conditions set by state funding agencies are often blamed on the bureaucracy. But internal politics play a primary role in the direction these agencies eventually take.

Other forms of direct support by government is through the operation of cultural institutions, both at a national or regional level. These may come in the form of theaters, museums, or a multi-media center such as the CCP. At an earlier stage of artistic production, state-owned educational institutions may be established (Netzer: 48). An early example is the University of the Philippines (UP) School of Fine Arts (presently known as the College of Fine Arts). Training at the secondary level was later heeded with the founding of the Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA) in 1978.

### CREATING A NEED FOR A CULTURAL CENTER

Plans for the CCP was formalized in 1966 through Executive Order No. 30 which created the CCP Trust and appointed a seven-member Board of Trustees.<sup>1</sup> By virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 20 (March 1966), a 28-hectare reclamation site was secured for the Center.

The concept for a cultural center was met with ambivalence among the art community. Hopes were raised after the aborted plan for the RP-US Cultural Foundation<sup>2</sup> a decade ago, while the legality of the CCP was questioned in spite of E.O. No. 30. It was seen as a duplication of the then inoperative National Commission on Culture (NCC).<sup>3</sup> Also, as a finance-intensive endeavor, the late Senator Benigno Aquino was most critical of the morality of this project in the face of widespread poverty (Jose S. Salazar, 1969). Barring these, the First Lady's vision for a center for a center for Philippine culture was realized within four years.

In defense, then Justice Secretary and CCP Legal Counsel, Juan Fonce Enrile, stated that the CCP was created as a "trust for the benefit of the



Filipino people" and not as a public office or government agency (CCP, 1966).

"The Cultural Center is nothing more than a group of trustees similar to the committees or bodies created in the past by past presidents ... to take charge of fund raising campaigns and to administer the trust fund for specific purposes."

In the same statement, then Sec. Enrile emphasized the private status of the CCP, that is, it is governed by the general law of trusts, including tax returns and exemptions. Furthermore, "only revenue funds and those raised through bond issues of officially received by and in the possession of public officers are 'public funds.'"

The structure that we now know as the Cultural Center of the Philippines was called a "Parthenon," a "Shrine of the Filipino Spirit." In line with Mrs. Marcos's "integrated social programs," the Center's primary goal was set towards "the development of a Filipino soul which is just as important in nation building." Prior to its 1969 inauguration, the Cultural Center was justified as essential to both the artists and the nation. Amidst what was described as a post-war development of "national amnesia ... and a lack of balance and sense of direction," the Center was envisioned to stimulate a meeting of old traditions and new ideas (CCP, 1966). The same publication defined elaborate objectives for the Center in the aspects of public service; propagation and development of art and culture; preservation and conservation of artifacts; education and research; providing a home for the artists and performers; and development of standards of excellence.

Assumptions on culture, its components and functions provide a strong basis for state policies and programs. In the case of the Philippines, the term "cultural renaissance," which allegedly transpired during the Marcos regime, was highly symbolic of its ideals on culture and its functions in society — placing high regard on the European phenomenon of centuries past. To fulfill this vision, the government created a need for cultural programs and institutions consistent with their policies for national development.

Even before September 1972, the idea of a "New Society" has been present in much of Mr. Marcos's statements — a society that would hope to achieve, among others, the glory of Ancient Greece (CCP, 1966). Understandably, culture would be an important element in this goal. The succeeding years saw how government further elevated the role of culture, the arts and the artists in the national and international milieu.

The concept of nationhood was highly associated with the definition of a national culture. A culture which will represent the whole nation, that is, its identity and existence, and provide people with "firm roots from which to grow." (Reference has been made with regard to a "confusion of tradition and values" as a product of history.) It is, thus, imperative that a national culture be nurtured and preserved. In pursuance of this national interest, the provision for culture in the 1973 Constitution was reassessed. Article XV, Sec. 9(2) has defined the domain of the state over the arts:

"Filipino culture shall be preserved and developed for national identity. Arts and Letters shall be under the patronage of the state."

The value of the arts to national affairs was also revealed in a number of speeches made by the Marcoses. Artists were seen as the vanguards of culture and the "spirit of a nation". As gifted individuals, they have the capacity to express the sentiments of a whole nation. It is, therefore, their "task to reveal our country and its people to the world and, more importantly to reveal the Filipino to himself" (Marcos, F., 1982: 223). It is also the artist's duty, by virtue of his/her special gifts, "to construct the nobler meaning of our race" and to ensure that such changes in society will "go deeply (in)to the fundamentals of human condition" (Marcos, I., 1982: 15). Such was the power of the artist and the value given to him/her towards the realization of the New Society.

These statements, from the side of the government, are explicitly based on the following assumptions on culture and the arts: (1) a highly individualistic notion of art and, at the same time, the artist's unique capability to speak for and change a whole nation; (2) that there exists a



national culture that will unify a multi-ethnic society such as ours; and (3) the public does not have access to culture without the support of government. What is actually happening, at this point, is that government has given itself enough reason to intervene in cultural affairs, to justify present and forthcoming cultural programs, and to pursue other concerns in the guise of cultural development.

This was the case with the CCP in the face of questions regarding its morality and legality. With the establishment of the Cultural Center, the government selected and promoted culture along the lines of national development and international recognition — for local and international audiences.

### THE CCP TRUST AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The initial funds for the construction of the CCP was said to have been generated from a benefit presentation which raised half a million pesos along with the P 90,000 interest from the aborted Cultural Foundation fund forwarded by the RP members (through Mrs. Purita Kalaw-Ledesma). Sizeable funding, however, came later through the U.S. Congress with the allocation of \$3.5 million (or 13.7 million). This amount was a portion of the Special Fund for Education (SFE) which totalled to \$28 million. Available CCP documents showed no evidence of the origin of the SFE which constituted the bulk of the CCP Trust Fund. CCP public statements gave the impression that the allocation was a philanthropic gesture of the US government. Thus, for purposes of this study, a brief background will be made. In the end, it will be noted, that the CDF had strong implications on executive actions affecting the nature and powers of the CCP in later years.

The \$28 million-plus SFE accounts for a portion of the Philippine war claims from the US government which amounted to \$73 million. After arduous negotiations between RP and US officials over this claim,<sup>4</sup> the Philippine War Damage Act was signed into law by President Kennedy in 1962.<sup>5</sup> The following year, however, the Fulbright-Hays amendment<sup>6</sup> limited (individual) awards to a maximum of \$25,000 and, furthermore, defined the

use of surplus of all claims exceeding this amount,

"...shall be placed into a special fund in the United States Treasury to be used for the purpose of furthering educational exchange and other educational programs to the mutual advantage of the Republic of the Philippines and the United States in such manner as the Presidents of those two Republics shall from time to time determine."

This amendment led to the creation of the SFE, which technically already belongs to the Philippine government. Two parties had special interest over the SFE — private higher education led by Fr. John McCarron, a professor from Ateneo de Manila University, and President Macapagal. McCarron was lobbying to fund projects for improving private higher education. This, however, had minimal support from Macapagal as he was more keen on his land reform project. An education program for land reform was discussed with President Johnson during his 1964 state visit to the U.S. The proposal involved two-thirds of the whole SFE. The Americans's reluctance for the approval was not only due to the amount involved. They were especially concerned with the implications of a sizeable release of funds with the forthcoming presidential elections in the Philippines. Further discussions were then superseded until after the elections which Macapagal lost.

Under President Marcos's term, negotiations for the SFE resumed. The Education Assistance Committee was created to set guidelines and review proposals from both public and private entities. The CCP project was among those submitted to the American panel, qualifying under the guideline "for the promotion of Filipino culture." This phrase may have been included by the Department of Education to accommodate Mrs. Marcos, as in those days, no one would dare say "no" to her wishes. Crucial to its speedy approval was the President's state visit to the U.S. in September 1966 and Mrs. Marcos's close involvement with the CCP project. In the same month, a U.S. Senate Bill was passed, sponsored by Senator Mike Mansfield. On August 1967, the project was signed in Manila. (Salamanca, 1984:



275-280) This formalized a bi-national agreement allocating 12.5 % of the SFE for Mrs. Marcos's project. The agreement clearly stated that the principal remain intact and only its investment earnings be spent for CCP purposes.

The CCP Trust Fund or the Cultural Development Fund (CDF), administered by Bancom Development Corporation totalled 15.5 million before 1969. This included an additional 1.8 million raised by Mrs. Marcos. By June 1969, the CDF amounted to 17.5 million with a market value of 20 million (CCP, 1969). (By 1986, the end of the Marcos regime, the CDF had a total of 379.5 million).

With the agreement stipulated by the US government regarding the CDF, the Marcos administration found itself with enough cultural funds within their reach but with actually so few at its disposal. Due to lack of liquid assets, resources were insufficient for the 40 million projected construction cost for the CCP. For this purpose, a \$7 million foreign loan from either the Manufacturer's Bank or the Chemical Bank, both New York-based, guaranteed by the National Investment Development Corporation (a subsidiary of the Philippine National Bank).

According to a former legal counsel, Atty. Antonio Quintos<sup>7</sup>, this move was not deliberated upon by the CCP Trustees but presented to them only later for approval. This was said to have been arranged by the Marcoses through Mr. Ponce-Enrile. By this time, he has resigned from the CCP board after being appointed President of the Philippine National Bank (PNB). With the drastic peso devaluation in the latter part of the 60s (mainly a result of the 1969 campaign overspending), the \$7 million loan, originally equivalent to 28 million, doubled its amount to 49 million, including deferred interest payments.<sup>8</sup>

By 1972, the CCP was already burdened with a debt amounting to 63 million, incurred mainly from the construction of the theater building alone, for which it had temporarily, but illegally, utilized the principal of the CDF. In an effort to solve this problem, the Trustees sought to change the private status of the CCP to a "non-municipal public corporation," and asked some congressmen to

sponsor and introduced in H.R. No. 4454, with a counterpart S.B. No. 929. (Salamanca, 1986) Both bills also included a permanent government subsidy to the Center, that is, equivalent to five per cent (two per cent in the Senate version) of all taxes on amusements.<sup>9</sup>

These bills were met with strong objections, both from the legislators and the public. Two main reasons were defined by Salamanca: first, approval would mean that the government would be accountable for CCP's debts and, second, that this will "completely kill" the inoperative NCC. Artists were more concerned with the latter since they had high hopes that the NCC, once it becomes operative, would assure their active participation in state cultural affairs.

## A CULTURAL CENTER BY DECREE

Upon the declaration of martial law, Mr. Marcos's unlimited executive powers facilitated the alteration and manipulation of the CCP — its nature, status and functions — for self-interest. The most obvious of which was to control the Cultural Development Fund (CDF) through the CCP (Salamanca, 1986). Also, based on subsequent presidential decrees, amendments were made to widen the resources and privileges of the Center by assuring various forms of support.

The executive was instrumental in solving CCP's financial predicament, as it was in all other aspects of state affairs. Immediately after September 1972, Executive Order No. 30 was repealed through Presidential Decree No. 15 (dtd. 5 October 1972). This hidden decree, entitled "Creating the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Defining its Objectives, Powers, Functions and for Other Purposes" transformed into law H.R. No. 4454. The first paragraph even justifies this decree, that is, it being "one of the priority measures pending before Congress" prior to the declaration of Martial Law.

There are two significant changes defined by P.D. 15 crucial to the operations of the CCP. First, the change in status of the CCP from a trust to a "non-municipal public corporation" — a public agent for the patronage of the arts (Sec.3). Second,



with the dissolution of the CCP Trust, all of its properties, including the CDF, were transferred to this new entity (Sec. 5). With these, the CCP was given autonomy over its policies and operations but, nevertheless, assured of permanent state support and assistance (Sec. 11). This funding is over and above the tax exemptions and incentives it has been given (Sec. 13). With regard to its acquired debt, Sec. 2(a) easily gave the CCP a means of crediting this liability to government as construction cost.

This, of course, was not the end of the Marcos's manipulation of cultural policies through the CCP. Seven other presidential decrees followed between 1973 until 1981 which further amended the stature of the CCP — its objectives, privileges and physical domain. P.D. 179 (dtd. 26 April 1973) specifically extended its revenue-generating schemes. The CCP was given authority to "raise funds by public patronage through the medium of floatation of bonds or other forms of indebtedness" which, again, shall be exempted from taxes. Also, amendments to Sec. 7(b) and 7(c) underscore its autonomy of the CCP with regard to budget allocation and disbursements.

P.D. 179 was passed at a convenient time, that is, a year before the 1974 Miss Universe Pageant. In an interview, Atty. Antonio Quintos has shed light on the rationale of this presidential decree. The government needed money for the construction of a venue for the forthcoming pageant. Through the issuance of CCP bonds (serviceable within 25 years), five government agencies were tapped and raised 50 million to build the Folk Arts Theater. The construction feat was expertly managed and completed within 70 days.

In 1975, P.D. 773 extended the real estate properties assigned to CCP. To pursue its function of constructing the necessary facilities for its purpose, the whole reclaimed area that is known today as the CCP complex was "assigned, transferred and conveyed" to the Cultural Center. Together with the full benefits of property tax exemptions given to a non-profit institution, the CCP made use of its other privileges and financial resources for construction purposes. A major liability incurred for this purpose was a 450 million loan from the GSIS used to construct the Philippine Plaza Hotel. (Quintos, 1994; CCP, 1986) Its vast property eventually became the site of other

structures which included the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), the Folk Arts Theater, the Coconut Palace, and the Manila Film Palace. Other facilities were also built to be rented out to private concessionaires. All of these establishments, since their start of operation, have been generating funds for the CCP Administration. These revenue sources were given legal stature and were tax-exempt since 1978 by virtue of P.D. 1444, Sec. 4. The construction of these facilities were allowed provided that income generated "shall be invested in the CDF."

In response, perhaps, to complaints from the private sector engaged in the hotel business P.D. 1815 was created in 16 January 1981. CCP tax exemptions were revoked from the income generated by the Philippine Plaza Hotel, as a major business venture. On the same date, however, P.D. 1825 was passed to qualify the preceding decree. Instead of paying directly to the Bureau of Internal Revenue, such remittances were to be given to the CCP for its "cultural activities." With these two subsequent P.D.s, Mr. Marcos promptly relieved himself of pressures from the private sector while, simultaneously, maintained the disposable funds of the CCP.

In addition to its vast Metro Manila property, the CCP also owned a parcel of mountain land in Mt. Makiling on which the Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA) and the National Arts Center (NAC) were built.<sup>10</sup> The PHSA was created through P.D. 1287 (dtd. 20 January 1978) and assigned it under the jurisdiction of the CCP. A six-member PHSA Board of Trustees was defined with the CCP President as chairman. This was later amended through P.D. 1779 (dtd. 17 January 1981) specifying that the Founding Chairman of the CCP, that is, Mrs. Marcos, shall sit as Chairman to the school's Board of Trustees.

Imelda Marcos's vision of nurturing a national culture that would be at par with Western standards — "the true, the good and the beautiful" — was heeded well by the executive. Following the administration's thrust towards international recognition, Proclamation No. 1151 (dtd. June 1973) created the International Artists Awards "to be conferred to artists of foreign nationality who have contributed to the advancement of the arts and



culture in the Philippines" (NEDA, 1983: 186). This awards was administered by the CCP, the first recipients of which were prima ballerina, Dame Margot Fonteyn and pianist, Van Cliburn. In relation to this, P.D. 1444, Sec. 1(f) encouraged the performance of foreign artists at the CCP. This also enabled the Center to avail of the service of foreign artists on a long-term basis. Among them was William Morgan who stayed with Ballet Philippines for more than ten years as ballet master and choreographer.

From 1969 to 1986, cosmopolitan sensibilities in the arts formed the CCP's main agenda, both in the classical and modern (abstractionist) idioms (Guillermo, 1993). Cultural exchange with other nations brought numerous foreign artists — in theater, dance, music, and the visual arts — within its massive walls. Similarly, local artists were given a chance to participate in the international art scene through competitions and exhibitions in the name of the state.

The vast public resources allocated to the CCP was not compensated by its programs. These addressed the interest of only a minority of the population. Notwithstanding the issue of public accountability, the government further justified and reinforced the value of the CCP and other cultural programs in national development.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ARTS

Development programs of the "New Society" were allegedly designed for the interest of the greater majority and, at the same time, to promote the image of our nation as a progressive economy under martial rule to the outside world. The latter, however, seemed to be the priority of the administration then. Unemployment was a major problem to contend with then (as now). A major economic move was to diversify the participation of the international market by (1) emphasizing on export-oriented industries and (2) encouraging the entry of foreign investments.

The relatively low wage rate in the country, compared to other competing Third World nations, attracted the establishment of transnational

corporations such as pharmaceutical companies. Various forms of incentives for foreign investors were designed.<sup>11</sup> In the guise of protecting the interest of local industries and entrepreneurs, foreign investment schemes (particularly for designated priority areas) were defined to attract international companies to set-up shop.

Among the industries established and developed was car manufacturing. The Philippine Car Manufacturing Program (PCMP) was designed upon the advice of the Central Bank and through the (newly formed) Board of Investments. The PCMP made possible the setting-up of assembly plants by foreign manufacturers with the cooperation of local producers.<sup>12</sup>

The government's thrust towards internationalism has been visible as early as 1973 when (under Letter of Instruction No. 73) a study committee was formed to "study ways and means of making Greater Manila more attractive as a site for locating the Asian regional headquarters of international companies". This, however, was further reinforced with the appointment of then First Lady as Governor of the newly formed Metro Manila Commission in 1974. (Archipelago, 1975:34) The "City of Man," as she called it, was to be developed as a "Convention City" where:

"the great minds, the scientists, the artists, the financiers" can meet and "leave us not just their money but also their know-how and values, a part of their culture."

Beautification programs were in full-scale (although at a superficial level) as well as the so-called "edifice complex" identified with Mrs. Marcos.

To further increase the supply of foreign exchange, the government went on a full-scale development of the country's tourism industry. Presidential Decree No. 31, issued in October 1972, exempted all foreign tourists and travelers from the payment of hotel room taxes. But the state's tourism program was institutionalized two years later. In 1974, a Four-Year Tourism Development Plan was initiated which set a 500,000 target of visitors (foreign and "Balikbayans") by 1977. To supplement this, a



comprehensive investment incentive program was implemented (P.D. No. 535, dated August 1974) which defined various forms of tax exemptions to tourism-related industries. The hotel industry was given priority to assure sufficient accommodation of the expected increase in visitors.

Related to the tourism industry was the trend of international events taking place in Manila as envisioned by the Metro Manila Governor. The most popular of these was the Miss Universe Pageant held in 1974 (recently duplicated, after ten years). The following year saw the simultaneous construction of as many as 18 luxury hotels in the Greater Manila Area in preparation for the 1976 International Monetary Fund-World Bank Conference. The decision to hold such a conference was seen as an international recognition of the "New Society." Although privately owned, 14 of these projects were endorsed by the Central Bank for financing by three government agencies — namely, the Development Bank of the Philippines, the GSIS and the Philippine National Bank (Aspiras, 1975: 3-5).

The IMF-World Bank Conference marked the "construction boom" of the seventies, not only of structures such as hotels. Mrs. Marcos's vision to develop Metro Manila as a "Convention City" led to the rise of the Philippine International Convention Center; the opening of museums such as the Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA, originally called Contemporary Art Museum of the Philippines), the Metropolitan Museum of Manila and the Museum of Philippine Costumes. In line with this, medical institutions were established which were referred to as "designer hospitals." Among them were the Philippine Heart Center for Asia, the Lungsod ng Kabataan or Children's City, the Lung Center and the Kidney Center (Manapat, 1991: 14).

Beautification and cleanliness programs were necessary in line with the growing tourism industry and international promotions.<sup>13</sup> One program that was most visible to the public was called *Kulay Anyo ng Lahi*. This project commenced as part of a Manila Arts Festival held in 1975 in connection with the IMF Conference. It was to be the first government program for "public art," i.e., painting. (The programs of the succeeding Aquino administration was more in line with the

commemorative thrust of public art as monuments.) *Kulay Anyo* involved the large-scale reproduction (murals) of works by contemporary visual artists on the exterior walls of buildings (most of them privately-owned) all over Metro Manila (Benesa, 1980: 18-23).

As a pioneering project, the *Kulay Anyo* project created mixed reactions. Aesthetically, the project was inconsistent with the concept of mural painting. The result were merely enlarged versions of easel paintings. The late Raymundo Albano, then CCP Museum Director, was also critical of the lack of foresight among its proponents. Referring to the eventual "loss" of some murals due to inappropriateness of materials to climatic conditions. Also, the subsequent construction of new buildings covered most murals out of the public's sight. The government and project proponents were obviously too preoccupied with pursuing the *Kulay Anyo* project for its short-term purpose, that is, for IMF-WB viewing only.

## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ART PATRONAGE

The development policies of the Marcos Administration did not only affect the national economy. In fact it did more good to other areas than the economy itself. The art market in the 1970s might have grown in volume, even though art patrons account for a small proportion of the whole population. In addition to the elite were expatriates who shared the same taste in the arts. Among these groups, there were enough available resources to be used for luxury goods such as the enjoyment of the arts.

The scope of art collection widened in the 1970s. It was no longer limited to paintings and sculptures but included antiques and ethnographic objects as well. The growing interest in the collection of old masters was triggered by Central Bank purchasing under Gov. Jaime Laya. It was during his term that the extensive Central Bank art collection was pursued to include a wider range of artworks. From the small lot collected during Gov. Gregorio Licaros's term, Gov. Laya started the Bank's collection of 18th and 19th century masters as well as its antiques and furniture collection.



This also caused an upsurge in the prices of colonial art.

Other government agencies also started purchasing artworks for its own use. Government agencies, apart from the GSIS and Central Bank, were required to spend a particular percentage of their annual budget for the purchase of artworks to decorate offices and buildings.<sup>14</sup>

The availability of more resources may also be attributed to the travel ban imposed by the government in September 1972 (LOI No. 5). Opportunities to travel was predominantly a luxury of the rich — most of whom benefitted much in the state's economic programs. With this restriction, art collections were made to compensate for their usual luxury expenses. (Torres, 1993)

The emphasis on export-oriented industries created a set-back for the Philippine economy. The changing policies of the international market towards the importation of sugar, copra and timber (our main export goods) and the rising rate of inflation further destabilized our economy. Private individuals and companies (mostly banks), still with their excess resources, widened their choice of investment opportunities. And art, then, was seen to be a relatively stable and lucrative one.

Patronage of private corporations such as banks strengthened the possibility of returns in art investment, both for money and publicity. The Metrobank accumulated its art collection mainly through the sponsorship of an art competition for amateur artists. This enhanced not only their philanthropic reputation but also their commitment to the future of Philippine culture. Also, Metrobank established certain canons of "taste" through its art competitions, mainly for representational works of art. The PCIBank and Mobil (Phils.) ventured into similar projects, with the former covering the fields of the visual arts and music.

With all these developments, in art patronage from both the public and private sectors, the art world had to accommodate its growing market whose needs were largely set by the ruling elite. These preferences, along with CCP programs, defined a coterie of artists identified with the patronage of the state. Nevertheless, the 1970s

also saw the emergence of a mass-based art, that is, protest art into the mainstream art market. Social realism also benefitted from the growing art market. Meeting the expectations of the "highly developed visual language," social realists also created paintings that appealed to the urban sectors of society. (Guillermo, 1988: 12-14)

Art galleries and dealers along with interior designers plunged into the world of free enterprise. The art trade in the 70s has taken on different forms of marketing strategies. From the elegance of clean, white walls in galleries and well-attended opening nights to more familiar and domestic settings in supermarket racks.

The Marcos regime was a turning point in the matter of government support for the arts. By employing the various avenues of the executive cum legislative, the arts was given a place in national and economic affairs more prominent than in previous administrations.

The imposing structure of the CCP we see today was symbolic of the extensive support the state then was willing to provide. Assured of vast resources, its full-scale operations was without financial constraints. The CCP pursued its programs for the "high arts". With the necessary infrastructure — a theater, a school, a museum, and galleries — and funds at its disposal, the leadership's found a foothold for culture.

The status enjoyed by the Cultural Center through the years has truly been a privileged one. On the surface, it seemed that the state has been benevolent with respect to culture. By extending the jurisdiction of the CCP, the government has assured the arts with its constant support.

The CCP has been operating as a distinct agency enjoying both private and public status, with its own funds and vast means of generating them. Given the seemingly harmless reputation of a cultural institution, CCP resources were used indiscriminately used for non-cultural purposes. These included the construction of a guest house at the Malacañang premises and the Palace's renovation, in time for the expected (but aborted) visit of Libyan leader, Muamar el-Qaddafi. While CCP officials allegedly objected to these



disbursements, Mrs. Marcos simply justified the project for the purpose of preserving a "national treasure." (Quintos, 1994) Other expenses and liabilities incurred under CCP books were the renovation of the Moslem Mosque, and the abandoned construction of the Philippine Science and Technology Center (CCP, 1966).

What the executive has actually done was to ensure a conjugal control over a major cultural institution, its operations and, moreover, its funds. To justify its agenda for culture, the government created a viewing public whose taste was in consonance with Western sensibilities. With the state's thrust towards marketability in the international community, art and culture became part of the national agenda for trade, diplomacy, and tourism.

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## NOTES

1 The CCP Board of Trustees then included Mrs. Marcos (Chairperson), Horacio de la Costa, S.J., Juan Ponce Enrile, Antonio P. Madrigal (treasurer), J.P. Soliongco; and Ernest Rufino (Assistant Treasurer).

2 The RP-US Cultural Foundation was considered as a predecessor of the CCP. In 1959, the American Embassy sounded off a proposal for a bi-national cultural project to the Philippine government through Purita Kalaw-Ledesma. Excess funds, amounting to 3.2 million, were to be channelled from the International Media Guaranty program (an agreement between the two governments) for this purpose. This was upon the condition that the concept can only be proposed by the US government. An 11 - member Board of Trustees, composed of 6 Filipinos and 5 Americans, was formed to pursue the project for a cultural center. The building design for this project was won by Leandro Locsin, a plan very similar to the present CCP Main Theater structure.

After almost four years of planning and preparation, the American government's unreasonable intervention eventually led to the resignation of the Filipino board members. Going beyond the project's concept, the Americans were insistent that their terms be followed regarding the center's cite, operational scheme, and even the appointment of a director. To this, Mrs. Ledesma remarked that "...a great power like the United States operates, manipulating people and using money to achieve its aims, imposing its will on the developing countries under the guise of slogans on 'internationalism' and 'brotherhood'. Of all the forms of control, I was soon to discover, cultural domination was the most lasting, the most difficult to eschew." Purita Kalaw-



Ledesma and Amalis Ma. Guerrero, *The Struggle for Philippine Art* (Quezon City: Vera-Reyes, Inc., 1974), Chap. 7

- 3 The NCC was created by virtue of Republic Act No. 4165 (August 1964) under the Macapagal administration as a result of extensive lobbying from the art community. Upon its approval, artists from the different media were appointed as commission members. In spite of this, the NCC became a victim of politics and thus never materialized. Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero. Chap 10.
- 4 The issue of war damage claims started with the Philippine Rehabilitation Act of 1946 which set-aside \$620 million for public and private reconstruction and rehabilitation programs. This amount was not enough to cover all claims which resulted to pending appropriation amounting to \$80 million. This bill, however, was neglected due to a lack of executive support and the influx of domestic problems in both governments. Action was revived only in the succeeding administrations, between Presidents Eisenhower and Magsaysay, and later President Garcia. This was formalized, in 1954, through the Philippine Economic Mission to the United States originally formed to renegotiate the Bell trade Act of 1946. Unexpectedly, the war damage claims, (which according to the US totalled to \$73 million), was incorporated into the Omnibus Claims. Furthermore, under the 1961 War Damage Bill, the US Congress proposed an offsetting of Philippine obligations (a loan made under the Romulo-Snyder Agreement of 1950) against the \$73 million. If approved, the Philippine claims will amount to only \$21.1 million.
- 5 (H.R. 11721) to be supplemented by the Zablocki Bill in Congress. Bonifacio S. Salamanca, "The Negotiation and Disposition of the Philippine War Damage Claims: A Study in Philippine American Diplomacy, 1951-1972." *Reappraising an Empire: New Perspectives in Philippine-American History*, pp. 263-283. Edited by Peter W. Stanley. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- 5 This act has limited, as its scope, "only the unpaid balance of awards made by the PWDC (Philippine War Damage Commission). Ibid., p. 273.
- 6 Passed and signed into law by President Kennedy, dtd. 12 August 1963. Ibid., p. 274.
- 7 Atty. Antonio Quintos served as the CCP Legal Counsel since 1969 until December 1993. He was also a board member of the RP-US Cultural Foundation project cited earlier.
- 8 Foreign exchange rate jumped from 3.90 in 1966 to 7 for every dollar in 1967.
- 9 5 per cent was the same amount defined as subsidy to the NCC.
- 10 By this time, the CCP had, as part of its assets, 70 hectares of reclaimed land on Roxas Boulevard, 13 hectares of mountain land in Makiling, Laguna, and buildings and facilities in these properties.
- 11 A series of republic Acts (R.A.) regarding the entry of foreign investments was promulgated which defines, among other things, the allowable percentage of foreign investment for both priority and non-priority areas (R.A. 5455 and 5186). Reflected as well was the priority given to export industries(R.A. 5186), wherein the establishment of 100% foreign-owned companies was allowed upon the condition that, after 30 years, at least 60% ownership will be given to Philippine nationals. "Foreign Investments: A Rising Trend", Archipelago, 1978-IV, A-46, p.3.

It was during the term of Presidents Kennedy and Macapagal that the preceding US Congress proposal took a drastic turn. Macapagal had, as his ace, a pending action to nullify the importation of \$20 million worth of Virginia tobacco. This eventually convinced legislators from tobacco-producing states to disapprove the War Damage Bill. Immediately after, President Kennedy created his own bill



- 12 Among the foreign car companies were General Motors, Ford Motors, Chrysler, DMG Corporation and Toyota.
- 13 Cleanliness projects gave enough reason for the government to cause the displacement of various urban squatter communities to unpopulated areas in the metropolis, among them those found on Constitution Hill. The same community was again displaced upon the construction of the Barasang Pambansa building. *Manapat*, 1991: 2-4.
- 14 From interviews with art critic Emmanuel Torres and visual artist Francisco Verano, this was done through a Letter of Instruction (LOI). To this date, this LOI cannot be traced in legal documentation.

## INTERVIEWS

Quintos, Antonio R. San Luis Terraces, T. M. Kalaw, Ermita, Manila. 23 February 1994.

Torres, Emmanuel. Ateneo Art Gallery, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City. 23 August 1993.