

# Mapping un-captivity

χαρτογράφηση  
κλουβί  
υβριδικό υποκείμενο  
επανάσταση  
απελευθέρωση  
**mapping**  
**cage**  
**hybrid subject**  
**revolution**  
**liberation**

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Οι χάρτες που παρουσιάζονται εδώ αποτελούν μέρος της φοιτητικής μου εργασίας με τίτλο «Οδηγίες απ-εγκλώβισης» (2016-2017) που εκπονήθηκε στα πλαίσια του εργαστηρίου του πρώτου έτους «Εισαγωγή στην Αρχιτεκτονική 1» στο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας. Για τη συγκεκριμένη άσκηση χαρτογράφησης ο κάθε φοιτητής θα έπρεπε να έχει επιλέξει ένα υποκείμενο από την πόλη του Βόλου και ένα αντικείμενο χρήσιμο σε αυτό το υποκείμενο για να τα παρατηρήσει σαν ένας «ντέντεκτιβ, ανθρωπολόγος ή αρχαιολόγος» (Λυκουριώτη,2012). Σκοπός αυτής της έρευνας ήταν η παραγωγή από κάθε φοιτητή πέντε χαρτών, με τους τίτλους που παρουσιάζονται παρακάτω. Αυτοί οι χάρτες θα μας επέτρεπαν να δούμε την πόλη «σαν ένα δίκτυο χώρων που διαπλέκονται γύρω από την παραγωγή του αντικειμένου και τις συνήθειες χρήσης του» (Λυκουριώτη,2012). Η εργασία αυτή αποτέλεσε μια εξαιρετική αφορμή για μια πρωτότυπη γνωριμία με την -άγνωστη σε μένα τότε - πόλη του Βόλου και τους ανθρώπους της. Ακόμη, ήταν μια ευκαιρία ανακάλυψης του χάρτη σαν αναπαραστατικό εργαλείο που να μπορεί να αποδώσει μια πληθώρα νοημάτων δεδομένων και αφηγήσεων (χωρικών, ιστορικών, λογοτεχνικών κλπ), ξεφεύγοντας από τη λογική της φωτογραφικής αντικειμενικότητας και καθολικότητας των ψηφιακών χαρτών που χρησιμοποιούμε σήμερα όπως είναι αυτοί της Google. Χρησιμοποιώντας τους χάρτες που παρουσιάζονται σε αυτό το άρθρο, θα εξερευνήσουμε το δίκτυο που συνδέει έναν άντρα, ένα κλουβί, μερικές κότες, μια πόλη και μια ουτοπία.

The maps presented here are part of my student project titled "Instructions for un-captivity" (2016-2017) completed on the basis of the first-year studio "Introduction to Architecture 1" at the University of Thessaly. For this specific exercise of mapping each student had to choose a subject from the city of Volos and an object useful to the subject in order to observe and investigate them, assuming the role of "a detective, an archeologist, or an urban anthropologist" (Lycourioti,2012). The aim of the research would be the production of five maps from each student, each map with a specified title presented below. These maps would allow us a view of the city as "a net of spaces intertwined around the production of the object and the habits regarding its use" (Lycourioti,2012).

This exercise became a great stimulus for an new way of becoming familiar with the -unknown to me back then- city of Volos and its people. Also, it became a way to re-discover the map as a representation tool which can present a variety of notions, data and stories behind them -spatial, historical, poetic- that escape the logic of photographic objectivity and universality of today's digital maps such as those from Google.

Using the maps presented in this paper, we will explore the network linking a man, a cage, some chickens, a city and a utopia.

## MANUSCRIPT

The maps that are being presented here are trying to tell the story between an object and a subject that uses that object, their relation to the city and cultural elements. In this case the object is a cage made for keeping chickens and the subject is Mr. Stefanos, who uses the cage at his live poultry shop located in the old city of Volos. In order to describe these relations, various scales of representation were used: from the scale of the construction detail to the scale of an imaginary city-state.

The synthesis of the maps

was the product of a metabolic process. The experience of wandering in the city, the random discovery of the subject and the discussions with Mr. Stefanos, the visits to the places he operates and the documentation of these experiences through sketches, photographs and texts, the inspiration from the lectures in the studio, but also the personal mind associations. All this then became five black and white A3s.

Creating these maps or even reading and using them, allows us to see things from different perspectives e.g., from the perspective of Mr. Stefanos, the perspective of the chickens

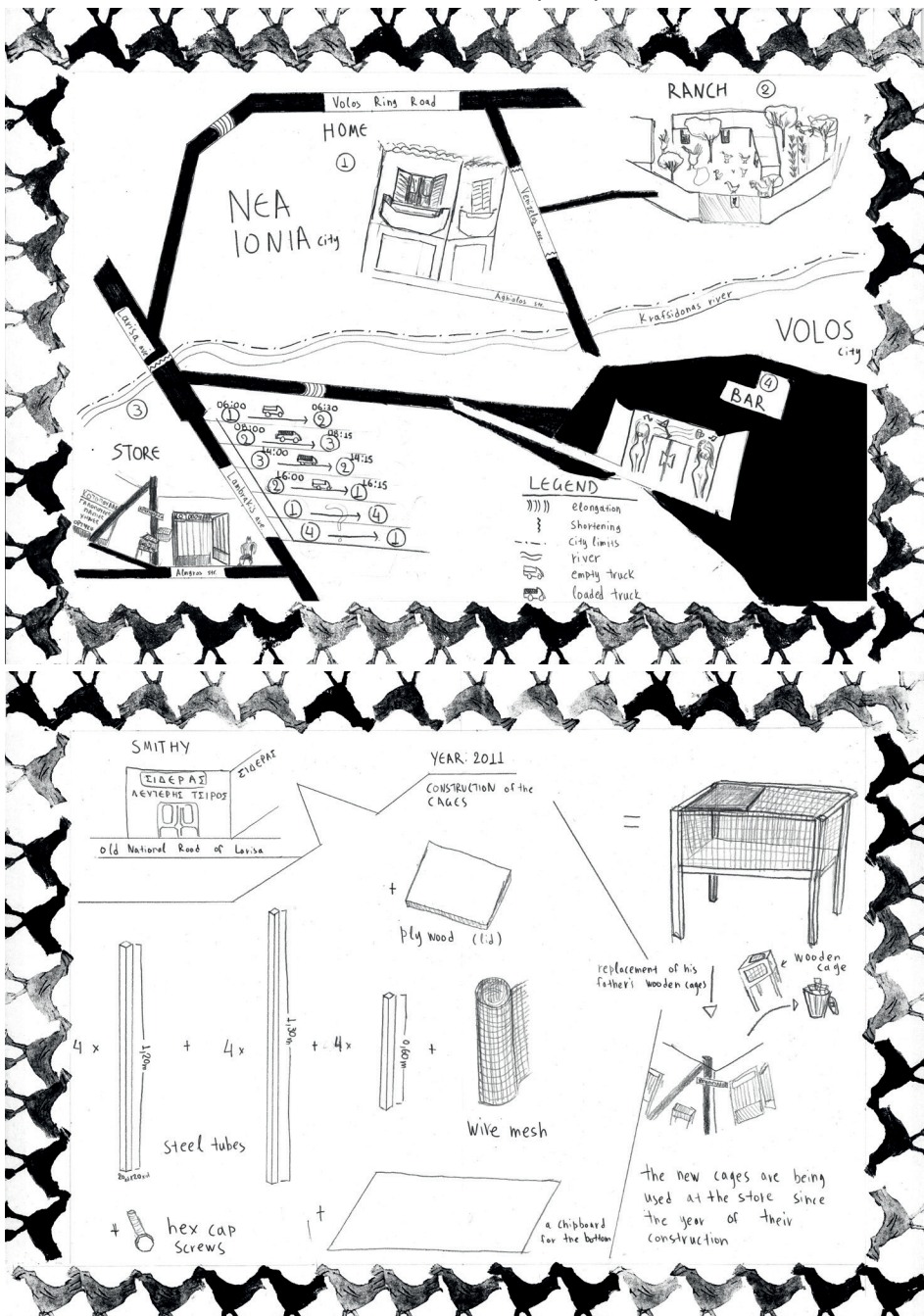
entering the cage, or from a third point of view that can evaluate better the dynamic between the two and wants to create some plot twists.

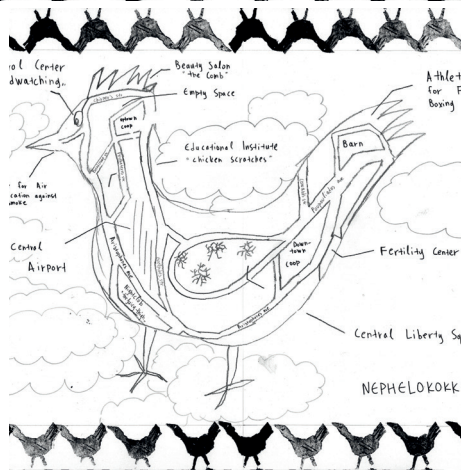
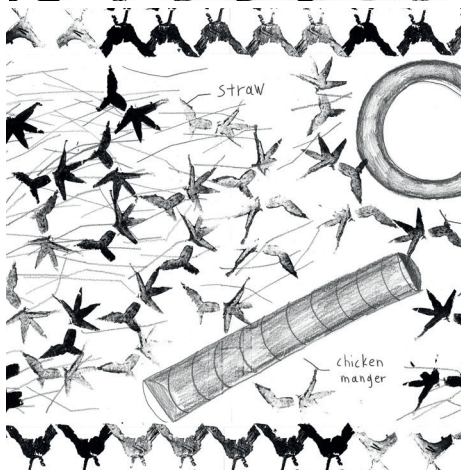
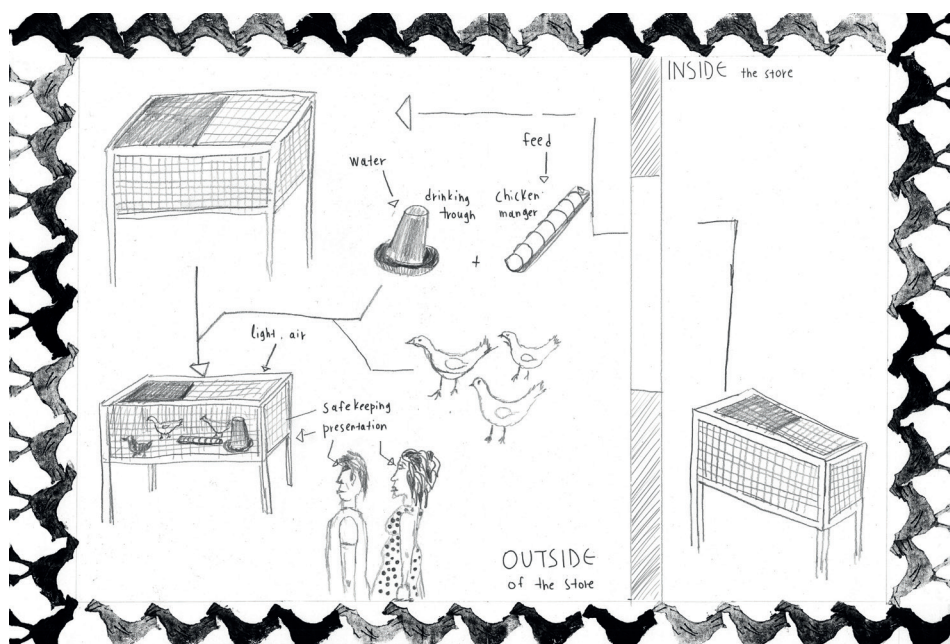
Before we study the object, it is important to become familiar with the subject using it. The daily routine of Mr. Stefanos is the following (fig.1): early in the morning he starts off from his home to go to his land in order to load the chickens on his truck and then he goes to the store to try to sell them. In the afternoon the store closes. He returns the chickens back to his land and provides them with the essentials. Following that, he goes back to his home and family to get some rest until the second part of his life begins. At night, he goes at a bar "with women" as he characteristically mentions, which is also his responsibility. Therefore, he is a hybrid-subject with a double life.

The three following maps have to do with the object itself. Through the narratives provided by the subject we learn about the history of the object (Fig.2). When, where and by whom it crafted, what materials were used and what is its purpose. The cage was custom-made by a local craftsman making its historic bond with the city even deeper. Afterwards, there is the map of the usage of the of the object in the space (Fig.3) and finally, the map of the object's space (Fig.4) - the cage creates a space in the city-.

[A cage], like a prison is a form of taking away somebody's freedom (Foucault, 1976). It is a tool for the establishment of an unequal dynamic between the guard and the guarded. The chickens are restricted inside it and live under the supervision of Mr. Stefanos, upon whom their survival depends.

However, there is an altera pars. In Aristophanes' play "Birds", the Birds, following the leadership of Peisthateros managed to





revolt against humans who were hunting them and establish Nephelokokkygia, a utopian city of absolute freedom. Its citizens enjoy unlimited pleasures. The only active law says that there is nothing considered illegal. In Nephelokokkygia, therefore, there is room for everyone who is hapless or persecuted. For everyone considered by humans as a criminal, coward, lazy or anything else unacceptable or shameful for their species (Aristophanes).

The last map (Fig.5) suggests a rather arbitrary effort to represent Nephelokokkygia. It also works in a provocative way, challenging us to think what would happen if the chickens left their cage and how could that happen? Maybe they can have a second life at night. While Mr. Stefanos is at his bar living a bachelor's life -even though he is married -, the

chickens could prepare their own revolution.

### CONCLUSIONS

Making a concluding evaluation of the work, I would consider the initial aim of the exercise achieved. The network of relations between the subject, the object and the city were recorded successfully and furthermore, it was enriched with additional meaning. The aim of these maps was never to be "objective", neither could they ever be, since they are products of a procedure which relies on subjective observation and creativity. Beyond the object, the subject and the city which are the objects of observation, there is the subject that actively observes them and takes on the creation of a narrative through the maps. In particular, the challenge to create a map called "useless" as part of the exercise, was a

chance to participate even more actively in the shaping of this narrative. Observing Mr.Stefanos and the cage for his chickens gave me this "ah-ha moment" to introduce to the table the Aristophanes' comedy "Birds" which was dealing with the issue of revolution against suppression. Through the "Useless Map" I tried using my imagination and sense of humour to express mind association, which would allow the chickens to assume roles of active subjects in this relationship, bringing plot twists to the story. Whereas the previous maps were about the cage and the captivity conditions, the last map aims to incite a revolution by giving as motivation the image of Nephelokokkygia, the city where birds live in liberty. Therefore, the last map which, based on its title, could be everything or nothing at all, worked as a catalyst for the evolution of this story.

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