

A Museum of Hope: A Story of Robben Island

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This article explores hope as a technology of collective governance through an exploration of the work that is being done to celebrate and promote a hope for a New South Africa at the Robben Island Museum—former prison to the political opponents of apartheid that is situated on a small island off the coast at Cape Town.

Keywords: Robben Island; hope; governance; reinvention

Hope is widely acknowledged as a desirable state of individual being, but less attention has been paid to its potential as a collective sensibility that can be steered in various directions by governing agencies. The manipulability of hope as a technology of governance raises normative issues that pertain to the authenticity and desirability of various states of hope consciousness. We draw upon Peter Drahos's (this volume) analysis to develop normative measures for evaluating hope-constituting initiatives through a case study of an initiative that the South African government is promoting through the Robben Island Museum in South Africa.

What Is Hope?

We begin by relating this article to the project of which all the articles in this volume are a part by asking, "What is hope?" Hope to Thomas Aquinas (quoted in John Cartwright this volume) "is directed to a future good which is hard but not impossible to attain." This simple defini-

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tion is one around which the articles in this volume coalesce. Peter Drahos in his article takes up both elements of this definition in arguing that hope should be understood as a forward-looking sensibility or emotion that keeps us moving ahead in the face of adversity.

Philip Pettit (this volume) adopts a similar conception. Hope, Pettit argues, allows us to maintain a “fixity of purpose,” a “cognitive resolve” that enables us to avoid falling prey to the ebbs and flows of evidence.

This conception of hope identifies it as a technology of governance that can be used both to govern the self—what Nicholas Rose calls “governing the soul” (Rose 1991)—and to govern collective life. As a technology of governance, hope is a sensibility that shapes “the flow of events,” to use Christine Parker and John Braithwaite’s (2003, 119) phrase, at both the individual and the collective levels.

In suggesting that we think of hope as a technology of governance, we are doing more, we hope, than simply rephrasing what the others we have mentioned have said. In seeing hope in this way, we are flagging that hope can be, and is, deliberately constituted by various governing agents and agencies to regulate the flow of events. This, as Peter Drahos (this volume) notes in his article, raises the possibility that hope can be manipulated. This in turn raises the possibility that hope can be used as a device for exercising power over others.

In keeping with such questions, Peter Drahos concludes his article by asking whether a hope that is politically constituted at the public level can be a force for good in the same way as both he and Philip Pettit (this volume) argue it can be at the individual level. His answer is that it can, provided certain conditions are met. We want in our remarks to explore this question: What might a technology for cultivating hope that meets these conditions look like?

In talking about hope as something that can potentially be cultivated to promote a collective good, our focus will be on the ways in which the South African government, in collaboration with Robben Island Museum’s designers and managers, has sought to promote a hope sensibility, through museum exhibits, that will inspire South Africans. Our focus will be their intentions and technologies as programmers of hope. Whether their attempts to promote a hope sensibility are successful is beyond the scope of this analysis. Similarly, our focus is not on the South African reality but on a vision that those who are promoting it hope will inspire South Africans to move forward as they tackle the very difficult tasks they face in building a New South Africa.

Cultivating Sensibilities

A sizable amount of literature has been published about the cultivation of collective sensibilities. The authors of these works have widely acknowledged that liberal modes of governance that attempt to govern through the freedom of subjects are dependent upon constituting political actors who are capable of exercising such freedom responsibly (Garland 2001; O’Malley 1992; O’Malley and Palmer 1996; Rose 1996; Rose and Miller 1992). Thus, liberal governments are constantly

engaged in constituting sensibilities in their citizens that will enable them to govern with efficiency and a light touch—although Barry Hindess (2001) reminds us that this light touch can quickly become a heavy fist when governments are faced with those actors who have failed to assimilate the requisite sensibilities. As scholars drawing upon the work of Michel Foucault have detailed so well, the cultivation of sensibilities for responsible liberal citizenship is often achieved through governmental mechanisms such as systems of surveillance, sanctions, and rewards that shape the mind through shaping conduct and that, conversely, shape conduct through shaping consciousness (e.g., Burchell, Gordon, and Miller 1991; Dean 1999; Foucault 1977, 1991). Other theoretical traditions, such as that inspired by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, in taking up the theme of the shaping of conduct through shaping sensibilities remind us of the importance for liberal governance of technologies that seek to act on the figurative plane to shape consciousness—through mobilizing such symbolic resources as stories and iconic images with the intention of promoting desired ways of thinking and feeling (e.g., Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Shusterman 1999; see also other traditions such as those represented by Boal 2000).

One of us explored this latter line of thought some time ago with Richard Ericson (Shearing and Ericson 1991), through examining the way in which older police officers used parables and anecdotes (i.e., figurative resources) to shape the sensibilities of new recruits. The shaping of new police officers, Shearing and Ericson argued, did not involve providing them with sets of rules to follow but rather involved the constitution of a “way of being” out of which action would then flow. The principle underpinning this approach to shaping new recruits was that correct action would flow automatically from correct sensibilities.

The example that had motivated this line of thinking was a statement by a veteran police officer to a novice that the new officer should “always act as if he were on vacation.” What kind of instruction was this? It was certainly not a rule as to how to act of the “if X do Y” sort. Shearing and Ericson (1991) concluded that what the veteran was saying to the rookie was something like the following: “You know that feeling of being laid back that you have when you are on holiday, well that is a sensibility you need to cultivate if you want to act effectively as a police officer.”

Similarly, other scholars have suggested that governors mobilize emblematic stories—concerning national heroes, great events, and public initiatives of history—with a view to communicating a generalized “way of being” to citizens that is thought to promote a well-functioning society (e.g., Leman-Langlois 1999; Leman-Langlois and Shearing 2003). Particularly important in transitional political environments that are faced with significant growing pains in the form of economic dislocation and rising crime that accompany political reinvention is the engendering of a degree of hopefulness that things will improve, provided that the fledgling democracy is supported (e.g., Brewer 2003b; Deegan 2000; see also Courville and Piper in this volume for an analysis of the importance of hope in transitional economies).

In exploring Peter Drahos’s (this volume) question of whether constituted hope—and in particular a politically constituted hope in the form we have just out-

lined—can be a positive force, we examine the work that is being undertaken at the Robben Island Museum in South Africa. As we have already intimated, the Robben Island Museum is one of the initiatives that the South African government is supporting to promote a hope sensibility within South Africans in the context of that country's ongoing political transition from apartheid to what is hoped will be a fully established, inclusive, and prosperous democracy.

Like most museums, Robben Island is a site for the preservation and exhibition of objects thought to be of lasting value. But as a site designed to promote a hope sensibility, it is also more than that. It belongs to a class that we might think of as “governance museums”—that is, museums that are concerned with promoting sensibilities rather than with simply exhibiting valued objects. In these museums, the exhibits are intentional vehicles for shaping consciousness. Another example of a governance museum, which we will have more to say about later, is the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles that exhibits and interprets the Holocaust. If we think beyond museums to symbolic sites more generally, we might think of Robben Island as a site of “figurative governance”—that is, as an instance of figurative sites designed to shape sensibilities that it is hoped will promote a desired future by promoting certain ways of thinking and therefore acting across the population. Another way of putting this is to say that we will be exploring the way in which the South African government, in collaboration with the management of the Robben Island Museum, is seeking to shape the identities of South Africans as part of what John Brewer (2003a, 2003b) has termed “citizenship education.”

To return to Drahos (this volume), we will explore the extent to which “public hope” can incorporate some of the positive features that he identifies in instances of “private” and “collective hope.” For Peter Drahos, these positive features have to do with the authenticity of private and collective hope—authentic in the sense that they are constituted by individuals who make the choice to hope themselves rather than having hope imposed on them. Drahos refers to this sense of authenticity when he talks about people “placing” themselves “in a state of hope,” either alone or collectively. This can be contrasted with a situation where individuals are placed in a state of hope through the use of manipulative technologies. There is, of course, a fine line between an authentic facilitative technology of governance that permits people to choose to hope and a process in which hope is imposed, as Sasha Courville and Nicola Piper (this volume) observe in their article. Our concern will be with this fine line and how it perhaps can and should be drawn. We turn now to probe these issues through examining the intentions and actions of the designers and managers of Robben Island.

Robben Island and the Robben Island Museum

Robben Island has a long history as a place of exclusion, having served a variety of carceral purposes over its history including the confinement of mutinous sailors, lepers, the mentally ill, and tribal leaders who fought against the colonization of southern Africa (see Buntman 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Deacon 1996; Strange and

Kempa 2003). The apartheid government put the site to use as a prison where it attempted to isolate the leading political opponents of apartheid. This is where Nelson Mandela spent eighteen of his twenty-seven years as a political prisoner.

Robben Island, as a prison, was designed as a place that would cultivate a sensibility of hopelessness among those who resisted, or who might resist, apartheid governance. It is worth noting that *apartheid* in Afrikaans means “separateness.” It is this foundational rationality of separateness between people with ostensible racial differences that underpinned all of the policies and technologies of governance that were enacted by the government of the old South Africa. Seen in this light, the technique of isolating the political opponents of apartheid at Robben

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Island can be understood as consistent with a broader ideology of governing through separateness—in this case, by isolating the leaders of the resistance to apartheid, the government sought to “crush the spirit of the people” by “crushing the struggle itself” (Ahmed Kathrada, personal communication, August 1998). Ahmed Kathrada (the current chair of the Robben Island Trust) was one of the earliest and highest profile political prisoners on the island. He was jailed in 1963 along with Nelson Mandela. Looking back to this time, Kathrada noted in his interview with us that “this [sensibility] was summed up by a senior prison official . . . who told us in so many words, that in five years’ time, no one in the world would remember the name of Nelson Mandela.”

As history has shown, the strategy of governing through separateness has proven to be a spectacular failure. The history of the island through the apartheid years is one of sustained resistance and surprising political activity among the prisoners and, surreptitiously, between the prisoners and the struggle movement back on the mainland (for academic accounts, see Buntman 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Deacon 1996; Hutton 1994; Rioufol 1999, 2000; for prisoners’ accounts, see Alexander 1994; Dlamini 1984; Mandela 1994). Embodying the slogan of “each one teach one,” the prison gained the moniker of the “University of Robben Island” among those involved in the struggle as many people learned to read and write, while others went on to attain “diplomas” in history, economics, and law signed by Nelson Mandela. The island remained throughout a center for political debate—and it is

widely reported by former inmates and acknowledged in academic accounts that the philosophy of inclusive governance that eventually came to form the basis of the new democratic South Africa was refined between groups at Robben Island (see Buntman 1996a, 1996b).

The failure of governance through separateness nicely illustrates the point we made earlier about keeping distinct the question of what governmental programmers intend and the technologies they design and deploy to realize their intentions from the issue of whether their intentions are realized. As we will elaborate in a moment, Robben Island Museum celebrates and builds upon the failure of the apartheid designers' plans and programs to create the sense of hopelessness and acceptance of separateness between racial groups that was intended, as well as the triumph of an inclusive vision for governance that was refined within the walls of the prison.

It is important to note that the transformation of the site into a museum was largely a foregone conclusion within resistance circles as apartheid began to crumble in the late 1980s. The African National Congress government established the "Future of Robben Island Committee" in 1995, chaired by Ahmed Kathrada, which reviewed some two hundred public submissions as to the fate of the island. In response, and drawing on discussions that had taken place at the University of the Western Cape in the last days of the National Party government of the apartheid era, the committee reported to the cabinet in September 1996 and recommended that the island become a museum. The government agreed. Along with an additional major initiative—The Truth and Reconciliation Commission—Robben Island was to be developed as a central pillar in the government's program of renewal, nation building, and reconciliation. As President Nelson Mandela noted at the inauguration of the Museum in January 1997,

I am confident that we will together find a way to combine the many dimensions of the island, and that we will do so in a manner that recognizes above all its preeminent character as a symbol of the victory of the human spirit over political oppression; and of reconciliation over enforced division. . . . When Cabinet decided that Robben Island should be developed as a National Monument and National Museum, it set in motion its redevelopment as a cultural and conservation showcase for South Africa's democracy which will also maximize its educative potential.

The museum displays not simply the physical artifacts of the island but also, much more important, the lives and experiences of the political prisoners. It is these lives and experiences, as much as the physical features of the island, that constitute the preserved and exhibited objects thought to be of lasting value by the South African government and the museum's directors and employees.

Mandela's Hope

We turn now to elaborate upon the hope of the political prisoners of Robben Island, namely, a hope for a New South Africa that Mandela has come to epitomize.

A critical feature of this hope was what a New South Africa should not be. As we have noted above, this negative vision was a key element in the resistance by prisoners to the technologies of apartheid designed to promote hopelessness that is now celebrated in and through the museum. What South Africa should not be is a place that responds in kind to apartheid by mirroring apartheid.

The culture of political resistance that the museum celebrates centers on a deliberate refusal by the political prisoners to respond in kind to the actions of warders and their superiors. They refused to respond to hatred with hatred. They refused, as they have expressed it, to be less as human beings than they could be—a total rejection of the notion of separateness along lines of “difference” drawn across (imaginary) racial groups. It is this refusal, more than anything else, that Mandela has come to represent.

It is perhaps this refusal to respond to hatred with hatred, more than any other single factor, that made a negotiated transition in South Africa possible (Deegan 2000). It is this refusal that now stands at the center of the vision of a New South Africa. This refusal is what the Robben Island Museum has been, and is being, designed to exhibit and, through this, to celebrate as a “way of being” worthy of South Africans. It is the hope that this sensibility will indeed become a defining sensibility of South Africans and a sensibility that will spread and found a new nonracist, harmonious, and prosperous society; that is the hope of Robben Island.

This sensibility that the Robben Island Museum has been designed to constitute has been beautifully expressed by Ahmed Kathrada (1997), in a statement made at the time that the Future of Robben Island Committee reported to the government in 1996:

We will not want Robben Island to be a monument to our hardship and suffering. We would want it to be a monument reflecting the triumph of the human spirit against the forces of evil, a triumph of freedom and human dignity over repression and humiliation; a triumph of wisdom and largeness of spirit against small minds and pettiness; a triumph of courage and determination over human frailty and weakness; a triumph of non-racialism over bigotry and intolerance; a triumph of the new South Africa over the old. (pp. 10-11)

As this statement makes clear, both a positive and a negative side are on the coin of meaning that Robben Island as a museum seeks to embody and express. This positive side that the refusal noted above draws forth is nicely captured by a southern African concept that expresses the “largeness of spirit” to which Kathrada refers. This is the concept of *ubuntu*—a concept that is deeply rooted in Nguni culture (i.e., the culture of southern Africans who speak linguistically similar languages, including Xhosa and Zulu).

Archbishop Desmond Tutu—another totemic figure of the New South Africa who was the chair of another iconic institution (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission)—has expressed the meaning of *ubuntu* as follows. *Ubuntu*, he said, means that we all belong to a unified “bundle of life”—a person with *ubuntu* “is diminished when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are” (Tutu 1999, 34-35).

What is important to note here, and this is something we will come back to, is that the hope of Robben Island is deeply grounded in the experience of South Africans—both through Nguni culture and through the experience of the islanders. Mandela's hope thus integrates a widespread African sensibility with a more specific sociopolitical one that is oriented toward a New South Africa.

This brings us back to the question of authentic hope and the possibility of authenticity where sensibilities are deliberately constituted through governmental programs. Does a politically cultivated sensibility that draws upon deeply rooted cultural sensibilities discredit these sensibilities, or does this cultural embedding promote authenticity? Is it possible to constitute a sensibility that strives for a public vision, for a public hope, without diminishing the autonomy and freedom of those whose sensibility is being shaped? More generally, can a public hope be constituted toward political reinvention that is normatively desirable?

Cultivating Hope

To answer these questions, we will now look in greater detail at the nature of the institution that has been established to give effect to the technology of hope that the South African government is seeking to promote in partnership with the management of the Robben Island Museum. In this examination, we will rely on three sources of data collected in 1998 and 1999. First, interviews with the museum's founding director and his management team; second, participant observation of tours of the island; and third, interviews with guides who conducted these tours.

The technologies employed by the museum were founded on a single overriding assumption—namely, that the most persuasive reason that South Africans can have for maintaining a sensibility of hope and a vision of ubuntu during the difficult times that lie ahead is the fact that the prisoners who struggled against apartheid under extraordinarily difficult conditions were able to cultivate, sustain, and practice a sensibility of ubuntu and a hope for a new South Africa that embraced this. From this assumption follows the premise that a museum experience that simply exposed South Africans to this prison reality—rather than imposing it upon them—would be a powerful force in cultivating a hope sensibility for a New South Africa. Given this conclusion, the museum designers and managers have sought to structure visits to the island to promote as much as possible a direct experience of the prisoners' hope sensibility and its accompanying way of being.

What is required, from this point of view, is an authentic and relatively unmediated experience of the hopeful life that was regarded as essential to the experience of the political prisoners—the experience of Mandela being the totemic instance. A critical reason for simply making the reality of prisoners' sensibilities available to visitors was also that to do otherwise would undermine the freedom and largeness of mind that ubuntu requires. To manipulate an acceptance of ubuntu would be to contradict the spirit of ubuntu. This attitude was expressed in the decision by the museum's management to open the island to visitors nearly immediately after it

was declared a museum rather than wait until it had been fully developed in an institutional sense as a museum. As the director noted, “from Day One we’ve had people in the space, [experiencing] the sheer power of the space” (personal communication, December 1999).

The idea of facilitating a direct and unmediated experience appears, judging by other academic accounts, to be in sharp contrast to the experience designed by the management of the Museum of Tolerance where, as Lisus and Ericson (1995) observe, guides anticipate the visitors’ experience with a voice-over designed to interpret what they see before they experience it. Guides, they write, provide “moral interpretations of the exhibitry” in ways that parallel the “journalist’s voice-over in television” (Lisus and Ericson 1995, 3). Indeed, the director of the Robben Island Museum made clear that his team was aware of other museums that seek to shape a future rather than simply exhibit a past. One of these museums mentioned explicitly in our interviews with Robben Island management was the Museum of Tolerance. The director of the Robben Island Museum and his staff appear to share the conclusions drawn by Nicola Lisus and Richard Ericson that at the Museum of Tolerance visitors were being “entertained into submission” (p. 8) and that the site had become an “emotions factory” (p. 18). The Robben Island Museum staff stood firm in the belief that this undermined the freedom to choose that they believed was essential to transmitting the message of hope in a gentle manner that reflected ubuntu values. Visitors, they insisted, should be free to respond to the experiences of Robben Island in the light of their previous experiences and history.

In commenting on lessons learned for the Robben Island Museum from their interpretations of the Museum of Tolerance, the director of Robben Island noted that for him, the other experience is

like a tunnel, you follow the story of the Holocaust and there is no way of escaping out of the story. You come in the tunnel and you had to go out the other side and, if one is not feeling emotionally strong that day or you want out of it, you can’t. And I think that’s a lesson for me about Robben Island: you mustn’t force a story onto people. You must allow people to opt out depending on where they are at. (Personal communication, December 1999)¹

Consistent with this approach, the management of the Robben Island Museum had, at the time of the research, refused to provide scripts for tour guides. Furthermore, rather than use exclusively professionally trained guides, the museum has undertaken an outreach program to employ ex-prisoners as guides and simply encouraged them to tell their stories. The use of ex-prisoners as guides has made, in the words of the director,

concrete our vision of making [Robben Island] a living museum and a new kind of museum—a place of engagement and education rather than it being a fixed narrative [for] a passive observer. (Personal communication, December 1999)

Indeed, the tour guides we interviewed were unanimous in the expression of their own desire to communicate a narrative of inclusion, tolerance, and the tri-

umph of the human spirit. While this was repeated to us in almost all the interviews with different tour guides, this sentiment is best expressed in the following three statements:

As a peace-loving person, I would like us as South Africans to go beyond the pain and not to start doing the kinds of things that were done to us for all those centuries—that I do not want to see in South Africa. So for me, keeping the memory [of what happened at Robben Island] alive and allowing people to experience that, and also talking about the healing we went through as human beings, discovering the common humanity, those things must be the basis of whatever we say or do on Robben Island. (Tour Guide 1, personal communication, May 1998)

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And as the second tour guide expressed it,

If you know the South African society, you know that segregation—in the words of South Africans, apartheid—bedeviled the populace for centuries. And the result is that we are still a very divided society because of colonial rule. And I realized that here was an opportunity for me to talk about my experiences in jail, and how [the prisoners representing very different political views] found one another. How we had to learn to live together. How our common humanity was realized in jail. And I thought that this would be an appropriate message, to give to South Africans in particular, but (also) to the whole world. So that is what I've been doing and I've been trying as much as possible to spread the message of the need for greater tolerance and less prejudice. . . . And if I can convince ten people out of 200 per day, then I think I am actually making a contribution to the healing of this very divided world we live in. (Tour Guide 2, personal communication, December 1999)

And finally the third said,

While we are talking about painful things [here on the island], at the end of the day, [Robben Island] should not be a symbol of hatred but of peace and justice. This is what we tell people. We must understand that we should not go back to our differences, we must throw away our differences. Let's go forward, all of us as South Africans. Because, at the end of the day, we want to build, so ours is to build, not to destroy. That is why I make sure

[visitors] understand that human forces have overcome evil forces. It is on that note that we are talking about reconstruction. It is on that note that we are talking about nation building. Ours is to build. (Tour Guide 3, personal communication, December 1999)

As these quotes suggest—and as we observed as participants on the tours themselves—each story told by the guides is personal but also allegorical. This is to say that each tour narrative conveys a synthetic truth about the island, apartheid, the lives of prisoners, their vision, and so on through a patchwork of personal anecdotes that are grounded in the struggle against apartheid. While these stories are being told, persons taking the tours were able to ask particular questions. On several occasions when we were on the tours, visitors presented particular interpretations with which they were familiar and asked of tour guides whether their own experiences supported or contradicted the visitors' own understandings.

In outlining the methods they were employing to inspire visitors into adopting a hope sensibility, the tour guides spoke of the importance of drama in their presentations and the need to tailor their narratives to their audience—to their political consciousness and their historical sophistication as these became apparent in the course of tours. One had, they emphasized, to talk to people who had supported apartheid (who were sometimes reluctant to acknowledge the brutality of apartheid) differently to foreigners who were often apocalyptic in expectations about South Africa's future. So too one needed to speak to black South Africans, who continue to live in the aftermath of apartheid, differently. A tour guide and former political prisoner elaborates,

[Some Afrikaners] come with a totally negative attitude, and you can see it, because the body language tells you. Instead of listening to you, the guy would turn his back, you know, or sneer, or walk away—show disinterest—or talk while you're talking. These are the tell-tale signs, and your question is now, "I want to reach that person, what am I going to do?" If it means altering slightly, so you actually snare that person, then you do so. You're not just like a parrot—that you turn on and then just babble. You learn to read your audience. You're not going to alter the facts, but you present the facts in such a way that you are able to send over . . . positive messages, because the negative is always there. (Tour Guide 2, personal communication, December 1999)

While the line may at times be fine between a process of invitation and an "emotions factory," Robben Island, we suggest, remains consistently on the side of engagement and education at a pace appropriate to the state of preparedness of an individual visitor.

The understanding of the history that informs the museum's objectives of assembling an inclusive narrative is of great importance in evaluating the nature of their program for inspiring hope. As the museum develops, it is very crucial to Robben Island that it

remains a platform for critical debate and lifelong learning. Because that's one of the big legacies that we inherited from Mandela and all those thousands of prisoners who argued amongst each other within [political] organizations, between organizations and obviously

they contested the whole apartheid ruling class version of history. . . . So that notion of critical debate, contestation is very important. (Director, personal communication, December 1999)

This insistence on the island as a space for deliberation that may and does lead to different conclusions is critical to the issue of constructing a sensibility that is authentic in the sense that Peter Drahos (this volume) sees private and collective hopes as being authentic. Authentic hope in Drahos's sense is hope that "leads into a cycle of expectation, planning, and action that sees the agent explore the power of her agency." This "enabling function of hope," he writes, "is key to the success of many individual projects and can be key to the survival of the individual." This was certainly true of many of the individuals who were prisoners on the island, as the Mandela image testifies. It was also true of the prisoners as a group who shared a collective hope—a "collective memory." Our question is the following: Is it also an accurate description of the hope that the Robben Island Museum seeks to inspire by telling the story of the lives of the prisoners? Drahos (this volume) raises doubts about the shift from private and collective hope to public hope when he notes how "commercial actors understand that if they can link their products to the private hopes of individuals, they will sell more of those products and gain customer loyalty" and when he goes on to note how politicians can and do attempt to manipulate public hope in similar ways.

In evaluating the degree to which the museum's invitation to hope is truly an invitation rather than an imposition, the degree to which alternate perspectives are being presented is relevant. In fostering an environment where there is a degree of openness—where one is not trapped in a tunnel—the Robben Island Museum has attempted (increasingly so as it has begun to mature as an institution) to create exhibits that broaden the presentation of the range of political perspectives that were represented among the inmates at the prison. One critical such exhibition is the "Cell Stories" Exhibit that was introduced at the later stages of our fieldwork in 1999, which features artifacts of importance to particular prisoners, which are presented in otherwise stark cells with a single placard on the wall (and in some cases button-operated digital recordings) that express the significance of those objects in the words of the owners of the artifacts. Again in contrast to the Museum of Tolerance, these narratives are the words of the prisoners themselves, and the recorded voices are not those of actors, reading scripts and playing the roles of inmates (Lisus and Ericson 1995). As a codesigner of the exhibit explained, he selected the items so as to represent the broadest range of voices possible, so as to counter the idea that only a single master narrative of resistance emerged during the years of the prison: real debate resulted in conflict between members of different political groups that led in some cases to people altering their views. As he put it to us,

There is a lot of myth surrounding political prisoners. . . . [Cell Stories] unmasks that: there is a lot of contradictions and opposing views within those stories that prisoners are telling you. If you look at the objects that are exhibited it's like a single object per person. . . . We're . . . creating space for the multiple voices of Robben Island. You would find that dif-

ferent organizations were here, different people were here, and their thoughts were different . . . they represented different things. (Exhibition Codesigner, personal communication, December 1999)

Other new exhibits are already extending this development. Notable among these is the Women's Exhibit being housed in one of the buildings that was used for the rare visitors' meetings with the prisoners at the island. Guided tours now also go beyond the prison itself to include a bus tour around the island as a whole, with a comprehensive travelogue outlining the histories of captives of the imperial project as well as the lepers and others suffering from medical illness who were concentrated on Robben Island over the years.

As we have noted several times, the line between manipulating a response and allowing people to experience something that might inspire a response is a fine one. In considering the difficulty of balance in drawing this line, the Robben Island Museum Director had the following to say about the sort of engagement that he hoped visitors would experience:

There are two ways in which we think people can be affected in a way that makes them think about themselves and the world around them. The first one is simply traveling from Cape Town to the island. You've been taken out of your daily environment on a trip to an island that in itself is quite a special thing, especially for children and people who have never seen the sea before and you've got this beautiful view of Table Mountain. The other one is, of course, just coming to stand in the space where someone like Mandela spent 18 years in a very small space, which even ex-prisoners when they come back, say they never realized it was so small. And ordinary people just see this space, see what people must have been through and how they emerged from that and you can't be unaffected by that. And that to me is a notion of pilgrimage—pilgrimage goes through different stages: Your departure point; period of journeying; period of destabilization; a period of catharsis; a period of re-establishing yourself; and then arriving back again. (Director, personal communication, December 1999)

While a "pilgrimage" to Robben Island may not be as orchestrated an experience as a visit to the Museum of Tolerance is regarded as being, it is clearly not an entirely unmediated experience either. Indeed, the very notion of a completely unmediated experience is an ideal type—there are very few if any such experiences. Rather, the idea of an unmediated experience stands at an end of a continuum where the other end is a completely manipulated experience. Everywhere along the continuum, our experience is constructed to varying degrees. So the question is not whether our experience is constructed but rather how it is constructed and toward what ends? Is what is happening facilitation, in the sense that Drahos (this volume) has in mind when talking about the need for "facilitative institutions" that can foster "good hope," or is it about the constitution of a submissive consciousness?

Perhaps at this point, it might be useful to reflect on what we take to be Foucault's conception of freedom as a space for personal reinvention (Foucault

1997). It is such a space that we want to suggest that Drahos (this volume) has in mind when he talks of the possibility of public hope's being "a contingent force for the good." He suggests that hope is a force for the good when three conditions hold. First, it is "judged by truth;" second, it is "the subject of cold analysis"; and third, it is "underpinned by social arrangements that maximize the opportunity for bearers of truth about public hope to come forward."

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If the above interpretation of the technologies used at the Museum of Tolerance is correct, then this would provide an example of a case where Drahos's conditions have not been realized. On the other hand, precisely because Robben Island is an orchestrated setting that seeks to promote facilitative social arrangements that encourage inclusive deliberation and a direct experience, the museum might come close to meeting these tests. Our reasons for coming to this conclusion are not simply that Drahos's conditions are being realized within the museum itself, although this is part of the story. There is a deeper reason that has to do with the fact that the hope celebrated by the museum emerged out of the crucible of deliberation that the prisoners created during their periods of imprisonment—that is, it is grounded in a collective memory.

If this analysis is correct, then perhaps, it is appropriate to characterize the Robben Island Museum as an institution grounded in a legacy of deliberation that has worked to transform private and collective hopes into a public hope through drawing on and extending collective memory. This deliberative grounding is deepened by the fact that the hope that emerged through the debate and engagement that characterized the life of prisoners on the island resonates with a deeply embedded and central value of Nguni culture. If this conclusion is accepted, then it might give a new meaning to the phrase that is often used to refer to the tip of the peninsula on which Cape Town is located, namely, that it is the "Cape of Good Hope."

Conclusion

The major theme running through this article is the following: To what extent can the political constitution of hope as a technique of governance be normatively desirable? Should governments and other governing agencies be seeking to promote hope in their populations at all? And if the answer is yes, what types of hope and under what conditions are such endeavors acceptable? As Foucault (1997) might well remind us, the degree to which such practices constitute “authentic” identities is always an open question—indeed, the pessimist in Foucault would hasten to point out that such an enterprise, being engaged in by governments, is always dangerous, as by necessity it tends to close off other alternatives in thinking and being to citizens. We can certainly accept the point that these identities are not authentic in a (classical liberal) sense that they originate in some sort of prediscursive human nature—they are of course, and by necessity, constituted precisely because neoliberal approaches to minimal government are dependent upon a constituted “responsible” citizenry.

In considering the issue of authenticity, we have looked to the conditions and technologies used to constitute a hope sensibility. We have seen how the hope being constituted on the island, as well as the conditions and technologies used, has deep deliberative roots in the history of the prison itself, the broader struggle movement against apartheid, and the indigenous southern African culture more generally. In Drahoš’s (this volume) terms, the public hope is deeply rooted in individual and collective hope. This is reflected in the work of the museum staff in their insistence that visitors should be invited (but not compelled) to share in the inspiration of the island and to experience the range of voices that comprised the islanders. To return to Foucault (1997), we conclude that the Robben Island Museum has been, and is being, constituted as a space that invites the possibility of personal reinvention and, through this, the collective reinvention of South Africans.

Note

1. We do not wish to make claims about the Museum of Tolerance, which we have neither visited nor studied. Our interest here is simply in how it was seen by the designers and managers of Robben Island: the way it contrasted with their museum and how their response to the Museum of Tolerance shaped their own museum technology.

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