Absence, Invisibility and Objectification in the Creation of spaces

It is the invisible facilitators of society who create new space, be it the women in the Algerian revolution or the motorcycle taxi drivers of Bangkok.

The Algerian women are seen through the eyes of European men, women and the Algerian man represented by Fanon, but never are they heard. Their presence in the revolution was by virtue of their absence - their invisibility behind the *haik* lent strength to the nationalist politics. They were the facilitators of the revolution - their *haik* was the symbolic opposition to the colonisers, their invisibility allowing them to transport material commodities required by the revolution and their visible objectified bodies a shield for the revolutionaries venturing into the city. In their invisibility, they rendered possible the space for geographical and social progress while making a political statement. It was the presence of their absence that rendered the revolution possible.

The motorcycle taxi drivers of Bangkok connect the inhabitants to the modes of transport in the city, their knowledge of the *soi* system and ability to create spaces within the traffic enabling them to facilitate eco-geo mobilization within the city. Rendered invisible by their efficiency, it is only by their absence that their presence is noticeable within the urban space as it allows movement within the city to stagnate, hindering the progress of economic activities and the usual flow of life. These “mediators of movement” within the city are also the most marginalised of the urban inhabitants.

It appears that it the most marginalised inhabitants of a society who are depended on the most to sustain the pace and direction of society. It is by virtue of being ignored by society that they are enabled to create spaces within the existing structure, in an effort to establish their presence in it. While the accepted members of society tread between the officially constructed lines, it is those people who have to create a space for themselves within society who create spaces within and without the established order allowing for the eco-socio-geographical movement and thus political movement within the society. Considering the extent of their involvement within social life and the creation of spaces which in turn further mobility, what then is the cause of them remaining “invisible”? Does society actively work to disregard their contribution, ignoring or fearing the creators and facilitators while consuming their labour? Or is it the intellectual’s romanticised ideal of the invisible and the marginal which place these men and women in a space rendered invisible? Does this marginalisation arise from the intellectual’s need to distance themselves from these individuals and ensure a sense of centrality for themselves?