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Drawings and Narrative: the Inmates Memory and Experience (At the Prison of Monsanto)

MARIANA CARROLO

Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal
marianacarrolo@gmail.com

Abstract

In the first part of this communication we present the underlying questions of the research held in the Prison of Monsanto (PM), as well as its theoretical framework and the specific situation regarding the context – the prison space – in an outside-in perspective. We aim to approach the relationship and social problematics inherent in a prison institution and in an *exercise of power* (Foucault, 1997), according to a point of view that regards the space, the *place* and the supporting conditions of the experiences and life experiences of the inmate, specifically the inter-relationships between the space and the subjects, in a closed environment.

In the second part, which is directly related to the research, we aim to understand the space perception and representation of the inmates, following the reverse view (*inside-out*). Through this, we analyze the communication acts, which are a result of the direct contact with the inmates and the registration of the provided elements. Along with these records, we supply their drawings and work developed within the Creative Arts Studio (CAS). This research, as stated in the Arts of Making (Certeau, 1990), allows us to know the inmate's point of view, his perception and his graphic and social representation of the space – his experiences and life experience. There were twenty-one inmates taking part in this research, from 2007 to 2011.

Lastly, through the idea of *narrative images*, it was suggested that the drawing would work as a body for the social narrative, as a communication strategy and as a revelation of the knowledge and counter-knowledge that takes place in a disciplinary institution.

Keywords

Inmates Drawings; Inmates Memory; Inmates Experience; Social Narrative

INTRODUCTION

The Prison *place* congregates unpaired situations of limitation and depersonalization of the identity and autonomy of the subject. If, as Foucault (2007, pp.141-142) affirms, the power makes knowledge, part of that knowledge lays in those, who are docile and useful, that are more submissive to it – the arrested individuals, Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1991, p.138).

Will the basis of this research¹ - set of artistic work, drawings and paintings, developed by the inmates at the Prison of Monsanto, during the *Creative Arts Studio* (CAS) – become a

¹ This research was supported by a grant from FCT.

body of knowledge, revealed through the revelation of the inmates' spatial conditions and interpersonal relationships, that conducts to a reflection upon the idea of narrative identity?

What sort of records and memories are contained in this kind of work, as the witnesses of an unpaired experience; and what information, symbols and identity marks related to the subject and the place can this show us?

The underlying idea of this works, as an artistic witness – both as a product and a producer of the individual and social knowledge of the *place*, derived from these speeches – is that it tells specific stories and has visualities and encrypted metaphors of a certain experience and life-experience. This work has an individual and a collective dimension, shared and complex, fruit of the limiting prison action towards rights, freedom, behaviours and autonomy of the inmates – ritual social experiences, disciplinary and submitted to the *exercise of power* (Foucault, 2007). They are, therefore, based on a discourse that is eminently focused on a personal perception of space and shape, and on the way it is represented by the inmates, considering the conjecture and exercise of the *microphysics of power* (Foucault, 2007) and the dialectics of knowledge production.

This way, with this research, one aims to think about the perception of the space, of the shape and of the inmates' life experiences, as well as their ability to represent a prison facility where inmates live, as a complex phenomenon, common to different grounds; and where the Art is a way of mediation and an agent of the revelation: the interpretation and thinking of all the work that was done. Within this context, one is forced to think about working methods that interdisciplinary intersect different knowledge, capable of finding a balance between History, Architecture, Space Psychology (among others) and the inmates' narratives, their perception and memory as a re(construction) and representation of the space and the place. And allowing oneself, from that experience, to understand the cultural, the social and the historical factors associated with it, as well as the physical and psychological factors that, in real time, constitute not only the concept of place, but also the concept of inmates and of social body.

1. THE SPACE

The concept of space and place, and their physical, social and identitarian characteristics, emerges as central during this research. The object of study, the Prison of Monsanto², the only high-security facility in Portugal, presents a radial plan and is destined solely to male inmates in a special regime and in punishment - A prison with unique disciplinary characteristics and regulations. During its design, the architectural project (1878/1914) was not supposed to be used as a civil prison (1915). Nevertheless, as a military building, it already had some formal, proper, symbolic, material and architectonical characteristics able to be adapted in order to shape it into the Civil Prison of Lisbon. As a building – a circular stronghold – it spontaneously follows part of the J. Bentham's Panopticon guidelines and model³ (1748-1832), which aims: '(...) to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and

² Former Sá da Bandeira Fortress, that belonged to the Trench Camp in Lisbon. The Civil Prison of Monsanto was created by the Law of June 30th 1941. The Prison of Monsanto started its functions in 1915 (after the 1st World War), being upgraded to a high-security Prison since 2007.

³ For a functional description of the Panopticon, see Bentham, 2008 [1787], pp. 20 – 21. On the other hand Foucault understanding of the Panopticon is: 'But the Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is the diagram of a

permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power'. This idea is reinforced by Foucault (1991, pp. 201-202). Interpretation of the building 'The Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power. A real subjection is borne mechanically from a fictitious relation'.

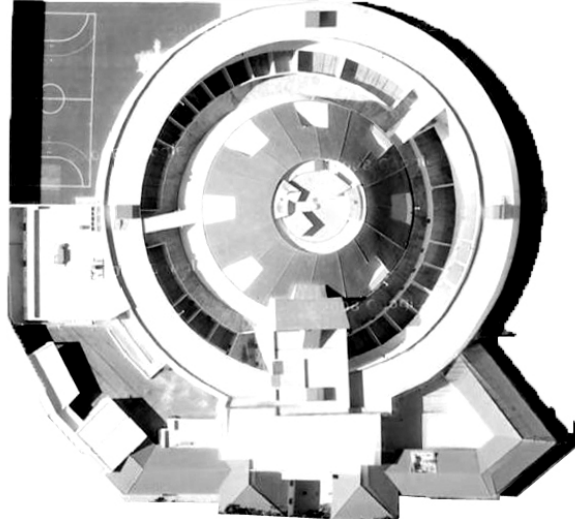


Figure 1 – Prison of Monsanto. Aerial photography of the Prison facility ©2012, Google.

It can be recognized as a space that has and holds what is considered to be a model of control and totalizing surveillance, but equally preventable regarding intern insurgencies, as described by Bentham's key-idea (2008 [1787], p.28): 'To see [the prisoner] without being seen [by him]'. As a radial structure, it 'atomizes the prisoners' through its location and the placement of the relative architectural elements and, as a consequence, this architecture creates conflicts to the individual's orientation, where he becomes potentially able of connecting the inner part of the building with the whole building. Since the 19th century, it is observed in the common reasoning that there is a search for socially expropriating the subject, incrementing its own depersonalization and its absence of autonomy. Not only as a way of abiding by the power, exercising and regulating it, but as a way of this Power, that is also eminently transformative, to be self-defined and located. This power is manifested in the whole prison praxis (schedules, restrictions and rituals) and that assumes a commitment and a security's responsibility before the political power and the civil community.

Because of its spatial panoptical architectural organization – Monsanto presents few spans, since it was designed similarly to a fortress with a pit, - and because of the complex intern organizational diagram, - with its own procedures and logistics, - the prison space where inmates live present orientation troubles to these inmates, reducing their ability of understanding the whole building, the ability of mapping it and, therefore, to recognize the cardinal directions, the time and the solar orientation. This incapacity leads to a tendentiously fractioned space reading. Formed with fragments and passages, lonely routes without the

mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use:(1991, p.204).

'other', like Augé (1995) defines it, may lead to a moment of a *non-place*⁴ or even, as Giddens (1994) questions, one may be before an *emptiness of space* – the concomitant separation of the space from the place. According to this author, modernity tried to subtract the space from the place, by promoting relationships between absent 'others', physically distant and with no present interactions, from which, the place would become phantasmagorical.

For the inmate, the instant fractioned images of space converge, shuffle and deform, dismantling the perception of the structure. As shown by the sketches and drawings (*vide* figures 6 to 11), that architectural instrument is countered by the inmates' mechanism of collecting and finding spatial references that identify the place (and the time). This same place that is both known and unknown to them, is congregated in its fragments, where it is invested by the appropriation and inter-relationship with their peers.

2. THE INMATE

The work of authors, such as Certeau (1925-1986), allows one to understand that the creation of knowledge and significations in the daily life follows varied and complex paths, uneven from those that the modern society's organization – structured through hierarchy, discipline and power – presents. According to the author, the daily practices form an immense fund of practices, structuring and organizing, that always exist concurrently to the Panopticon proposition, 'Under the apparent monotheism (...) that would guarantee for itself even the Panopticon devices, a "polytheism" of disseminated "practices", dominated but not erased, would survive, by the triumphal path of one of them among the others'. (as cited in Alves, 2009, p.115). To act accordingly to 'other' practices, other than the Panopticon, is possible, according to this view.

That is due to what Certeau (1990) describes as *spatial tactics*. Those are strategies of space use, held by people in their daily lives, like sabotage (...) of the social control ways that were previously registered in it. According to most of the authors, the possible neutrality of space serves the relationships of power.

The possibility of sabotage, as the generation of a counter-knowledge to the power by the individuals in their daily practices, happens because this sabotage acts upon the power devices and hegemonic procedures. That means it is possible to recognize the processes, economies, technologies and mechanics that serve the hegemonic logics – which serve the institutions and social organization. This hegemony creates 'blindness' conditions where the established power loses its ability to be self-analysed and even to admit the possibility of the existence of other logics and social organizations – subversive and transgressors of the social norm – within the same space and time.

In this gap, the individual, within its multiple processes of experiencing the daily life, look for solutions, 'find ways' of resistance and of alternative – consolidating a counter-power

⁴ The non-place is understood as non-relational, non-identitary and non-historical place. Places of individualism, passage and solitude. Nevertheless, and for the author, 'In the concrete reality of today's world, places and spaces, places and non-places intertwine and tangle together. The possibility of non-place is never absent from any place. Place becomes a refuge to the habitué of non-places (...)' (AUGÉ, 1995, p.107). I.e., the non-place never exists in a pure form, since relationships are rebuilt in it. Therefore, places and non-places are fugitive polarities, where the first never disappears and the latter never fulfills completely.

and a counter-knowledge – applied as a practice in the daily life, happening in the same places and with the same actors where the power is exercised. Certeau regards that ‘the tactics are the art of failure, and that the Arts place themselves beyond the dominant reasoning, playing with the emotions’ (Alves, 2009, p.10).

The knowledge (counter-knowledge) from these practices constitutes a surprise for the present power and, therefore, is feared and even negligently understood. In any case, there are just few experiences in which the contemporary institutions capitalize these knowledge and practices, as well as the creation of an understanding and reciprocity in between the parts. The tendency, which is rooted in fear (the danger of security) leads to an exacerbation of the control procedures, as such, coercion mechanisms amplify the domination wish. This situation is frequently seen within the prison environment.

This way, it seems essential to mention not only the main role of the inmate, as well as to explain its specificity. The prisoner is not a viewer, is not a bystander of its surrounding reality. The prisoner participates and builds the prison reality: the space where he lives and the one he is shaped by. More importantly, regarding the current law, the prisoner is an entity that is extinguished by the end of its imprisonment time, but consequently supplants that same reality as its witness⁵.

3. RESEARCH

Produced in the *Creative Arts Studio* (CAS), the research in the Prison of Monsanto was based on the artistic work of the inmates, as previously mentioned. The fieldwork involved me, as an Art Teacher, and it involved the inmates. The creative arts’ activities took place in a class, under my supervision, while teaching and developing artistic techniques in the presentation of work propositions and work themes, during the four years of research⁶.

It was sought to build, during that time, a model that was more centred in the students, rather than centred in the teacher, aiming to search for alterity rather than directivity. That is relevant in way that, in the current research, the organization of the programs’ contents and the attainment of results also depends of the ability to negotiate, conciliate and integrate affective and cognitive matters during the work progress. Informed about the project, the inmates question the nature of the ‘hidden’ goals related to the elaboration of the drawings and the conclusions, as a group and as a subgroup; they showed reluctance sharing their Knowledge, informing the Power, through drawings that would get them ‘exposed’.

The inmates’ information and their transmission of experience aim then to make visible what is invisible to the outside visitor: an invisible structure made of schedules, rituals, and behaviours that lays the place bare in its multiple facets.

To give notice, for instance, that in the environment of the high security prison, times where the inmates are gathered and out of the cells is limited (not considering the dining

⁵ This essential difference is registered by Agamben (2003).

⁶ In 2007/2008, this teaching experience in a prison environment was due to my hiring by the Portuguese Education Ministry: teaching ‘Arts’ in the Prison of Monsanto. During the following years, from 2009 to 2011, my abidance was due to the beginning of this research, under the Doctorate degree, at the New University of Lisbon, with the thesis entitled: ‘The Portuguese Prison Architecture: Shape, Experience and Space Representation. The Prison Facility of Monsanto’, under the supervision of Manuel Villaverde Cabral and Raquel Henriques da Silva (FCSH-UNL).

hall and common area times). This only occurs in certain activities, like the CAS, as well as the 'big yards' activities. Apart from that, they can be locked up for up to twenty two hours per day.

That is also why, regarding this environment, that time spent at CAS was used to the inmates' socialization: to get to know the others; to define limits; to share confidences; to offer help to create relationships, contacts and groups.

The activities took place in a closed room with a closed-circuit television (CCTV) - is the use of video cameras to transmit a signal to a specific place, on a limited set of monitors - with a maximum of two sessions per week, with inmates serving time or waiting for trial. The average time of the activity was about 90 minutes. The number of inmates for each activity never exceeded six people.

The inmates could participate, which was due to the exceptionality of the place, but only after showing interest in the school and administrative services of the Prison and after an evaluation and approval. During the four years, the collected work was done with the involvement of twenty-one inmates.

There were school breaks (the activity followed the Portuguese School Planning); some inmates quit since they did not want to carry with the activity and some were transferred, but there were also some inmates that came back to the activity, three years after it had started, due to Prison's punishments. The planning was authorized by the Prison's Head and by the General Head of Prison Services (DGSP).

The work done was focused on varied themes and goals, searching a harmony between several aspects of plastic and artistic background. It was proposed to the inmates to work with Drawing (charcoal/colour/wax/pastel), Illustration and quick Sketches; Painting (gouache and watercolours) and Models; all this with a Substantial Forms and a Form Studies view; Free Drawing; Drawing with Interpretation – exploring Memories, Landscapes (whether real or fictional), Fantasy, Experimentalist or Metaphors; Perspective Drawing; Reality Observation and Representation (Still Life, Substantial Forms Drawing).

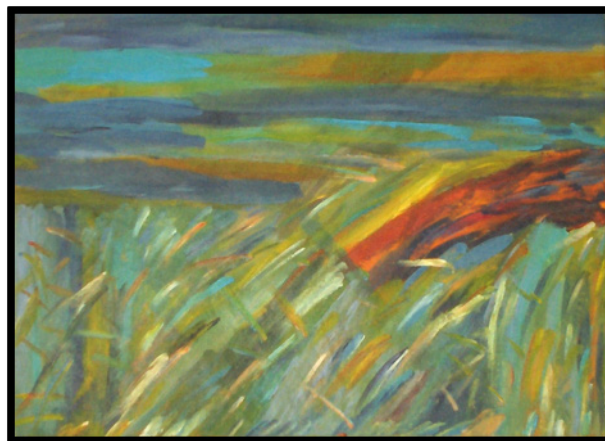


Figure 2 – Landscape (2009). Acrylic painting – free drawing. (Anonymous)

The goal of this work was getting to know the inmates and find out how they communication and interpretation styles. In addition, it also allowed me to understand, as an active agent, their communicational products, their plots and narratives, their work, without neglecting the 'educational' view (to teach and to amplify) in the areas they care the most,

that means giving the tools to improve their techniques that would allow them to exteriorize better their intentions. The experience of developing a plan together, within a certain schedule and limited spatial conditions, created a unique situation, built from my experience as a teacher and the direct contact with the inmates and their stories (shared through conversations) - dialogues and observations are registered in Notes, Logbooks and Journals during the CAS classes; the work and classes developed in a CAS context.

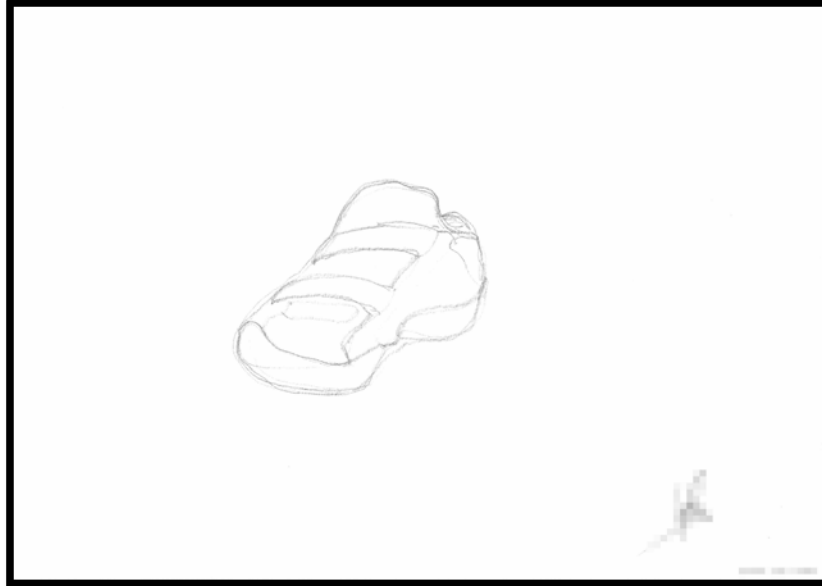


Figure 3 – Shoe Exercise (2009). Through an Object Modeling technique, the image is registered, paying attention to the shape/form and without raising the pencil from the sheet (Anonymous).

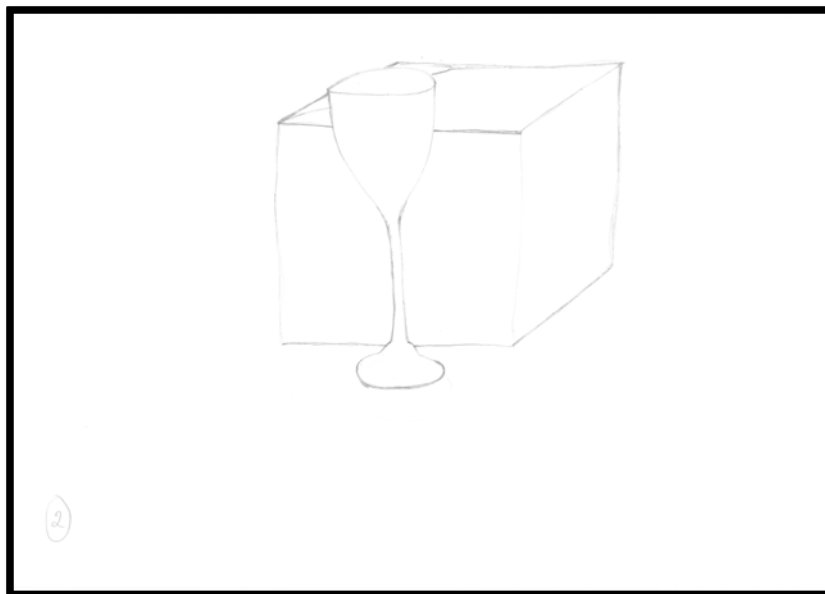


Figure 4 – Glass & Cube Exercise (2009). Through a direct observation of the objects, the materiality, configuration and different natures are registered – space and limit notions (Anonymous).

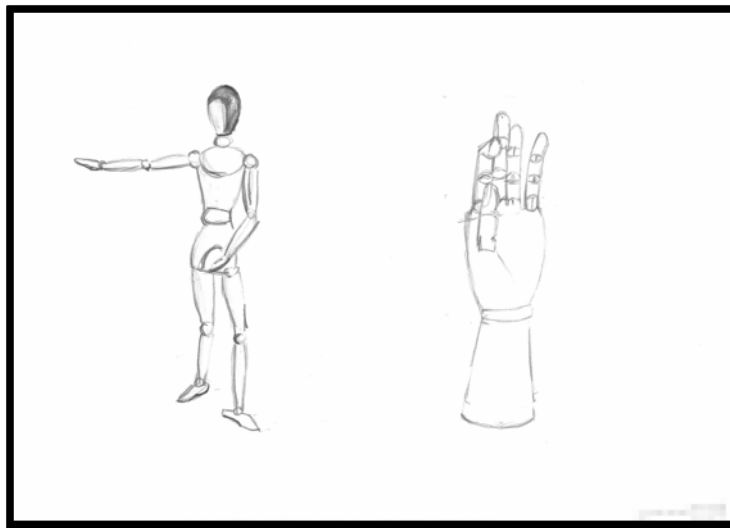


Figure 5 – Hand & Model Exercise (2009). Through a direct observation of the objects, configuration and different natures are registered – body notion: the part and the whole (Anonymous).

Lastly, we worked the inmates' prison space perception (space, configuration and dimensions) and their representation and record ability regarding this same space (Prison of Monsanto). The inmates were asked to draw their cells and the prison, considering different building levels (plans) they might have known. The exercise was formulated without instructions related to the way the inmate should proceed and approach the theme, as well as without any expressive limitations regarding the contents – it was not asked any specific model of representation (plans, perspective, views).

The exercise aim is to understand, through the carried communicational products, the impact of the Power in this subject (A). His artistic ability to communicate and represent the perceptions and what he lived (B). And to think about how Art participates in the knowledge building and consequentially informs the Power and how it works, reciprocally, as a vehicle of Expression and Communication, Art and the Inmates (Witness) build a personal and social identity narrative about these actors and the reclusion (C).

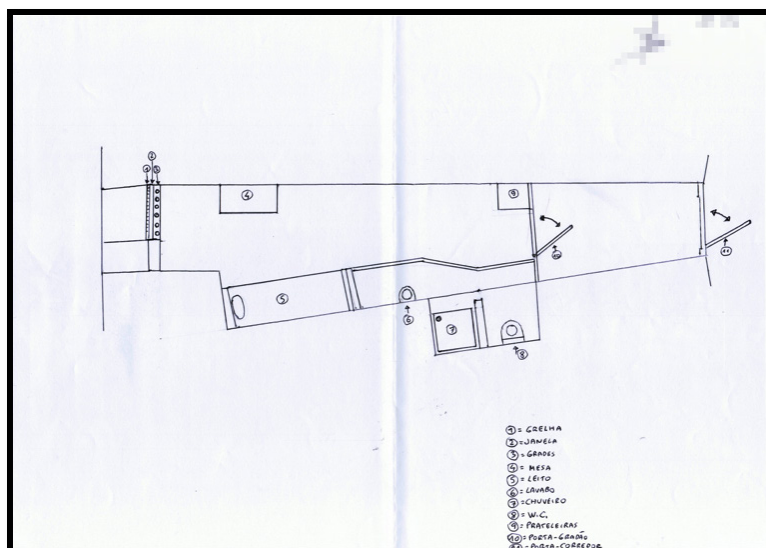


Figure 6 – Cell I (2009). Architectural Plan Representation. No Scale. (Anonymous).

Some way, for the Prison of Monsanto, during this research, the completion of the drawings configured a transgression to the order and security of the facility. An almost 'improper' use of the memory (as an instrument and as a record) through the drawings, motivated some other questions related to the drawing itself and its impact and potential strength⁷ that were felt in the reluctance of the Prison, as an institution, to allow the CAS planning and the plastic language towards other uses other than the expectable for a classroom.

Although the security measures demanded control over the circulation of drawings, could they (also) restrain the memories associated with the drawings? Moreover, what about the social narrative, is it possible to direct it? Due to a prison's security precautions and social responsibilities (regarding the escape of an inmate), the viewing of architectural plans, façades and cuts was forbidden throughout the research period.

4. THE DRAWINGS

As methods for this investigation, we selected for analysis the graphic elements from the drawings, sketches and paintings, created and developed by the inmates. From that we aimed to achieve an idea of the inmates perception of the reclusion at the Prison of Monsanto and how they expressed their knowledge, experiences amidst a reclusion context.

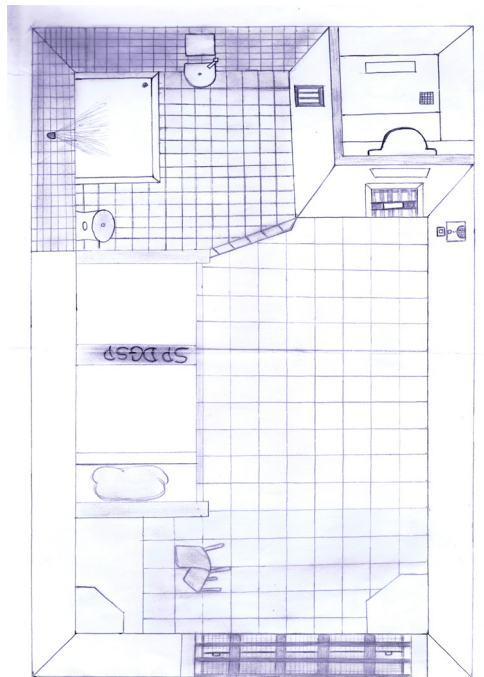


Figure 7 – Cell II (2009). Representation - Upper view. (Anonymous).

The drawings, as communication acts, connect directly with memory, its characters and/or scenarios. They have autonomy to other ways of communication, regarding what is expressed and that can be read because of its own immediate content.

This is structured through scenes that express themselves in summary-moments. The articulation of those elements constitutes a narrative that emerges in the succession of

⁷ The power to recreate the real and to project it (power from the counter-knowledge and from the counter-power)

key-moments that frame the plot. And it is where the interconnected images create attachment and sequences even if they are not intentionally organized afterwards.

The reading of the drawing leads us, then, to a second narrative. This one begins with the image that reflects a learned reality. This is done differently from what happens in photography or painting. Its aim is to materialize the memory through aesthetics placed between the factual and the abstract, subject to a personal screen made of values, sensibilities and wishes, and also mostly made of options – allowing space to emerge in between the subjective and the interpretation.

Regarding the plastic language, the metaphor, the self and the background interpretation's metamorphosis, from the narrative eyes or self-diegetic, is the main character of that time, that space and that action; all this lives in the drawing. In the drawing the (re) construction of the place happens, and individually finds in the other person, both spectator and actor, like another similar reality that confirms itself through lexicon, concepts and sureness of its life experience and daily life notions, in a prison and reclusion life environments – validating or not its experience and, reciprocally, the other's, creating a projection of identity.

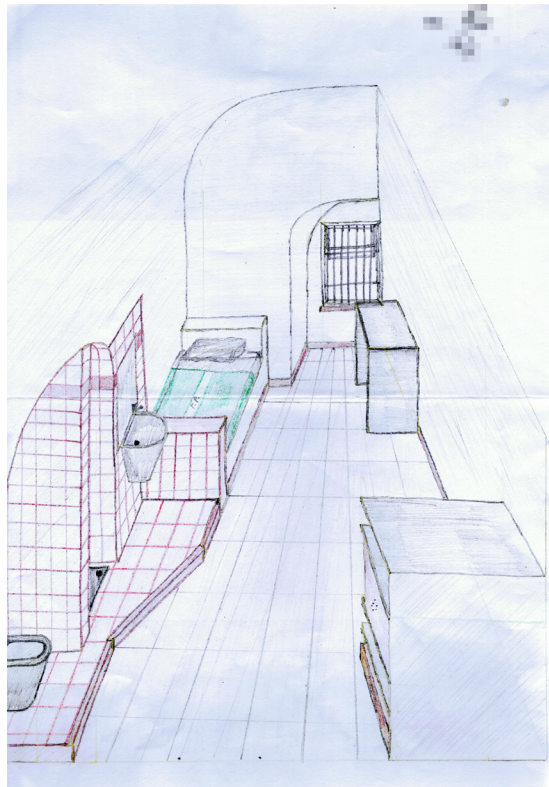


Figure 8 – Cell III (2009). Perspective. (Anonymous).

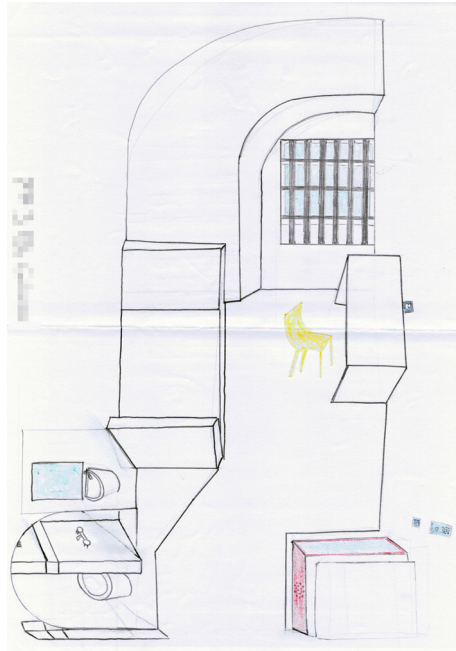


Figure 9 – Cell IV (2009). Panoramic View. (Anonymous).

Therefore, the drawing itself is a document, a record and a ‘witness’ in the true meaning of this word. It’s a ‘witness of the witness’. It’s a way of exteriorizing and finding the other – formulating knowledge and counter-knowledge – in a larger communicational production, that works as a mediator and as reinvention of the cell experience where the atomized inmate (and all the inmates) are under the aegis of that organism and its disciplinary rules. The inmates’ perception, while building the whole thing is, as mentioned, always fractioned. It is always related to the part. And the captions of the drawings indicate many times the places where they did not go, the gaps and absences where they have not been, or the parts they have foreseen, deduced, making an interpretation and mentally building it through ‘immediate images’ and passages; like jigsaw puzzles, excluding parts, fractioned and fiction memories, oddments and detached conversations. It is a vision of the world and of the self – socially and culturally – endured by a space and a power structure that guards and scans the notions of the self and imagines and aims for a subtraction or a control of the memories, the identity and the appropriating of the imprisoned individual.

About the drawings: their aim is not to feed the factual nor to reproduce the truth, but to establish a commitment in a metaphorical way between the reality and the fiction (Ricoeur, 1983). This way, the ‘stories’ and the illustrations of this stories are closer to the real life; they focus on the consequences of the events, in the people and use hierarchical signs and symbols that transmit emotions, synaesthesia and feelings in a better way. Their interpretative subjectivity allows a better finding of meanings, where one does not search for an established truth but where the production of meanings happens between the drawing (image, illustration) and the observer. This relationship, which is not textual, allows free associations, a combination of signs and the participation of the observer’s subconscious – different from word processed speech.

The way the drawing ‘tells something’ obeys, then, to the ‘interpretation of facts’, on one hand, electing basic symbols, signs and their own motivations as instruments/devices to narrate the place and the space. And, reciprocally, the observer – who is able to possess and to interpret – focuses and differentiates some elements instead of others, with no goals or specific themes. Even if there is a chance of the existence of gaps in this sequence and thread, and according to Iser (1978) a narrative is coherent when ‘absent’ elements are seen as implicit by the observer that the subject will supplement through its social and culture repertoire, as well as through its personal experiences.

The interpretation aims to understand the elements that characterize and that are recognized in the image – the document that is presented to us. In this document, the subject searches for the recognition of what is overt, realizing what is absent or sometimes implicit. This ability to identify elements and decode meanings has different origins: some are biological in the human being, some others are cultural, social and even related to a historical heritage. All this gathers in our *reading ability*, as an evident verification of the clear and abstract elements in the drawings, which we can consider and count if interested in a study based upon numeric possibilities.

For example: as humans we have the ability to connect colors, and tonal values, with temperature sensations. We are, in the same way, able to recognize the saturation of a space, and its elements, by the presence of spots and grid cells. This capacity allows us to identify sensations like ‘horror for emptiness’ – when those elements are in excess – or a ‘deaf emptiness’ – in a situation where the elements lack abusively. This can lead us to situations of claustrophobia or agoraphobia.

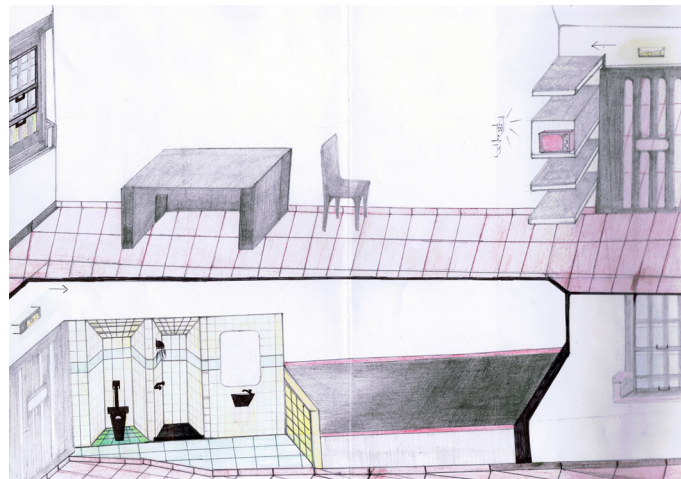


Figure 10 – Cela V (2009). Overlaid View. (Anonymous).

In the same way, the place of the observer in a plan, in a perspective or in a view, allows him to measure the space, to locate it and to be located in it. Or even, the representation of acute angles usually shows that when the image is deformed or twisted, the observer is excessively close to it.

In addition, tubular views, excessively focused in one vanishing point, even when deformed, allows us to automatically understand that the measured value is not in the increase of the distance, but in the decrease and narrowness of the width. Lastly, there is

a tendency to summarize. We tend, as subject authors, to gather information in one record only. That may come from outside environment pressures that the inmates can be exposed to. Specially in a prison environment (Moreira, 2010) where, as is the case of Monsanto, inmates are housed in individual cells, and for long periods of time, that can reach 20-22 daily hours. Throughout time we observe our surroundings and try to understand the reality around us in fractured pieces, which then leads to a synthesized understanding. This personal summary consists in bringing to the visible our relevant references of space and time (real or fiction). All the significant data about the space exists independently from distances, positions and locations. Therefore, we overlay perspectives; amplify simultaneous and panoramic views, so that with one look we can embrace the whole reality. Sometimes, this drawing overload hampers the observer's understanding.

Therefore, when we stop a drawing, the aim is to find the subject and to locate the scene. We also try to frame the image and understand it regarding its scale, field of view (which plan it has) and scene. One does not neglect the value of the sheet shape and its orientation (vertical or horizontal), as well as the existence of a frame or the use of the sheet margins as a support to the representation.

We measure the 'weight' of the composition and the way it is inserted in the sheet. If the 'earth line' is respected or if it floats in the air.

We also aim to find the central location of the image, from where the observer 'watches' it. When one finds some of these stable points or some others that were not mentioned, one is able to measure the image range. Then, we aim to understand how it is possible to build that image, that drawing. And, necessarily, one has to consider those for whom it is directed and what it shows.

Those who interpret, a subject with reason, feelings and personal experiences, connect immediately with the object in a concern, fondness relationship, or the opposite. But the subject may or may not identify himself in the image. And he will aim to understand what strikes him in that image and what did the author mean with it. How did the author want to touch us? What instruments did he use in that communication? How does the work speak about the author, about what he sees, what he thinks?

In a *narrative of image*, there are options and ways of representing more 'realistic', more 'projective' and architectural, more 'dynamic', more 'metaphorical' or related to the psychological – as if all those options, which are different from each other, would form a synthesis and would aim to express, through that synthesis, the same content in different ways.

Therefore, all the elements that one recognizes in every drawing are very important, such as: the presence of objects within the scenes (bed, wood, WC, etc.) or the permanent absence of personal 'things' and personal traits, the repetition of 'style' figures and plasticity, as well as the tendency to the summarized and unusual election of details. In a tendentially general space: the letters DGSP appear in the bed sheets; the intercom buzz; the details of the window; the colour and organic shape of the chair; etc.

But, the attention given to the drawings lies in the fact that they are actually built beyond the composition elements in circumstances where there is a predominant use of the line, in an almost total absence of a blot. Or, simultaneously, an absence of colour (blot);

There is only colour use in the lines (figures 8 and 9), except in figure 10, and a predominant use of grid lines, which is a result of the materials 'stereotomy', as well as the cell covering, or the unevenness of the floor. We can also find a persistent use of a parietal white and concrete grey (which is related to a perception of the material and the temperature). Some of the data we can retrieve from the drawings indicates the inmate's usage of signage, signs and meta-language.

As indicated by architecture and environmental psychology we can understand the relevance of the unavoidable presence of common objects and elements that influence directly the physical and environmental conditions of the cell and the impact that those circumstances have on the daily life, routines and general well being of the inmate. Some of these elements are directly related with the study of depression in a prison environment and stressful elements related to it (Moreira, 2010). Thus, the drawings emphasize the use of values and personal hierarchy, based on comfort – the fluffy representation of the pillow; the hygiene objects, the tap and the shower sprinkling; the television opposed to the cell bars.

All these elements speak about the 'story', which is a mental frame for these drawings. Their narrative is a gathering of multiple elements, where none of them is more valuable than others. There is not a ranking nor a hierarchy, nor a script that tells us how they integrate and place the drawings when it is time for these drawings to communicate.

Nevertheless, we built a design in which every drawing was a node, represented by a point in space. In that space, two drawings connect and link. And those several links support a constellation – a network shaped dynamic organization. Its placement was always relative in space and in between the elements. After reading that constellation we could visualize the data that informed and allowed us to build a mental map about the representations, as well as about the social narrative related to the space and the place.

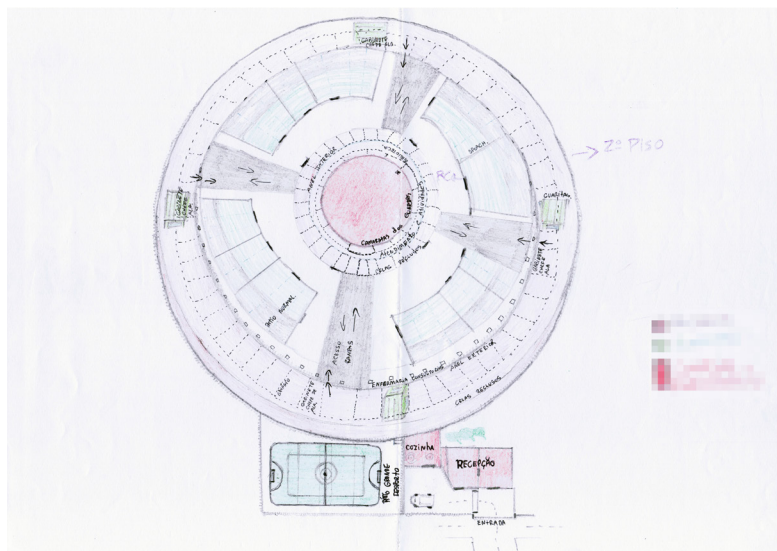


Figure 11 – Prison of Monsanto Drawing. (2009). Aerial View. (Anonymous).

5. CONCLUSION

In Benjamin's (1892-1940) essay, 'The Storyteller' (1936), the author finds in the *information* advent a demonstration of the *narrative's* death, since it is, as said by Oliveira (2009, p.111): 'in Benjamin's view there are irreconcilable incompatibilities between the narrative and the information. The first offers reflexion, astonishment and is never exhausted; the latter appears in an ephemeral way and it is only valid while it's new 'This finding, according to the author, shows the present loss of character of the *collective experience* we all contemporarily live.

According to this line of thinking and not neglecting the subjective value of a narrative, we analysed, throughout this research, the ways where the space and place, reclusion and communication, can be addressed by the 'Power ways' as well as the powers of the Institution (prison) and, simultaneously, through the daily experiences and the inmates' 'Arts of Making'. This is how the inmates' memory and experiences can be worked through the drawing as a social narrative, in the Prison of Monsanto.

In order to think about the perception and representation of the inmates' space, as well as the drawings they produced, one considers the *narrative images* like a *conceptual/aesthetic character*, which is a structure that allows to think about the knowledge and the significations of the prison's daily life lived by each inmate and, according to this view, also allows to value the artistic component of their work. The constellation of drawings is articulated harmonizing the information from uneven communicational products – *narrative images*. Through the drawing, some images resemble others. It is our task, as observers, to interpret and understand them, one by one and overall, as a dialogue. This dialogue looks for a construction of a referential map regarding the daily lives experience of the inmate and tries to build it so these *narrative images* are not depleted in the iconographic analysis⁸.

According to Kossoy (1999), the *narrative images* are also considered to be 'a succession of imaginary constructions' (as cited in Alves, 2009, p.12) and reconstructions that allows us to know the space and know what it talks about and what it is, not through the relationship between its dimensions, but through the meaning of those measures and constructions – their representation, considering habitation and the people.

The possibility of regarding this data and this experience, manifested in the *narrative images*, is only possible by the intervention of those who are involved in the understanding of these processes, since that through these *narrative images* no objective and/or universal truth is obtained. Each fragment of the narrative tells one and a different 'story' which, in a shared and institutional context are means towards understanding of the prison facilities as a 19th century building and a modern penal institution. As reinforced by Certeau (1990) from these experiences derives a possibility of working with the processes related to the perception and representation of the space and prison experiences, using the inmates' *voice*, searching for their counter-knowledge. This was done, in this research, trying to find a place in between the power and the everyday life's agents in a prison environment; we were attentive to the idea of a strategy of 'the arts of making', in a model that connects what

⁸ Understood as related to the composition elements; the way it was done; acknowledgment of the space-time; location; information of the scene; social situation of the actors and even the names of the authors, etc.

happens inside and outside the object we want to understand. In a sense, this approach allowed an 'entrance', an outside-in movement in a relationship, historical and situational context, which derives from different actions coming from the Power; and, in another way, an entrance in an inside-out movement, which enabled a comprehensive understanding of the narrative images, of the movement and communication strategies.

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