

Art, citizenship and government: 'Art for the people' in New Deal America and the 1940s in England and Australia

Lisanne Gibson

This paper analyses three key moments in the history of government arts administration in America, Britain and Australia. The first is the history of the Federal Art Project (FAP), administered by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA art projects were the largest art projects of the American New Deal of the 1930s, and the only ones which were specifically a product of the New Deal. The second moment was created by the British Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) during World War II. The third is an analysis of the Australian CEMA during the period of postwar reconstruction. It is not possible to offer an exhaustive historical account of these three moments. Rather, the purpose is to explore some of the framing discourses for the conjunction of art, citizenship and government in these milieux.

The period of the 1930s and 1940s is especially significant for the ways in which government arts funding came to be institutionalised in the postwar world. During the 1930s and 1940s there was a significant shift in the degree to which government administered the arts, which had two direct outcomes. First, there was an increased political expectation that it was a responsibility of government to fund and administer the arts. This meant that in a time of dire economic and political circumstance, due first to the Depression and then to World War II, there were multiple initiatives for administering the arts with the aim of extending access and participation more generally throughout the nation. Second, linked to this shift in arts management, there was a shift in the way 'the people' were constructed in relation to art. Far from being thought of as the property of the few or the elite, the definitive art programs of the 1930s and early 1940s were titled 'Art

for the People' and proudly proclaimed that art was the property of 'Everyman'. Both of these discursive shifts were the outcome of a much longer history.¹ Specifically, they can be seen in relation to the more general shift towards different strategies for the management of 'the social', which can be traced from the early nineteenth century in, for example, museum policy.² Nevertheless, the 1930s and 1940s are significant for the way in which cultural policy sought to act on the citizen from 'arm's length' — that is, these strategies hoped to produce and encourage citizens capable of self-regulation in a way that would ensure their active and productive contribution to the nation. Thus artists in America were encouraged to paint 'American', British culture became a symbol of 'what we are fighting for', and in Australia the promise of culture was part of the promise of a new, reconstructed nation. An integral part of these various constructions of collectivity was the shaping of a citizen who would participate constructively in her or his working, political and social life.

A 'New Deal' for art: The Federal Art Project

In 1932, the Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt defeated Herbert Hoover to become president of the United States. Roosevelt won the election on the basis of his platform promising that the conditions which led to the 'Great Crash' of 1929 would never occur again and that there would be a New Deal for Americans which would bring the country out of depression.³ The New Deal was an innovative program involving the abandonment of the gold standard, devaluation of the dollar, state intervention in the credit market, agricultural price support, the passage of a Social Security Act (1935), which provided for unemployment and old age insurance, and the establishment of extensive work creation schemes. The key rhetorical appeals of the New Deal are apparent in Roosevelt's inaugural speech where he warned against the 'evils of the old order' and stated that his 'primary task' was to 'put people to work' (1973 [1933]: 241). His central claim was that, 'If I read the temper of our people correctly, we now realise as we have never before, our interdependence on each other; that we cannot merely take, but we must give as well' (1973 [1933]: 241). Thus the New Deal was established (in its rhetoric at least) as a deal which would give such things as economic equality, fair working conditions, leisure and decent housing to the common people, in return for 'good citizenship'.⁴

The Research Committee on Social Trends appointed by Hoover in 1929 reported in 1933 that 'for the overwhelming majority of the American people, the fine arts of painting and sculpture, in their non-commercial, non-industrial forms, do not exist' (in McKinzie 1973: 4). There are two primary reasons why government organised and funded the art projects of the New Deal. First, the support of art projects was symptomatic of a particular philosophical view of the relationship of government and 'the people'. This view envisaged people as informed citizens participating in the working of the nation. Second, government art subvention was based on the aim of provision of work for unemployed artists. While there was an increase in exhibitions, collections, galleries and patrons of the arts in the United States during the 1920s, with the advent of the Depression this growth declined. However, prior to the stockmarket crash of 1929, much of the trade in 'fine' art was in foreign markets. Holger Cahill, Director of the FAP from 1935, stated that: 'During the middle twenties there was an art boom of respectable proportions associated with the stockmarket boom in those years, but in this, the American artist hardly shared at all. He had become a step-child in his own country.' (in Harris 1995: 15)

The FAP was framed in terms of a particular construction of 'the people'. This construction emphasised the interconnectedness of the citizen with the state and reconstructed the American nation in terms of a *collective* of participatory citizens. Art played a central role in this relationship. Francis O'Connor, historian of the FAP, has described it thus:

the idea of 'art for art's sake' was firmly rejected as the basis for the FAP. This rejection was in keeping not only with the theoretical tenor of Cahill's thought and the desires of the socialist-oriented artists' organisations, but with the practical necessities of setting up an effective art-relief program, on a national scale, designed to employ all needy artists regardless of skill or aesthetic proclivity. The ideal was collectivism, not individualism. (O'Connor 1973: 18)

Thus Roosevelt commented in 1939 that 'The WPA artist *exemplifies* with great force the essential place which the arts have in a democratic society' (my emphasis, in O'Connor 1993: 2).

Although the FAP did not require social realist art from its artists,⁵ R.D. McKinzie (1973: 106) has argued that:

few in 1935 escaped the influence of Midwestern 'regionalist' artists ... or ... 'social realism' ... Regionalists and social realists built their art on American themes and sought to register their message in the untutored American mind. The roots of these modes lay in the 'country-wide revival of Americanism'.

This influence was politicised in the rhetoric of Roosevelt, Cahill and others, in terms of New Deal art reclaiming art for 'the people'. According to the New Dealers, before the New Deal, art was limited to the wealthy who only had a taste for foreign art. The New Deal, therefore, not only gave 'ordinary' people access to art, but also allowed the American artist to paint 'American'. These sentiments are apparent in Roosevelt's 1941 speech at an address in dedication of the National Gallery of Art:

A few generations ago, the people of this country were taught ... to believe that art was something foreign to America and to themselves ... something they had no part in, save to go and see it in a guarded room on holidays or Sundays.

But recently ... they have discovered that they have a part ... They have seen, across these last few years, rooms full of paintings by Americans ... all of it painted by their own kind in their own country, and painted about things they know and look at often and have touched and loved. (in Park and Markowitz 1984: 6)

The appeal is to art *for* 'the people' and *about* 'the people'. In this construction, art practice is reformed as not only representational of the nation, but in the broader sense as 'national'. In order for realist art to be reframed as national, a dichotomy was set up between 'foreign' art which was categorised as 'art for art's sake', and therefore of limited appeal to a broader public, and realist art which spoke to and represented the American citizen. This rhetoric enabled the FAP to claim that the gallery was: 'No longer an esoteric space for the cognoscenti ... the art gallery now belongs to the ordinary people.' (in Harris 1995: 40)

Jonathan Harris has argued that 'Art and the social relations involved in its production were transformed ... in Project rhetoric, from objects

of conflict and antagonism in industrial-capitalist society into objects of reconciliation, bringing order, reason and collective will' (Harris 1995: 52). Thus art acted as part of a strategy that attempted to achieve 'a set of social identities or subjectivities that the state wished people to adopt' (Harris 1995: 8). For Harris, this is problematic as the FAP and the New Deal in general constructed its subjects as citizens and not as revolutionaries. According to Harris, this is evidence that the 'Roosevelt revolution' was confined, and reproduced 'monopoly-capitalist dominance in the United States' (Harris 1995: 21–22). While, as has been indicated, there has been a tendency to overstate the radicalism of the New Deal reforms, by the same token, an over-emphasis of its failure to be 'truly radical' also leads us away from the meaning of these reforms in the 1930s. Park and Markowitz have made just such a point about another art project in existence during the New Deal, the Section of Painting and Sculpture:

To some, the Section's art [and New Deal art in general] may seem to promote a middle-class, consensus view of the world ... in the 1930s ... labor and the left saw the New Deal as an ally in transforming society ... It was not a picture of the status quo but of a society undergoing fundamental improvement. (Markowitz 1984: 179)

Stuart Davis of the American Artists Congress put the importance of conserving the arts under the New Deal in this way:

Such conservation can continue only with the support of a government administration that will regard the arts, along with proper housing, playgrounds, health service, social security legislation, and educational facilities for all, as part of the basic obligations of a democratic government of all people towards the welfare of its citizens. (Davis 1973: 250)

Thus the FAP's philosophies can be defined as concerned with the utility of art in the construction and representation of a *new* America and its citizenry in a phrase: 'art for the (American) people'.

The establishment of CEMA: World War II in Britain

In an analysis of the framing discourses of arts subvention in Britain during World War II, there are two main correspondences with the examination of the history of the FAP. First, the rhetorical construction

of a collectivity of citizens was an important framing influence on the art, citizenship and government conjunction. This collective discourse is important to understanding the character of the art-citizenship-government conjunction in the 1930s and 1940s in America and Britain. Second, in the 1930s in America, the individual was reframed as a citizen participating in the creation of an ideal New Deal America. The art projects were thus part of a strategy for the formation and distribution of an image of the participatory citizen in a collective state. There was a similar rhetorical connection of the citizen to a collective state in Britain during World War II.⁶ World War II has commonly been termed 'the people's war', encapsulating the sense in which an appeal was made to 'the people' who, particularly because of the stringencies of the Total War philosophy and the bombing on the home front, were intricately involved in Britain's campaign. As part of this appeal to a citizen actively contributing to the war effort, wartime arts organisations acted to construct and distribute a culture which could be claimed by all.

CEMA was not the first government-funded arts organisation in the United Kingdom,⁷ but it is particularly important for four reasons:

- 1 It was the first government-funded agency established to actively promote the arts (including the performing arts and music) to a wider civilian audience.⁸
- 2 It confirmed the experience of the BBC that audiences existed for the arts among people of widely varied social and educational backgrounds.
- 3 An analysis of CEMA and its policies shows how some of the discourses which framed the relationship of art and citizenship were played out in a government organisation.
- 4 After the war, it was set up by Charter as the Arts Council of Great Britain.

In September 1939, discussions took place between Treasury and the Board of Education on the provision of financial assistance to organisations involved in adult education. These discussions focused on the need to 'preserve the national framework of culture, with special reference to music, drama and the arts during the emergency and to provide sufficient entertainment to sustain the morale of the civilian population' (in Leventhal 1990: 290). While it may have been

appropriate to leave the encouragement and preservation of morale to voluntary initiatives and the BBC, the Board of Education believed that it was essential:

to show publicly and unmistakably that the Government cares about the cultural life of the country. This country is supposed to be fighting for civilisation and democracy and if these things mean anything they mean a way of life where people have liberty and opportunity to pursue the things of peace. It should be part of the national war policy that the Government is actively interested in these things. Such an assurance needs to be given equally for the sake of our own people and for the sake of British pride abroad. (in Leventhal 1990: 293)

The two major framing principles of CEMA are to be found in this statement. CEMA was concerned with national quality and thus needed to associate itself with art in which 'British pride' could be placed. Second, it needed to be accessible to all and thus demonstrate and encompass the British qualities of 'democracy', 'liberty' and 'opportunity'.

CEMA was established under the management of the Board of Education, although little policy guidance was forthcoming and CEMA in fact developed its own policies. The initiative for the establishment of CEMA came from Thomas Jones, Pilgrim's Trust Secretary from 1930-45, who was impressed by the touring exhibitions of the British Institute of Adult Education (BIAE).⁹ E.W. White, Assistant Secretary to CEMA in 1942, explains the terms of reference as:

- a) The preservation in wartime of the highest standards in the arts of music, drama and painting;
- b) The widespread provision of opportunities for hearing good music and the enjoyment of the arts generally for people, who, on account of wartime conditions, have been cut off from these things;
- c) The encouragement of music-making and play-acting by the people themselves;
- d) through the above activities, the rendering of indirect assistance to professional singers and players who may be suffering from a wartime lack of demand for their work. (White 1975: 25-26)

Although the Council's earliest policy was framed in terms of helping unemployed artists, its orientation soon became predominantly towards amateur and educational activity, due to the influence of the Pilgrim's Trust. Leventhal (1990: 295) comments that:

As educational missionaries, CEMA's founders believed that 'enjoyment of the arts is closely linked with their practice', that ordinary people should experience art as practitioners, not as consumers.

However, the exclusive advocacy of amateur activities was abandoned with the appointment, in early 1940, of six professional music travellers to stimulate amateur activity in the towns and villages they visited (Leventhal 1990: 296). 'The Best for the Most' became CEMA's slogan. However, CEMA retained its commitment to amateur activity and rejected applications for assistance from opera, ballet and professional theatre companies, apart from underwriting a tour of the Old Vic (Leventhal 1990: 298). Instead, CEMA organised concerts in factories, mines, air-raid shelters, town halls, hostels and convalescent homes.

In 1940, the Council part-funded the BIAE 'Art for the People' touring exhibitions. These exhibitions were the idea of, and were organised by, a protégé of Jones, W.E. Williams, Secretary of the BIAE from 1934–40.¹⁰ In 1938, Williams described the object of these exhibitions: 'Our chief object has been to "expose" people to art, simply to put them in contact with really good pictures and hope that they will catch the infection.' (1938: 115) This kind of patronising rhetoric characterised CEMA reports and media releases. However, Janet Minihan (1977: 218–19) argues that:

Despite the pompous rhetoric ... CEMA's aim was not the preservation of the cultural status quo. From the start, it sought to develop new audiences, and reported proudly on the warm receptions accorded CEMA artists in the most unlikely places. It tried, furthermore, to promote local initiative in the arts, encouraging the establishment of arts clubs, and music or drama societies, whenever touring exhibitions or performers aroused sufficient local interest.

Reginald Jacques, another member of CEMA, also wrote about the travelling exhibitions. One passage is worth quoting at length, as it supports Minihan's argument. 'I believe,' Jacques wrote, 'that most of us have at last realised that we can no longer put Art on to a shelf, to

be taken down and admired at infrequent intervals by a severely limited and select company. Art is, or should be, the possession of EVERYMAN' (1945: 281). Like the New Deal rhetoric, CEMA's policies were characterised in opposition to a construction of the 'old world' where art was available only to the few; rather, CEMA advocated that art be the 'possession of everyman'. In the early CEMA, this emphasis was manifest in policies encouraging participation in art activities and amateur activity.

There was opposition to this amateur emphasis from the beginning. Kenneth Clark was one of the main Council advocates in favour of a policy concentrating on raising professional standards and taste.¹¹ In fact the policy shift began early — indeed, after the first year, by which time the National Council of Social Service and other educational bodies had facilitated the movement of amateur bodies over to county organisations managed under the Pilgrim's Trust (Leventhal 1990: 302). Possibly as a result of criticism, the Pilgrim's Trust decided to detach itself from CEMA in 1942 and the post of Chairman was offered to John Maynard Keynes, the economist. Keynes was a critic of the Council's policies. He wrote that he had 'only limited sympathy with the principles' of the Council and 'was worried lest what one may call the welfare side was to be developed at the expense of the artistic side and of standards generally' (in Leventhal 1990: 305). Thus, from early on, a dichotomy was established in discussion of the Council and its policies between those who were committed to the encouragement of amateur artistic activity, defined as the 'people's culture', and those who defined the Council as representing 'the best of British'. Thus the idea of culture as the best and the idea of culture as an expression of 'the people' were set up in opposition. The negotiation between these competing discourses has continued to be played out in the policy of the Arts Council.

The Australian CEMA

Arthur Phillips wrote in *Meanjin* in 1946 that the mating of 'Culture and Canberra' was as 'comically improbable as Flossie and the Archbishop' (1946: 99). Nevertheless, Phillips goes on to advocate in favour of government involvement with the arts in terms of its importance to 'the people' of Australia.

The immediate postwar period was characterised by a shift towards modes of management which favoured a more direct planning ethos;

in Australia there were a range of factors which influenced this shift. These included a reconception of the economic management of the population as compared with the pre-World War II period, when economies were, in simple terms, organised in a way which favoured minimal government intervention. Some of the major factors which contributed to a shift in the favoured forms of planning were the Depression of the 1930s, Roosevelt's 'New Deal', the Marshall Plan, the influence of Keynesian economics and the necessity — at least initially — for government to 'sell' the war to the Australian people. This was done with the promise of a new reconstructed postwar world. While many of these factors were set in motion prior to World War II, the circumstances of the war enabled the implementation of a different form of planning. Nicholas Brown argues that it is possible to trace a transition in the conception of government from the postwar period to the late 1950s. He writes (1995: 5) that:

Underpinning the reformism attributed to the 'true believers' of the 1940s was a concern that the scale of post-war social, political, economic and international change could ever be managed as once it had been through concepts such as class, race, social hygiene and hierarchy, public order and duty ... this concern was transposed into, rather than superseded by, the practices of governing the new spaces of post-war prosperity — the more private spaces of citizenship, consumption, the local community, the intimacy of relationships and the individual personality.

New techniques of planning were based on a notion of the interconnection of the individual and government. This was in terms of the individual citizen's capacity for particular forms of self-government and, at the same time, a closer involvement of government in areas which were previously primarily private.

There was a multiplicity of suggestions for the organisation of cultural groups in Australia during and after World War II. H.C. Coombs (1981: 218) writes: 'Advocacy for Government support was widespread, encouraged by awareness of what CEMA had achieved for the Arts and the community in Britain.'¹² CEMA was established in Australia in 1943. The Australian CEMA began mostly as a result of the efforts of Dorothy Helmrich, who worked with the British CEMA for two years.¹³ In 1942, the year in which Helmrich returned to Australia, the

artist Russell Drysdale wrote regarding the British CEMA that it was a good example of the ways in which artists could be made useful in wartime. Drysdale (1942: 70) criticised the fact that no advantage was taken of artists in Australia:

It occurs to me that this is the very time to encourage and foster our cultural movements so that from this period of trial and sacrifice we shall be able to build a new and vigorous growth with its roots firmly planted in the interests and expression of the common people.

This emphasis on 'the people', which was common to arts advocacy at this time, meant that CEMA took on quite specific goals and mechanisms. It had three strategies in particular which ensured the possibility of reaching a wide audience. The first was the provision of access to art involving the use of regional tours; this was the Council's central activity. Second, CEMA made use of lunchtime lectures, which provided access on an educative level to both city workers and people in regional centres. Third, CEMA and later the Arts Council were both organised around a policy of decentralisation which ensured that each division and regional branch was specific in the way it dealt with local needs.¹⁴

In 1944, the 'People's Conference on Culture in the War and the Peace' agreed in its final organisational session that 'Culture must be made the possession of the people' (1944: 15). Helmrich gave us the best statement of why this was so: 'When man thinks constructively and can use his imagination — which is common to all ... then we have a complete being who will prove the perfect citizen.' (1944: 4) Thus, for CEMA and later The Arts Council, it was imperative to the creation of good citizens that certain practices in times of leisure were encouraged. The particular emphasis in CEMA's programs was on the participatory citizen. This appeal to 'the people' in the form of the participating citizen cannot be described simply in terms of populist advocacy. While it is clear that the definition of 'the people' here is as a collectivity of citizens, integral to this definition of collectivity is its constituent parts: 'active' citizens.

Conclusion

We have discussed the contingent and varied nature of the principles informing governmental rationalities of arts administration in three

different milieux. This has shown that in the 1930s and 1940s there were significant similarities in the discursive framing of government administration of art in America, Australia and Britain. We have emphasised that the relations between art, citizenship and government in each of these milieux are the product of a specific history. Nevertheless, it is a surprising point that, in each of these three case studies, increased governmental arts subvention occurred at a time of dire social and economic circumstance. This curious point has been explored by an analysis of the discourses which framed the relations between art, citizenship and government. These relations were framed in terms of various types of collectivity. An integral part of these various constructions of collectivity was the shaping of a citizen who would participate constructively in her or his working, political and social life. Thus these historically informed relations between art, government and citizenship are best defined by the ways in which different strategies for the management of populations, through encouraging a citizenry to be self-regulating in various ways, have been organised and deployed.

On one view, it would be conceivable to use these histories to trace a governmental recognition of democratic cultural rights.¹⁵ Populist calls for broader access to culture were certainly constructed in terms of an ideal of public participation. However, this 'freely' participating citizen was never unregulated. Most crucially, in this pre- and post-World War II milieu, it was hoped that the construction of such a citizen would guard against the corruption of totalitarian politics, which were seen to trade on the ignorance of 'the people'. In 1945, Hal Missingham, The Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, quoted from an American report to make this point:

If society is to maintain its health and sanity, the people at large must be trained to accept the guidance and direction of a special call, whether of economic masters or of soldiers, or else it must be *trained to take part* in the knowledge, the culture, the thought, and the concepts upon which its civilisation rests. (my emphasis, in Missingham 1945–46: 67)

It is evident here that cultural access was not formulated as a natural right of citizenship, but as a tool in the formation of good citizens.

Notes

- 1 While the similarity of the citizen constructed in these milieux is described, it is emphasised that each milieu is the product of its own specific history, which there is not sufficient space to go into here. These broader histories have been the subject of my doctoral research.
- 2 Tony Bennett has written extensively on the strategic use of the museum as a space designed for the shaping of particular behaviours and the forming of certain kinds of capacities. See especially *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Bennett 1995).
- 3 The repeal of prohibition was also a vital platform issue in this election with Roosevelt in favour of a 'New Deal for alcohol'.
- 4 While it is undeniable that the New Deal reforms were significant (for the first time, the federal government took responsibility for the welfare of unemployed people, for example), the New Deal was not as radical as has sometimes been claimed. Barton Bernstein questioned the extent of the 'Roosevelt Revolution' when he argued (1968: 264) that: 'The Liberal reforms of the New Deal did not transform the American system; they conserved and protected American corporate capitalism ... There was no significant redistribution of power in American society.'
- 5 Compared with The Section of Painting and Sculpture under the Treasury Department.
- 6 However, it must be emphasised that there was a different set of historical conditions framing this conjunction. There is no space to discuss this broader history here.
- 7 Throughout the 1930s, the British government became more involved in direct provision for the arts. Apart from the BBC, the semi-autonomous British Film Institute was established in 1933, a quota system was introduced to protect the British film industry, and the British Council was established in 1934.
- 8 The wartime organisation Entertainment National Services Association (ENSA) was primarily established for the entertainment of the armed forces and war workers.
- 9 The Pilgrim's Trust was established in 1930 as the result of a donation by an American millionaire. It was known for its social service orientation, and was mainly involved in projects for the education of the working classes.
- 10 Williams was also Director of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs from 1941–45, and Chief Editor at Penguin Books.
- 11 Kenneth Clark (later Sir), Director of the National Gallery from 1934–45, Chairman of the Arts Council from 1953–60 and London acquisitions advisor for the National Gallery of Victoria.
- 12 Coombs was appointed Director-General of Post War Reconstruction in 1943.

- 13 Helmrich became President of CEMA in 1943 and held this position for 20 years (Helmrich 1969).
- 14 In 1945, CEMA followed in its British parent's footsteps by changing its name to The Arts Council of Australia.
- 15 See, for example, Pick (1986) and Pearson (1982) on the British CEMA, and Harris (1995) and Park and Markowitz (1984) on the New Deal art projects.

References

- Bennett, Tony 1995, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, Routledge, London.
- Berstein, Barton 1968, 'The New Deal: The conservative achievements of liberal reform', in B. Berstein (ed.), *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History*, Pantheon Books, New York.
- Brown, N. 1994, 'Shaping the "plain Australian" from war into prosperity: Social analysis in the 1940s and 1950s', in I. Craven, M. Gray and G. Stoneham (eds), *Australian Popular Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- 1995, *Governing Prosperity: Social Change and Social Analysis in Australia in the 1950s*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Coombs, H.C. 1981, *Trial Balance: Issues of My Working Life*, Sun Books, Melbourne.
- Davis, Stuart 1973, 'American Artists' Congress', in F.V. O'Connor (ed.), *Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project*, New York Graphic Society, Boston.
- Drysdale, Russell 1942, 'Art and the people', *Society of Artists Book*, Ure Smith, Sydney.
- Harris, Jonathan 1995, *Federal Art and National Culture: The Politics of Identity in New Deal America*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Helmrich, Dorothy 1969, *The First Twenty Five Years: A Study in the Arts Council of Australia*, Southwood Press, Sydney.

- Jacques, R. 1945, 'The work of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, April, pp. 276–84.
- Leventhal, F.M. 1990, "'The best for the most': CEMA and state sponsorship of the arts in wartime, 1939–1945", *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 289–317.
- McKinzie, R.D. 1973, *The New Deal for Artists*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Minihan, J. 1977, *The Nationalisation of Culture: The Development of State Subsidies to the Arts in Great Britain*, Hamish Hamilton, London.
- Missingham, Hal 1945–46, 'Art gallery reforms', *Society of Artists Book*, Ure Smith, Sydney.
- O'Connor, F.V. 1973, 'Introduction' in F.V. O'Connor (ed.), *Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project*, New York Graphic Society, Boston.
- 1993, 'The New Deal Art Projects' 50th anniversary decade: 1983–1993', *Federal Art Patronage Notes*, vol. 4, nos 3 and 4, pp. 1–4.
- Park, M. and Markowitz, G.E. 1984, *Democratic Vista: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- Pearson, N. 1982, *The State and the Visual Arts: A Discussion of State Intervention in the Visual Arts in Britain, 1760–1981*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.
- People's Conference on Culture in the War and the Peace 1944, *Conference Proceedings*.
- Phillips, Arthur 1946, 'Culture and Canberra', *Meanjin Papers: A Quarterly of Literature and Art*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 99–103.
- Pick, J. 1986, *Managing the arts?: The British Experience*, Rhinegold, London.
- Sorensen, R. 1997, 'Identity crisis', *The Courier-Mail*, 31 May, p. 30.
- Roosevelt, F.D. 1973 [1933], 'F.D. Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address', in H. Steele Commanger (ed.), *Documents of American History*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

White, E.W. 1975, *The Arts Council of Great Britain*, Davis-Poynter, London.

Williams, W.E. 1938, 'Art for the people', in *Art in England*, Penguin Books, London.

Lisanne Gibson is a PhD candidate with the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy at Griffith University.

The rearticulation of meaning of national monuments: Beyond apartheid

Keyan G. Tomaselli and Alum Mpfu

Introduction

This study deals with one site of meaning-making, that of national monuments. We define 'monument' as a deliberately built or preserved structure or image which is made to represent or denote a specific historical experience considered significant in terms of the evolution of a people's identity. Monuments are symbols of historically discursive and contested contexts in the life and development of groups and nations. The study illuminates ways in which historical, social, cultural and political discourses in South Africa have been represented through monuments.

The ritual significance of monuments

All societies justify and flaunt their existence through signs. Signs assist individuals and society in meeting the ultimate problems of identity and destiny. They serve to affirm and justify certain material and historical conditions. Monuments, like religious and other political symbols, are signs standing for abstract processes. Under apartheid, monuments were part of the material rearrangement of history necessary for the rationalisation of oppression.

It is important to understand how meanings are made and remade, shifted, reinterpreted and revised through divergent uses of signs in society. Historical experiences out of which the same images or discourses have emerged account for variances in use. In South Africa, Christianity, as one illustration, has been appropriated by ideologues from all shades of political opinion, from the far right to the far left.