

EVERY TOWN SHOULD HAVE ONE: THE ROLE OF THE ARTS CENTRE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT PROVISION¹

GERARD HAGG
Human Sciences Research Council
Pretoria

*alexandra
overcrowded
and overflowing
like a fallen dustbin
dark city
of dust clouds
rabid dogs
acid smells of shit buckets
assailing nostrils
from dusk to dawn
in wide dust bowl
treeless avenues
fringed by battalions
of crumbling*

*one roomed houses
sagging dangerously
and leaning backwards
at sunset
like drunkards
drinking up the night
alexandra
the big toilet
stuck unceremoniously
like a black anus
between the white buttocks
of johannesburg city ...*

(Dikobe wa Mogale)

*We workers are a worried lot
Racist Racist Racist
Wake up!
Workers are a worried lot!
We thought we work
To fight injustices
- A common foe
We thought
We work
To fight unemployment
- A common foe
We thought we work
To fight against starvation
- A common foe*

*We wanted to gain peace
- A common friend
We wanted
To win equality
- A common friend
Kodwa Hawu!
To you, our friends
Are foes!
To you, our foes
Are friends!
We workers are a worried lot
....*

(Mi S'dumo Hlatwayo)

"For here was the artist touching the so-called 'common man'. That is what art should actually be doing, not something only to exercise the intellectual sensibilities, but a living thing that reaches into the hearts of all the people" (Aggrey Klaaste 1989:11).

"The goal of development can therefore be defined as follows: to provide all human beings with the opportunity to live a full life" (Paul Streeten in Coetzee & Ligthelm 1989b:352).

1 CULTURE, WORK AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In this article the relationship between culture, community development, employment and unemployment will be discussed. The role of culture and community arts centres in this context will be highlighted with the suggestion that the development of these centres can play a major role in empowering the township communities with regard to both self-development and participation in employment provision.

In addressing the issues of community development and employment emphasis is normally placed on housing, job creation, health services, education and other traditional economic fields. Very little is ever said about culture or the arts. Even when a humanist approach is advocated (Hölscher & Romm 1989; J.K. Coetzee 1989b), cultural issues are seldomly mentioned. One could find various reasons for this neglect. One could be the lack of agreement on the *definition* of culture.

Some stretch its meaning to "anything that gives meaning to life", others limit culture to the refined artistic products of a society. A second reason could be the nature of culture which is difficult to quantify, rationalise or predetermine. Therefore the traditional approach of community development as controlled social change found little use for culture. A third reason could be the fact that ethnic cultural differentiation formed one of the cornerstones for *apartheid* policy.

Under the current socio-economic circumstances in the townships employment is more than just a job. To have work is to have a future for yourself and your family, it determines your way of living, even mere survival. This means employment – and conversely unemployment – can only be discussed within a wider social, culturally determined, context. This need for an integration of work, community development and culture is clearest when we look at unemployment and its bleak effect on community life.

In this article the discussion will be limited to the artistic aspects of culture, as they are

¹ Paper delivered at the Conference of development, employment and the new South Africa, Development Society of Southern Africa, Johannesburg, 5-7 September 1990.

socially typified in the activities of the community arts centre. According to John English (n.d.:9), founder of the famous Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, an arts centre is an institution or building where: "there is a programme and a policy for more than one art form, more than one space is used for arts activities, there is some professional input (artistic or managerial), there is a substantial usage which is not part of formal education."

Activities could include theatre performance, music, dance, the visual arts, exhibitions, literary workshops etc. It could also include calligraphy, sewing classes, gymnastics, martial arts and domestic arts like flower arranging. As community participation is a major aim the selection of activities will be determined by the users, normally under the guidance of professional facilitators.

1.2 THE VALUE OF THE ARTS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Arts and community centres have proven their worth in many overseas countries and form the core element in community development in Israel and the UK. In the former more than 150 are functioning on a full-time basis, in the UK more than 250 arts centres offer participatory services to the inhabitants of most cities and towns. In both countries the



Figure 1. Mzwakhe Mbuli performing at the Unity '91 Concert in Johannesburg.

community centres are heavily subsidised by the government, local authorities and the private sector. In South Africa about fifteen full-



Figure 2. People's park at Oukasie.

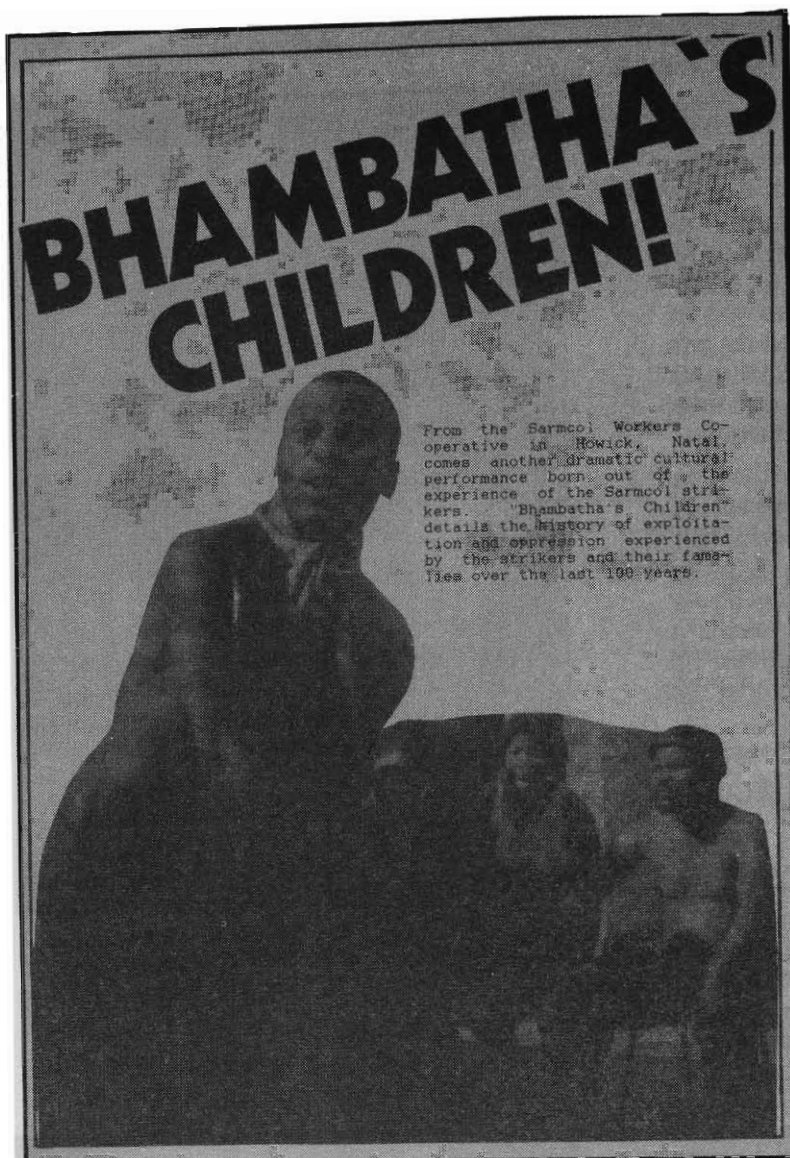


Figure 3. Poster for Bhambatha's children

time centres (e.g. African Institute of Art, Katlehong Art Centre, Afrika Cultural Centre, Alexandra Arts Centre, Community Arts Project) are struggling for survival, mainly in the metropolitan areas.

The importance of culture in a community development context has often been indicated by international agencies. Peter Stark (n.d.:26) quotes a Swedish minister of culture: "[...] in time of massive and fast technological and social change, when the basic pattern of our lives is changing at an extraordinary rate, the greatest cause of personal and communal distress is an inflexible culture; an inflexible notion of that which can't be done. And the prime function of art is that it keeps culture flexible, it keeps our perceptions of what is possible moving. And that comes at root from an individual creative mind meditated by social, economic and political forces."

For decades we have experienced the rigid regulatory process of politics that conditions the quality of life in South Africa. Art as a revelatory process, a reflection of life, provides an antidote. To the question of 'why

art?', one can only answer that the artist is there to ask 'why?'. The artist has the power to pose alternatives, to induce people to think, and to accompany society through the inevitable trauma of change (Dubow 1979:125). Federico Mayor, Director-General of Unesco, stated in 1988 (Malan 1990:30):

"Whenever a country has set itself the target of economic growth without reference to its cultural environment, grave economic and cultural imbalances have resulted and its creative potential has been seriously weakened. Genuine development must be based on the best possible use of the human resources and material wealth of the community. Thus in the final analysis the priorities, motivations and objectives of development must be found in culture. But in the past this has been conspicuously ignored."

The interdependence of culture and socio-political advancement was well-understood by the Afrikaners in the early 20th century. Soon after the Broederbond had started its battle for economic and political power in 1918, the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenig-

inge was founded (1929). It was through cultural activities like the unveiling of the Bloedrivier and Voortrekker monuments that mass support was mobilised.

Similarly poetry, theatre, music and the visual arts play an important role in the way black people experience their daily lives, both at home and at work. It emerges as an aspect of social action and resonates with emotion and meaning among members of communities in the context of social institutions (Coplan 1985:3). This can be seen in the popularity of people's poets such as Mzwakhe Mbuli, attendance at cultural festivals during the weekends, dances like the toyi-toyi and performances on the factory floor during strikes (figure 1).

1.3 CULTURE IN THE TOWNSHIPS

In the townships cultural activities aim at entertainment, expression of everyday life experience and the mobilisation for the struggle for power. Music, singing and dramatic performance have always been a natural ingredient of social activities in the black com-

munity. Especially during the weekends the dreariness of labour is drowned in the sound of *mbaqanga*, jazz, reggae and Afro-fusion of bands like Sakhile and African Youth Band. The township performances of plays such as *Crime does not pay* and *Unfaithful woman* by playwright Sam Mhangwane or *Mama and the load* by Gibson Kente with their melodramatic realism remain popular with the people. Art has for a long time been used as a tool of liberation, for example in the production of banners, posters, graffiti and murals (Williamson 1989). So-called cultural workers – activists that organise cultural activities for political causes – played an important role in this process. In 1985 in the most politically engaged form of township art, the community was mobilised around cleaning up debris-littered townships at the same time as they celebrated the struggle for freedom. Part of this mobilisation was the development of people's parks (Vergunst 1988:10). These parks were not merely acts of protest or revolt, but actions aimed at social transformation and political reconstruction (figure 2). Similarly the women of Crossroads protested against their removal through the development of the play *Imfuduso* in 1978.

However, the few facilities for cultural activities that exist in the townships at the moment, such as community, church or YMCA halls, lack proper lighting or sound systems and are totally inadequate for the basic needs of even amateur performances. Many protest plays gain support after performance at the well-equipped Market Theatre, the Grahamstown Arts Festival or the Wits Nunnery Theatre. Notwithstanding the lack of facilities an abundance of performances takes place, e.g. Kavanagh has counted no less than 153 separate theatre productions between 1953 and 1977 (Coplan 1985:226). At the moment more than 120 gospel choirs perform on a regular basis in and around Pretoria, and the exhibition of black art at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, *The neglected tradition*, acknowledging the historical role of black artists, literally forced us to rewrite the South African art history. The presence of efficient community arts centres could solve many of the problems that are experienced with the existing facilities in the townships. Besides they could

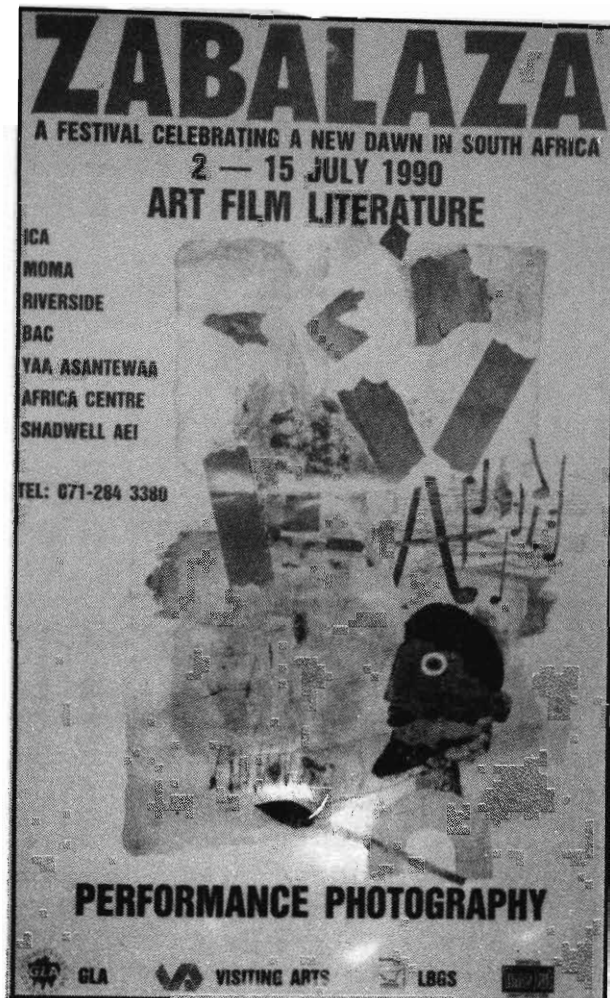


Figure 4. Poster for the Zabalaza festival

function as linkages between the better established cultural institutions elsewhere in of town.

1.4 CULTURE IN THE FACTORY

As in most Western businesses art is mainly considered as a commodity to enhance the management office apartments or the reception area. Other working environments seldomly receive any aesthetic attention. Thus the importance of the arts in the factory applies primarily to its use for resistance from the workers. Shop-stewards trained as cultural workers played an important role in labour relationships as they provided the tools that allowed workers to express their feelings. The play *Ilanga* was developed to express strikers' experience of their working circumstances, and was eventually used as evidence in a court case (Coplan 1985:226). Spontaneous theatre performances like the *Dunlop Play* and *Bhambatha's children* (figure 3) bound the workers together, as it was characterised by a lack of written script, improvisation and impromptu participation of workers' audiences, this all leading to self-

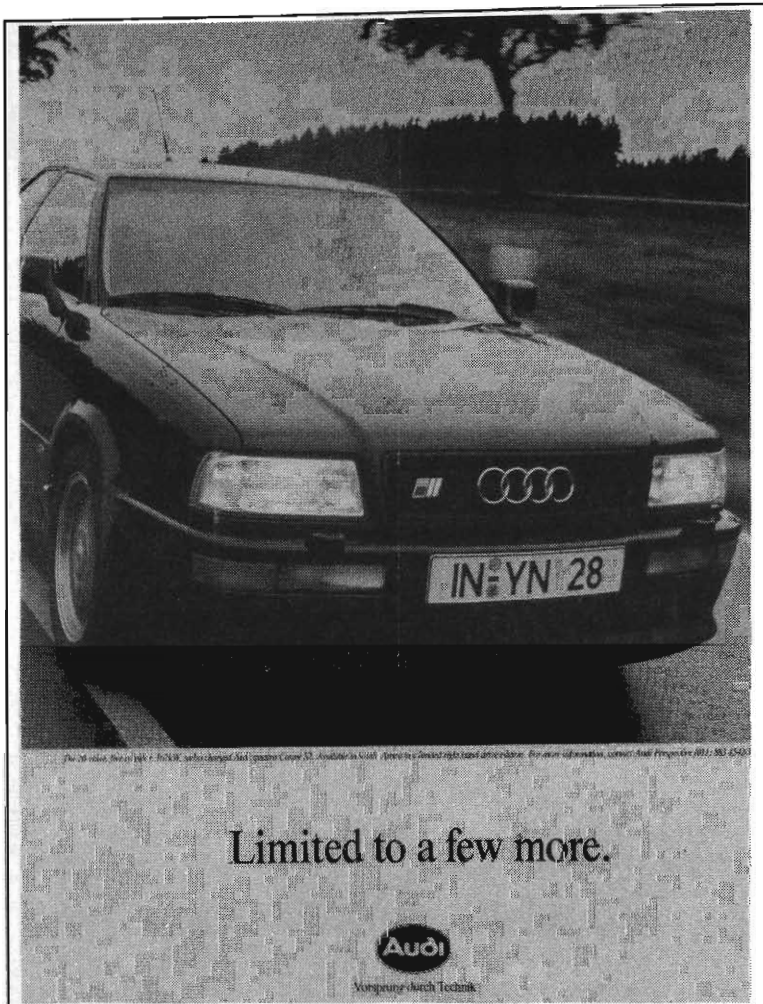


Figure 5. Limited to a few more: advertising new models in international magazines.

confidence and leadership development (Coplan 1986: 174). Overseas it is not unusual to import art into the factory at an enormous scale and to much acclaim by the workers, like at the Morris plants in the USA as well as at Upjohn in Denmark. In Europe this is considered as an extension of existing structures in the neighbourhoods.

Although the cultural workers perform within the context of the unions, their role could be positively augmented in a new South Africa if enough efficient structures, like arts centres, could be developed. It was exactly for the purpose of preparation for a constructive social role of art in a new South Africa that the ANC organised the Zabalaza festival in London in July 1990 (figure 4). Although the Zabalaza festival was announced as a continuation of the Culture in Another South Africa conference, held in Amsterdam in 1987 and aimed at strengthening the cultural boycott against the South African government, the content and introductory notes indicated a dissatisfaction with the negative influences of a boycott attitude. The emphasis on training in all type of artistic and

managerial skills during the Zabalaza festival marked a stance more positive and constructive in terms of a new future. The development of arts centres in the townships themselves could create the much overdue dynamic training centres for cultural workers, linking community life and working context. No wonder they form the basis of policy within most progressive movements.

2 THE INFLUENCE OF MODERNISATION ON WORK AND TOWNSHIP LIFE

To understand the role of the arts centre in a broader context than just the provision of a few more jobs we shall have to consider some influences of the *industrialisation or modernisation* process that took place in South Africa – especially during urbanisation – over the past century. The relationship between modernisation and community development has always been paradoxical, as Warren (1970:33) indicates:

“Community development is being asked to bring about a set of conditions – roughly modernisation – and is then being asked

to cope with the conditions modernisation have created.” The effect of modernisation on life in developing communities has been de-



Figure 6. The high costs of ballet classes and the limited facilities available make it almost inaccessible to anyone but the affluent sector of society.

modern education, totally emasculated the ordinary person and deified the scientists and social engineers. The standard for intelligence has become scientific intelligence, functional relationship and practical application in a new industrial society (Franks 1978:65, 88).

The monopoly of technology is even visible in the *predominance of high or elitist culture over popular culture*. The former is judged against professional standards that comprise of highly refined technical skills. Obviously participation is then limited to the few highly talented who also had access to training at the right time of life (figure 6). The majority of state funds for the arts go to the professional arts notwithstanding the fact that they are closed to 95% of the population both in terms of participation and audience.

This does not mean that funds are not available for the popular arts. Millions of Rands are spend on the recording of township music, for example. The problem is that *commercialisation* makes even leisure and culture into an industry, a production process for the enlargement of capital and the provision of more cultural commodities for popular consumption. Leisure is no longer a festival, the reward of labour. It is a generalised display: television, cinema, tourism (Lefebvre 1971:54). This process of passification is aggravated by the influence of TV on especially the younger generation. TV which is supposed to be a public facility, seems to make absolutely no effort to promote participation in live activity at a local level. The most advertised product on TV is TV: "The mass media [...] make you a passive victim of the situation" (Lefebvre 1971:71).

People are educated for employment, not for *leisure*. Western ethics emphasises the contrast between work and recreation. It should be clear that non-work is as important for employees as work. This applies even more to the black community in which music – a leisure commodity in the modernised society – is an integral part of life experience. Social destabilisation and violence between migrant labourers and township people has as much to do with working circumstances as with boredom during off-hours. How many

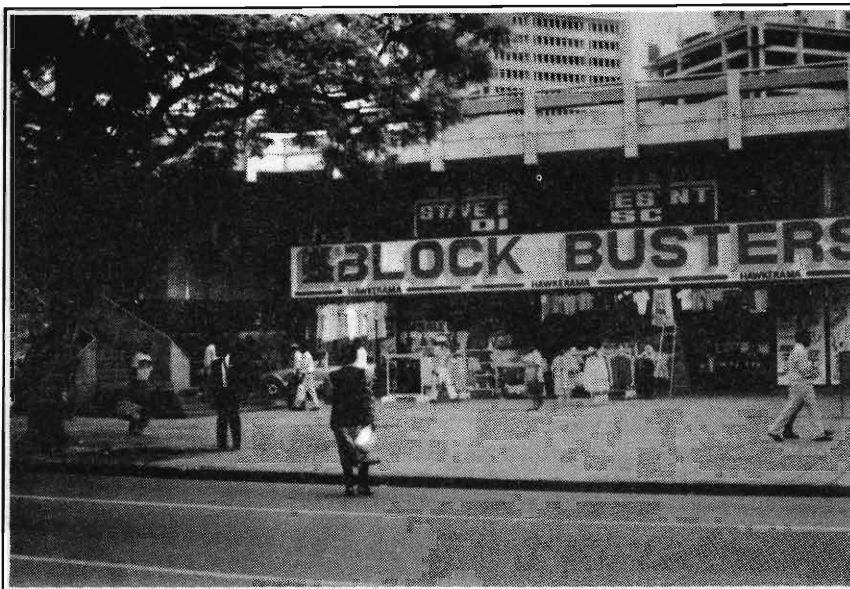


Figure 7. Shopping malls like this one offer secluded spaces for performances and meetings.

mine-hostels have recreation halls and programmes for participation? As an example Schlemmer (1978:10) refers to the fact that "the metropolis takes the labour and the money of Kwa Mashu in its factories, offices and shops but offers little in return. The metropolitan centre of Durban with all its specialised attractions and entertainment, is largely closed to residents of Kwa Mashu."

The negative influences of modernisation affect especially people living at a *subsistence* level. The atomisation of their lives often makes them highly competitive in a negative sense, almost predatory and above all highly fearful and sceptical about possibilities of improvement in their circumstances (Schlemmer 1978:14). Township life is bleak, dusty, violent. Reality forces us to accept that the abolition of the Group Areas Act will not bring about an integration of the various communities in the near future. For rewarding blacks' identification with their residential areas and neighbourhoods, major requirements have to be met in the planning of these areas, as Schlemmer (1975: 13,15) points out:

"We need the opportunity for informal face to face interaction in a relaxed atmosphere, for smaller neighbourhood units [...] a place where people can meet, eg a shopping mall, milkbar, small stage for amateur bands (figure 7). Basically what is being argued is that community development must emerge in such a way that not only welfare is emphasised, but also the promotion of local leadership, the alleviation of boredom and the improvement of general morale."

It will be argued below that participation in

creative and artistic activities can provide an antidote to the negative effects of modernisation.

3 EFFECTS OF EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT ON COMMUNITY LIFE

3.1 EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL LIFE

The *provision of employment* is normally related to economic issues like production, export and growth rate, all aimed at providing welfare. Indeed, the importance of having a job must be recognised as it is basic to life fulfilment. Production, however, also has a socio-psychological aspect, as Baudrillard (1983:97) has pointed out:

“The entire analysis of production changes according to whether you no longer see in it an original process [...] but on the contrary a process of absorption of all original being and of introduction to a series of identical beings.”

Thus the repetitiveness of industrial production has a negative effect on especially the labourer's experience of the work context. Frankl warns that this reductionism deprives human phenomena of their humanness (De Beer 1988:11). This danger pertains to Marxist work methods as much as those of capitalism. Marx's emphasis on production, and thus the product, rather than the producer led to factory environments that did little to enrich life for the worker. On the other hand capitalism considers the employee mainly as an individual in relation to production and remuneration. In both cases the workers and their community are treated as separate entities, the worker being only a single cog in the production machinery. The factory uses the South African worker outside his community on the assumption that it is the responsibility of the employee to take care of his social context, as if a community could take care of itself after decades of disruption. No wonder business has been accused of supporting the apartheid system in the past. The modernised employment situation may easily result in alienation between the role played in the Western working environment during the day, and the role of member of the community played afterwards. The anti-social repetitiveness of labour necessitates an antidote in the form of stimulation on other levels as was provided in earlier integrated working contexts. This is accepted in Europe where companies like Volvo, realising that motivation for work is social and not economic, have changed single action conveyor-belt production into complete task teamwork years ago.

Employment has positive and negative influences on behaviour. The following are some of the effects of employment on individ-

uals and communities, as pointed out by Marie Jehoda (Stark n.d.:24):

- Employment means the pursuit of collective purposes in which individuals go beyond their personal and immediate goals for the benefit of the production process and the market system. Personal relationships like family life are easily sacrificed for this purpose.
- Employment disciplines people by forcing them to work within a production oriented time structure which governs execution of activities and orders life accordingly.
- Individual social contact is enforced outside the home and family. This broadens one's world view but also alienates the family that has to stay at home.
- Work increases self-esteem as well as admiration from members of the family.
- It allows one to improve living circumstances; employees have easier access to leisure and other social commitments insofar as time permits.
- Social status can be derived from a combination of the prestige in occupational status and the potential to create personal wealth. Thus the unemployed carry a double stigma: no job and no money.

Ways have to be found for the unemployed to create these experiences if we want them to participate fruitfully in their community.

The provision of employment can also create *undesired effects* in the long run if it is not integrated within a broader development strategy. A clear example is the effect of migration labour on family life, violence and Aids. If employment has to do with people's welfare, it should be clear that a holistic approach is imperative in which all the needs of the worker have to be taken into consideration.

3.2 UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL LIFE

International and local trends indicate that a high unemployment rate will be with us permanently. Official unemployment numbers for blacks for February 1989 was 730 000 or 10.7% (CSS 1990:2). This number does not take the informal sector into consideration and other estimates talk about 1-2 million. Stef Coetzee warns that the modern sector of the economy will not be able to create enough jobs and income to accommodate the fast growing labour force (Coetzee S.F. 1989:334). This was acknowledged by the government White Paper on employment (RSA 1984). A deterioration of the unemploy-

ment context will annihilate any progress made in employment provision. Whatever the exact number of unemployed people, it implies that attention will have to be paid to the accommodation of this phenomenon as much as to the creation of jobs. If this problem is ignored violence will increase, destabilising the attempts to improve the economy through job creation. Accommodation means providing means for the absorption of psychological trauma that is the product of mass unemployment. In simple words: these people will have to be kept busy and given access to skills development to retain their potential for re-entering the market.

One factor in unemployment that directly relates to the need for arts centres is the negative effect it has on community life and education, with the resulting *juvenile delinquency*, the phenomenon of *comtsotsis* and violence. The disastrous failure rate of black matriculants in 1989 and 1990 adds hundreds of thousand unmotivated youngsters to the number of unemployed. Even those that make matric have only the slightest chance to find work. Unemployment, as Schlemmer (1978:11) has shown, is thus virtually a built-in demoraliser in the educational system for Africans.

Unemployment does not only increase as a result of a reduced economic growth. Internationally persons over 45 years old find it difficult to get employed. Business considers it a bad investment unless the person is highly qualified. In South Africa this problem threatens especially the black unskilled labourer. Overseas provision is made for the absorption of the psychological shock of early retirement in centres for the unemployed. In South Africa no such services are available.

Not only unemployment, but also *under-employment* has to be accepted as permanent, especially in the informal sector. Some estimations indicate a 5-7% of the employment to lie within this sector. Informal employment occurs mainly within the townships and has therefore often been seen as a stabilising factor. However, we should not be romantic about the influence of the informal sector, as it is even more affected by the economic



Figure 8. The late Bill Ainslie, founder of the Johannesburg Art Foundation.

climate than the formal sector. The well-known piece job may prevent the starvation of the worker, it does very little to improve the living circumstances of a family. Basically it sustains the status quo, which means that it still shows up negatively in comparison to the desired growth rate of 5-6 % (Coetzee S.F. 1989:334).

No work means no income, or *poverty*. This is aggravated by the phenomenon of comparative poverty. Although wages have increased tremendously over the past decade, it had little influence as the cost of living soared and advertising promoted the ideal of an increasingly higher standard of living.

Besides the opposites of the effects of employment on social life as mentioned above, the following effects of unemployment are relevant (Stark n.d.:22):

- Poor people are prone to ill-health increase. In our work-based society, basic human needs like health services, can only be obtained by people with an income. The concept of free medical services for blacks is in practice mainly a myth. Department of Health clinics for township inhabitants requires the patient to arrive early in the morning, and with the general shortage of doctors results in queuing for most of the day. Townships like Soshanguve near Pretoria have no ambulance services or hospital. Little can be done for undernourished and psychologically affected people. Those unable to have their medical needs met are at risk physically and psychologically (Impasse n.d.:18). Heart dis-

eases, stress and depression are on the increase in the townships.

- Unemployed people live a life that is structured according to their circumstances. There is no need for waking up early in the morning or sleeping early at night. Daily activities are decided on at random while little planning takes place. The irregularity of living undermines the self-motivation and unemployed people often tend to suffer from an impaired time sense. However, those that find a job in the informal sector, with its similar time structure, are more easily accommodated. Impaired time sense is in many cases aggravated by the so-called problem of "African time". This refers to the fact that black employees are often late for work. The cliché has it that this is mainly a traditional cultural attitude. However, more important in the urban context is the myriad of time consuming elements in the workers' lives, such as the vast distance between home and work (often a heritage from the apartheid era) and general lack of high speed transport resulting in long hours spent on travelling; lack of pre-school and nursery provisions for small children at home; boring working conditions, etc. These circumstances have affected the life of black employees for such a long time that even the workers tend to take them for granted and do not consider time loss as a major problem. Fact is that this phenomenon decreases their possibility for re-employment.
- Unemployment reduces social participation. Partly it is a result of the reduction in range and volume of social contacts, partly it is the psychological pressure of not contributing to the household income.
- These circumstances lead to a low self-esteem in individuals. Many unemployed report their lives as meaningless and purposeless.

4 HOW CAN THE ARTS CENTRE CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE LIVES OF UNEMPLOYED AND EMPLOYED PEOPLE?

4.1 THE ARTS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF LIFE

The basic purpose of any arts centre is to provide facilities for artistic activities. However, the role of the arts centre should not be seen as limited to these 'recreational lux-

uries'. Several direct links with employment provision and the alleviation of unemployment can also be pointed out. These issues seen in a wider social context, as argued above, make them even more relevant to the needs in a so-called 'new South Africa'. Both in the (long) transition period towards a new society and in the recovery period after establishing more or less balanced social patterns, the following roles of the community arts centre can contribute to the prevention of breakdowns in the process and a human-oriented community development strategy. Thus the value of the community centre must be seen in the widest applicable sense possible. The centre can contribute considerably to the general upliftment of a community, destabilised by the modernisation process. This would be reason enough for its existence in the townships.

As simple as it may sound, the first function of the arts centre is *to be available* in the township. Lack of long term town planning resulted in high density of houses with very few multi-storey structures like churches or townhalls. These buildings, common to all developed towns, function as beacons for physical and psychological movement and are socially directives. Schlemmer (1978:11) points out that "the mere presence of appropriate facilities could have an impact on morale which far exceeds its actual performance in improving standards of education and job opportunities [...] a visible means of getting a second chance". The content of these facilities has to be determined by the community that is served by them.

Physical venues themselves will not solve the cultural problems of the townships. *Professional facilitators* are needed to guide participants in the centre (figure 8). In Israel, where the emphasis lies on general community development, standard composition of staff is a director or administrative manager, an anthropologist, a psychologist and a social worker or change agent. These professionals receive training at tertiary institutions. In the proper arts centre, like the ones in the UK and in South Africa, staff would be composed in proportion to the subjects taught, but at least a full-time manager, a secretary, an administrative manager and trainers in drama, music, visual arts.

Training would encompass typical artistic skills such as, for the visual art, silkscreen printing on paper or cloth, e.g. T-shirts; painting in oil, acrylics and aquarelles; sculpture in wood, metal and clay; drawing of the human figure, the environment and still-life; graphic techniques like etching, woodcuts, lino cuts; weaving and pottery, especially for the women. In the drama classes tuition would be

in stage crafts, body movement including traditional and modern dancing, speech, group interaction, script writing, decor design, lighting, etc. Music would make provision for individual instrumental tuition, group and orchestral work, theory, score reading and writing, composition, etc. Training would not be necessarily limited to classical or modern music. Depending on the wishes of the community quite probably traditional artistic forms would feature highly on the menu, as happens at the Afrika Cultural Centre (Johannesburg) and in Busang Thakaneng (Sharpeville).

In the light of the shortage of facilitators in the community, training in *management and organisational skills* receives increasingly attention. This need has been recognised by the progressive movements years ago and the Zabalaza festival was one attempt to address them. Both the Afrika Cultural Centre and the Community Arts Project offer two and three year courses for cultural workers, addressing, besides artistic training, issues like planning, bookkeeping and administration, community organisation and mobilisation, report writing, fundraising, leadership development, etc.

Not all trainees find a place in society to make a living. Many find regular work as a result of the positive influence of the courses on their ability to organise their lives. Those who have talent *sell their works through art galleries* or join existing *performing troupes*. At the Katlehong Art Centre (KAC) more than 30 artists live mainly on the sales of their products which in total runs into more than R10 000 per month. The informal market provides work for those who can print banners and T-shirts. Gibson Kente can often accept new actors for his township performances. From tendencies overseas it can be accepted that in any given community at least one professional artist is needed for every 10 000 inhabitants. These artists again need other people to support them, such as stagehands, make-up specialists, etc. In the UK, with its total population of 65 million, the arts provide fulltime employment to 64 000 people, a ratio of 1:1000. This figure does not incorporate In a developing country like South Africa the ratio of 1:10 000 could be considered as an absolute minimum, although it could be argued that a country that experiences social upheavals needs more artists, rather than less than a stable society. Anyway it would still mean 50 artists in Mamelodi or Katlehong, and 200 in Soweto. At the moment we have not even half those numbers and the overall lack of facilities prevents those who want to train as artists from achieving this aim.

4.2 THE ARTS CENTRE, EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Less than 30 secondary *schools* in the townships throughout the country offer art or music as matric subject, a privilege that is readily available at white schools: in the greater Pretoria area more than 20 high-schools of the TED offer art as matric subject. It is assumed that in any society at least 4% of the pupils are gifted, often in the artistic sense. In a city like Mamelodi this would imply a need for tuition for at least 15 000 pupils. Lack of funds for art rooms – or rather the low priority of art for education planners – bar these children from access to the arts. An attempt to start the PAMDA Mamelodi Arts Centre offered facilities for about fifty children and had to be suspended due to a lack of funds. Arts programmes like Khula Udweba at the African Institute of Art (FUNDA) can make a considerable contribution here as no additional classrooms have to be provided at the schools that share an arts centre.

Much has been said and will be said about *illiteracy* in South Africa. 55% of the population is defined as illiterate. Most people think of reading and writing in this regard and indeed they form the core of literacy. However communication, the aim of literacy, is not only verbal. Speaking is one thing, expressing yourself is quite another one. Illiteracy is as much a cultural phenomenon as a technical one. The existence of disciplines like semiotics indicate the vast field of sign systems of which the arts are important exponents. Training in artistic expression is as important as mere reading and writing technics. An analysis of communication patterns in the townships confirms this approach. Interaction with art forms like theatre improves people's literacy, especially in the cultural sense. Very little is known about perceptive skills and habits of black people – knowledge that is needed by the advertising world as much as by general education. Unless people get a chance to participate in the arts, this lack of information will remain.

Cultural literacy allows the individual, as much as the community, to put meaning into action (*semiopraxis*). This is considered as a major aim of community development by various theoreticians (J.K. Coetzee, Hölscher, Romm). One of the main objections to modern industrialisation was the senseless repetition of action and the compartmentalisation of production. The production of an art work is primarily the creation of meaning through form. Artistic production has the advantage over industrial production that 'mistakes' can be made without causing damage

to the process or the end product. It also allows the creator to explore alternative forms and meanings without a prescriptive formula.

Art as *therapy* is an accepted practice overseas. Through artistic activities handicaps are overcome in children, patients in the hospitals and mental institutions, and with the aged. In this country only a handful of trained therapists are practicing. Yet several artists in the townships do this work regularly, e.g. Dumisani Khumalo from the Katlehong Art Centre at the Natalspruit Hospital and the KAC. This is one area where training from arts centres could be applied. About the need in this field no one can argue: if projections are correct, South Africa will have one million Aids patients by the end of the decade.

4.3 THE NEED FOR CREATIVITY IN LIFE

This brings us to one of the most important reasons for the existence of art in society: the stimulation of *creativity* and creative processes with the individual.

Bill Ainslie (1979:81), founder of the Johannesburg Art Foundation and initiator of various other arts centres correctly points to the basic fact that "man has a built-in imperative to make things, [...] to take raw material of himself and his environment and fashion it according to his needs" (figure 8). This does not only pertain to art. Creativity is mentioned as one of the most needed qualities in today's society. It forms one of the cornerstones of industrial progress and management for the 21st century. Regularly people are called up to come forward with imaginative solutions to problems in areas as wide apart as politics, environmental conservation, constitutional and educational models, development strategies, etc. The lack of genuine creative response and the repetition of old recipes for solutions can be glanced from newspaper and official reports alike.

Traditional formal education – for whites as much as for blacks – is notoriously effective in killing creativity. Studies indicate that a child's creativity plummets 90% between the ages five and seven when schooling is introduced. According to Holdstock (1987:82, 204) it is estimated that by the time they are forty, most adults are about 2% as creative as they were at five. Children who had the opportunity to participate in imaginative play by acting out fairy tales or real-life experiences, not only scored higher on IQ tests, but as long as four years afterwards continued to show marked superiority in amusing themselves, in controlling impulsive behaviour and in concept learning tasks. And Coplan (1987:18) states that participation in theatre allows black people to express their creative

potency and to achieve some mastery over their lives.

Two other aspects that have to be mentioned in this context are the relationship between creativity and *process orientation*, and creativity and *problem-solving processes*. Modern production in all spheres of life has always emphasised the end product. Little attention is paid to the nature of the process. Some disastrous results are seen in ecological fields and education. Artistic production emphasises the process, from concept to finished product, as holistic, and with regard to human experience, as qualitative, two concepts that are central to community development as well. A major problem in any development context is the inability of people to define and solve their problems. This subject could fill books. Its relevance here is the fact that the artistic production is characterised by the integration of posing, defining and solving complex problems. This implies the constant evaluation of alternatives from multiple viewpoints, selection of adequate methods and techniques, stating of priorities, unity of manual and mental work, quality control and a myriad of aspects of conceptual, abstract and technical nature that can be found in any complex social, economic or political situation. As such artistic practice is an ideal training ground for planners, managers, etc. The women of the Ipopeng project at the SAB in Waltloo, Pretoria, have had tremendous success in this regard: they design, print, market and develop greeting cards of high quality nationally.

One other aspect of creativity must be mentioned here. Despite the emphasis on control and order in our society, *intuition* remains of great importance to development at all levels. Nobel prize winning scientists, indeed the greatest logical minds the world has ever known, have endorsed the importance and even the primacy of intuition. Einstein is often quoted as saying that the really valuable thing is intuition. And Eugene Wigner states (Holdstock 1987:67): "The discovery of the laws of nature requires first and foremost intuition, conceiving of pictures and a great many subconscious processes. The use and also the confirmation of these laws is another matter. Logic comes after intuition."

Creativity and intuition lead to *relational thinking*, a prerequisite for survival in the chaos of modern life. Artistic practice is characterised by relational thinking: every aspect of a play must be related to a whole in order to communicate effectively. As De Beer (1988:11) states: "Die taak van die oorskydende denke is om die sfeer van geldigheid te ontwerp, die verbande tussen geïsoleerde dinge te sien, die spel te heropen."

Although playfulness and creativity are important aspects of art, even in everyday life it facilitates a search for *structure* and a discovery of *order*. The lack of constructive rhythm and order in the life of unemployed people is often mentioned. Without this order life falls apart. The rhythm of regular work processes is seen as a positive aspect of people's personal development. Without it there can be no planning or control, thus no cumulation of experience, so needed for any progress in a developing community. Artistic experience can provide the necessary exercise for creative control practice.

4.4 ART AND IDENTITY

With the expansion of social roles and identities has come a corresponding elaboration of the importance of *personal identity*, associated with variations in lifestyle and the presentation of self in the community (Schlemmer 1978:9). A lack of positive self-image as a people other than oppressed does much harm to all development attempts. This hauntedness by the spectre of apartheid was clearly argued by Albie Sachs in his seminar paper *Preparing ourselves for freedom* (De Kock & Press 1990:20). Meintjes quotes Shuenyane's remark on the influence of music on self-image: "Respecting one's music is an encouraging step toward respecting one's self" (Meintjes 1990:61).

From the debate on nationalisation and democracy it is clear that a new South Africa needs more than economic growth. No equality is possible unless more social coherence is found. This implies partly the development of a new urban culture which has to be a mixture of African and Western values. Western culture could do with a blending with the best of Africa. There is in African culture a greater bias toward spontaneous, artistic, musical and non-verbal forms of self-expression, as evidenced in dance and gestures (Holdstock 1987:245). On the other hand Africa needs some of the order and efficiency of the West. In the face of the rationalist and reductionist life-styles of the West one could easily romanticise township life-style, as an extension of the Romanticist view of the 'innocent' African primitive. The recent violence in some of the townships and the general chaos on all structural levels – be they in state or progressive organisations – has led to repeated calls for efficient structures throughout since the unbanning of the ANC, SAPC and the PAC. On the other hand it is clear that purely Western models cannot provide strategies that answer the typical problems of a country in cultural, economic and political transition. Without overestimating the

power of art it is generally accepted that the arts have been very successful in blending various cultural forms and methods. Coplan mentions, for example, the use of the workshop by Athol Fugard to integrate African qualities of imagery, visibility and improvising composition into contemporary Western theatre (Coplan 1986:166). Meintjes discusses the use, and abuse, of cross-cultural blending of musical and political elements in Paul Simon's LP record *Graceland*, and points to the 'collaboration' as a possible "gateway to the future" (Meintjes 1990:57).

The need for a new identity is especially relevant on a community level. Without a sense of *communal identity* the social tensions will for ever impede social reconstruction. Comparisons with the situation in Israel could be drawn here. Immigrants from more than 70 cultural and language backgrounds had to be assimilated in the shortest time possible. Afterwards social reconstruction had to be facilitated on a continuous basis. The population of new settlements had to be forged into coherent communities through projects like *Project Renewal*. The community centre formed the core element in this strategy. Similar developments have taken place in the United Kingdom since the Second World War. Over 250 community arts centres function on a daily basis, with vast community participation and a national financial support of more than R15 million per year.

Additional benefits from identity enrichment is *leadership development* – an obvious aspect of community development – and the enhancement of communication skills. The former has direct implications for empowering the individual and the community within the socio-political context. Progressive movements stress this need for power to improve circumstances, e.g. people's power for people's education. Indeed most important decisions are taken at a leaders' level, and skills have to be acquired to function successfully in the leadership position. The lack of expertise on this level is one of the major causes for the breakdown of activities in the townships. The same applies to other contexts. It is estimated that business alone needs more than 50 000 managers on middle level and upwards within the next decade. Under the present circumstances not even half of them can be produced through the existing institutions (Sowetan 1991:5).

If qualitative empowerment of the individual and the community were the only benefits from the arts centre, it would be reason enough to increase support for them. The enhancement of communication is of importance in cross-cultural contact at all levels. Various studies on this subject with regard to

the labour situation have been conducted by the Language Section of the Human Sciences Research Council. Efficient communication might be one of the most important factors in national reconciliation. The arts centre can provide the resources to give people the opportunity to meet others and do things communally. Actors address the audience not as a collection of money-paying strangers or forced participants in a show of solidarity but as a community, even as a congregation, in order to create a sense of collective participation and transformation (Coplan 1986:174). Participation by the audience, one of the main aims of the arts centre, increases this unity (figure 10).

Participation by the community in their development is by now an accepted principle. Practice indicates how difficult it is to obtain efficient participation. Marxist theories that emphasise the natural or spontaneous mobilisation of the masses do not find much confirmation in the South African context. Spontaneous community participation is scarce, especially after years of inhibited development during the State of Emergency 1985-1989. People who want to participate need training in basic procedures. The arts can provide the right opportunity as they deal with the realities of life. Social harmony is the key to a new South African society. But people have to acquire the skills to restore this harmony.

A last social function of the arts centre can be mentioned here. Due to the state's assumption that black townships were of a temporary nature, all of them lack a proper town plan. All over the world and throughout history it has been typical of a town to have a *town centre*, normally in the form of some municipal buildings. Even small towns in the Karoo have their post office and café. These centres literally have a cohesive function. Few black townships have this type of development. The arts centre, with its social activities, could provide at least some cohesion in the neighbourhood where it is situated.

The community arts centre can fulfil a healing function in a new South Africa. Its ability to provide opportunities for life enrichment and preparation for more efficient participa-



Figure 9. Participation in music increases social unity.

tion in the work situation integrates the needs for employed and unemployed people into a holistic pattern, restores confidence and self-esteem of individuals and community and can form one of the cornerstones of community development for a future South Africa.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ainslie, B. 1979. An artists workshop – flash in the pan or a brick that the builders rejected. *The state of art in South Africa: Conference proceedings, July 1979*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town: 80-89.
- Batram, A. & Segal, S. [n.d.] *Arts & unemployment*. London: CASA/RTI.
- Baudrillard, J. 1983. *Simulations*. New York: Columbia University.
- Bell, T. 1984. *Unemployment in South Africa*. Durban: University of Durban-Westville. (Occasional paper no. 10).
- Coetzee, J.K. (ed). 1989. *Development is for people*. Johannesburg: Southern Books.
- Coetzee, J.K. 1989a. A micro foundation as alternative for development thought. *Coetzee 1989:86-107*.
- Coetzee, J.K. 1989b. Hermeneutics as the basis of development thinking. *Coetzee 1989:152-164*.
- Coetzee, J.K. 1989c. Modernisation: An idea and model of progress. *Coetzee 1989:17-36*.
- Coetzee, S.F. & Ligthelm, A.A. 1989a. A profile of the Southern African development area. *Coetzee 1989:333-349*.
- Coetzee, S.F. & Ligthelm, A.A. 1989b. Towards an integrated development approach. *Coetzee 1989:350-363*.
- Coplan, D.B. 1983. Editorial: Popular culture and performance in Africa. *Critical Arts*, 3(1):1-8.
- Coplan, D.B. 1985. *In township tonight!* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Coplan, D.B. 1986. Ideology and tradition in South African black popular theatre. *Journal of American Folklore*, 99(392):151-176.
- Coplan, D.B. 1987. Dialectics of tradition in South African black popular theatre. *Critical Arts*, 4(3):5-27.

- CSS. 1990. *Statistical news release*. Pretoria: Central Statistical Service.
- De Beer, C.S. 1988. Die krisis van die afwesige gees. *Research Bulletin*, 18(3):1-12.
- Degenaar, J. 1989. Die helende krag van kuns. *De Kat*, Julie:116-7
- De Kock, I., Press, K. (eds). 1990. *Spring is rebellious*. Cape Town: Buchu Books.
- Dubow, N. 1979. Art and the politics of power. *The state of art in South Africa*. Conference proceedings, July 1979. Cape Town: University of Cape Town:113-126.
- English, J. [n.d.]. *The case for arts centres*. London: City Arts.
- Franks, P.E. 1975. *A social history of American social psychology up to the Second World War*. New York: State University, PhD dissertation.
- Franks, P.E. & Vink, A. 1989. *Between ideals and reality: A research investigation of the Kattlehong Art Centre*. Johannesburg: NIPR.
- Hagg, G. 1991. Between ideal and reality: some thoughts on township art and arts centres. *Proceedings of the sixth annual conference of the South African Association of Art Historians, 10 July 1990 in Cape Town*.
- Hagg, G. 1991. *A window on township art. Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education: Institute for Reformation Studies [forthcoming]*.
- Hagg, G. 1991. Cultural festivals: challenges in community empowerment. Malan, E. & Steadman, I. Popular theatre and performance in South Africa [forthcoming].
- Holdstock, L. 1987. *Education for a new nation*. Riverclub: Africa Transpersonal Association.
- Hölscher, F. & Romm, N. 1989. Development as a process of human consciousness: Elements of a humanist view of development. *Coetzee* 1989:108-137.
- Hutchison, R. & Forrester, S. 1987. *Arts centres in the United Kingdom*. London: Policy Studies Institute, Report no. 668.
- Illich, I. 1973. *Tools for conviviality*. London: Calder & Boyars.
- Impasse. [n.d.]. A resource for the unemployed. Battram, & Segal. [n.d.].
- Klaaste, A. 1989. Art reaches into the hearts of all people. *Sowetan*, November 27:11.
- Lane, J. 1978. *Arts centres: Every town should have one*. London: Paul Elek.
- Lazlo, E. 1974. *A strategy for the future*. New York: George Braziller.
- Lefebvre, H. 1971. *Everyday life in the modern world*. New York: Harper.
- Malan, C. 1990. *Viool en voorlaaier: Kultuurstudie in 'n Rome wat brand*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- McKay, V. 1989. People's education for a democratic South Africa. *Coetzee* 1989:320-332.
- Meintjes, L. 1990. Paul Simon's *Graceland*, South Africa, and the mediation of musical meaning. *Ethnomusicology*, Winter 1990:37-73.
- RSA. 1984. *A strategy for the creation of employment opportunities in the Republic of South Africa, Government White Paper*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Schlemmer, L. 1978. *Needs, well-being and morale in the city: Subjective aspects of the quality of life among blacks in Durban*. Durban: University of Natal, Centre for Applied Social Sciences.
- Sowetan. 1991. Management needs blacks. *Sowetan*, May 16:5.
- Stark, P. [n.d.]. Can the arts do anything about unemployment. Battram & Segal [n.d.]:22-26.
- Tomkins, A. [n.d.]. The state we're in: Cultural policy and local government. Battram & Segal [n.d.]:29-37.
- Vergunst, N. 1988. *The art syllabus and community arts in the Cape Peninsula during the 1980's*. Cape Town.
- Warren, R.L. 1979. Application of social science knowledge to community organization. Cox, F.M. (et al). *Strategies of community organization*. Itasca: Peacock: 85-94.
- Warren, R.L. 1970. The context of community development. In Cary, J.L. (ed). *Community development as a process*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Williamson, S. 1989. *Resistance art in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Phillips.
- Younge, G. 1988. *Art of the South African townships*. London: Thames and Hudson.