

ABSTRACT

On a global scale attitudes towards crime and punishment have become somewhat misconstrued, with an emphasis on empathetic, political and economic motives, rather than pragmatic solutions, both in the sense of architectural considerations and on a rehabilitative, programmatic scale. The framework of our societal structure is compromised by an increasing population of individuals who are processed through their respective judicial system and are not supported correctly upon reintroduction into their communities, nor during their time of incarceration. Little research exists acknowledging the importance of space in the process of reform; it was my attempt to draw together the role that this has, with considerable influence of positive staff-prisoner relationships, carried out in a reformative sense.

There is an abundance of quantitative data to suggest the effectiveness of incarceration, namely in the undeniable form of reoffending rates. For example, in 2015 the crime statistics published for the United States stated that 77% of inmates reoffended, whereas in Norway (where the prison model is juxtaposed), reoffending rates sat at 20% (The Economist, 2015). In order to identify the success of Scandinavian penal policy and its judicial system, it was paramount to study both the physical form of their correction facilities but also their attitudes towards crime and punishment, and how these differed from other case studies observed in the United States.

RESEARCH METHODS

Throughout I identified a thesis, analysing in both theory and practice to see if they corroborated one another and then compared this to physical examples of prison architecture. However to understand the landscape of the criminal justice system it was important to identify key examples in which space and rehabilitation were (or were not) defining characters in successful prisons, which itself had been shaped by historical trial and error in crime and punishment.

I examined how much power is held by architects in this particular circumstance, questioning whether the architect is even important in this equation at all or if it is entirely a product of societal requests, influenced by financial concerns and moral attitudes. By using primary evidence from interviewing a forensic psychologist I was able to grasp an understanding as to the power held by each specialist within the construction and orchestration of a facility.

I carefully collected qualitative data by selecting specific case studies to analyse both their programme and design. To pragmatically assess the success of these facilities I will compare them to the theories of Beccaria and other notable academics to see if their implementations were applicable or even successful. I also considered the wider scope of quantitative data; comparative analysis, geopolitical factors, and also other deliberations such as financial restraints, societal demands and attitudes and community factors.

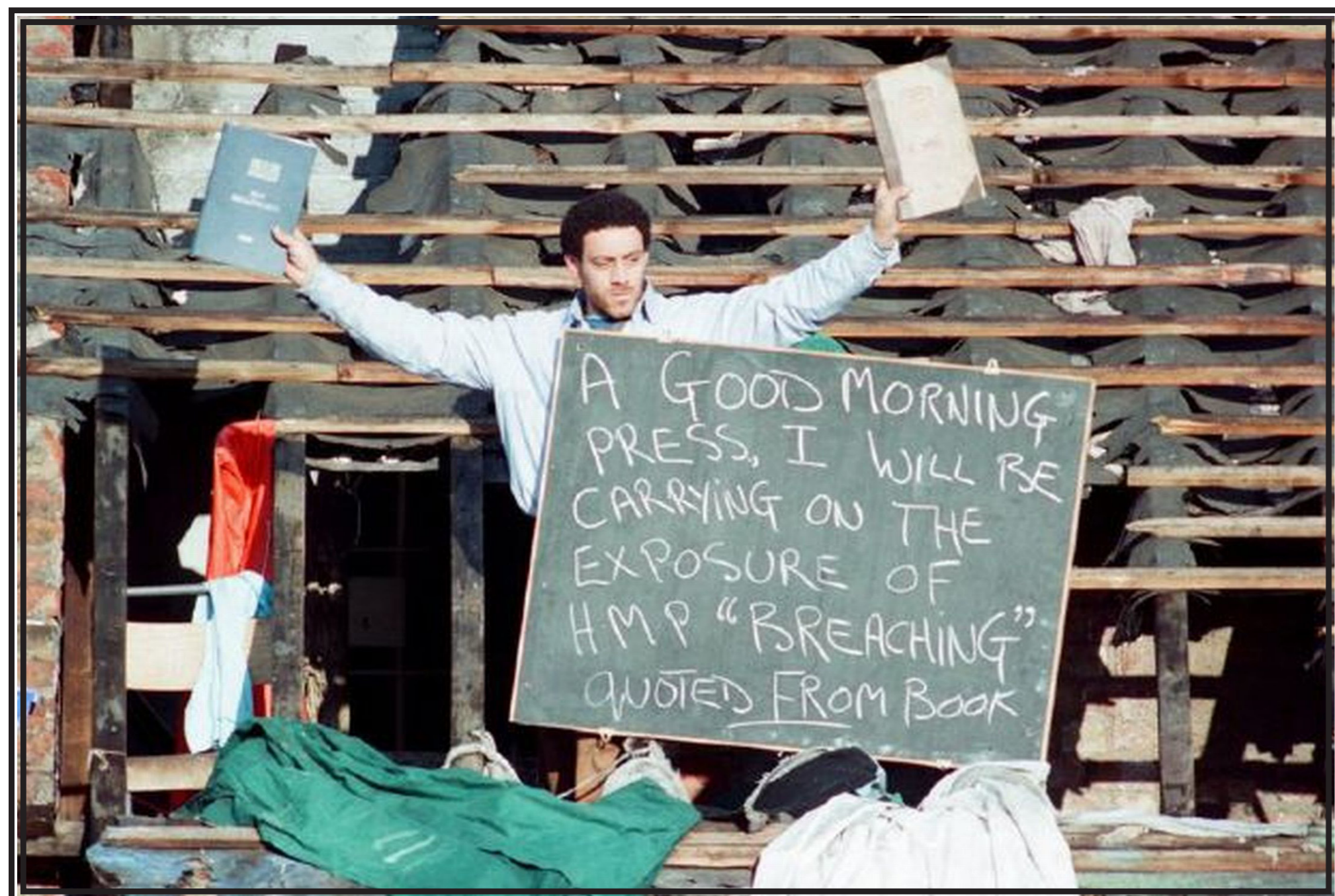


Figure 1 - Inmate protesting at Strangeways Riots

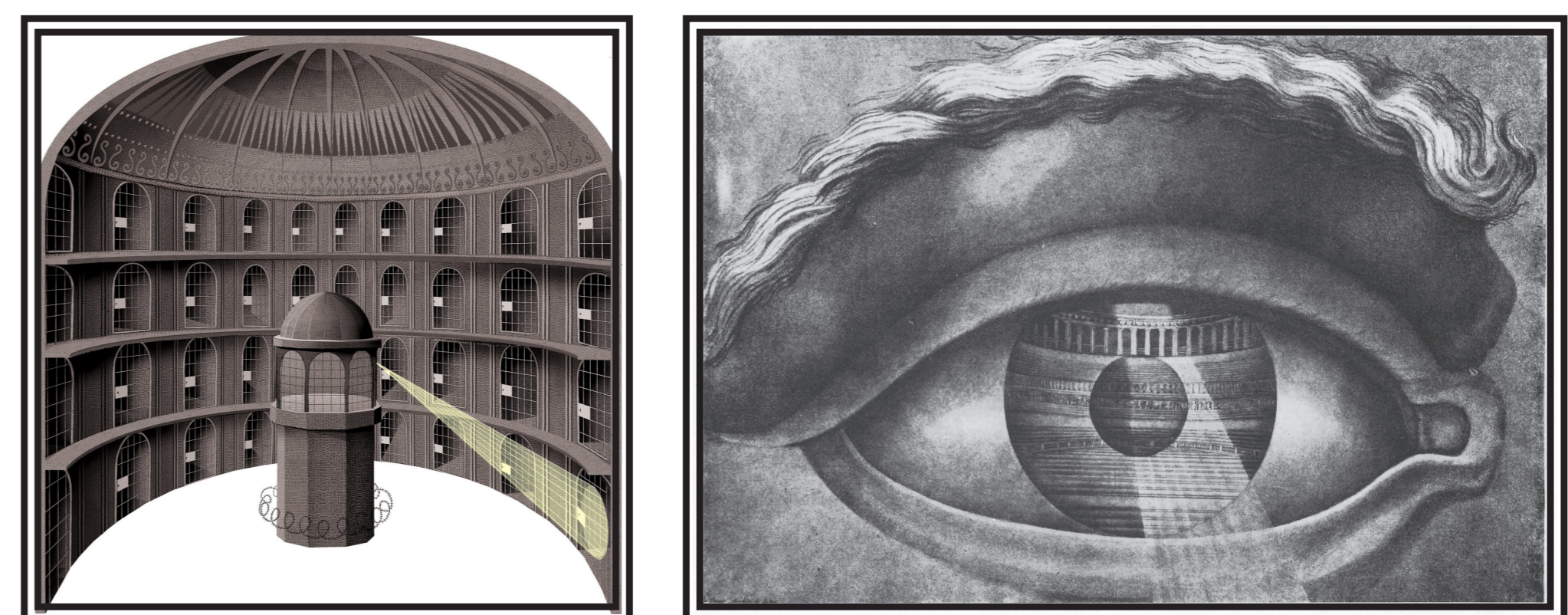


Figure 2 (left) - Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon and Figure 3 (right) - Besançon Theater

FINDINGS

It can be deduced from the findings of this research that the role of the architect when defining a rehabilitative space is dependant on many factors; penal policy and subsequent governing voices, population and economic models, physical demands and the implications of limited time, cost-efficiency and societal judgement. The way in which a country addresses each one of these will have an impact on the facilities that are built.

My research highlighted the importance of public perception in formulating penal policy. In order to shift a society's view from punishment to rehabilitation the purpose of incarceration need be framed in a particular way. Norwegian prisons such as Bastøy and Halden are prime examples as to liberty being the sole deprivation required in order to make a reform. There is evidence to suggest that not only using relationships to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders back into society, but to have spatial considerations which also encourage this is an increasingly popular means of reform (Matthews, 1999). Smaller, locals prisons, which are boasting purpose built architecture, and placed within an urban environment appear to be gaining popularity with prison administrators and penal reformers (Matthews, 1999).

SUMMARY

This research intended to explore the role of design in a rehabilitative space, specifically spacial considerations to encourage reform and their consequential significance. I directed my field of work through categorising spatial aspects which could identified as enhancing or diminishing rehabilitation. As the thesis developed it became apparent that an amalgamation of factors were responsible for compelling an individual to reform, most notably staff-prisoner relationships and the the physical form. I believed this topic to be important to address as the way in which a sentence is utilised would ultimately be responsible for one's actions post imprisonment. My findings suggested that being pragmatic with imprisonment, and practising methods of reform rather than punishment, provided a environment in which an individual could be rehabilitated. I used qualitative data and chose case studies from the Scandinavian and American judicial systems to create a stark contrast in showing the way that people are rehabilitated (or punished) during a prison sentence. This research could certainly benefit those in correctional planning, governing and architectural fields; the paper encompasses a wide scope of elements that impact the rehabilitative process and question the norms of the system and our acceptance of them.

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