

Politics of Waste:
Rethinking Postcolonialism Through Matter Out of Place

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2009

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Contemporary postcolonial critique poses questions about the impact of colonization on the construction of the political. Beginning with David Scott's account of the limits and even hopeless condition of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory, this thesis explores one way in which the political might be reconstructed under postcolonial conditions. The analysis is primarily theoretical in character. I work through texts by Immanuel Kant, Mary Douglas and Partha Chatterjee to recount the narrative of modern politics and its affect upon postcolonial societies. On this basis, I recognize the sovereign state as the key point of contention in accounts of the continuing reproduction of social exclusions. I then identify the imposition of colonial Enlightenment to have refigured authentic modes of self-representation for the colonized; colonial Enlightenment I suggest, conflated cultural difference with the value of right, and has thereby largely depoliticized practices of exclusion. Shifting to consider how postcolonial political space might be reconstructed, I draw on Warren Magnusson's understanding of urban politics. By challenging the ontological positioning of the sovereign state, the city may be understood as a dynamic political actor that does not erase cultural difference. Then by examining practices of scavenging in Brazil and Argentina, I compare one case in which the sovereign state has effectively perpetuated conditions of social exclusion with a case in which a municipality has been able to address these conditions. I conclude that the contemporary condition of postcolonial critique can indeed be taken in more optimistic

directions through challenges to the ontological primacy of the sovereign state so that the value of difference can be recognized and emancipation rethought.

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Introduction

Modern narrative of the political has been identified by the notion of the sovereign state and the impact of this narrative has directly affected the practice of politics. As modern narrative of the Enlightenment is a derivative of Western philosophy, how has the status of the political in the postcolonial world and postcolonial critique fared with the concept of the modern state that was transferred through colonialism?

To introduce this thesis, I look towards words provided by David Scott to articulate the complex gravity of this question. As Scott states, “we inhabit a moment of crisis, which is at the same time a moment of possibilities.”¹ To examine contemporary conditions of the political in the postcolonial world is to be presented with a moment of crisis, but also one of possibility. To investigate this project, my argument is based upon the idea that colonialism was not only a political and economic project; it was also a psychological experience² that I have attempted to investigate by introducing metaphysical conditions of social exclusion through the concept of informal scavenging practices. Modern power conditioned the state to be the locus of power for the subject to identify with by the creation of right. It is through the legacy of colonialism that this identification of power has greatly impacted the ability of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial critique to think of emancipation.

As Scott refers to the contemporary present as a dual moment of crisis and possibility, he is denoting that the status of postcolonial political space can be read by

¹ David Scott, *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* (Princeton and Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1999), 215.

² When stating colonialism to have also been a psychological experience, I am making reference to the intellectual work of Frantz Fanon.

crisis, by possibility, or by both. To contextualize my question within this moment, I once again refer to Scott to navigate what is at stake in framing this predicament, which is:

“not simply the naming of yet another horizon, and the fixing of the teleological plot that takes us there from here, still, what is at stake is something like a refusal to be seduced and immobilized by the facile normalization of the present.”³

To question the political in the postcolonial present necessitates the examination of postcolonial theory in the world today. The crisis that Scott references concerns the status of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought, in which he claims to have become hopeless. Both resistance to and critique of colonialism have become hopeless, as neither have been able to overcome the colonial insertion of the modern state. Both movements have been seduced to the normalization of the present, but this crisis also presents the possibility to use the conditions of the contemporary present to think differently of the political.

To construct a landscape of the political, as imagined by Western political thought, I look towards Max Weber. Weber’s political writings are seen to describe the position of the subject to identify politics with the state, as he articulates the “significance of political action within our conduct of life as a whole.”⁴ By this statement, Weber is claiming politics to influence the manner of the subject within a population. To think of the political within this framework, it is to think of how subjects have become organized. Classically, Weber is known for his statement that claims the state to be an entity “which (successfully) lays claim to the *monopoly of legitimate physical violence* within a certain

³ David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 2.

⁴ Max Weber, *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 309.

territory”⁵. While the terminology of violence is a prominent characteristic, this quality is not definitive of, but rather unique to the state. When speaking to political association, Weber continues to describe that “violence is, of course not the normal or sole means used by the state... but it is the means *specific* to the state.”⁶ So rather, what is normal?

While the use of legitimate violence asserts the authority of the state as a sovereign political actor, this characteristic is an exceptional quality. The normative value of modern political organization constructed by the Enlightenment is seen by restrictions on freedom through the granting of right. However, how has modern power influenced the political of the colonized world, but also emancipation projects that respond to colonization? To frame questions of both the status of postcolonial political space and of critiques of colonialism by the construction of modern politics, is to signify the power of colonization upon the colonized state. So what is postcolonialism, and how can it be useful for examining what Scott claims to be the facile normalization of the present? To briefly explore postcolonialism, Robert J.C. Young describes this discipline to “elaborate a politics of ‘the subaltern’, that is, subordinated classes and peoples.”⁷ Postcolonialism has provided a political narrative for those subordinated during colonization. However, this narration of the political is not static, as it is comprised of multiple disciplinary principles and perspectives⁸.

As postcolonialism is not a static position, postcolonialism rather seeks to:

“force its alternative knowledges into the power structures of the west as well as the non-west. It seeks to change the way people think, the way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between the different

⁵ Ibid., 310-311. Emphasis in original.

⁶ Ibid., 312.

⁷ Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6.

⁸ Ibid, 6-7.

people of the world.”

As postcolonial theory is comprised of many principles and perspectives, it has become an opportunity to examine dominant paradigms of power structures with the purpose of resolving issues of inequality. The varied epistemological foundation of postcolonial theory stems from an expansive ability of postcolonialism to respond to contemporary realities.⁹ When applied to modern conditions of the political, postcolonialism directly counters the centralization of power to the modern state. The authority of the state is directly challenged by the dynamic ontology of postcolonialism, as the trajectory of its orientation suggests “that you are looking at the world not from above, but from below.”¹⁰ To look at the world from below directly challenges the modern ontology of the political, which has positioned the modern state at the top of the world.

While postcolonial theory has been able to produce a critique of modern power from the condition of the colonized, Scott’s statements indicates that there are problems with postcolonialism. To contextualize the problematic of postcolonialism, it is useful to look at the word itself. The post in postcolonial signifies a disciplinary field that began after colonialism.¹¹ It must however be acknowledged that, “formal political colonialism has all but disappeared”¹². This inherent conflict in postcolonialism is seen by colonialism being partially defined by the “experience of dispossession and landlessness”¹³. Colonization is seen to describe the dispossession of the colonized from a territorial region, which infers decolonization to signify the reappropriation of land and

⁹ Arif Dirlik, *Postmodernity’s Histories: The Past as Legacy and Project* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 6.

¹⁰ Young, 20.

¹¹ Ibid., 17.

¹² Dirlick, 3.

¹³ Ibid., 49.

thus assert postcolonialism. However, the claim that colonialism has not ended can also infer colonialism to have been a psychological experience.

To build upon the idea of colonialism as a psychological experience is to build upon the dynamic ontology of postcolonialism, and this aspect of colonialism can be developed through a discussion of identity and identification. For Young, the psychological condition of colonialism is marked by the concept of translation, which describes “the transformation of indigenous culture into the subordinated culture of a colonial regime, or the superimposition of the colonial apparatus into which all aspects of the original culture have been reconstructed”¹⁴. In the context of colonialism, translation represents the removal of an authentic origin of identification for the colonized. As a psychological force, colonization subordinated authentic culture to that of the colonial power while also refiguring the political in the colonial state. By this assertion, authentic modes of identification for the colonized were culturally subordinated, but as I will argue in my thesis, this has directly impacted the ability of postcolonial critique to effectively think of emancipation.

By articulating the psychological experience of the colonized, it has led me to think of Scott’s reading of the hopeless condition of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought. However, why critique a method that attempts to challenge structures of power when colonialism still maintains purchase today? As Arif Dirlik succinctly summarizes, postcolonialism is not without contention. Dirlik argues that, “postcolonial criticism has become absorbed into institutions of power, its arguments appropriated by those who may feel marginal in certain ways but represent new forms of

¹⁴ Young, 139.

power in others.”¹⁵ In this statement, Dirlik is identifying that despite postcolonialism originally having been a position from below, postcolonialism seems to have been appropriated by alternate concerns and used as a method to explore problems that do not necessarily deal with that of the colonized world.¹⁶

For Dirlik, postcolonialism has become a critical approach with broad purchase, which has resulted in being no “obvious relationship to either the ‘post’ or the ‘colonial’ that initially constituted its meaning- unless we take the colonial to serve as a paradigm for all inequality and oppression.”¹⁷ By this description, the development of postcolonial theory has seen a redirection of cultural ontological approaches to understanding power. Dirlik describes the impact of this appropriation upon postcolonialism when stating, “it also has become oblivious to these circumstances and the possibility to imagining a world beyond the present.”¹⁸ Anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory were created with the focus on thinking the future differently, but for Dirlik, this possibility has been suspended. While Dirlik’s critique focuses upon the disciplinary development of postcolonial theory, I approach this contention by examining the influence of colonialism upon the relationship of modern power with anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory in critique.

To introduce the contentious nature of postcolonial theory in relation to the construction of the modern power and the modern state, I am identifying the theoretical problem that I wish to address in this thesis. The problem that I propose will concern the ability of the postcolonial state to address issues of social exclusion. It is out of this

¹⁵ Dirlik., 7.

¹⁶ Ibid..

¹⁷ Ibid., 8.

¹⁸ Ibid., 16.

predicament that I build upon the notion of colonialism to have been a psychological force. As colonialism replaced pre-colonial origins of cultural representation, I claim that the refiguring of these origins impacted the ability for cultural difference to identify within the political. The inability of those socially excluded to politically identify with the framework of the modern state has not only perpetuated social exclusion, but has also affected the opportunities to address social exclusion. To develop this problematic, I primarily utilize theoretical approaches to examine the impact of modern power upon the construction of postcolonial political space and critiques of emancipation.

In the first chapter, I introduce my conceptual influence for writing this thesis. In this chapter, I initially begin with building a historical narrative of scavenging. While doing so, I am constructing a definition of scavenging that will be utilized throughout this thesis. My definition is built upon the concept of scavenging for recyclable goods for the purpose of economic reimbursement, and seen as part of the informal economy in the Global South. By this definition, I assert that this condition of scavenging has developed in relation to the rising condition of social exclusion. Increasing conditions of social exclusion can be linked to the development of the urban periphery in cities in the Global South, and the scavenging of recyclable goods has been able to provide an economic livelihood outside of the formal economy. While scavenging has been able to provide economic stability, it has commonly been negatively perceived and legislation has prohibited the act. In the last section of this chapter, I present a case study of Jardim Gramacho, Brazil's largest open-air landfill that has recently been shut down. I use this case study to exemplify policy changes towards scavenging but also to exemplify my

primary focus of this thesis, which is a critique of the status of the political in the postcolonial world.

My second chapter articulates the theoretical foundations to develop a critique of postcolonial political space by the conceptualization of scavenging. In this chapter, I examine the theoretical works of David Scott. As previously mentioned, Scott interprets the contemporary position of postcolonial critique to be framed by the condition of hopelessness. The question for Scott is how has anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought evolved to occupy such a position? To refashion critiques of emancipation, Scott reads through Talal Asad to suggest that modern power has conscripted critique. It has been by the conscription to modern power that colonial Enlightenment has refigured the ability for the colonized to locate authentic positions of self-representation. By contextualizing the affect of colonial Enlightenment, this inheritance has conditioned anticolonialism and postcolonialism to romantic historiographic readings of temporality. To counter the impact of colonial Enlightenment, Scott claims the necessity of conducting a tragic reading of time. In utilizing this claim, I use Scott's tragic temporality to contextualize the conditions of the contemporary present in relation to the conditions of history.

By using the concept of scavenging as a moment in the contemporary present to examine the condition of colonial Enlightenment, I identify modern power to have asserted the sovereign state as the central location of power within the political. To investigate the implication of this identification, I turn towards an examination of Immanuel Kant's *Political Writings*. As a central thinker of the Enlightenment, the Kantian conception of the political is able to describe the affect of sovereign state upon

the identification of the subject. For the postcolonial condition, authentic origins of self-representation have been replaced by a political position that identifies with the state through the granting of right. In conjuncture with Kant, I move on to examine Mary Douglas's writings on the prohibition of pollution to fully historicize my question. As Douglas describes how the prohibition of dirt has been constituted within both premodern and modern cultures, I use her idea to develop a relationship between cultural prohibition and governmental legislation. To contextualize this linkage, I examine the conditions of street scavenging in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and use this case study to further theoretically contextualize my argument towards a politics of urbanism.

In my fourth chapter, I use Partha Chatterjee's concept of civil and political society to illustrate how the postcolonial state has negotiated colonial Enlightenment. Chatterjee classifies those subjects that infringe upon the sovereignty of the state within political society, and claims that the state manages this population by the administration of welfare. However, the state's administration of welfare is a formation of governance. This act of governance does not seek to rectify conditions of social exclusion; it is rather an assertion of sovereign authority. As colonial Enlightenment asserted the sovereign state into postcolonial political space, I use the example of scavenging in Buenos Aires to consider the ontological capability of the city to respond to conditions of social exclusion. Through identifying the municipality of Buenos Aires to have transformed prohibitions on scavenging by the legalization of recycling and the Brazilian state's closure of Jardim Gramacho, these case studies exemplify the different responses by the city and the state. As Warren Magnusson describes the city to be a dynamic location to rethink the political

through a politics of urbanism, I find potential in refashioning the hopelessness of postcolonialism by this quality of the city.

I conclude this thesis by seeking potential in the refashioning of postcolonial political space by the ontological position of the city in the political. By using the conceptual analysis of Jardim Gramacho and Buenos Aires, I found the governmental responses to scavenging strikingly different. By the closure of Jardim Gramacho, the Brazilian government is seeking to administer governance to prohibit the practice of scavenging, while the city of Buenos Aires saw opportunity to address increasing social exclusion by the legalization of recycling. While it may seem strange to examine the theoretical question of the political in the postcolonial world by the examination of scavenging in the Global South, both topics are interlinked by the concept of difference. For both contexts, the concept of difference has been constituted by metaphysical boundaries that are distinguished by the condition of social inclusion and exclusion. As both the position of the colonized and the scavenger have been subject to conditions of social exclusion, I seek to examine how modern governance has excluded cultural difference from the political. Through reading the foundation of postcolonial space by the inheritance of modern Enlightenment, I have sought to rethink contemporary moments of crisis as a moment of possibility to address exclusion.

Chapter 1

This chapter will introduce my conceptual inspiration that seeks to locate theorizations of emancipation within the political by a critique of anticolonial and postcolonial movements. In this chapter, I choose to examine the proliferation of the global phenomenon of scavenging practices in the Global South, while also focusing upon a case study of the open-air landfill, Jardim Gramacho. While my thesis is not necessarily primarily focused upon the study of this location, it is my conceptual stepping-stone to theoretically rethink present conditions of the political. To look at the practice of scavenging is to examine the transformation of modern power that has come to represent a space of dislocation within the political. Locations of scavenging are able to disrupt normalized political order as they are not traditionally part of public space, or the formal economy. In attempting to build an alternative understanding of the political, the analysis of scavenging is able to become a position that can represent the necessary changes needed to think of historical emancipation in relation to transformations of power. To place scavenging in the political is to begin to rethink contemporary political space and is why I have chosen to closely examine scavenging within this first chapter.

Conceptualizing Scavenging

As a word, scavenging is said to have appeared in the English language in 1851¹⁹ by the Oxford English Dictionary. The definition provided by this source states scavenging to be: “street-cleaning; removal of filth; also, the cleaning of a river, etc.”²⁰ While this definition of the word is able to convey connotative associations with filth

¹⁹ Oxford English Dictionary. “Scavenging,” <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/172195>.

²⁰ Ibid.

through the removal of waste from public spaces, this characterization is derivative of the historical period in which it appeared. To construct an etymology of the word is to examine how this term has developed through time. By introducing a historical analysis of scavenging by the definition of the word, I am choosing to develop this temporal moment by contextualizing it within literature that will enable the expansion of this definition.

To further contextualize the moment set by the Oxford English Dictionary, I look towards Mary Downs and Martin Medina as they describe that “during the nineteenth century, scavenging acquired the meaning of cleaning out, street sweeping, cleansing rivers and refuse collection. Scavengers received licenses from cities to act as refuse collectors and to recover waste materials.”²¹ This description enables for the definition of scavenging to reveal it as a practice of collecting waste. By the definition of the Oxford English Dictionary, scavenging entails the cleaning of a certain space; however, it can also involve the collection and gathering of refuse materials. The expansion of the interpretation of scavenging is seen due to historical temporality, as scavenging is seen to have “flourished during the nineteenth century. Urbanization and industrialization played major roles in the development of scavenging and recycling activities.”²² While scavenging is seen to have proliferated in practice during this period, this has been in response to changes in society introduced by urbanization and industrialization. In effort to further the historical examination of scavenging, I ask the question: if it has developed and thus changed, what has it changed from?

²¹ Mary Downs and Martin Medina, “A Brief History of Scavenging,” *Comparative Civilizations Review* 42, (2000): 35.

²² *Ibid.*, 34.

To begin this investigation, I look towards Downs and Medina when they articulate, “the recovery of materials from waste to be reused or recycled has been carried out for millennia, and probably throughout the whole of human history.”²³ While the practice of scavenging has persisted throughout time, the practice itself has changed and developed. However, the constant link between variations in the practice of scavenging has been connected by the role of the scavenger. For scavenging, the scavenger has remained central to this practice, as the scavenger has consistently been that “individual who informally recovers items from waste for the purpose of reuse or recycling”²⁴. While the scavenger has continued to be a central locus for the practice of scavenging, surrounding environments have been transformed and caused changes in the way scavenging occurs. In addition to the scavenger being a centralized agent, it has also been consistently seen that “scavenging represents an adaptive response to scarcity.”²⁵ It is in this development of the definition of scavenging that a history of scavenging can be adapted by examining changes in history.

As Downs and Medina perceive scavenging to be a tactic that has historically responded to scarcity, the resources sought out by scavengers have changed through time. Changes in resources being scavenged can initially be seen by locating scavenging during prehistoric periods. As Downs and Medina articulate, scavenging patterns in hunter-gathering societies responded to scarcities of food since the “risks associated with hunting may have been avoided by the scavenging of animal meat killed by predators, or

²³ Ibid., 23.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 24. Qtd. M. Medina, “Scavenging on the Border: A Study of the Informal Recycling Sector in Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1997).

dead from natural causes.”²⁶ During the period of Antiquity, scavenging is seen to develop due to the “advent of permanent settlements in the Neolithic, [as] waste disposal started to become an issue.”²⁷ Changes to the nomadic patterns of populations by the settlement of groups saw the production of waste as an issue that needed to be addressed. In this time period, it was noticed that certain “wastes could be reused or recycled since reuse or recycling involved less effort and time than obtaining virgin resources.”²⁸ In this period, items of waste and refuse took on the formations like pottery, metals, fertilizers, paper and clothing.

The collection and reuse of waste product is seen to have existed throughout extended periods of time but also within many different cultures. The Romans are seen to have participated in the recycling of metals during the Bronze Era that saw bronze melted down to be reused, and this period also depicts proof for the first historical moment of recycling as commerce.²⁹ However, metal was not the only item exclusively recycled during this period. It was common for peddlers to sell used clothes in Rome, but also for stones of old buildings to be used towards the construction of new ones.³⁰ Outside of Rome, scavenging is also seen to have occurred in Central America as “the Maya engaged in the reuse of various items, such as broken pottery, ground stones and stones taken from old buildings as fill in temples or other buildings.”³¹ Scavenging has also been practiced in Asia and the Middle East since “in Samarkand, Baghdad, Cairo and

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 25.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 27.

³⁰ Ibid., 27- 28.

³¹ Ibid., 29.

Damascus paper was made from rags in the ninth century. Rag collectors salvaged hemp ropes, fishing nets, footwear soles and robes to be sold to papermakers.”³² These are only a few examples that help depict the extensive nature of scavenging, but also the historical longevity of scavenging.

These examples depict scavenging to have long been a part of history before the word entered the English language. As the conditions that influenced scavenging have altered through time due to changes of needed resources, definitions of scavenging have developed with these changes. As the Oxford English Dictionary emphasizes the characterization of cleaning public space, this denotes the development of cities during the Industrial Revolution in Britain during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The growth of the city during this period saw that “while in 1800 no more than 2.5 percent of the world’s population lived in cities, by 1900 the urban population had risen to about 10 percent.”³³ As in the Neolithic era, the advent of settlements instigated the issue of waste production by communities now centralized within a certain location. The development of the city also determined the dimension that incorporates scavenging as integral to the issue of managing waste production in public space.

I utilize a historical analysis of scavenging to not only introduce the historical legacy of this practice but also to begin to develop my own definition of scavenging for the purpose of this thesis. The motion towards contemporary society is where I begin to centralize my own analysis as this moment sees changes in the refuse materials being collected, but also changes in recycling structures. Scavenging in the contemporary present is seen to span global boundaries as it is documented in both developed and

³² Ibid., 30.

³³ Ibid., 34.

developing countries. In developed countries, scavenging is seen to occur by the “poor and homeless [recovering] materials from waste for reuse or recycling.”³⁴ Aluminum cans, and plastic or glass bottles are able to illustrate a common example of this act of recovery. Another example of scavenging is seen by the rummaging of restaurant and grocery store garbage bins to recover food.³⁵ The first example depicts a response to the issue of economic scarcity, while the second example addresses a historical trend of food scarcity.

While scavenging persists in developed countries, it is an endemic condition in developing countries as “scavenging plays an important role in supplying raw materials to industry, and represents a common survival strategy for the poor.”³⁶ For developing countries, scavenging is not only able to fill a void in recycling but also responds to economic scarcity. This is seen due to cities in the Global South that lack the recycling infrastructure seen in the Global North, and thus scavengers perform much of these activities.³⁷ Scavenging in these conditions has largely been in response to scarcity in the formal economy and has developed activities in the informal economy. By developing a historical analysis of scavenging, it can largely be seen as a response to urban, social and economic conditions. To properly situate scavenging in the Global South is to identify the impact of these conditions that facilitate scavenging to have become a strategy to respond to scarcity. For my own analysis of scavenging, I look at the occurrence of scavenging in the space of the city. Identification of the city is integral to building a conception of

³⁴ Ibid., 37.

³⁵ Ibid., 37.

³⁶ Ibid., 38.

³⁷ Ibid.

scavenging as the city illustrates the urban changes that have facilitated the development of the informal economy.

The space of the city is intimately linked to the context of scavenging in the Global South as “the number of people living in cities in the developing world is growing at a much faster rate than in the industrialized world.”³⁸ The impact of increased settlement in the city resonates Downs and Medina’s discussion of Neolithic settlement development as both saw the disposal of waste to be problematic. In effort to explore the problematic of waste management infrastructure within modern urban expansion for the context of this thesis, I am specifically looking at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and, further on, at Buenos Aires, Argentina as both of these cities have been identified to be within the world’s 20 largest cities.³⁹ The development of movements from rural to urban regions within the world signifies a large restructuring of populations worldwide⁴⁰ that is changing the context in which cities are imagined. Historical and current patterns of growth seen in some of the world’s largest cities have “[stretched] urban planners, architects, engineers and civic administrators to the very limit, even if resources are plentiful.”⁴¹ In these expansive cities, the division between developed and developing is diminished as the management of these urban spaces has presented challenges to planners from both contexts.

While the development of urban regions has been globally difficult to manage, the problems associated with urbanization are illustrated by the experience in Latin America

³⁸ P.W. Daniels, “Urban challenges: the formal and informal economies in mega-cities,” *Cities* 21, no. 6 (2004): 501.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 502.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

as this geographic region now has “75 per cent of the population living in cities.”⁴² The intensity of increased movement into cities is exemplified by Brazil within the past 40 years, as over 80 per cent of the population has come to live in a city.⁴³ While the intensity of urban development in cities is not restricted to Latin America, it has been a global phenomenon that has seen the “urban population worldwide [increase] from 33 to 42 per cent between 1960 and 2000”⁴⁴. The increased movement into the space of the city is described by “the expectation for a better quality of life in the city.”⁴⁵ The city has become a place depicted as a space of wealth and opportunity. The city, as a space of wealth, has been conceived by a city’s ability to “have the potential to make countries rich because they provide the economies of scale and proximity to make growth more efficient.”⁴⁶ Due to their nature, cities have centralized the efficiency of economic exchange by their geographical space of economic locality.

The economic scale of the city is portrayed in comparison to national economic abilities. The two cities I primarily focus upon in this thesis are both a part of the “four megacities in developing countries... in the top 30 GDP ranking- Mexico City, Buenos Aires, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro- accounting for 1.5 per cent of the global GDP.”⁴⁷ This statistic depicts that great wealth can indeed be found within the space of the city, especially in developing countries. While wealth and the opportunity for employment has

⁴² Jutta Gutberlet, *Recovering Resources- Recycling Citizenship: Urban Poverty Reduction in Latin America* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁴ UNHABITAT, *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011* (London and Washington: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, 2008), 21.

⁴⁵ Gutberlet, 5.

⁴⁶ UNHABITAT, 18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

driven urban development in cities internationally, the result has not been complementary to social and economic equality as “the relationship between urbanization and poverty is a positive one”⁴⁸. While cities have become spaces of geographical and economic expansion, cities have also become a location in which inequality can be seen by the division between wealth and poverty.

Despite the wealthy allure of cities that has driven an influx of an urban population, the city is ultimately commonly characterized by being a “final destination for many [that is within] the urban periphery, where sanitation is inadequate, living conditions are crowded and tenure is insecure.”⁴⁹ While the city is a centralized location of financial capital, it is surrounded by an urban periphery that can be described by the characterization of the concept of social exclusion. Drawing upon the work of Jutta Gutberlet, social exclusion can provide an interdisciplinary description of poverty as she describes it to be “a complex, socially constructed phenomenon with social, economic and cultural facets”⁵⁰. The use of this term is to assist the expansion of the notion of poverty that is now seen to “also focus on qualitative indicators rather than only quantitative ones”⁵¹. In developing this notion, Gutberlet is working from Graham Room’s deployment of the term to be “a state of detachment, where individuals are restrained from or not enabled to access public services, goods, activities, or resources which are essential for a life of dignity.”⁵² Measurements of poverty cannot only be characterized by economic inequality but also inequality developed from scarcity to

⁴⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁹ Gutberlet, 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 51.

⁵¹ Ibid., 50.

⁵² Ibid., 51.

access services provided by the formal economy when working with the practice of scavenging.

The issue at stake when connecting ideas of urbanization, urban peripheries and poverty are seen depicted in Brazil as “almost 30 per cent of the population lives under conditions defined as social exclusion- poor housing and living conditions, inadequate nutrition and unsafe working environments.”⁵³ The development of the urban periphery has occurred in relation to the increased growth of urban poverty, as the state has been unable to facilitate and control the expansion of cities in developing countries by being unable to provide, enforce or improve formal employment opportunities for those living in cities. While cities have continued to expand internationally, this has led to a predicament for countries in the Global South. As developing countries have not been able to develop effective waste management techniques, this has coincided with the issue that “urban lifestyles generate significantly more solid household waste than rural livelihoods.”⁵⁴ As cities have continued to urbanize and expand, cities have begun to generate large amounts of waste while “most waste is deposited at landfills, with sanitary landfills prevailing in the North and uncontrolled garbage dumps in the South.”⁵⁵ As the Global South has not been able to instigate recycling programs similar to the Global North, the increasing production of waste in developing countries has largely been transferred to garbage dumps unsorted.

The convergence of economic scarcity and the increasing production of waste have provided the context in which employment in the informal economy has risen. The

⁵³ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 27.

scavenging of waste for recyclable materials in the Global South, as an activity in the informal economy, is a process performed by:

“a person who searches among or collects things unwanted by others. The purpose of scavenging is to personally use, recycle, trade or resell discarded waste materials. The activity is usually associated with developing societies where it often plays an integral role in the survival mechanisms of many impoverished inhabitants.”⁵⁶

The practice of scavenging has developed as a source of economic livelihood within the informal economy, as this sector “encompasses such miscellaneous activities as tax evasion, welfare benefit abuse, moonlighting, voluntary work, self-provisioning, self-employment, domestic labour and criminal activity.”⁵⁷ While the informal economy has proved difficult to be clearly defined⁵⁸, it has been articulated through points that reinforce economic capabilities that respond to the “inability of the state to satisfy the needs of all its citizens”⁵⁹. The concept of the state is central to building a definition of the informal economy as it entails “unregulated employment or unregistered economic activity.”⁶⁰ As the informal economy is comprised of employment activities that are unregulated and unregistered by the state, the process of scavenging recyclables from waste is classified as a part of this sphere- but will also further be seen in the formal economy.

As an activity that is part of the informal economy, scavengers are seen “[removing] the most valuable resources (aluminum cans, glass, plastic bottles and paper)

⁵⁶ Madeleine Leonard, “Coping Strategies in Developed and Developing Societies: The Workings of the Informal Economy,” *Journal of International Development* 12 (2000): 1078.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1072- 1073. Qtd. Madeleine Leonard, *Invisible Work, Invisible Workers: The Informal Economy in Europe and the US* (London: Macmillian, 1998).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1072.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Gutberlet, 6.

out of garbage bins or plastic bags placed in the street before the official waste collection.”⁶¹ While this is able to concisely convey the concept of scavenging, scavenging is not entirely contained to garbage bins and bags in the street. The recovering of recyclable resources by scavenging can be seen by the process of sorting through waste from “businesses, schools, apartment buildings, or out of the garbage in the streets and sometimes at landfills, and transporting them for separation at home, at recycling centres, or at the middlemen’s premises.”⁶² While there may be different approaches to the scavenging of materials for recycling, the practice consistently recounts the sorting through of waste materials for the ascertainment of recyclable materials that will be sold to a buyer of that material.

While scavenging has largely been seen within the informal economy, there have also been recent changes to incorporate scavenging within the formal economy. The development of scavenging into two different economic streams is described by “some recyclers [who] work independently; other are part of organized groups, co-operatives, associations or governmental waste management programmes.”⁶³ While scavenging in the informal economy has developed from scavengers working independently, co-operative groups have developed between independent scavengers that have attempted to bridge the independent nature of scavenging as an economic activity. By constructing co-operative groups, scavenger networks have transformed the informal nature of scavenging as exemplified by Brazil where “recycling has become an *official*

⁶¹ Ibid., 82. This practice is commonly referred to as, *pente fino*.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 34.

waste management option in many cities”⁶⁴. Through becoming an official waste management option, the building of governmental partnerships with scavenging co-operatives has led towards scavenging becoming incorporated into the formal economy by introducing regulatory practices that support scavengers by the creation of “operational infrastructure and technical support”⁶⁵. These specific changes to the informal structure of scavenging that attempt to incorporate scavenging into the formal economy is discussed more in-depth in the next section of chapter one. However, the introduction of scavenging into the formal economy signals the formal introduction of scavenging into politics.

For the Global South, scavenging as an activity in the informal economy has largely remained “a livelihood option”⁶⁶. The expansion of city space has entailed the expansion of an urban periphery that has intensified social exclusion and the informal economy in response to poverty. The United Nations has detailed that approximately 85 per cent of those new employment opportunities will occur within the *informal* economy.⁶⁷ This statistic depicts the informal economy’s ability to provide the opportunity to obtain an economic livelihood in the world today. However, as the informal economy is outside of the formal economy of the state, many of these employment opportunities are illegal, unregulated, and unsafe. To examine scavenging within the context of urbanization and social exclusion is to demonstrate that “the real challenge is for governments to adopt policies that maximize the benefits of

⁶⁴ Ibid., 83. Emphasis added.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁷ UNHABITAT, XIV. Emphasis added.

urbanization.”⁶⁸ As the documented expansion of the informal economy indicates that the state and the formal economy have been unable to provide necessary means of sustaining economic livelihood, a focus upon government and governance should be developed when examining scavenging.

Examining how scavenging has been influenced by urbanization and social exclusion is able to demonstrate how scavenging has been a part of both the informal and formal economies, but is also able to present the opportunity to think the political differently. By examining this shift, scavenging and recycling can showcase many complex patterns in the political but also provide:

“a unique opportunity to tackle human security issues with adequate and inclusive waste management strategies. Until today the potential for resource recovery has been neglected. Only a few cities embrace innovative alternatives, where social and environmental policies engage in reduction, reutilization, and recycling of materials, also providing a chance for the poorest sector of the population to participate.”⁶⁹

While a historical analysis exemplifies that scavenging encompasses a vast number of social and economic issues in contemporary society, this analysis also shows that scavenging is not a new phenomenon. As it is not new, why has scavenging received little political attention when it can be such a unique opportunity to address issues of social exclusion and thus, is able to question the organization of the political?

It is with this predicament in mind that I will begin to pursue scavenging through the political. In the next section, I examine social and governmental perceptions of scavenging and then move onto a case study of Jardim Gramacho in Brazil. In this section, I continue to work with secondary research that has been performed in English. I

⁶⁸ Ibid., 5

⁶⁹ Gutberlet, 38- 39.

am using the developed trend to incorporate scavenging into the formal economy as a tipping point to pursue an original idea in relation to scavenging. As my next section will depict, the incorporation of scavenging into the formal economy has not been straightforward, but scavengers and scavenging co-operatives have had to, and continue to, negotiate many obstacles. The purpose of this thesis is to seek out the ramifications of how the political is structured in relation to scavenging, and how the state has addressed the practice of scavenging and those that have been socially excluded. As scavenging has been documented to be a long-standing activity that has transformed historically, this thesis attempts to examine how scavenging is politically understood in the present.

Social and Political Conceptions of Scavenging

Scavenging has become a global phenomenon that has been largely geographically documented across regions of Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. While the countries in which scavenging has been documented span from Brazil, Nicaragua, India, the Philippines to Egypt, the pattern in which scavenging occurs has also varied according to the location. However, the constant linkage between all these varying spaces and practices is that “human scavengers constitute disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of the populations.”⁷⁰ To properly create a conceptual narrative of this global phenomenon, it is crucial to convey that some of the most socially excluded sections of society are the principle actors participating in scavenging, and have also been classified by modern political language of state citizenship as “immigrants or internal

⁷⁰ Martin Medina “Scavenger cooperatives in Asia and Latin America,” *Resources, Conservation and Recycling* 31, no. 1 (2000): 52.

migrants”⁷¹. While the story of scavenging is one that depicts a narrative of those socially excluded, this also acts to signify the grand nature of this account because it is approximately 64 million people from the Global South⁷² that participate in scavenging. While scavengers are central to this practice, the influence of external actors has increased in importance. The growth of scavenging has seen the development of multiple structural and institutional relationships with organizations like the state, and non-governmental organizations.

To develop scavenging by a political analysis, it is important to identify the relationship that scavengers have with space, but also the interactions of external actors that further define these spaces. As a process in which economic livelihood is ascertained, scavenging can generally be described as the “recovery and recycling of materials taken from garbage”⁷³. This generalization is succinct, however, it ignores the multiplicity of variations in which scavenging does occur. Martin Medina’s studies on scavenging in Asia and Latin America are able to provide a comprehensive examination of the variations of scavenging, because he identifies the separation of waste materials to occur within: households, along collection routes, retrieval before the disposal of waste by external informal collectors, external purchasing of recyclables from residents, public spaces (like city streets), vacant lots where garbage is dumped, from rivers and canals where materials are dumped, composting plants, municipal open dumps, and at

⁷¹ Maria Scarlet Do Carmo and Jose Antonio Puppim de Oliveira, “The Semantics of Garbage and the organization of the recyclers: Implementation challenges for establishing recycling cooperatives in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil,” *Resources, Conservation and Recycling* 54, no. 12 (2010): 1265.

⁷² Christopher D. Hartmann, “Uneven Urban Spaces: Accessing Trash in Managua, Nicaragua,” *Journal of Latin American Geography* 11, no. 1 (2012): 144.

⁷³ Héctor Castillo Berthier, “Garbage, work and society,” *Resources, Conservation and Recycling* 39, no. 3 (2003): 194.

landfills⁷⁴. Through this list, a diverse image of scavenging can begin to be developed because the term itself comprises a practice that extends to a wide array of geographical locations where different resources are being collected.

While scavenging depicts a wide array of locations and processes, perceptions of scavenging and those associated with this practice have historically been produced through discourses of social exclusion that have reinforced a negative perception of scavenging and scavengers as undesirable and out of place. Historically, participation within the informal sphere of scavenging waste and refuse materials has been highly stigmatized due to the physical value of “waste [being] generally unwanted and viewed as ‘matter out of place’”⁷⁵. The association of waste has produced negative identifications of scavenging practices with lower socio-economic population segments have been “[reinforced by] the stigma attached to jobs involving the handling of garbage because they are done by socially excluded people”⁷⁶. These two negative stigmas have resulted in the creation of public policy that has acted to further intensified socio-economic cleavages, since public policies have aimed to repress, neglect, and exploit through practices like collusion⁷⁷. While policies have generally responded to these negative identifications, there have been positive relationships developed from certain economic positions of labour value and environmental concerns pertaining to the semantics of waste.

⁷⁴ Medina, “Scavenger cooperatives in Asian and Latin America,” 54-56.

⁷⁵ Hartmann, 146.

⁷⁶ Do Carmo and de Oliveira, 1265.

⁷⁷ Medina, “Scavenger cooperatives in Asian and Latin America,” 57. As Medina explains, collusion is a relationship of political clientelism. While these relationships are often illegal, they are seen between scavengers and government officials, and are characterized by mutual or exploitative modes of cooperation that aim to secure stability for scavenging practices.

While previously predominant opinions and semantics of stigmatization that have primarily depicted scavenging and scavengers through a language of exclusion and dislocation, these hostile positions have begun to shift towards a more positive narrative. This positive narrative has developed from the forming of symbolic relationships to the capitalist market place, but also the environment. The first stage in the transformation of valueless given to waste is in correlation with human labour because:

“it is possible to begin by saying that waste is worthless. When it is discarded many consider it worth nothing, but from the moment it is collected, transported, stored, classified, cleaned, sold and recycled/ reused, it is transformed into merchandise. This means its inherent value and initial exchange value can be recovered if human labour is incorporated.”⁷⁸

The original characterization of valuelessness that has been placed upon waste is seen to transform into value by the reintroduction of ownership through labour value. Despite a historical legacy that originally stigmatized waste, the process of scavenging waste has been seen to extend value onto scavenged materials through the commodification of human labour. While scavenging has consistently been defined by the involvement of human labour, the recognition of value by governmental and nongovernmental bodies outside of scavenging has produced a more positive attitude toward this practice.

However, this shift does require the contextualization within popular environmental movements to be fully developed.

The growth of environmental awareness surrounding the production of waste and waste management impacted scavenging practices by an increased recognition of labour value. Value changes are seen by the language used to describe waste matter by changes in terminology that replaced waste with recyclable since “the positive semantics of

⁷⁸ Berthier, 196.

garbage means the process of attributing positive value to it...the rise of environmentalism and the increasing value of recyclables stimulated this process, evidenced when waste started to be called “recyclable material”.⁷⁹ As a word, recyclable was able to provide value to waste but also facilitate a moment in which the environment and the economy meet in an “achievement [that] is not just about saving the environment. It’s about economics.”⁸⁰ The transformation of waste into a recyclable material is seen as an achievement as it had successfully reduced the amount of waste being dumped and retained in landfills, but it was also able to transform the historical dynamics of exclusion by providing the legitimization of attaining economic livelihood. Positive changes to perceptions towards the informal sector have only “[come] along with the rise of environmentalism, which has changed the way society sees recycling. Recycling is now something positive for society and even profitable.”⁸¹ The positive impact of the environment and economics upon scavenging and scavengers has not only been seen upon externalized perceptions of scavenging, but has also provided the foundations for changes in public policy.

The development of public attitudes towards scavenging saw the shift towards a positive reception through the convergence of economic and environmental attributes of value to have impacted governmental legislation that informally and formally regulates scavenging. Governmental legislation towards scavenging has been historically defined by the negative association of waste material to be out of place of the formal jurisdiction of public space and thus has conditioned the advancement of traditionally hostile policy

⁷⁹ Do Carmo and de Oliveira, 1265.

⁸⁰ Michael Fox, “Cash for Trash: Brazil’s Unemployed *Catadores* Keep Recycling Rates High while Earning Much- Needed Cash,” *Earth Island Journal* 25, no. 1 (2010): 49.

⁸¹ Do Carmo and de Oliveira, 1265.

positions. These hostile legislative positions towards scavengers have been traditionally formulated in policies of repression and neglect because many countries in the Global South have attempted to emulate developed standards of waste elimination and disposal⁸² from the Global North. The impact of these policies has been that:

“In many cases policies strive for the elimination of scavenging by enacting bans and by trying to find alternate employment for the scavengers. Rarely a comparison of costs and benefits of scavenging [has been] conducted.”⁸³

Development patterns in the Global South have attempted to recreate those practices in the Global North despite any formal research proving that the urban modernization of waste management to be economically or socially effective since these deeply impactful social stigmatizations have perceived and produced scavenging as a ‘dirty’ practice, and as one that must be eradicated.

While policies of repression have been imposed upon scavengers by the state through the enactment of legislative bans and the illegalization of scavenging, there have been positive changes in policy directed towards scavenging developed from shifts in semantics and changes in attitudes towards scavenging. Changes in perception are seen to be impactful by practices of stimulation since the:

“[recognition of] the economic, social, and environmental benefits of scavenging and recycling governments have started to change their previous attitude of opposition, indifference or tolerance, to one of active support. Supportive policies range from legalization of scavenging activities, encouraging the formation of scavenger cooperatives (in Indonesia), the awarding of contract for collection of mixed wastes and/ or recyclables (in

⁸² Berthier, 210-211. As Berthier discusses, the emulation of waste management techniques from the Global North have reproduced the tactics to isolate the disposal of waste through technological modernization. The scope of these practices have removed the scavengers from the recovery process by focusing on the physical removal of waste from the city through the means of transportation and the industrialization of processing waste, which has perpetuated the stigma of waste to be matter out of place but also systemically exclude the social reality of scavenging organization and the economic reliance that scavengers have upon this practice.

⁸³ Medina, “Scavenger cooperatives in Asia and Latin America,” 58.

some Columbian towns), to the formation of public-private partnerships between local authorities and scavengers (in some Brazilian cities).”⁸⁴

The practice of stimulation is seen as a positive approach to scavenging since it seeks to encourage the practice of scavenging by recognizing social, economic, and environmental advantages. Governmental legislation that supports scavenging is seen through stimulation practices that promote legalization, building relationships of cooperation with scavengers and potential cooperatives (that represent groups of scavengers), and also by the development of NGO participation with scavengers. In order to examine policies of stimulation and neglect, but to also examine a specific case of scavenging that contextualizes this narrative, it is useful to turn to an examination of Jardim Gramacho.

Jardim Gramacho

North-east of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, lies Latin America’s largest open-air landfill, Jardim Gramacho. While Jardim Gramacho has been active for 36 years, the Brazilian state government previously attempted to close the dump in 2004, has continued talk of its closure, the official closure of Jardim Gramacho was June 1, 2012⁸⁵. The official closure was announced a few weeks before Brazil hosted the United Nations Rio+20 Earth Summit while citing environmental concerns for the official closure. The two main reasons that have been asserted for the official closure are environmental concerns of high levels of greenhouse gases being generated from the decomposing garbage, and toxic run-off from the garbage that has been leaking into the sea⁸⁶. Alongside these

⁸⁴ Ibid., 57- 58.

⁸⁵ Maria Renou. “Fears as Latin America’s largest trash dump closes.” Dawn Media Group. <http://dawn.com/2012/05/29/fears-as-latin-americas-largest-trash-dump-closes/>.

⁸⁶ British Broadcasting Corporation. “Brazil’s biggest rubbish dump closes in Rio de Janeiro.” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-18318714>. Similarly to many other open- air landfills, *Jardim Gramacho* has been polluting the air with high levels of methane gas, which is not only highly combustible but one of the main contributors to global warming. While not only producing methane gas,

environmental concerns, the 9000 tones of garbage dumped at this location on a daily basis⁸⁷ has also informally employed thousands of *catadores*⁸⁸. The informal work conducted by the *catadores* on Jardim Gramacho has also helped promote Brazil to be “one of the top recycling countries in the world, with a tin can recycling rate of as high as 96.5 percent.”⁸⁹ This high success rate is not only confined to tin cans but also 47 percent of glass bottles, 54.8 percent of plastic bottles in 2008⁹⁰.

Through these statistics, it can be seen that the informal labour of the *catadores* has produced internationally high standards of recycling despite the work of *catadores* to be a mode of waste management practice that has rejected modernized waste management practices of the Global North. While the work performed by the *catadores* on Jardim Gramacho has succeeded in meeting international recycling standards, it has also generated a comparable living wage for those working as a *catador*. In Brazil, it has been documented that *catadores* working for the ‘Coopamare collective’ are able to make \$300 per month, while the Brazilian minimum wage was approximately \$150⁹¹ in 2005. However, it has also been documented that *catadores* working for the Vila dos Papeleiros Recycling Association (AREVIPA) were making \$225 in 2012, while the new Brazilian minimum monthly wage was approximately \$291⁹². While the first cooperative mentioned depicts scavenger wages to be above the minimum wage, the second is seen to

the decomposition of waste and refuse materials produces toxic leachate that have been polluting Guanabara Bay. CF. Martina Medina, *The World's Scavengers: Salvaging for Sustainable Consumption and Production* (Toronto: AltaMira Press, 2007), 51-52.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ *Catador* is the localized terminology to describe a scavenger in Brazil.

⁸⁹ Fox, 49.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 50.

⁹¹ Medina, “Scavenger cooperatives in Asia and Latin America,” 62.

⁹² Fox, 50.

be lower than the minimum wage in Brazil; these statistics are being depicted to exemplify that scavenging at Jardim Gramacho has not only produced exemplary recycling standards but also produced a range of moderate to above average income levels for those participating in the informal economic sphere of scavenging, which has asserted the Brazilian government's approach of stimulation towards scavenging.

In approaching scavenging through a policy of stimulation, the Brazilian government was beginning to develop relationships with scavengers and cooperatives in order to better the wages for scavengers through the legal recognition of scavenging as an economic practice. Specifically, it was the self-initiating actions of *catadores* through the formation of the first informal cooperative (*Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis*) that led to the Brazilian government to formally recognize *catador* as an official profession in 2002⁹³. This first change in policy not only reflected a shift in perception, but also began the development of cooperatives through entrepreneurial, state-led, or NGO-led leadership projects⁹⁴. While these three forms of cooperative action represent both private and public relationships, all three formations shared the goal of “overcoming the power of the middlemen in the recycling chain, and as a result getting better prices and more income for the recycling workers”⁹⁵. For this context, the middleman was seen in relation to gaining control over the process of weighing waste, which would then determine the rate for recyclable goods. However, the success of seeking weighing regulation for state-led cooperatives as a policy orientation to increase

⁹³ Ibid., 51.

⁹⁴ Do Carmo and de Oliveira, 1264.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

the profit of *catador* workers was limited by further attempts to institutionalize the process of recycling.

The impact of state involvement upon the organization of cooperatives with *catadores* has been neither negative nor positive since “income remained very low because of taxation due to formalization of the sales and labor.”⁹⁶ Along with attempting to control the weighing practices of materials, the institutionalization of recycling through state-led practices introduced concepts of profit distribution and taxation upon goods⁹⁷. While the development of state policy attempted to initiate equity into the previously free market place of recyclables, this implementation policy rather saw:

“governments or NGOs who help recyclers neither give them conditions to compete with recycling companies nor make transactions in the waste market more transparent to help recyclers to get a fair value for their work. Both gave structures to labor, but do not have conditions to interfere in the market.”⁹⁸

The initial purpose of the imposition of the state through policies of stimulation failed to control the primary economic determination of recycling that is the practice of weighing materials⁹⁹, but rather lowered the wages of those *catadores* through institutional policy practices that attempted to promote equality through taxation and wage pools.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 1267.

⁹⁹ The practice of weighing is integral to scavenging in both the informal and formal economy. In this procedure, a scale is used to determine the weight of goods that a scavenger has collected. The purpose of this act is to determine the price in which the goods will be purchased from the scavenger, as each type of scavenged good has its own predetermined value. A middleman and not the scavenger has traditionally performed the weighing, which has led to cases of exploitation of the scavenger by the person weighing goods, through the tampering of scales. See Maria Scarlet Do Carmo and Jose Antonio Puppim de Oliveira, “The Semantics of Garbage and the organization of the recyclers: Implementation challenges for establishing recycling cooperatives in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil,” *Resources, Conservation and Recycling* 54, no. 12 (2010): 1264.

Despite attempts to stimulate the informal recycling sector through formal approaches of public policies conducted by the Brazilian state, Jardim Gramacho has recently been officially closed. The closure has been cited as a step towards environmental sustainability because of the environmental concerns of greenhouse gases and water pollution, but has also left thousands of *catador* workers unemployed. While compensation and the retraining of workers have both been promised as a result of this closure, these promises have not stabilized many workers' concerns for the future. A primary concern stems from whether some unemployed workers will find their way back into the drug trade- a life once commonly abandoned for *catador* work¹⁰⁰. In addition, a more general concern surrounds the ability to know how to survive because Jardim Gramacho became a sense of community for some, or an honest way of making money and raising a family.

To further examine the closing of Jardim Gramacho politically, it is important to look at the form of compensation that has been promised to *catadores*, but also examine the closing within a broader context of the modernization of waste management in Brazil. The distribution of financial compensation that has been promised is a one-time payment of 14,000 Brazilian reais (approximately \$7,000) to 1,700 registered *catadores*¹⁰¹. In addition to financial compensation, *catadores* have also been promised access to professional development programs in the field of skilled labour and information technology.¹⁰² While this promised combination of financial and development support does not leave the general portion of *catadores* empty handed, it is only *catadores* that

¹⁰⁰ British Broadcasting Corporation.

¹⁰¹ Felicity Clarke, RioOnWatch, "Waste Land Pickers Struggle from Landfill Closure," <http://rioonwatch.org/?p=4032>.

¹⁰² Ibid.

are registered with co-operatives that will be able to access these resources. Those *catadores* that have continued to participate in scavenging through the informal sphere and depend on this practice for economic livelihood are not entitled to the benefits promised to those *catadores* who were registered in cooperatives¹⁰³.

While unregistered scavengers have expressed exclusion, some registered *catadores* have also expressed a similar sentiment. Some scavengers that are illiterate or injured have also questioned the effectiveness of development training when one cannot already read or write¹⁰⁴. While these questions stem from some of Brazil's most vulnerable members of society that have been excluded, it is also necessary to be critical of the facilitation of professional development programs in relation to the formal economy. Tião Santos (president of the Association of Recycling Pickers of Jardim Gramacho) expresses hopefulness for the potential that the development of new skills for those registered *catadores* as he claims: "Brazil has grown, but it's not developed... There's a shortage of skilled labor."¹⁰⁵ One must wonder if jobs within the formal economy will be found, or will these *catadores* fall back into the informal economy?

While these questions are important to raise, it is also important to place the closing of Jardim Gramacho within the larger context of waste management practices, but also important to further place within the theoretical concept of the political. In Brazil, the municipality is centrally responsible for managing solid waste disposal¹⁰⁶. However, the closing of Jardim Gramacho has been part of a larger political effort "led by Rio's

¹⁰³ Ibid. Cf. Fabíola Ortiz. Global Issues. "Brazil Closes Symbol of Environmental Degradation, Ahead of Rio+20," <http://www.globalissues.org/news/2012/06/04/13904>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ CORE International. "Potential for Landfill Gas Recovery from Landfill Sites in Brazil." http://www.coreintl.com/projects/Signature_Projects/Brazil_Landfill_Gas_Project.html.

state environmental minister to close all of the area's five official open-air landfills -- as well as an unknown number of clandestine ones-- by 2014."¹⁰⁷ In this location, the division between municipal and state-led governmental polices are being bridged between these two levels of political actors. The connection between political actors was influenced by environmental concerns of Jardim Gramacho polluting the surrounding air and water as municipalities are responsible for the dumping of solid waste in environmentally sound ways¹⁰⁸. As the state government has officially pushed for the closure of Jardim Gramacho, this mandate has implemented the modernization of waste management for the region of Rio de Janeiro. The garbage originally sent to Jardim Gramacho will now be sent 75 km outside of Rio de Janeiro to the most modern waste treatment facility in Latin America that is located in the city of Seropédica¹⁰⁹.

While waste produced by the city of Rio de Janeiro has a new location that it will be transported too, Jardim Gramacho is also going to be developed into a biogas plant that will utilize already existing decomposing waste by transforming methane gas into biomethane¹¹⁰. While the methane gas will be transformed into an alternative energy resource, the leachates polluting the surrounding water will continue to do so¹¹¹. The closing of Jardim Gramacho will also affect Brazil's high level of recycling, as formal selective waste collection is only available in 443 Brazilian cities (8% of cities)¹¹². This

¹⁰⁷ Marilia Brocchetto and Azadeh Ansari. CNN. "Landfill's closure changing lives in Rio." <http://www.cnn.com/2012/06/05/world/americas/brazil-landfill-closure/index.html>.

¹⁰⁸ CORE International.

¹⁰⁹ Fabiola Ortiz. Global Issues. "Brazil Closes Symbol of Environmental Degradation, Ahead of Rio+20." <http://www.globalissues.org/news/2012/06/04/13904>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Government of Brazil. "Selective Waste." <http://www.brasil.gov.br/sobre/environment/waste/selective-collection>.

statistic translates into the fact that the *catadores* performed most of the recycling in Brazil as it is only 18% of the population that is formally serviced by governmental agents.¹¹³ The modernization of waste management systems in Brazil signifies a predicament that is represented by a high level of recycling done by the *catadores* in Brazil in which the:

“trend is for cities to close dumps and send the waste to new sanitary landfills that have the proper controls to handle the flow of leachate and gases... the closing of any given dump, on which hundreds of scavengers may earn a living, has catastrophic consequences on the communities that live around them.”¹¹⁴

This predicament has been lessened in the case of Jardim Gramacho by the formalization of co-operatives that have been legally recognized by the state government and those initiatives to compensate and offer retraining, however, the original condition of scavenging as an informal activity persists for those not part of co-operatives.

To put this problem in a larger context, it is also unclear as to what will happen to other scavengers working informally and formally on other landfills in Brazil, as the state attempts to modernize waste management systems. As scavenging has arisen from the informal economy and is closely associated with the concept of social exclusion, the closure of Jardim Gramacho represents the perpetuation of social exclusion, as there has been a non-negotiation with those *catadores* within the informal economy. While the closure of Jardim Gramacho is a move towards environmentally friendly practices of waste management, the closure of open-air landfills as a spatial location of scavenging represents the systematic dismantling of scavenging as an informal activity. The pursuit

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Brazilian Recycling Commitment (OEM PRE). World Bank. “Promotion of Recycling in Brazil- A Case Study.” http://www.worldbank.org/urban/solid_wm/erm/Annexes/US_Sizes/New_Annex_4B.6.pdf.

to modernize waste management infrastructure that replicates the Global North largely ignores the conditions of social exclusion in the Global South. The dismantling of scavenging systems, whether formal or informal, becomes a question of politics, as it is a question of how space is organized and governed. It is in this organization of space that the *catadores* in both the formal and informal sphere are governed by the decisions to transform a location like Jardim Gramacho, despite the economic and social opportunities to address issues of social exclusion.

Conclusion

The process of scavenging, as an economic activity, has become a global phenomenon across the Global South that encapsulates many distinct patterns of scavenging over a vast geographical range of regions. While a historical legacy of waste to be matter out of place in public space that is seen coupled with conditions of social exclusion, there have been positive changes to how scavenging is perceived and governed in political space. Positive changes towards the induction of informal scavenging by the legal recognition of cooperatives have been facilitated by the valuing of waste but also by the recognition of scavenging for recyclable materials to be environmentally sustainable. The impact of changes in perception have been seen to develop governmental legislation from policies of repression to ones that stimulate the scavenging process by processes that legalize scavenging, but also the implementation of state governed measures to regulate the scavenging industry.

However, the case of Jardim Gramacho is not a straightforward example, as the Brazilian government shut down Jardim Gramacho. To use this case study to theoretically explore the construction of the political, I frame my case study by the predicament of

scavenging as an extension of social exclusion. As urbanization has greatly influenced the initial informal practice of scavenging, the Brazilian government recognized this pattern when legalizing scavenging, which allowed for the formal negotiation of compensation with the co-operatives of Jardim Gramacho. It is however the original condition of scavenging within the informal economy that responded to economic scarcity of those socially excluded and is perpetuated by the systematic deconstruction of scavenging spaces. To take this predicament of Jardim Gramacho and question the concept of the political is to question the structure and organization of the political. As social exclusion and the informal economy suggests a critique of the state's ability to regulate political space, the closing of Jardim Gramacho symbolizes the state's attempt to assert sovereignty within its own territory.

To use the idea of scavenging and the example of Jardim Gramacho as a way to begin rethinking the political, I utilize David Scott's work on the failure of decolonization to navigate the problem of thinking political space differently. As Scott identifies the problem of decolonization to be embedded within the ability to think outside of the structure imposed by modern Enlightenment through colonization, Scott's proposition is to rethink the political by historically examining a contemporary moment of crisis. From these methodological groundings, I am using the example of scavenging to illustrate Scott's idea, as the contemporary exclusion of scavengers resonates a modern form of colonization in formally decolonized regions of the world.

For Scott, to know and think outside of modern Enlightenment is the issue at stake for the postcolonial thinker. For to think outside of modern Enlightenment, Scott is suggesting that the postcolonial thinker practice strategic criticism by rethinking

historiographical narratives that have conditioned the way in which questions have been formulated. To rethink the problematic of modern power is to rethink time tragically by turning a contemporary moment of crisis into a problem-space that will enable the examination of historical conditions. As Scott is beginning to develop an examination on how to think alternatively of political space, I am using this methodology to construct a problem-space around scavenging. I am utilizing Scott's methodology to politicize the informal practice of scavenging by his position to read the present contemporary moment of a problem-space by a critique of historical narrative.

To think tragically of historical narrative is to interrogate the conditions that have influenced the construction of the contemporary political. It is from this method that I approach the political through an examination of modern power that has constituted the primacy of the modern state. To apprehend what Scott is directly referring to when he makes claim to modern power in relation to colonial Enlightenment, I look towards Immanuel Kant. An examination of Kant will be able to articulate how the political has become defined by the sovereign state. In continuing the trend to examine the past to understand the political conditions of the present in direct relation to scavenging, I look towards Mary Douglas. As Douglas conveys how waste has historically been thought of as matter out of place, she details that the distinction between premodern and modern perceptions of waste have been falsified. To remove the distinction that subordinated premodern culture to modern culture is a move to rethink the modern construction of political space by the rejection of waste and those associated with waste. The removal of this distinction is to rethink how waste has been constructed as a taboo subject and rather, attempt to use waste as a symbol to rethink the political.

To use Douglas to exemplify the falsity of a distinction between premodern and modern culture is an attempt to think of power outside of the sovereign state. By using Kant and Douglas to historicize the problem-space of scavenging, these two thinkers are illustrating the conditions of how scavenging is thought of in relation to the political as a method of organization. The example of Jardim Gramacho is able to exemplify the problematic of the political, as the Brazilian state only addressed and negotiated compensation with scavengers of formal cooperatives during its closure. To continue fashioning this problem-space by Scott's method of strategic criticism, I transition towards propositions of rethinking the political in relation to scavenging by examining the work of Partha Chatterjee and Warren Magnusson. As Chatterjee describes the process in which the postcolonial state governs, it is for the purpose to contain infringements upon the power of the modern state. Chatterjee is able to illuminate that the sovereignty of the modern state is continually challenged by internal infringements (like scavenging), but the state has been unable to effectively address issues of social exclusion. As the modern structure of the political has been unable to effectively govern, it is from this point that I turn towards Magnusson's politics of urbanism in order to rethink the political from the position of the city.

Chapter 2

“Modern power, obviously, is a crucial aspect of the story of historical change in the non- European world because the modern age unleashed forces that sought not merely to extract forms of tribute or impose asymmetrical patterns of exchange, but to forcibly- and very often violently- destroy old ways of social and moral and political life and build up new ones. Unlike nonmodern power, in other words, modern power has been concerned precisely with systematically transforming the very conditions in which life as a whole is organized.”¹¹⁵

Is Jardim Gramacho not just a location outside of Rio de Janeiro that happened to become an open-air landfill that provided economic livelihood, and has recently been closed due to concerns of environmental pollution? What is so political about Jardim Gramacho? These questions are interesting because there is an absence of political writings on scavenging, specifically on spaces like Jardim Gramacho. While scavenging has predominately been empirically researched through the disciplinary means of sociology, geography and anthropology, political analysis has been silent towards the concept of scavenging. However, this should not imply that a space like Jardim Gramacho is not political, nor cannot be examined through an attempt to politically think emancipation from modern political power.

As this thesis finds inspiration from the examination of scavenging practices found at Jardim Gramacho, the exercise to examine political emancipation is found in the anthropological work of David Scott. In both *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* (1999) and *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (2004), Scott attempts to conduct a critical reflection on what he describes as the hopeless legacy of postcolonial criticism, and the failure of anticolonial resistance.

¹¹⁵ Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 117.

While these two books are interlinked, it is Scott's *Conscripts of Modernity* that further contextualizes *Refashioning Futures*. In his 1999 publication, Scott is focused upon a philosophical analysis of the forlorn shape of the postcolonial present by a critique of postcolonial analysis. In the 2004 publication, Scott further contextualizes this analysis and his concern regarding the inability to think of the future by focusing on shifts of time and narrative that construct the framework of criticism via the concept of problem-spaces. This thesis chapter moves through the development of Scott's intellectual thought in both books but also seeks to find foundations to politically think of Jardim Gramacho as a space that can seek to question modern conditions of the political by rethinking postcolonial emancipation.

This will be done by Scott's conception of strategic criticism and the creation of a problem-space within his critique of the romantic narratives of anticolonial and postcolonial resistance, and both will also be seen to found an alternative tragic trajectory of time. In Scott's critique of decolonization, he directly deconstructs the way the production of knowledge has been shaped by colonization. Scott not only produces a critique of how colonization has transformed political space; he also provides keys to rethinking political space. As it will also be seen that Scott emphasizes the importance of the contemporary present, this has influenced my choice to think of scavenging in relation to decolonization. By creating a problem-space around scavenging, it is to seek out the influence of modern perceptions of waste to be an organizing symbol that has historically been governed by policies that relegate scavenging as illegal and within the informal economy. To contextualize the example of scavenging within Scott's analysis of the failure of decolonization by following his methodology is to attempt to resuscitate

postcolonial thought by interrogating the core assumption of modern politics: the sovereign state.

Imagining Modern Enlightenment

In both texts, Scott articulates that anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theories of decolonization have come to a position of uncertainty and instability in which neither can articulate a vision of the future. This claim made by Scott is complex because he is combining two different but deeply intertwined movements by a critique of emancipation. To ground this critique, Scott states that anticolonialism and postcolonialism have failed to successfully think of colonial emancipation as they are both:

“moments when hitherto established and authoritative conceptual paradigms and political projects seem no longer adequate to the tasks of the present, and when, at the same time, new paradigms and projects have yet to assert themselves fully in the place of the old.”¹¹⁶

For Scott, anticolonial and postcolonial paradigms of decolonization have proved themselves irrelevant to produce critiques of contemporary political conditions. Despite the collapse of colonial critique, new projects of decolonization have not replaced the old. To fully elaborate on the collapse of critique, Scott develops his own critique of decolonization through a negotiation of contemporary modern power described by Talal Asad’s “Conscripts of Western Civilization”.

To fully develop Scott’s position on decolonization, a reading of both Asad’s understanding of the modern state and modern power must be performed. This move is necessary, as Scott works directly through Asad and these ideas will contextualize his own conclusion on the hopelessness of critique and resistance. To introduce Asad’s piece,

¹¹⁶ Scott, *Refashioning Futures*, 10.

it can be said that he is describing contemporary terms of global interaction. In the space of global interaction, the terms of interaction often conflate cultural difference with political and economic practices. While cultural difference exists within and between states, modern power has structured terms of communication between difference since “social and cultural variety everywhere increasingly responds to, and is managed by, categories brought into play by modern forces.”¹¹⁷ Political and economic processes that influence modern power¹¹⁸ have created the options on how categories of difference are able to respond, and this has led to the eradication of cultural difference in response. For Asad, this characteristic of modern difference is a defining moment for what he finds to be the determining quality of the political. It is also the beginning of a moment in which the modern version of the political became a totalizing power.

As modern power has become a process that regulates difference through interaction, Asad is describing a historical moment in which modern power became a transformative force. This moment of transformation is seen by the creation of the modern state as a dominant force that encompasses the political since “the state became the dominant mode of organizing its life [the political]- in terms of the momentous new categories of ‘public’ and ‘private’.”¹¹⁹ The creation of a public and private sphere signifies a pivotal moment in which the political reconstituted the state and society. Organizational divisions between the private and public allowed for law to become a defining category that has allowed the state to “not simply command obedience and to

¹¹⁷ Talal Asad, “Conscripts of Western Civilization,” in *Dialectical anthropology: essays in honor of Stanley Diamond* (v.1.) *Civilization in crisis: anthropological perspectives*, ed. Christine Ward Gailey (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 333.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 334-335.

maintain justice, but to enable or disable its population.”¹²⁰ The formulation of law as a governing body over the populous in a state became the defining division between the premodern and modern state. While this change not only began the division of space that designated the public to be political, it also founded a new distinction of what it means to be a subject of the state.

As political space changed through the constitution of the modern state, the creation of law necessitated a new form of governance that reconditioned the ability for the subject of difference to act, but also react. In this process, Asad describes this change as a function of modern power that:

“presupposes the equal citizen, not subject to a superior power, but the subject of specific rights, a part of the sovereign body, and in that sense of the state. But the crucial difference is that the law becomes a means for creating conditions in which equal citizens can do certain things as “free agents.” This change implies a deliberate transformation of subjects from one kind of person to another.”¹²¹

This moment of transformation in political space is seen to entail a fundamental change to the positioning of the state and subject. Both actors have become projected through legal categories of what the state allows subjects to do, or not to do. It is through the organization of an obedient subject to the modern state that a division between the public and private has conditioned the political. It is through these motions that Asad builds upon the metaphorical value of conscription, since this terminology conveys the notion of force and a lack of freedom within the conditions of conflict¹²². The metaphorical grounding of the state within political conditions is able to also further signify Asad’s point: cultural difference may exist but political and economic power has conditioned the

¹²⁰ Ibid., 335.

¹²¹ Ibid., 336.

¹²² Ibid., 340.

ability for difference to react. Cultural difference has been subordinated to the modern state by the creation of the free and equal subject and through the legal restrictions of governance.

Hopeless Conditions of Critique: The Past Revisited

Asad's examination of how modern power has constituted the modern state and modern subject by a conflation of cultural difference with political and economic categories describes how states have been enlisted into a dominant paradigm of modernity. Scott heavily draws upon this notion of conscription and Asad's influence is seen clearly through Scott titling one of his books *Conscripts of Modernity*. Asad's contention on the conflation of cultural difference is fundamental to understanding Scott's understanding of colonial Enlightenment because Scott directly disagrees with how questions and answers of the past have been posed in relation to understanding the present and future. For Scott, the problem of reading modern temporality in relation to the idea of conscription is seen by his criticism of how questions of contemporary power are posed. The problem that Scott identifies ascertains that modernity has set the ontological ability to think critically, but also to question and answer the condition of decolonization. In the effort to seek a solution, Scott specifically identifies that modernity has been:

“understood in the Foucauldian sense of a positive structure of power, a historical formation of certain constitutive and productively shaping material and epistemological conditions of life and thought. Consequently, the relevant questions are those posed in terms of the new conditions in which the possibility and the idiom of resistance took shape and was articulated.”¹²³

¹²³ David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 106.

For Scott, modernity is seen as a conditioning power of both the ontological and the epistemological. For both the colonized state and subject, it is these two categories that have, through the process of conscription, transformed subjectivity. From this understanding, modern power has shaped colonial resistance by focusing criticism's gaze on the answer of resistance, rather than the historical conditions that originally framed the question of resistance.

In response, Scott is proposing that a strategic rereading of modern history can provide guidance to understanding the impact of colonial Enlightenment. A rereading of history that rethinks criticism can provide the tools to reorient how questions have been framed and thus, give attention to how colonial resistance has been shaped. In this context, Scott conceives the moment in which modern temporal narrative and modern power meet as a conjuncture. As Asad describes, the transformation between premodern and modern power altered the conditions of interaction. This act has enlisted colonial resistance into new categories of power and has deemed historical resistance to be ineffective since:

“new historical conditions emerge (conditions shaped by new technologies and new rationalities, not merely new consciousnesses) the efficacy of old distinctions and old options wanes, fades, becomes obsolete. The old paths do not necessarily disappear altogether. They may well remain dimly visible along with remnants of the languages that articulated them. But their point—that is, their ability to produce salient effects—becomes attenuated.”¹²⁴

As modern power has transformed conditions of temporality, this movement has also altered the ground that will allow for resistance to be productive. It is in this conclusion that Scott articulates anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought to be outdated, but to have also prevented new forms of critique to develop.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 116.

Scott's initial step to critically rethink critique and resistance is seen by an interrogation on how both anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought have failed to successfully yield emancipation from colonial Enlightenment. Despite anticolonialism and postcolonialism being separate movements, they are also intimately linked with one another. To separate these two movements, a division must be demarcated by the concepts of action and epistemology when thinking towards the purpose of historically articulating the failure of the postcolonial order¹²⁵. However, for this formulation, the interlocking nature between anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory must firstly be examined. Both movements are connected by the frame of decolonization that has sought to emancipate colonial states while being unable to recognize that "not only did the relation of force between colonizer and colonized change, but so did *the terrain* for the political struggle itself...not only accommodation but resistance as well would have to articulate itself in relation to this comprehensively altered situation."¹²⁶ From this statement, Scott is seen conveying that critiques of colonialism have been unable to transform alongside the changing terrain of modern power and were rather conscripted to the changes described by Asad.

To better understand the failure of colonial resistance, it is useful to examine Scott's deconstruction of the particular circumstances that led to the individual failures of both anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory. For Scott, the foundation of anticolonial resistance is found within the "demand of political decolonization, the

¹²⁵ For Scott, the "postcolonial order" is specifically articulated by the failure of the 'New Nations' project that developed during the post World War II period.

¹²⁶ Scott, *Refashioning Futures*, 31. Emphasis in original.

demand for the overthrow of colonial power.”¹²⁷ It is seen that anticolonial resistance sought to imagine emancipation from colonialism by a direct movement with a clear vision of the future: one that is free of colonial rule and control. While the desire for political emancipation has instigated colonized regions to seek freedom from the force of settler colonialism, colonization has left those formally decolonized in a position of anxiety due to the colonial impact that persists by being introduced into the New World Order.¹²⁸ This simple and seemingly effective vision of freedom by decolonization was unable to anticipate the power of conscription to colonial Enlightenment.

Anticolonial resistance failed to foresee the development between formal and informal colonization when it sought to imagine resistance by imagining colonial power by the “register of a social, economic, and political force, locking the path to freedom and self-determination of the colonized.”¹²⁹ While resistance recognized the social, economic and political aspects of colonization, the act of resistance was sought through the material and psychological modes of change that would reappropriate self-possession.¹³⁰ Colonial power was presented as an image that was constructed to be a physical formation that could be overcome through the process of resistance and revolution by an uprising against the state. Scott bases his critique of anticolonial resistance upon this illustration of colonial power as a psychical bloc to freedom, as this image lacked the ability to recognize modern transformations of colonial power. Anticolonial resistance was unable

¹²⁷ Ibid., 11.

¹²⁸ For Scott, although he writes critically on the New World Order, he references this term to be the descriptor of the period of time that began at the end of the cold war. The start of this period is to claim the end of bipolar order between the West and the East, in which the West won by gaining hegemonic control and was able to assert a localization of Western culture. See David Scott, *Refashioning Futures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 71.

¹²⁹ Ibid., *Refashioning Futures*, 11.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

to successfully decolonize since metaphysical formations of power changed the colonial landscape by transforming the original epistemological conditions to know authentic freedom from colonial inauthenticity.

By introducing the concepts of authenticity and inauthenticity in relation to the context of the colonial landscape is where Scott's critique shifts from a focus on anticolonial resistance to postcolonial theory. While moving towards a postcolonial analysis, the split between anticolonial action and postcolonial epistemology is seen by the metaphysical relationship between authenticity and inauthenticity. As anticolonial resistance failed to see how modern power had changed the colonial state and subject, this movement saw that the "task of decolonization consisted in the demand of *self-representation*, a process of restoring an authentic relationship between representation and reality."¹³¹ As anticolonial resistance sought to replace colonial power with an original moment of self-determination, it failed to acknowledge that modern power had changed this origin of authenticity. The authentic moment of self-determination that anticolonialism sought to re-establish through the eradication of colonial rule became a problematic relationship of representation, rather than one of reality, due to modern changes to the colonial landscape. However, Scott acknowledges that anticolonial resistance could have not produced such a self-reflexive moment. It is only through an examination of history that Scott has been able to identify decolonization to have encapsulated such an epistemological moment in which the "whole question of the *decolonization of representation* itself, the decolonization of the conceptual apparatus

¹³¹ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

through which their political objectives were thought out.”¹³² As Scott recognizes that anticolonial resistance was enlisted into the formations of modern power, he utilizes this moment as a foundation to rethink postcolonial theory.

Scott’s critique of anticolonial resistance ends with the identification of a reflexive moment in which the authentic self-representation of power can no longer be attained. The question of decolonization is seen to transform into a question of how to identify with changes to power in political space. This moment for the desire of emancipation from colonial power drives Scott to examine postcolonial criticism, since postcolonialism allocated the space to identify these new formations of power during the 1970s. The impact of opening the ability to think of political space is described by Scott as:

“postcoloniality [having] altered the question about colonialism and providing a new set of conceptual tools with which not merely to revive colonialism as a going problematic, but to reframe it in terms of the relationship between colonial power and colonial knowledge. It thereby enabled a systematic reinterrogation of contemporary practices in terms of the extent to which they reproduced forms of knowledge that emerged as part of the apparatus of colonial power.”¹³³

The impact of opening political space by an examination of cognitive formations of power and knowledge are able to further understand how modern power transformed the relationship of self-representation between the colonized and the colonizer. Scott sees categories of power and knowledge as essential to the question of decolonization since they introduce the ability to think and question epistemological and ontological assumptions that have been taken for granted. In developing the problem of self-representation, the conditions that anticolonialism had normatively assumed are seen by

¹³² Ibid., 12. Emphasis in original.

¹³³ Ibid.

Scott in relation to the question of how to regain authentic power after formal decolonization.

From this position, Scott is seen describing the process in which postcolonial theory critiqued anticolonial practice by the introduction of new questions that transformed the “old idea of colonialism as a structure of material exploitation and profit as on the idea of colonialism as a structure of organized authoritative knowledge that operated discursively to produce effects of Truth about the colonized.”¹³⁴ Postcolonial theory was able to identify modern power to no longer be a physical bloc from emancipation; it had rather become an ontological block that metaphysically obstructed emancipation by refiguring precolonial authenticity and changed the conditions of representation and reality. While Scott recognizes the ability of postcolonial theory to include modern shifts of power in its critical analysis, Scott also recognizes the need to further this analysis. As stated earlier, Scott views that postcolonial theory has also fallen into a sense of hopelessness shared by its anticolonial counterpart. It is in this moment that Scott separates himself from the normative understanding of knowledge to seek the ability to understand knowledge, authenticity and representation by an interrogation of the postcolonial adaptation of epistemological values instilled by modern power.

In a critical refashioning of postcolonial theory, Scott is examining what he thinks is a major fault of postcolonialism: the replication of modern power through the reproduction of colonial knowledge. While postcolonial theory has introduced great amounts of liminality in developing standpoint positions that have attempted to restore the colonized subject to an original and authentic space of self- representation, Scott

¹³⁴ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

articulates complications with these approaches. For Scott, postcolonial theory has replicated modern power by developing knowledge in the “effort to demonstrate the essentialism of an adversary as though the assumption of an essence by itself were cognitively, morally, and politically unsupportable.”¹³⁵ This problematic of postcolonial theory parallels modern forms of knowing reality because the question for producing authenticity has become caught in a “zeal for their own version of epistemological purity, the anti-essentialists show themselves unable to put away or suppress their own desire for mastery, for certainty, for the command of an essential meaning.”¹³⁶ The acquisition of colonial logic is seen to rely on a mastery of the ownership of meaning, knowledge and authenticity. For postcolonialism, the production of self-representation has been influenced by conscription into modern power at a metaphysical level of thinking about political space in relation to emancipation.

Romantic and Tragic Temporal Trajectories

As Scott’s critique of decolonization is formulated by the writings of Asad, he is seen describing changes in colonialism by the transformation of modern power. Scott articulates modern power to have conscripted the ability for the colonized subject to achieve authentic power by an inability to regain self-representation. By examining how modern power had enlisted anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought, Scott attempts to refashion criticism by a critique of linear temporal teleology. To develop an alternative to criticism, the temporal linear trajectory of modernity becomes the primary objective when rethinking the past, present and future of the political. As the moment of modern conscription signified a change in the historical condition of the political, the

¹³⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

temporality of political space must also be examined. While linear teleology has acted as a drive for modern power to develop, this dominant trajectory of time has also impacted how anticolonialism and postcolonialism both function, but also provide a pivotal moment in rethinking critique.

When Scott speaks to a linear trajectory, he is implying that questions of modern power need to be read through the questioning of how history has been produced. Through focusing on historiography, Scott is attempting to focus critically upon the narrative of modernity that has normalized the progression of linear time. To develop a critique of the modern trajectory of history, Scott questions the normative value of linear constructions of narrative by asking: how do we know the past, present and future. Through conveying modern temporality to be a motion constituted by a seamless linear progression, Scott is critically identifying that “the historiographical relation between past, present, and future is, if nothing else, a problem about narrative.”¹³⁷ As historical narrative has been shaped by a moving progression towards the future, in which the present asserts existence and the past to be history. However, for Scott, his critique of this relationship of narrative is seen by Asad’s assertion of modern power to conflate difference by restricting response. The modern historiographical narrative of the political has conflated the conditions in which anticolonialism and postcolonialism were able to interact and resist power. To rethink the history of decolonization through a critical analysis of the historiographical relationship between narrative and power, Scott is articulating the need to look at the contemporary present by the limitations that have conditioned historical questions.

¹³⁷ Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 32.

Understanding modern temporal teleology through an analysis of historical narrative will further demonstrate modern power's nature of conscription, but will also allow for Scott to build an alternative narrative of critique. As the formation of a progressive movement of narrative, modern power transformed the epistemological location for the colonial subject to recognize conscription to colonial Enlightenment. The impact of conscription upon colonial resistance is seen represented by the replication of the temporal teleology of modernity because:

“the story of liberation presupposed a direction, a teleology, an end toward which we were inevitably moving, and it is no longer as clear today at the beginning of the twenty- first century as it was in 1938 what our options are and where that anti- imperialist emancipation is supposed to lead.”¹³⁸

As Scott claims, the visionary ideas of emancipation projects have faltered since colonial Enlightenment has been conditioned by what Scott articulates to be a romantic narrative of emancipation. As the romantic narrative of both modern power and decolonization have conditioned emancipation to be posited at an unforeseen moment in the future, the contemporary present is seen by a “social and political reality whose normative limits we now live as the tangible ruins of our present, the congealing context of our postcolonial time.”¹³⁹ The normative limits of the political are seen to be a result of a temporal trajectory that has been founded by the assumption of historiographical narrative that develops the past and present by a romantic progression towards the future.

Romanticism, as a literary concept, has played a conditioning role upon the temporal trajectory of modern political space towards conceptions of freedom and emancipation. However, the trajectory of romanticism has also conditioned the

¹³⁸ Ibid., 96.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 29.

hopelessness of colonial resistance as romanticism is structured by “the rhythms of redemption, the epic momentum of successive historical events, the metaphysical movement from Darkness to Light, Bondage to Freedom, and so on.”¹⁴⁰ The narrative of romanticism is seen structured by a guise of strong images of raw passion, desire and hopefulness; this is, however, a mask for the linear trajectory of modern conscription. The impact of romanticism upon temporality is seen to suggest a distinctive claim of modern historiographical narrative and of colonial emancipation to be embedded within “the idea of revolution, and, consequently, on its dependence upon distinctive ways of conceiving political change, and distinctive assumptions about temporalities and history.”¹⁴¹ The linear trajectory of modern narrative seeks to project political freedom as a fixed image in the future and modern power has enlisted colonial resistance to this narrative.

As the modern linear trajectory projects a successive progression of time, the future is defined by the questions of political freedom that are constituted by the present contemporary. Modern conscription has enlisted colonial resistance to this narrative and led anticolonial resistance to seek colonial emancipation as the removal of a physical bloc of power as a moment to occur within the future. Colonial resistance adapted modern temporality by being enlisted to cultural conflation that has sought to limit interaction and response since colonial emancipation became “an idea of historical time that was moving upward and onward in a rhythmic series of successive stages.”¹⁴² By basing the problem of colonial power or political emancipation within contemporary conditions with the aim

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 70.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 64

¹⁴² Ibid., 89.

to find a future solution, historical moments that have conditioned the progression towards the present are largely seen ignored. It is the placement of modern freedom and colonial emancipation to be in the future that Scott critically articulates as the issue of historiographical narrative that has led to the deficiency of colonial resistance.

As Scott describes, “change is brought about by the passionate action of men and women. But such action is always constrained by the conditions in which it takes place and which make it possible in the first place.”¹⁴³ The constraints imposed by transformations in power have enlisted and become impenetrable for colonial resistance to successfully seek decolonization. By focusing upon historical conditions, Scott is beginning to articulate an alternative framework for critical resistance to think of the future. What is at stake in this problematic for Scott is how can temporal narrative be read outside the bounds of a progressive movement towards the future. While romanticism has bound the trajectory of time into the future, Scott is proposing that an alternative narrative of history can be read through tragedy.

Tragedy, when applied to historiography, is able to question the conditions of the present that have set modern limitations upon the critiques of colonialism. Unlike romanticism, tragedy seeks to question the political space of the present by thinking in relation to history, rather than the future. For Scott, the narrative structure of tragedy is able to recognize the historical boundaries when creating a critique of the present to be more effective than positing emancipation in the future, since Scott’s argument is based upon the idea of conscription. As Scott does not believe that the historical legacy of

¹⁴³ Ibid., 70.

colonial Enlightenment imposed by modern power can be overcome, Scott is rather attempting to conceive of the problem of colonial resistance by:

“[formulating it] in such a way as to enable us to appreciate both the historical fact of our constitution as modern subjects on a terrain of modern institutions and social relations, and the theoretical justification for a suspicion of any normalization of modernist values and ethos.”¹⁴⁴

In taking a tragic position, Scott is attempting to develop criticism’s ability for self-reflexivity. As Scott’s critique of anticolonialism depicts that this movement was unable to predict the informal power of colonialism that reoriented authentic and inauthentic knowledge of colonial identity, Scott is using tragedy to go beyond essentialist modern understandings of identity and relationships. For Scott, essentialist categories have posited a dialectical relationship of “us” and “them” into colonial critique and have hindered criticism. To rethink criticism, modern temporality of romanticism must be removed from criticism in order to rethink normative categories of modern power and colonial political space.

Tragedy, however, is able to evoke potential and the possibility to rethink colonial criticism by an evaluation of historiographical narrative, as tragedy is able to engage with the past. The methodology of tragedy is able to disavow essentialist dialectical relationships of modernity and colonialism by allowing an and/ both position of the colonial subject that acknowledges modern conscription. To produce tragedy as a liminal space is to locate modern power within the colonial subject but to also recognize contingent force. To use tragedy in the terms of temporality is to remove romantic ideals of freedom and emancipation tied to a progressive movement towards the future by apprehending that the tragic position is:

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 180.

“concerned with our constitutive openness to luck, to fortune, to chance. It shows us in a dramatic and vivid way our very mortal vulnerability to the contingencies of our worldly life and of our physical embodiment. It urges us to appreciate that we cannot make ourselves entirely immune to the vagaries of misfortune, to calamities... Rather, tragedy presents us with a picture of ourselves as simultaneously authors of our ends and authored by forces and circumstances over which we have no- or little- rational control.”¹⁴⁵

By removing modern power’s political moment of freedom and decolonization’s moment of emancipation from the linear discourse of the future is to claim that contingency can dilute romantic narrative by being receptive to unexpected and unpredictable consequences held in the future.

While Scott’s tragic reading of historiographical narrative does not fully discount the transformative affect of modern power upon the political, it rather seeks to reread the temporal drive of modernity that has perpetuated a progressive linearity. To situate colonial resistance between these two positions is to destabilize modern narrative and power. As romantic discourse conditioned the anticolonial project of decolonization, postcolonial theory was able to reflexively delineate the transformative affect of modern power, which had been informally instilled by colonial power. Scott pushes postcolonial critique by tragic terms since he claims “we cannot seal ourselves off from chance, but that seeking to rid ourselves of contingency positively *impoverishes* us.”¹⁴⁶ Romantic trajectories of narrative have left modern political thought within a condition of destitution, as they have rejected the possibility of tragedy. As colonial resistance was enlisted into this temporal narrative, Scott’s claim of the hopeless condition of contemporary decolonization originates from this destitute.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 182.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 185. Emphasis in original.

As anticolonial resistance failed to successfully remove colonial power because modern Enlightenment had altered authentic origins of power and knowledge, Scott describes postcolonial theory to have been left with the problem to rearticulate authentic origins of the pre-colonial state. However, this condition was unforeseeable for anticolonial resistance and as Scott identifies tragedy to be susceptible to unforeseen conditions, he suggests tragedy to be able to “refocus our attention away from the paralyzing either/or- either embrace the project or reject it- into which that debate has inserted us.”¹⁴⁷ Categorical identifications that distinguish the colonized from the colonizer, and vice- versa, instilled by modern Enlightenment have continued to “aggressively and systematically displace the varied traditions of rationality and morality that characterized the nonmodern world and at imposing in their place a singular standard or calculus of instrumental reason.”¹⁴⁸ Authentic positions of pre-colonial knowledge and power have been conflated by modern power, which has positioned the political to be conditioned by romanticism. As anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory were enlisted into this discourse, they have lapsed into a precarious position of hopelessness because informal colonial discourse has obscured authentic forms of self-representation but also imagined the success of decolonization to be the removal of formal colonial power as a moment in the future.

Criticism, Rethought and Redirected

For Scott, a tragic historiographical narrative of history is a step towards the reformulation of colonial criticism. To tragically reread history is to reveal conscripted moments of modern power that continue to condition the contemporary present, which

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 190.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 177.

further founds Scott's formulation of his concept of strategic criticism. As Scott claims anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory to have fallen into a hopeless state since they have become formulated by modern power, he is attempting to seek new possibilities for critical colonial analysis. For the purpose of resuscitating decolonization, strategic criticism is formulated by the mutual foundation of romanticism and tragic narrative, which is political emancipation. While romanticism has posited this aim within the future, strategic criticism pursues a tragic narrative that frames the question of colonial emancipation by the "[concern of] determining at any juncture what conceptual moves among the many available options will have the most purchase, the best yield."¹⁴⁹ The method of strategic criticism is to frame a contemporary problem by reading present conditions that have been influenced by history to determine the most viable conceptual options for colonial criticism within the discourse of modern power.

As strategic criticism does not replicate romanticism, it rather details a need to create a viable space for criticism by relocating the ontological capabilities that have captured colonial resistance by temporal and epistemological moments of colonial Enlightenment that have conscripted decolonization. To further build strategic criticism as a tactful strategy, Scott is urging, "criticism must understand itself self-consciously as a practice of entering a historically constituted field of ongoing moral argument, of gauging that argument's tenor, of calculating the stakes"¹⁵⁰. As tragic narrative seeks to disrupt the modern trajectory of power, strategic criticism is receptive to contingent power, as it attempts to conceive of multiple paths for criticism to pursue. Although this practice is strategic, as it seeks the most viable path, this condition produces a self-

¹⁴⁹ Scott, *Refashioning Futures*, 7.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

reflexive state of liminality in understanding power. Strategic criticism is to recognize that postcolonial discourse must negotiate modern power within the landscape of colonial Enlightenment in order to rethink the ontological possibility of emancipation.

To utilize a tragic narrative is to examine the historical boundaries that have placed metaphysical limitations on the contemporary discourse of postcolonialism. To question modern power from an ontological position means to destabilize the romantic mythology of freedom and emancipation because tragedy is receptive to relationships of destabilization. Tragic temporality is foundational to strategic criticism as it does not posit a singular goal of colonial emancipation within the future, but rather assess the most viable route towards a reconstitution of self-representation. To remove the romantic projection of linear progression towards the future for strategic criticism is to project that “it can never know in advance how and in relation to what ends its moves are to be undertaken.”¹⁵¹ The condition of tragedy when practicing criticism strategically is to allow for the evaluation of modern power upon postcolonial discourse, rather than purchase the teleological aim of overcoming power by a totalizing identification of what is colonial and colonized. The tragic narrative of strategic criticism is to reject this modern dialectical position between the colonizer and colonized that has conditioned the hopeless disposition of anticolonialism and postcolonialism.

As strategic criticism is derived from a tragic historiographical narrative, Scott is calling for postcolonial theory to adopt a liminal position that can negotiate modern power by navigating the terrain of colonial Enlightenment. To navigate this terrain, Scott is attempting to address modern conscription by “recognizing the ways in which the

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 10.

answers critics produce are connected to questions thrown up by the demand of the problem-space they occupy.”¹⁵² As modern power has conflated difference, authentic locations of power for the colonized have been circumscribed to colonial Enlightenment. The limitations imposed by modern power through colonial Enlightenment have restricted the space in which postcolonialism has been able to question colonialism by restricting questions of decolonization to a romantic narrative of temporality. However, the move away from romanticism is able to rebuild metaphysical questions of the colonial condition by recognizing that “the questions that define our own conjuncture have perhaps changed fundamentally.”¹⁵³ As modern power is seen to have transformed the political terrain for anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory, Scott is using strategic criticism to suggest that as the discursive terrain of decolonization has changed, the framework in which postcolonial theory produces questions must also change.

Constructing a Problem-Space

As Scott speaks of strategic criticism, he speaks of the production of contemporary postcolonial theory to be a conjuncture, and thus incomplete. While referencing postcolonialism to be incomplete, he also briefly mentions the conjuncture to be a problem-space. To recall the terminology of a problem-space is to further Scott’s prospect of rethinking postcolonial theory. The idea of a problem-space signifies the critical refashioning of modern political space and its romantic trajectory by a method that seeks to identify “conceptual-ideological ensembles, discursive formations, or language games that are generative of objects, and therefore of questions.”¹⁵⁴ Problem-

¹⁵² Ibid., 17-18.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 18.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 8.

spaces are necessary for the success of the strategic criticism of postcolonial theory as they reinforce the examination of the historical terrain in which provocations of the present are conceptualized. As modern power has restricted the terrain in which answers to colonial Enlightenment have been produced, the contemporary problem-space of postcolonial theory read through strategic criticism is to “[constitute] the predicament and the demand of our own present.”¹⁵⁵ For Scott, a problem-space is to examine the contemporary predicament of postcolonial hopelessness by examining the historical conditions that formed the original questions of emancipation.

To fashion a problem-space around postcolonial theory is to respond to the transformations of modern power posited into the political by colonial Enlightenment. To apprehend changes in the political by the construction of a problem-space is to interrogate the contemporary space of colonial Enlightenment by modern power’s attempt to conflate cultural difference. In this interrogation, tragedy can direct the postcolonial narrative to examine romantic temporality that entrapped anticolonialism, but also the metaphysical boundaries that realigned authenticity. Scott’s critique of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory can be seen as an example of a problem-space, since he attempts to unveil the conditioning power of modern conscription by articulating the measures in which colonial resistance has become hopeless. As Scott formulated strategic criticism to exemplify how questions of decolonization must be altered as the political landscape of the colonized has changed, a problem-space is able to respond to this transformation, since it is a capturing of contemporary space in which the question is to be produced.

¹⁵⁵ Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 30.

To reorient critique by recognizing that anticolonialism and postcolonialism have failed to provide the answer to the question of decolonization is to recognize that the original “demand constituted by this problem-space no longer has a strong claim on us, and therefore we should set it aside and give up with it the question and answer problematic that animates us.”¹⁵⁶ To persist with the original questions posed by anticolonialism and postcolonialism is to perpetuate conscription, as it would continue the romantic narrative that projects decolonization to be within the future. To think of postcolonialism through Scott’s problem-space is an attempt to:

“dissolve the compelling claim this story has on us now. I am not concerned with whether that narrative got its characterization of colonial power right or wrong. The point I am after is a more fundamental one, namely, whether the problem-space in which the narrative of (social or nationalist) liberation is constituted continues to be a problem-space whose questions ought to exercise a claim on the criticism of the present.”¹⁵⁷

The problem-space symbolizes that the political conditions surrounding the original question of decolonization has changed, and that this original question must be released from its romantic narrative. The purpose of tragedy is to accept that both anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory occupy a space of hopelessness, but also reframe the question of decolonization by examining the contemporary present. While tragedy is able to recognize the impact of history upon the constitution of the present by conditioning the contemporary limitations upon the political through the transformation into modernity, it is however necessary for colonial critique to rethink this space within this context. To do so is necessary as it will allow colonial critique to rethink how the original question of

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 112.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 118.

decolonization is to be asked in order to strategically reframe colonial Enlightenment within the contemporary space of the political.

Conclusion

To contextualize Scott's discussion of the failure of anticolonial and postcolonialism with the case study of Jardim Gramacho is to signify a shift in the way emancipation from modern power has been historically thought. To formulate the connections and disconnections between narratives of resistance in the geographical space of an open-air landfill is to create a moment in which the political has been normalized by thinking of Jardim Gramacho to be a problem-space that can illustrate Scott's refashioning of critique. As modern power has already commanded the way in which the political is able to function, this transformation of power needs to capture the contemporary gaze as:

“the old paths do not necessarily disappear altogether. They may well remain dimly visible along with remnants of the languages that articulated them. But their point- that is, their ability to produce salient effects- becomes attenuated. The paths now go *nowhere* because they have become not false so much as irrelevant.”¹⁵⁸

Reorienting the trajectory of criticism by producing a problem-space around a contemporary moment is able to capture modern Enlightenment's effects to the organization of the political.

Following Scott's proposed methodology on examining the present through a tragic historiographic reading allows for the development of a new path towards rethinking the political. Through rejecting the seamless trajectory of linear temporality, tragic approaches to history will allow for contingent moments of unpredictable tragedy

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 116. Emphasis in original.

to frame contemporary moments of crisis. In this rejection, questions of the present are examined in relation to conditions of history, rather than directed towards the future.

From this approach, criticism is able to examine the conditions that have formulated the boundaries of political space; and ontological and epistemological normative values of knowing authenticity can be challenged. In relation to scavenging, this methodology will help develop an understanding of how waste has been produced as a symbol of organization in the political. While waste in relation to scavenging has largely been excluded from political space by primarily being an activity performed in the informal economy, this has resulted from what Asad articulates to be part of the colonial conflation of cultural difference to political and economic categories. By determining this conflation, scavenging through the understanding of social exclusion and a further discussion of governance by Partha Chatterjee and Warren Magnusson can develop to challenge normative understandings of the political by presenting urban challenges to the sovereign state through a critical rethinking of the historical conditions that formulate this problem-space.

Chapter 3

To understand the problem-space of scavenging by Scott's rejection of a romantic historiographical trajectory, this chapter will seek to revisit history. By addressing the question of informal scavenging as a way to rethink the political, the conditions that have formed the political but also, perceptions of scavenging will be examined. For this step, I look towards Immanuel Kant and Mary Douglas. As Kant is a modern thinker who has influenced the construction of political space, I examine his *Political Writings* for the effort to contextualize what Asad claims to be modern power. It is from this reading that the influence of modern power upon Scott's articulation of the hopeless condition of critique will be developed. To examine a historical narrative of waste, I look towards Mary Douglas's book titled, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Pollution and Taboo*. In this book, Douglas produces an analysis that examines how pollution has come to be prohibited in both premodern and modern cultures. By adapting this analysis to the problem-space of scavenging, waste is seen to be taboo, as it is prohibited matter. It is by contextualizing waste with a discourse of taboo that the symbolic meaning of waste, as an object of prohibition, is seen to inform varying levels of governmental legislation that have enabled or restricted the practice of scavenging.

A Modern Foundation of the Political

Immanuel Kant's *Political Writings* present the political to be a space that is defined by the state, as it produces a political hierarchy that subordinates the subject to the state. The Kantian formation of the political is seen to concentrate power within the state, which is signified by the transition from premodern natural organization to modern

governance. To develop a modern political ordering, Kant is transitioning away from premodern conditions of being by constituting subjectivity outside of nature as:

“men neither pursue their aims purely by instinct, as the animals do, nor act in accordance with any integral, prearranged plan like rational cosmopolitans, it would appear that no law- governed history of mankind is possible.”¹⁵⁹

In this proposition, Kant is seen situating mankind between premodern conditions of natural instincts and modern conditions of rational cosmopolitanism.¹⁶⁰ As man does not pursue either intrinsically, Kant is implying that his philosophical task is to construct a law- governed history of the political.¹⁶¹

It is within the temporal shift between premodernity and modernity that Kant places mankind within a liminal position that cannot provide modern Enlightenment. To resolve this metaphysical liminality, Kant is seen describing nature to have placed man outside of animal ordering as, “nature gave man reason, and freedom of will based upon reason”.¹⁶² By the endowment of reason, nature has separated mankind from the mechanical ordering of instincts by mankind’s ability to know freedom through reason. Despite the privilege of reason, nature has also placed mankind within the circumstance

¹⁵⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 41-42.

¹⁶⁰ When distinguishing current political conditions between premodern and modern temporalities, Kant is inferring that the attainment of universal Enlightenment is developed through three stages. These three stages consist of savage lawlessness, civilization, and morality. While the Kantian moment of Enlightenment constitutes the period of modern morality, present political conditions constitute the stage of civilization. The difference between these two stages is seen by period of civilization to be conditioned by unsocial sociability. The present stage of civilization is influenced by individual motives for the attainment of power, and thus the populous requires external law to restrict freedom for the purpose of coexistence. See Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 45- 49.

¹⁶¹ It is also important to note that while this thesis discusses Kantian distinctions between premodern and modern temporality, my own distinction is not fully Kantian. I use Kant to outline a foundation that can develop a reading of modern Enlightenment.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 43.

of unsocial sociability. The impact of unsocial sociability upon the construction of reason in relation to the political is seen by a social negotiation of space in which:

“man has an inclination to *live in society*, since he feels in this state more like a man, that is, he feels able to develop his natural capacities. But he also has a great tendency to *live as an individual*, to isolate himself, since he also encounters in himself the unsocial characteristic of wanting to direct everything in accordance of his own ideas.”¹⁶³

Unsocial sociability implies that mankind transverses between the desire to live in a society, but also as an individual. As mankind is removed from the premodern ordering of animal instinct, the question of modern politics for Kant is seen by the problem of organizing subjects for the attainment of Enlightenment. The political disposition to develop modernity will be seen by the hierarchical positioning of the state that subordinates the subject to the state; which will allow for the political to be conditioned by the boundaries of law that centralize power within the sovereign state.

To develop the Kantian position, it must first be understood what Kant is describing to be Enlightenment. For Kant, it is a moment that organizes the political by asserting the primacy of the state by the boundaries of law that negotiate the subject within the populous. The Enlightenment is characterized by the slogan that prescribes the individual to “have courage to use your *own* understanding.”¹⁶⁴ Through this statement, the space between the subject and the state are connected by the introduction of reason. To introduce the characteristic of courage to reason is to detail the Enlightenment as a delicate process as there are “only a few, by cultivating their own minds, that have succeeded in freeing themselves from immaturity and in continuing boldly on their

¹⁶³ Ibid., 44.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 54. Emphasis in original.

way.”¹⁶⁵ The implication of this distinction is seen by the principle that all subjects are able to think for themselves, but only a few have been able to cultivate their minds.

While reason may lie within the mind of the individual, the progression towards Enlightenment resides within the power of the state to govern through law. The Kantian construction of Enlightenment is based upon the creation of legal boundaries imposed upon the subject due to unsocial sociability. Modern Enlightenment may dictate the modern subject to think for oneself, Enlightenment also details that, “obedience is imperative.”¹⁶⁶ While one must think for them self, one must also obey the state by not acting upon individual thought. Obedience to the state is necessary because of unsocial sociability in the political. While the subject is to develop reason, the subject must also obey the state and not impose his own will on another. To act upon reason would be to “renounce such enlightenment completely... means violating and trampling underfoot the sacred rights of mankind.”¹⁶⁷ As nature privileged mankind by the ability to practice reason for the purpose of Enlightenment, the sovereign state is being developed as the sole actor to govern the populous through the enforcement of law that can ensure individual right.

While the state and the subject have become bound through a legal framework, the granting of right from the state to the subject has conditioned this relationship. Kant further develops this connection between the state and the subject in his sixth proposition in the “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose”. The need for the state to grant right can be seen by his description of mankind to detail:

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 55.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 56

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 58.

“although, a rational creature, he desires a law to impose limits on the freedom of all, he is still misled by his self- seeking animal inclinations into exempting himself from the law where he can. He thus requires a *master* to break his self- will and force him to obey a universally valid will under which everyone can be free.”¹⁶⁸

For Kant, it has been through the development of rational cognitive capabilities that man can be released from animalistic laws of nature. However, due to the condition of unsocial sociability, man still desires for obedience to an externalized force that is able to manage unsocial sociability. While all of man seeks freedom, the ability to gain freedom requires the subordination of the subject to a state that is able to govern by the boundaries of law, which regulate a population.

As the legislative authority of the state became a necessary condition for the transformation into modern Enlightenment, this is seen in accordance with restrictions on freedom through the granting of right. While the state is able to facilitate the cognitive development of the subject, the condition of unsocial sociability necessitates the need for legal boundaries to be maintained by the state as:

“*right* is the restriction of each individual’s freedom so that it harmonises with the freedom of everyone else. And *public right* is the distinctive quality of the *external laws* which make this constant harmony possible.”¹⁶⁹

While right may constitute limitations upon individual freedom, right however, ensures the condition of coexistence in the state. As the condition of coexistence can facilitate the growth of reason, it becomes the state’s responsibility to promote freedom through right as, “*public right* is the sum total of those laws which require to be made universally public in order to produce a state of right. It is therefore a system of laws for a people”¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 46. Emphasis in original.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 73. Emphasis in original.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 136. Emphasis in original.

For Enlightenment to occur, coexistence can only be assured by restrictions upon individual freedom through the granting of right from the state. As political conditions of coexistence constitute restrictions upon the freedoms of the subject within a populous, the relationship between the subject and the populous is regulated by the granting of right from the state.

Although this hierarchical structure is seen based within a relationship of the subject and the state, this organization solidifies the primacy of the state as a political actor. It is through this political structure that the centralization of power within the state is seen to represent a “form of a union created by the common interest of everyone living in a state of right... in relation to other people, however, it is simply called a *power*”¹⁷¹. While the state may seem to be constituted by the individual subjects of a populous, this is, however, a mere product of the sovereign state’s power. The narrative of freedom through the construction of individual right acts as a guise for the legitimization of the sovereign state since:

“any alternation to a defective political constitution, which may certainly be necessary at times, can thus be carried out only by the sovereign himself through *reform*, but not through revolution by the people.”¹⁷²

Political legislation that is fundamental to the constitution of the modern state not only ensures the individual security from surrounding subjects, but also secures the position of the state as the sovereign source of power in the political. Despite the perception of the state to represent the common interest of the populous, the state has become the legitimate source of power in the political, as it is the sole actor that is able to enforce the constitution, but also change it.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 137. Emphasis in original.

¹⁷² Ibid., 146.

Interlocking the Political with Critique

The purpose of introducing Kant to this thesis is to develop Asad's notion of modern power, as Asad's theory of conscription has greatly influenced Scott's conception of modern Enlightenment. As Asad describes modern power to have imposed boundaries upon the ability for cultural distinction to respond to modern power, these boundaries act to regulate how categories of difference are able to respond too, but also interact with the political. Arising from the transformative force of modern power that has condition the political, the distinction between premodern and modern power finds similarities between Asad and Kant; as both theorists describe this shift to be signified by the constitution of the state and the formulation of law. While Kant is an original thinker of the Enlightenment, Asad's interpretation of modern power enables a contemporary interpretation of this foundation.

As Kant is seen to have created the foundation for the restriction of freedom through right to facilitate the coexistence of subjects within a state, Asad's description of modern power nuances this position. While Kant writes to the subject in the condition of unsocial sociability, Asad describes modern power to project the subject as an equal citizen. For Asad, the citizen is projected through the legal category of right, which enables or restricts the ability of the subject to act. It is from this difference that Asad can be distinguished from Kant, but also seen as an interlocker. As Asad speaks to the position of the equal citizen, he claims the equal citizen to be an extension of the sovereign state. However, the citizen is only read as equal by the extension of the legal category of right within public space. Asad's formulation of modern power resonates the structure of Kantian modernity as Asad describes the transformation into modernity to be defined by the ability of the sovereign state to govern by legal categories.

While the Kantian foundation can be seen in Asad's description of modern power, it is Asad's critique that is able to interlink Scott into the development of this problem-space. Through introducing Kant to this thesis, it is to develop the foundations of what Scott claims to be modern Enlightenment. Asad is useful to transition this movement as his critique claims modern power to have transformed relationships with the political, as these relationships have been bound to legal categories of right. Seen in chapter one, Scott's critique is framed by Asad's description of modern power, and this transformation has affected the position of postcolonial critique. To examine Kant is to think through the question of how modern political space has been constituted by the Enlightenment, which has led to the hopelessness of critique. It is the relationship between the subject and the state that has been defined by restrictions upon freedom by the granting of right. By this relationship, Kant is seen to have constructed a political relationship between the state and the subject that is defined by the state.

The impact of this relationship is seen by Scott's description of the failure of both anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought. This is depicted by Scott's critique of anticolonial resistance, as anticolonialism saw emancipation to be the physical overcoming of the colonial state. For postcolonialism, Scott is seen describing how colonial Enlightenment replaced authentic self-representation. As Scott describes, the impact of colonial Enlightenment is seen by the ability to know authentic freedom, this has refigured legal categories to restrict freedom through right. The introduction to modern Enlightenment conscripted colonial states into modern structures of power, which sought to identify political relationships with the authority of the modern state. Political relationships between the colonizer and the colonized were marked by the transition

between premodern and modern temporality, which conscripted the colonized subject into the modern framework of the political by an identification with the sovereign state. From this process, cultural relationships have become depoliticized by the construction of the sovereign state.

To examine the implications of the historical processes of modern power upon the contemporary present that are framed by the notion of conscription, I am bridging towards thinking differently of the political. As Scott identifies the crisis of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought to also be a moment of possibility, I utilize my next section in chapter three to further develop metaphysical implications of waste upon the practice of scavenging. As Mary Douglas argues, pollution has been conceived of as taboo. The negative perception of pollution can be translated to the scavenging of waste, as pollution and waste are both matter out of place. It is from this translation that the notion of waste as taboo has impacted varying levels of governmental legislation that have restricted or enabled the practice of scavenging. However, as Douglas claims that both premodern and modern cultures have prohibited pollution, I choose to further investigate the impact of different political actors upon the development of a positive legislation towards waste.

As Douglas will be seen to describe, the removal of premodern and modern cultural categories from the prohibition of pollution reveals pollution to be symbol of political order. Through revealing the symbolic meaning of pollution, this notion can be integrated into the practice of scavenging, as waste can be translated to be read through political prohibition. From the symbolic translation of waste as prohibited matter, the value of waste is seen to have influenced municipal legislation in the city of Buenos

Aires, as recycling was deemed illegal. However, this value is transformed when waste became a visible symbol of political and economic crisis. It is from this moment of crisis that waste- as a prohibited symbol of instability found within the streets of Buenos Aires- became a moment of possibility to develop positive legislation towards scavenging in order to address social exclusion by the city of Buenos Aires.

By introducing the case study of street scavenging in Buenos Aires, I use the municipal government's response to scavenging to contextualize the experience of Jardim Gramacho. By examining state and municipal approaches to scavenging, I use chapter four to develop the possibility of theoretically rethinking postcolonial politics. In my last chapter, the ontological position of the modern state in the political is challenged by the dynamic quality of the city that is able to address conditions of social exclusion.

Prohibiting Matter

Mary Douglas is the next thinker I examine in an effort to construct a problem-space around scavenging in the informal sector of the Global South. To revisit historical narratives of waste is to develop an understanding of how negative perceptions of scavenging have been produced within the political, and thus inform political legislation. Douglas's book describes the methods in which pollution has become a taboo subject in modern culture, as pollution is seen to challenge the sanctity of cleanliness. Douglas describes these developments by working through religious, mythological and historical narratives of purity and danger. While identifying cultural influences that have acted to prohibit waste, Douglas also focuses upon how premodern and modern culture have distinguished pollution as an object of prohibition. The split between these two temporal

moments is the key to understanding Douglas, and the purpose of contextualizing her argument within a problem- space of scavenging.

For Douglas, history has been defined by a ruling preoccupation with the attainment of the state of cleanliness. It is out of this preoccupation that the desire for purity has come to influence the modern structure of the political, and reinforce the primacy of the sovereign state. In relation to the problem-space of scavenging, waste is seen to influence the development of the modern political by structuring boundaries that have developed from “our idea of sanctity that has become very specialized, and that in some [premodern] cultures the sacred is a very general idea meaning little more than prohibition.”¹⁷³ From this statement, it can firstly be noted that Douglas is identifying the prohibition of pollution to have existed in both premodern and modern cultures.

Secondly, the ‘our’ is seen to represent modern culture, and the advancement of rational thought by modern culture. By introducing these two positions, Douglas’s argument can be further described as the attempt of rational modern culture to create the distinction between premodern and modern conditions of prohibition.

However, it is Douglas’s identification of the revulsion of pollution within both premodern and modern culture that will embed her argument within a two- fold position. Firstly, while both historical moments see pollution as undesirable, premodern culture has produced this through a religious tone of the sacred nature of ritual, while modern culture has produced this notion through reason. Secondly, Douglas will be seen attempting to collapse the division between premodern and modern culture by challenging modern

¹⁷³ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1985), 8. Douglas is seen drawing upon religious tones that seek to depict good and bad through illusions towards the realm of holiness and impurity. Good is seen defined through terms of holiness, while a conception of what is bad is seen through impurity. See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1985), 5.

epistemological categories that formulate political space. To bridge these two positions together, Douglas is seen claiming that the differentiation between premodern and modern conceptions of pollution have been falsified by stating that “is this then really the difference between ritual pollution and our ideas of dirt: Are our ideas hygienic where theirs are symbolic?”¹⁷⁴ This statement exemplifies that the position of ‘us’ is restricted to modern culture by the advancement of hygiene, while ‘them’ is representative of symbolic premodern culture. The relationship between these two cultures forms a division between these two temporal moments that is seen as integral to modern Enlightenment, which resonates with the Kantian composition of modern political space, but also what Asad describes to be modern power.

While Douglas identifies the break between premodern and modern culture to be distinguished by the division between how the prohibition of pollution has been differentiated, Douglas is seeking to collapse this distinction. This is seen when Douglas articulates, “the difference between pollution behaviour in one part of the world and another is only a matter of detail.”¹⁷⁵ For Douglas, the difference between premodern and modern can be fused in the representation of Asad’s position on cultural conflation, but in the effort to examine modern dominance. The conflation of premodern and modern prohibitions on pollution is able to reveal a cross-cultural characterization of pollution because when:

“we abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place. This is a very suggestive approach. It implies two conditions: Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 34.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 35.

event. Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter.”¹⁷⁶

The removal of symbolic and scientific prohibitive reasoning from cultures can effectively erase the barrier between ‘us’ and ‘them’. As dirt is stripped of cultural representation, dirt continues to be prohibitive matter that symbolizes prohibition as an organizational category in political space. This move contextualizes Douglas within the problem-space of scavenging, as she reinforces Asad’s position on modern power through claiming “cultural categories [to be] public matters.”¹⁷⁷ Douglas is not attempting to remove cultural distinction, she is rather attempting to reinforce that cultural understandings surrounding the prohibition of pollution is truly a political category.

When examining how prohibition has been constructed in both premodern and modern cultures, Douglas can be used to exemplify how cultural prohibitions on pollution organize the political through regulation. In conflating cultural difference, Douglas is interpreting prohibition as a method to critique modern Enlightenment, and thus enabling scavenging to challenge modern constitutions of political power. By conflating the cultural differences between prohibition, Douglas is attempting to construct a larger image of pollution that acts as a signifier of power in political space. The idea of pollution has not only come to symbolize matter as taboo, but also how pollution works in political space since, “if uncleanness is matter out of place, we must approach it through order. Uncleanness or dirt is that which must be included if a pattern is to be maintained.”¹⁷⁸ While dirt represents matter out of place in both premodern and modern

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 39.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 40.

cultures, dirt cannot fully be removed from culture or else the relationship between cleanliness and uncleanliness would cease to exist.

However, the modern transformation of the political described by both Asad and Scott is seen reflected in Douglas's work. As modern purposes of prohibition have replaced premodern understandings of pollution in relation to society, this has developed legislation that restricts waste in political space. As seen by Douglas, the transition from premodern to modern culture replicates what Kant describes as the process of Enlightenment, and it is this transformation into modern Enlightenment that changed the way in which pollution has been prohibited. The connection between the temporal distinctions for both Kant and Douglas is seen through the development of the political by legal categories that enable or restrict coexistence with other subjects, but also with matter. Relationships between pollution and purity have historically defined social structure, and can be seen to symbolize modes of self-representation as:

“social rituals create a reality which would be nothing without them. It is not too much to say that ritual is more to society than words are to thought. For it is very possible to know something and then find words for it. But it is impossible to have social relations without symbolic acts.”¹⁷⁹

Social relationships are conditioned by power and by symbolic formations that are contained within space. As seen in Kant, he is formulating a social pattern that will ensure the process of modern Enlightenment by a legal constitution that will regulate social interaction in public space. For Douglas, modern culture has replicated a similar pattern to excluded waste from public space by legislatively prohibiting interactions with waste.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 62.

To embed the notion of temporal divisions into Scott's critique of colonial Enlightenment, it is important to note that Douglas also makes reference to modern historiographic narrative. As Kant and Douglas both conceive of the movement between premodern and modern to constitute modern political space, this linear projection replicates the temporal distinction between past, present and future, which Scott critically acknowledges to be romantic narrative. However, as Douglas is developing an argument that seeks to challenge modern Enlightenment, she resonates Scott's critique of romantic historical narrative of modernity as she claims that the:

“basis for comparison is to insist on the unity of human experience and at the same time to insist on its variety, on the differences which make comparison worth while. The only way to do this is to recognise the nature of historical progress and the nature of primitive and of modern society. Progress means differentiation. Thus primitive means undifferentiated; modern means differentiated.”¹⁸⁰

Douglas is seen articulating that the transition between premodern and modern culture has been constructed through the creation of difference, which is seen through the Kantian formulation of progression through reason. While the symbolic power of pollution has been shared by both premodern and modern culture, romantic historical narratives of modern Enlightenment have sought to subordinate premodern cultures, which has been normalized by the temporal distinction between premodern and modern culture.

Douglas's critique on modern Enlightenment specifically details the importance of modern logic in relation to how pollution is imagined in political space. The construction of how difference is perceived in political space, as influenced by the

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 77.

construction of reason for the progression of modern Enlightenment, has formed how political space is organized as:

“there is only one kind of differentiation in thought that is relevant, and that provides a criterion that we can apply equally to different cultures and to the history of our own scientific ideas. That criterion is based on the Kantian principle that thought can only advance by freeing itself from the shackles of its own subjective conditions. The first Copernican revolution, the discovery that only man’s subjective viewpoint made the sun seem to revolve round the earth, is continually renewed. In our own culture mathematics first and later logic, now history, now language and now thought processes themselves and even knowledge of the self and of society, are fields of knowledge progressively freed from the subjective limitation of the mind. To the extent to which sociology, anthropology and psychology are possible in it, our own type of culture needs to be distinguished from others which lack this self-awareness and conscious reaching for objectivity.”¹⁸¹

In this passage, Douglas is referring to the moment of criterion to be the Kantian construction of political society that removed the subject from human nature by the institutionalization of natural instinct through the logic of reason. However, Douglas is similarly identifying the development of prohibition to Asad’s description of the transformation of modern power. As the movement of progression is marked by difference and is represented by a change in thought, Douglas’s identification of the shift from ritual to reason is seen to represent Scott’s analysis on the replacement of authentic self-representation. By the force of conscription, modern Enlightenment has transformed how waste is seen to produce prohibition in political space by reimagining waste to be illicit through the modern quality of rationalism.

Relationships of Prohibition

To embed Douglas’s work on the taboo of pollution within the problem-space scavenging, I look towards a case study of scavenging from Buenos Aires, Argentina that

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 78.

integrates Douglas's work. By looking towards research that has developed Douglas's examination of the prohibition of waste in political space, this will help navigate scavenging within a politics of waste that seeks to rethink political space. By examining the experience of Jardim Gramacho in Brazil and the case of street scavenging in Buenos Aires, Argentina, I seek to utilize the different experiences to exemplify variant approaches used to address issues of social exclusion by the Brazilian state and by the municipal government of Buenos Aires. While Jardim Gramacho has been closed, the study of scavenging in Buenos Aires depicts the legalization of scavenging by the municipal government when faced with increasing conditions of social exclusion. By developing this analysis, I am able to progress towards discussing alternative theoretical visions of the political that are contextualized by acts that infringe upon the sovereignty of the state, but also imagine the political through an urban perspective.

The introduction of Rita Whitson's article entitled "Negotiating Place and Value: Geographies of Waste and Scavenging in Buenos Aires" is imperative for developing a problem-space surrounding scavenging, as it is able to draw connections between the conceptual prohibition of waste to the regulation of waste. By utilizing a case study that has read the role of waste as matter out of place in relation to scavenging practices, this study directly provides guidance on how to think of Jardim Gramacho in relation to political space. As Douglas's examination of the cultural prohibition of dirt in the political, Whitson's article is able to provide a material analysis of how Douglas can be used in relation to scavenging. As Whitson utilizes Douglas's account of how pollution has become constructed as matter out of place in political space, Whitson is able describe

how waste has influenced governmental legislation that acts to prohibit or promote scavenging.

To provide a historical background to how the Argentina's 2002 economic crisis heightened informal scavenging practices by creating conditions of social exclusion, I will briefly discuss the impact of the economic crisis upon residents of Buenos Aires. Argentina's economic crisis is seen to originate in the 1990's when the economy was slipping into a recession, and questions of governmental deficits and banking liabilities were being raised¹⁸². While economic instability has developed over time, the crisis peaked in 2001 when Argentina announced it "would stop paying interest on its US\$155 billion in foreign debt, the largest such default in history."¹⁸³ This default began a country wide economic crisis that saw traditional conditions of social exclusion develop since:

"58 percent of the urban population ended up below the poverty line. Families previously solidly in the middle class found themselves suddenly without income... the unemployed did not have many survival options."¹⁸⁴

In Argentina, economic scarcity quickly rose within all economic classes, but the middle class in the city of Buenos Aires were directly impacted by the collapse of the formal economy. As the economic crisis directly created extensive conditions of economic scarcity for those living in Buenos Aires, this crisis saw for social exclusion to develop through the characteristics of urban poverty discussed in chapter one.

While unemployment rates had drastically increased due to economic scarcity, scavenging in the informal economy began to flourish due to underdeveloped waste management practices. The 2002 economic crisis had presented residents of Buenos

¹⁸² Martin Medina, *The World's Scavengers: Salvaging for Sustainable Consumption and Production* (Toronto: AltaMira Press, 2007), 168.

¹⁸³ Ibid..

¹⁸⁴ Ibid..

Aires with the ideal conditions to develop an informal economy through the recovery of waste as:

“the country had hundreds of thousands of recently unemployed individuals and plenty of materials in the waste stream. On the demand side, industry needed, in order to survive the crisis, inexpensive raw materials. In just a few months, tens of thousands of individuals became scavengers throughout the country. The largest number of scavengers could be found in Buenos Aires, where one-third of Argentines live today.”¹⁸⁵

Waste management practices in Buenos Aires had been developed in the 1970s by regional authority of *Cinturón Ecológica Área Metropolitana Sociedad del Estado* (CEAMSE) in which “regulations were enacted to make sanitary landfilling the only disposal option for Buenos Aires’ waste. Recycling was declared illegal and prohibited in any form.”¹⁸⁶ Through this regulation, it is seen that the scavenging of recyclable materials was never incorporated into formal waste management practices. This practice was further institutionalized by manufactures before the economic crisis because, “Argentine manufactures imported inexpensive raw materials.”¹⁸⁷ For many decades in Buenos Aires, scavenging was made illegal, but recyclable materials were transported to sanitary landfills due to waste management practice and the lack of demand for recyclable materials by manufactures.

Despite longstanding prohibitions on recycling in relation to formal waste management practices, the economic crisis saw changes to negative perceptions of waste arising from the increase in the participation of informal scavenging in Buenos Aires. During the beginning of the economic crisis, “the city’s and public’s initial reaction to this *cartonero* explosion was negative. The authorities began to enforce CEAMSE’s

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 169.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 170.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid..

scavenging ban.”¹⁸⁸ Despite negative perceptions and legislative approaches to stop informal scavenging, the *cartoneros* continue to collect recyclable materials as a method to manage the conditions of social exclusion and economic scarcity. During this time, the authorities attempted to stop the work being performed by the *cartoneros* by having the city police confiscate recyclable materials that had been collected¹⁸⁹. While the authorities attempted to prevent scavengers from collecting recyclable materials, the repressive tactics of the authority saw a social backlash from the public, who began to support the work of the *cartoneros*.¹⁹⁰ As the public began to support the work of the *cartoneros*, the municipal legislation of CEAMSE that had illegalized recycling was overturned, and this change becomes the focus of my examination of Whitson’s piece.

Whitson’s case study depicts scavenging practices located in the streets of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Whitson’s study ties economic, geographic and public policy scholarship together in attempt to examine the impact of social exclusion upon the governance of the municipal government during a moment of economic crisis. Similarly to a point raised in chapter one, Whitson is emphasizing that the informal economy of scavenging is important to think of politically as “geographies of waste and disposal have the potential to transform or reinforce longstanding inequitable social structures.”¹⁹¹ For this effort, Whitson examines a case in which scavenging became a highly politicized topic in Argentina during the 2002 economic crisis, since there was a sharp rise of people participating in scavenging during this period. By focusing on governmental legislation,

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.,171.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.,172.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid..

¹⁹¹ Rita Whitson, “Negotiating Place and Value: Geographies of Waste and Scavenging in Buenos Aires,” *Antipode* 43, no 4 (2011): 1406.

Whitson is integrating social and cultural relations of waste with changes in existing municipal governmental legislation that previously produced scavenging as illegal, and thus had kept it in the informal economy. Legislative change towards the informal economy of scavenging is seen by the city of Buenos Aires having introduced the “*Cartoneros* Law and the Zero Waste Law, [which represented] a significant change in the position of the *cartoneros* and their work with respect to the state and society.”¹⁹² The change that Whitson identifies is the legalization of recycling through these two laws that responded to the conditions of social exclusion by changes in the perceptions of waste as taboo.

In Buenos Aires, it is seen that recycling was criminally prohibited before 2005¹⁹³. However, through the legalization of recycling, the reversal of this policy is seen as a response to the rise of informal scavenging occurring after the economic crisis and can be contextualized to changes in how waste is thought of in public space. As the lifespan of an object is defined by an end moment, the object is deemed valueless and becomes classified as waste and necessitates the removal of the object. Whitson utilizes Douglas to read the production of waste as matter out of place as an organizing value that structures relationships in the political. As waste is conceived as matter out of place, social relationships with waste have been conditioned by legislation that excludes and prohibits. The loss of value in matter is seen to affect political space as matter out of place by becoming “an expression of the other: place is a marker of value, and the value of things present, in turn, helps constitute the place.”¹⁹⁴ Spatial locations where waste is

¹⁹² Ibid., 1410. *Cartoneros* is also the Argentinean term for scavenger.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 1409.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 1413.

found appropriate the valueless condition of waste, and thus have negatively been perceived as culturally undesirable and excluded from the political.

For Whitson, the act of disposal is an essential stage that conditions the lack of desirability of an object. As the act of disposal encapsulates the rejection of an object through the symbolic representation of meaningless and valueless, this temporal moment reflects the social positioning of scavengers since the:

“recognition of waste as a commodity and disposal as not simply the end point of consumption facilitates an awareness that the power of waste in defining identities and structuring social relations exists not just in terms of positioning people with respect to other consumers. Rather, waste creation and management also position people with respect to those who will use, process, sell, sort, bury, and otherwise interact with the “waste” that is produced.”¹⁹⁵

Perceptions of scavenging have been conditioned by the subscription of valueless and temporal finality, which have defined how waste is managed within the political as “waste does not exist outside of our definition of it, and this definition almost always involves the spatial and relational elements”¹⁹⁶. Waste is a hegemonic symbol that derives meaning from cultural notions that construct the imagining of an object and its position within place ultimately govern relationships between value and valueless, and determine social inequalities within public space.¹⁹⁷ In this examination, Whitson is attempting to bridge connections between the political and those objects that occupy this space by integrating predominate socio-cultural perceptions that have prohibited waste.

For Buenos Aires, socio-cultural perceptions of waste as matter out of place were challenged by the economic crisis. It is from this crisis that Whitson claims perceptions of

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 1414.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid..

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 1415.

waste as prohibition that previously made recycling illegal were seen transformed. During this crisis, the increased amount of scavengers created intense competition for recyclables and led to garbage being strewn across streets, as the *cartoneros* did not have time to clean up the garbage bags that they had sorted through.¹⁹⁸ The process in which waste had become increasingly more visible by street scavengers begun to challenge the normative perception of waste as matter out of place, as “the importance of waste belonging elsewhere thus became very clear when the garbage was visibly and persistently *not* elsewhere for the residents of Buenos Aires.”¹⁹⁹ As an object, garbage, in the public space of municipal streets became “a very stark symbol that the system that had maintained order in the city previously was no longer functioning, as it was no longer able to maintain the boundaries that ensured that trash to be contained ‘elsewhere’.”²⁰⁰ Garbage soon became a symbol for economic instability, but also a symbol to question the founding legislative displacement of waste that had made it illegal to recycle matter that was originally deemed to be out of place.

In Buenos Aires, the visibility of waste instigated the revisiting of governmental legislation that saw waste as an item of prohibition by the illegalization of recycling through the formulation of the *Cartoneros* Law and the Zero Waste Law. As Whitson details, the *Cartoneros* Law sought to institutionalize informal scavenging into formal waste management practices by legalizing this act, the introduction of structural organization upon *cartoneros* and their cooperatives by formalizing workers into a

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 1416. Emphasis in original.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

registry, and by educating and encouraging residents to separate their own waste.²⁰¹

While this law was created in 2002, the Zero Waste Law was created in 2005 and sought to eliminate the dumping of any recyclable materials in landfills by setting yearly-proposed goals to decrease the amount of recyclable materials being dumped.²⁰² For the case of scavenging in Argentina, the increased visibility of waste that had resulted from economic conditions of crisis was originally undesirable. However, the economic crisis heightened the conditions of social exclusion and led to the proliferation of informal street scavenging, which saw changes in public perception of waste that reshaped municipal legislation.

Conclusion

As Kant is seen to describe the foundations of what is claimed to be modern power by Asad, Douglas is able to further detail how the political was changed by this transformative force during the shift between premodern and modern cultures. As Douglas's narrative is based in an examination of how dirt has been prohibited in both premodern and modern cultures, this thesis attempted to apply her concept to the problem-space of scavenging in the informal economy. By describing the prohibition of dirt by both premodern and modern cultures, modern culture has conditioned prohibition by the adaption of modern rationalism. Hygiene, as a characteristic of modern culture, acts to symbolize the progressive nature of this temporality, but also differentiate between conceptual metaphysical temporalities of premodernity and modernity. Despite dirt having been prohibited in both cultures, this difference works to symbolize a temporal distinction towards the progression of Enlightenment. While cultural difference

²⁰¹ Ibid., 1409.

²⁰² Ibid.

distinguishes these two moments, the Kantian formation of the political seeks to identify political relationships with the state.

The transformation into modern power is seen by the integration of the case study of street scavenging in the city of Buenos Aires. As modern power introduced the notion of the sovereign state, the political was transformed by the identification of politics with the state. Cultural relationships of difference were removed by this identification, which has perpetuated waste to be a valueless object in need of disposal. In modern political space, waste is seen to symbolize matter out of place, and those relationships with waste appropriate this symbolism. Whitson's examination of street scavenging in Buenos Aires is able to translate Douglas's theoretical understanding of waste as prohibition to have informed governmental legislation. As the Argentine economic crisis perpetuated the condition of social exclusion, the participation in scavenging increased. While the municipality of Buenos Aires attempted to maintain the illegalization of recycling and thus prevent residents from scavenging, waste left in the streets became a stark symbol of political instability. In response to pressure from the residents of Buenos Aires, the municipality amended this policy and made recycling legal.

For the purpose of this thesis, I utilize the case of Buenos Aires to further develop my problem-space of scavenging in the informal economy to the problem of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory. As scavenging is claimed to be a resolution to issues of social exclusion in the political, why has it historically been prohibited? Although the case study of Jardim Gramacho details the Brazilian state to have legally recognized scavenging as a profession, the closure of Jardim Gramacho has foreclosed the potential of addressing social exclusion through scavenging. The closing of Jardim Gramacho not

only foreclosed this possibility, this act also perpetuated the conditions of social exclusion for those scavengers working outside of cooperatives. The difference between Jardim Gramacho and Buenos Aires is articulated by the closure of Jardim Gramacho (and other landfills in Brazil) having been initiated by the Brazilian state, while scavenging in the streets of Buenos Aires was made legal by the municipal government. This differentiation informs my final chapter, in which I seek to understand theoretical relationships of cultural distinction in postcolonial states by Partha Chatterjee, but also think through the distinction between the ability of the state and the municipality to address social exclusion through urbanism.

In this final chapter, I seek to focus on rethinking the political for the purpose of turning crisis into possibility. In following Scott's claim to the hopeless condition of critique by an analysis of scavenging, I seek to utilize the different positions of the state and the city as a way to refashion critique. In Chatterjee's writings on postcolonial governance, Chatterjee constructs the notion of political society to be constituted by conditions of social exclusion. As Chatterjee's political society describes those excluded from the formalities of the political, this analysis of scavenging can be read through his work on the governance of political society. As Chatterjee will be seen to describe that the modern structure of the political has been unable to address exclusion, processes of governance have been utilized to manage political society. It is from this position that I move towards Warren Magnusson's politics of urbanism to ontologically challenge the structure of the political. As Magnusson proposes to see politics from the position of the city, he emphasizes the importance of relationships between subjects, matter and the environment in the space of city. As Magnusson proposes, these relationships work to

help rethink the political, and I have attempted to introduce this by the case study of scavenging in Buenos Aires. The importance of relationships in the political is seen in Buenos Aires as the municipal government redeveloped legislation that prohibited recycling for the purpose of addressing social exclusion after the city had to physically confront waste, and thus confront the symbolic power of waste to represent instability.

Chapter 4

In this final chapter, I intend to further develop the problem- space of scavenging by two very different theorists. As I have previously described, Scott's critique of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory is developed by the notion that colonial Enlightenment replaced authentic origins of self-representation in colonial states. The transformation of modern power introduced the notion of the sovereign state to politics, but also conditioned the political to be identified with the state. This condition of modern power reformed authentic positions of self-representation for the subject as cultural relationships of difference were replaced by the state. The affect of this change upon relationships of difference in the postcolonial state is the focus of this next chapter.

Firstly, I look towards Partha Chatterjee, as he writes to the postcolonial state by the examination of civil and political society. From this split, he describes political society to be inhibited by those that infringe upon the sovereign state to be managed by the administration of welfare, which helps me build a correlation with the experience of scavenging at Jardim Gramacho. This correlation drawn between Chatterjee and Jardim Gramacho leads into the introduction of Warren Magnusson's book, *Politics of Urbanism*. While Chatterjee is able to provide some measure as to why the sovereign state has been unable to address issues of social exclusion, Magnusson is able to progress political interpretations of scavenging at Jardim Gramacho and in the streets of Buenos Aires. As Magnusson will be seen attempting to think the other of sovereignty, his proposition of seeing politics through the position of the city is able to contextualize why

the municipality of Buenos Aires was more successful in overcoming relations of prohibition when dealing with social exclusion in the space of the political.

Postcolonial Governance

In Partha Chatterjee's *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, Chatterjee is writing from the context of postcolonial India. In this text, Chatterjee is examining the development of governance in the postcolonial world. To introduce Chatterjee's idea on governance, I look towards the statement in which he claims that "governance [is] less a matter of politics and more of administrative policy, a business for experts rather than for political representatives."²⁰³ By looking at the political in the postcolonial world by the concept of governance, Chatterjee is describing how the transformation of modern power has affected the postcolonial world. Similarly to the Kantian order of the political, Chatterjee describes that the sovereign state has been able to manage political space by regulating the population through methods of governance.

While the Kantian understanding of Enlightenment has constituted key concepts that have developed the modern political, Chatterjee is able to provide insight on how postcolonial political space has been enlisted into modern power. Chatterjee is seen rearticulating the Kantian foundation of Enlightenment- the placed restrictions on freedom by the granting of right from the sovereign state- to the context of the postcolonial by situating the postcolonial state within the paradox of modernity when claiming:

²⁰³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 35.

“the modern form of the nation is both universal and particular. The universal dimension is represented, first, by the idea of the people as the original locus of sovereignty in the modern state, and second, by the idea of all humans as bearers of rights. If this was universally true, how was it to be realized? By enshrining the specific rights of *citizens* in a state constituted by particular people, namely, a *nation*. Thus, the nation- state became the particular, and normal, form of the modern state. The basic framework of rights in the modern state was defined by the twin ideas of freedom and equality.”²⁰⁴

In this statement, Chatterjee is seen contextualizing what he articulates to be the subject of his book: the concept of the population. To develop this subject within the context of postcolonial governance, Chatterjee is attempting to differentiate the subject from the citizen as he claims “to have modern and free political communities, one must have people who were citizens, not subjects.”²⁰⁵ The differentiation between the subject and the citizen in relation to the nation is important to introduce, as it will help contextualize the problem-space of scavenging within Chatterjee’s writings.

As Chatterjee differentiates between the subject and the citizen, he is seen introducing the concept of the political populous by the idea of governance. Similarly to the construction of the Kantian subject, the distinction between the subject and citizen is seen in relevance to the creation of legislation that governs postcolonial political space.

As the concept of the citizen is tied to the nation- state, the concept of the population is:

“wholly descriptive and empirical; it does not carry a normative burden...Unlike the concept of citizen, which carries the ethical connotation of participation in the sovereignty of the state the concept of population makes available to government functionaries a set of rationally manipulable instruments for reaching large sections of the inhabitants of a country as the targets of their “policies””²⁰⁶.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 29.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 33.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 34.

The concept of the citizen is produced through the universal notion of being a constituent of the state, which is seen formulated by Kantian theory. However, Chatterjee's concept of the population is able to introduce those socially excluded from the formal processes of politics while simultaneously in political space. This distinction is important for the postcolonial context, as it details governance to be the incorporation of those socially excluded into the formal structure of the political.

As earlier mentioned, Chatterjee is developing his conception of postcolonial governance by examining India, however, his theoretical developments are not solely restricted to India. By distinguishing the difference between citizen and population, Chatterjee is describing the subject of his book to be concerned with those part of the population. This distinction allows for his theory to translate to the problem-space of scavenging, as this concept is embedded within the space formally excluded by the political, but are still governed by the state. By developing this idea, Chatterjee is producing the context of his book in "those parts of the world that were not direct participants in the history of the evolution of the institutions of modern capitalist democracy."²⁰⁷ This context not only resonates with Scott's claim of how the postcolonial world has been constructed, but also reveals Asad's claim to how the colonial world was conscripted into modern power.

Asad's claim that the introduction of modernity through colonial Enlightenment has instigated the regulation of difference is seen articulated by Chatterjee, as he claims that the political has become:

"conditioned by the functions and activities of modern governmental systems that have now become part of the expected functions of governments

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 3.

everywhere. These expectations and activities have produced, I will argue, certain relations between governments and populations. The popular politics I will describe grows upon and is shaped by those relations.”²⁰⁸

As colonial Enlightenment transformed the political space of the colonized by erasing authentic origins of self-representation for the colonized, the displacement of representation is seen through postcolonial populations being governed by relations with the state. While the narrative of Enlightenment centralized political power to the state, the introduction of modern power to the postcolonial state saw it endowed with the problem of governing a population that had lost the origin of self-representation due to colonial Enlightenment. It is Chatterjee’s development of the population in relation to governance that evokes Asad’s and Scott’s claim to colonial Enlightenment having reconfigured political space. This notion is depicted by Chatterjee’s focus upon the relationship between the state and population, rather than the traditional relationship of representation between the state and the citizen.

Before further specifically dealing with Chatterjee’s interpretation of political governance in the postcolonial world, there is an additional conjuncture to be made between Chatterjee and Scott. As Chatterjee titles his first chapter “The Nation in Heterogeneous Time”, Chatterjee is speaking to the temporality of the population in the political. For Chatterjee, the nation-state identifies with the universal and the citizen, and thus he describes it to be a space in which, “people can only imagine themselves in empty homogeneous time; they do not live in it. Empty homogeneous time is the utopian time of capital. It linearly connects past, present, and future.”²⁰⁹ The nation-state, the universal and the citizen, constitute a linear temporality that cannot be inhabited. However,

²⁰⁸ Ibid..

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 6.

Chatterjee's description of homogeneous time directly resonates with Scott's description of modern romanticism, as both are linearly composed and both constitute utopian ideals. Similarly to Scott, Chatterjee seeks to think politics by a heterogeneous temporality. Like Scott's proposed tragic reading of time, Chatterjee claims that, "the real space of modern life consists of heterotopia... Time here is heterogeneous, unevenly dense."²¹⁰ To think politically of the postcolonial population, the modern linear trajectory of time must be removed and be replaced with a dynamic reading of time.

To look further at how Chatterjee constructs postcolonial governance, I focus upon the first portion of his book titled: "The Leonard Hastings Schoff Memorial Lectures 2001". As Chatterjee distinguishes his subject of the postcolonial population to be held within the terms of modern power, he creates the division between the citizen and population. While both concepts are restricted to the boundaries of the sovereign state, he is claiming these two groups to be differently governed. As these two groups exist in different temporal moments, they constitute different modes of existence. Modern power has left the postcolonial state to negotiate the precarious nature of colonial Enlightenment by the challenge to govern these two realms of inhabitation as:

"the postcolonial state deployed the latest governmental technologies to promote the well-being of their populations, often promoted and aided by international and nongovernmental organizations. In adopting these technical strategies of modernization and development, older ethnographic concepts often entered the field of knowledge about populations".²¹¹

As the narrative of the modern state is seen developed from homogeneous temporal moments that are directly tied to the state, Chatterjee classifies the citizen to be a part of civil society. As the concept of the population exists within heterogeneous time,

²¹⁰ Ibid., 7.

²¹¹ Ibid., 37.

Chatterjee is seen to classify this group within political society. The concept of the population that constitutes political society is seen to be Chatterjee's subject, as it has presented many challenges for the postcolonial state to govern by the construction of the modern state.

Originating from varying temporal distinctions, Chatterjee is seen distinguishing that "citizens inhabit the domain of theory, populations the domain of policy."²¹² The homogeneous citizen encapsulates the Kantian subject that is bound to the modern state, and has been thought through the original dynamics of unsocial sociability. As Chatterjee describes, "civil society then, is restricted to a small section of culturally equipped citizens"²¹³. In the postcolonial state, civil society relatively constitutes a small portion of the populous, as it is seen through:

"the *formal* structure of the state as given by the constitution and the laws, all of society is civil society; everyone is a citizen with equal rights and therefore to be regarded as a member of civil society. The political process is one where the organs of the state interact with members of civil society in their individual capacities or as members of associations."²¹⁴

It is the formal understanding of politics to be constituted by the state that exemplifies how modern power has transformed the postcolonial state through colonial Enlightenment. However, for Chatterjee, the postcolonial adaption of modern power does not describe those inhabiting the space of the population. Those that have been socially excluded from the formality of the political are seen through political society.

To develop the population, Chatterjee develops political society in comparison to civil society. Derivative of heterogeneous time, political society is constituted by various

²¹² Ibid., 34.

²¹³ Ibid., 41.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 38.

spatial-temporal existences in the political. As political society lacks the utopian romanticism of the civic subject, those of the populous take on Scott's liminal position as, "they are not, proper members of civil society and are not regarded as such by the institutions of the state. But it is not as though they are outside the reach of the state or even excluded from the domain of politics."²¹⁵ It is from this liminal position that the postcolonial state relies on relationships of power to govern those in political society. For Chatterjee, political society reflects the shift from representation to governmental legislation since there is a "politics emerging out of the developmental policies of government aimed at specific populations groups."²¹⁶ While political society is not outside of the postcolonial state, the population is not contained by how modern power has identified politics to occur.

The difference between civil society and political society is seen by the population to encompass portions of society that "transgress the strict lines of legality in struggling to live and work. They may live in illegal squatter settlements, make illegal use of water or electricity, travel without tickets in public transport."²¹⁷ Through this description, political society is seen to encapsulate those that infringe upon the boundaries of the modern state. While political society is outside of the formal jurisdiction of the political, as they infringe on the legal boundaries of the state, the state cannot ignore these groups since "they are among thousands of similar associations representing groups of populations whose very livelihood or habitation involve violation

²¹⁵ Ibid., 38.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 40.

²¹⁷ Ibid..

of the law.”²¹⁸ While the postcolonial state has been left to negotiate the liminal terrain of political society, Chatterjee describes the sovereign state’s approach to the population through the “administration of welfare to marginal and underprivileged population groups.”²¹⁹ It is from this position that the case of Jardim Gramacho can be directly linked to the condition of political society.

As Chatterjee continues to describe the administration of welfare, there are strong correlations to how the Brazilian state compensated those working in Jardim Gramacho. While writing to particular incidents of land claims in India, Chatterjee describes the administration of welfare allocated by the sovereign state to recognize:

“that these population groups do have some claim on the welfare programs of the government, but those claims could not be regarded as justiciable rights since the state did not have the means to deliver those benefits to the entire population of the country. To treat those claims as rights would only invite further violation of public property and civic laws.”²²⁰

As the postcolonial state attempts to govern political society, it must cautiously proceed with the administration of welfare. The state must be selective in the distribution of welfare, as it is attempting to maintain sovereign political distinction while negotiating with groups that are already infringing upon sovereign power. This condition resonates similarities to how compensation packages were allocated during the closure of Jardim Gramacho, as those *catadores* outside of cooperatives were excluded from these benefits. The position of Brazilian *catadores* reflects the heterogeneous terms of Chatterjee’s political society, as the *catadores* scavenging at Jardim Gramacho constituted different social positions, but also others across Brazil.

²¹⁸ Ibid..

²¹⁹ Ibid..

²²⁰ Ibid..

As the Brazilian state closed Jardim Gramacho, the distribution of compensation packages detail Chatterjee's idea of welfare administration and is able to represent Chatterjee's idea of postcolonial governance. As Chatterjee describes, "governmentality always operates on a heterogeneous social field, on multiple population groups, and with multiple strategies."²²¹ Political society is extensively diverse, the state cannot singularly regulate each group, but it also cannot extend beyond its own power and lose sovereignty. Due to the limitation of state sovereignty, the state is seen to be adaptive in approaching infringements upon its own power, but as seen by Jardim Gramacho, the precarious nature of the state can also perpetuate social exclusion. By coming to understanding the context of Jardim Gramacho through Chatterjee's concept of political society, I look towards a final statement from Chatterjee. While Chatterjee moves onto focusing upon resettlement and rehabilitation in India, he reasserts my own question when stating, "the big question is now: how can political society renew itself?"²²² By thinking of scavenging in the context of political society, the state is seen limited by its own sovereignty to resolve the many dimensions of social exclusion. However, this is also exemplified by the introduction of the case study of scavenging in Buenos Aires, as it was the municipal government that effectively responded to scavenging during economic crisis. It is from this question that I look towards a politics of urbanism to attempt to theoretically rethink the political.

Refashioning Critique

As Chatterjee asserts the proposition for the renewal of political society, I look towards Warren Magnusson's *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing Like a City*. Chatterjee is able

²²¹ Ibid., 60.

²²² Ibid., 67.

to aptly describe the affect of modern power upon the postcolonial state, since he explicitly articulates the sovereign state to have assimilated cultural difference by the notion of right. By thinking the space of Jardim Gramacho and Buenos Aires through the context of the heterogeneous temporality of political society with the question of how to address social exclusion, the city of Buenos Aires exemplifies the ability to adapt to changes of cultural perceptions of prohibited matter. To recognize the role of the city in this problem- space is an attempt to resolve Scott's predicament of how to de-enlist from the ontological and epistemological conditions of modern power that have conscripted critique. By looking towards a politics of urbanism, Scott's predicament is able to find resolve through the imagining of the political by the ontological space of the city.

It is important to note that for the direction of this thesis, as both Chatterjee and Magnusson turn towards thinking politics outside of the modern language of the state, this move is a direct challenge of Enlightenment thinkers. As Chatterjee is seen to have turned towards populations, Magnusson is seen to turn towards the city, but both do so through the idea of governance. The move away from the language of the state interlink Chatterjee and Magnusson with Scott's proposition of crisis to also be a moment of possibility. As Scott is seen to describe critique to have been enlisted into modern power, the question for the postcolonial writer is how to think of an alternative political ontology. As critique has been able to successfully identify the modern language of the state as a point of contention, the important next step is how to rethink the political for the purpose of refashioning postcolonial critique.

In his book, Magnusson is attempting to think of modern politics differently. Ultimately, this task stipulates there is currently something inadequate in the construction

of the political as he proposes to, “understand the *other* of sovereignty, the political practices that enable forms of order whether or not standard sovereignty-practices are effective.”²²³ The political, as defined by the sovereign state, has become the legitimate narrative of how the political is organized. As Magnusson identifies the political to have been identified by the sovereign state, this has been produced by classical political theorists like Kant, but it has also been engrained by “the thrust of the modern social sciences [that] has been towards a naturalistic understanding of the human condition, and hence towards explanations of politics and political choices in naturalistic terms.”²²⁴ Influenced by the Enlightenment period, modern social sciences have reasserted the epistemological foundations of rationalism as a natural methodological approach to understanding the political. It has been from this process that the modern subject has been constituted by the sovereign state, which has maintained the state to be the primary actor in politics.

When asserting a critique of politics, Magnusson is however identifying that to think of the ‘other’ of sovereignty is to think within the political. In doing this, Magnusson articulates that his “aim here is to try to politicize the analysis without resorting to a binary, statist ontology of the political.”²²⁵ Similarly to Scott, Magnusson is attempting to think the political differently by questioning the ontological qualities that have conditioned this space. As Magnusson is emphasizing that the political has historically been conditioned by a statist ontology,²²⁶ the legacy of modern

²²³ Warren Magnusson, *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing like a city* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 12.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

Enlightenment that has naturalized the position of the state is in need of interrogation. To transverse this critique, Magnusson fashions his critique similarly to Chatterjee's analysis on governance. As both Chatterjee and Magnusson write on governmental methods, Magnusson's focus upon an alternative to sovereignty acts to interlink Chatterjee's idea of political society with Scott's assertion for the need to rethink postcolonialism. To frame Magnusson's analysis of governance, he will be seen discussing the notion of sovereignty in relation to governance by a reading of Foucault.

To rethink the ontological space of the political, Magnusson is seen to utilize Foucault's account of the art of government. In Foucault's analysis, he is constructing an important distinction previously seen by Asad, Scott, Kant and Douglas, which is the differentiation between premodern and modern power. For Foucault, it is during the premodern period of the 16th Century that sovereignty is seen to have developed as a defining characteristic of the political. This development details Kantian boundaries of law, as the state is seen to have gained primacy through the creation of public law by the exercising of power over "a territory and consequently on the subjects who inhabit it."²²⁷ Sovereignty is reaffirmed as the foundation for the legitimization of the state, as it centralizes power within the state by its ability to govern a population. This feature of the political is a static position as, "the end of sovereignty is the exercise of sovereignty. The good is obedience to the law, hence the good for sovereignty is that people should obey it."²²⁸ In this moment, sovereignty and law are being interlocked to develop an art of government that facilitates the regulation of the population.

²²⁷ Michel Foucault, *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: The New Press, 2000), 208.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 210.

However, domination through public law was not entirely satisfactory for the modern state. During the 17th Century, power becomes marked by the distinction of difference in law and finality. While law is able to rule and impose order, finality suggests the management of a population. In this move, the development of governance is seen to be a:

“question not of imposing law on men but of disposing things: that is, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics- to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such- and- such ends may be achieved.”²²⁹

Finality, as a method of governance, is seen to regulate the population outside of legal categories. Finality is a prescriptive power that “[founds] the principles of its rationality in that which constitutes the specific reality of the state.”²³⁰ While rule may govern subjects, the development of a population requires the conditioning of the subject to the population. The condition of managing a population through finality necessitated an art of government as the “framework of sovereignty, which was too large, too abstract, and too rigid... the theory of government suffered from its reliance on a model that was too thin, too weak, and too insubstantial”²³¹. As this description details sovereign power to have become an insufficient category to rule a population, Foucault is moving towards developing a contemporary notion of governance through the notion of finality.

For the art of government, Foucault is articulating governance to have developed with the rise of a population by the concept of population management. As a technique of organization, the art of government saw the subject constituted by the aspirations of the state since:

²²⁹ Ibid., 211.

²³⁰ Ibid., 213.

²³¹ Ibid., 214- 215.

“the population now represents more the end of government, aware, vis-à-vis the government, of what it wants, but ignorant of what is being done to it. Interest as the consciousness of each individual who makes up the population, and interest considered as the interest of the population regardless of what the particular interests and aspirations may be of the individuals who compose it”²³²

The art of government describes the subject to be conditioned by the concept of the population, which is reinforced by legal legislation. The subject in a population is seen regulated by methods of governance, which claims certain actions legal, or illegal. When legally reinforced, finality prescribes the subject to values deemed normative within the population. By building a connection between legislation and normative value, Foucault is identifying a relationship between sovereignty, discipline, and government.²³³ This three-point relationship seeks to identify that there are methods of governance in the political that are outside of the power of the sovereign state. This notion of governance resonates with Chatterjee’s description of political society, as governance is the regulation of the population outside of the legal jurisdiction of the state.

Foucault’s art of governance centralizes critiques of modern power to further develop an understanding of how relationships between the state, population and subject are conditioned by the political. As Magnusson writes to think of the other of sovereignty, he is developing an argument for a politics of urbanism. By initially reading through Foucault’s art of government, Magnusson is articulating two primary points. Firstly, Magnusson is identifying that Foucault’s historical archaeology of rule seeks to differentiate between the concepts of government and sovereignty, although there is an

²³² Ibid., 217.

²³³ Ibid., 219.

interlocking nature between the two.²³⁴ While both sovereignty and government assert authority to be within the state, authority is differently produced by each concept. Secondly, Magnusson is emphasizing the point that “Foucault is *not* challenging the idea that sovereignty is a defining feature of the state.”²³⁵ By utilizing Foucault’s art of government, it is not to challenge whether sovereignty lies within the state or not, but it is to think ontological conditions differently.

By thinking of urban politics through the art of government, it is to rethink the ontological space of the political by the relationships that exist in it. While accepting that state sovereignty exists, it is important to think of sovereignty in relation to government because it:

“forces us to see that the connection between force and right is *always* forced, that claims of universal justice or the rights of the people always refer back to a war that the people have won or must win, and to an “other” that must be contained, repressed, marginalized, excluded, or simply destroyed.”²³⁶

As the Enlightenment constructed the political by the granting of right through restrictions upon freedom, Foucault’s analysis on the art of government is exemplifying that this relationship has been forced. Not only has it been forced, the political condition of freedom through right has also occurred through the relationship of exclusion. As finality denotes the act to govern beyond the means of sovereignty, it has occurred through the conditioning of the subject to the population. The granting of right, which constitutes the promotion of, or prohibition of acts, has designated relationships within the political. To exemplify this idea, the conditioning of the subject can be seen through the policies that promote, or act to diminish the practice of scavenging. As scavenging

²³⁴ Magnusson, 91.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 93. Emphasis in original.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

symbolizes a state of instability, states have commonly conditioned the population against the participation of scavenging by the illegalization of this act, or by making this process difficult to engage in.

In imaging the political while not challenging the sovereignty of the state, Magnusson is choosing to critically engage with the effectiveness of the primacy of the state over other legitimate political actors. For Magnusson to perform this critical engagement by the development of urban politics, he focuses upon the relationship between the state and the city. By questioning modern narratives of sovereignty that have constituted sovereignty, he asks:

“why should we not conceive of this broader field as “social” or “cultural”?
The reason is simply that terms like “cultural” and “social”— as well as
“economic” and “environmental”— were meant to depoliticize the object of
analysis.”²³⁷

By refocusing questions of the political away from the sovereign state, those questions normally associated with the value of right and freedom translate into social and cultural values. As legislation promotes or prohibits certain acts, the granting to, or from, hides these relationships under the promotion of the granting of right. As seen by Asad, modern power conflated cultural difference by restricting how difference is able to respond to these relationships. Within governance, difference constitutes the normative value of right by becoming the other of right. As the original modes of self-representation of the colonized subject were removed through colonial Enlightenment, the modern postcolonial state has attempted to negotiate difference by the creation of political society. However, as cultural difference has not ceased to exist, political society continues to challenge the notion of the sovereign state.

²³⁷ Ibid., 36.

To think alternatively of the political by examining how the postcolonial state has been conditioned by colonial Enlightenment through the introduction of urban politics is an attempt to think postcolonialism beyond sovereignty. To think beyond sovereignty is to respond to Scott's claim that anticolonial action and postcolonial thought have been conscripted to modern Enlightenment. While this is also seen by Chatterjee, as he describes political society to exist within a heterogeneous temporality, Magnusson describes the urban framework to be "too changeful, too multifarious to be described by any simple model. It cannot be tamed to fit a particular model of authority relations."²³⁸ Urbanism, alike political society, does not maintain a static ontological framework. However, by focusing on relationships in the political, urbanism is able to remind us that:

"the fact that a minority within the state may be the object of violent policing is a reminder that states rarely succeed in unifying the societies they are to govern. The outside is always inside. Moreover, urbanism as a way of life means that the inside is always outside, always articulated on a scale that transcends the state."²³⁹

While the population that Chatterjee describes may not be the minority, political society has constituted the position of the other. The population is seen as the other in formal politics, and captures those that challenge the ontological construction of modern politics. By thinking of postcolonial politics in relation to scavenging, the social exclusion of scavengers is seen to necessitate a different form of analysis external to the modern state.

However, urbanism is able to recognize conditions of exclusion, as it is able to recognize cultural relationships of difference. It is able to recognize relationships of exclusion as the ontological "frontier of the urban is not at the boundary between one state and the next; nor is it at the boundary between state and society. Instead, it is at the

²³⁸ Ibid., 31.

²³⁹ Ibid.

boundary of the rural, the natural, or the un-urbanized”²⁴⁰. Urban politics can be seen as a decentralized approach to thinking of the political, as the sovereign state remains a political actor, but is not defined by it. What is at stake for Magnusson when creating an urban analysis of the political can be seen when he asks, “how we are to understand ourselves in relation to our own natures or own cultures or in relation to what is not of human making is clearly of central concern.”²⁴¹ To think of the urban is to think of relationships understood through governmentality, and these relationships are most clearly seen when seeing like a city.²⁴² Magnusson is seen asserting urbanism to be located within the city, and that this location will allow for the politicization of the relationships that occur in the political between people, space, and the environment.

When introducing the city to be a standpoint for thinking the political differently, Magnusson is identifying that the state is still relevant, but for the city to also be an actor within the political. Magnusson conceives of these actors by the concept of ‘to see’, since this phrase implies a certain location of observation. To see from the position of the state is to “assume that the state is the necessary solution to the problem of sovereignty”²⁴³. To see like the state regulates questions of the political by the problem of sovereignty and erases my own problem of the conflation of cultural difference to modern categories of political and economic identification as, “politics, government, law, and the state is presumed to enjoy a certain autonomy in relation to “society”: so that it is in a one-to-one relation with the state.”²⁴⁴ The state, as a political entity, maintains sovereignty through a

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 122.

²⁴¹ Ibid..

²⁴² Ibid..

²⁴³ Ibid., 120.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 19.

narrative of right that perpetuates the centrality of power by the question of effective governance. The relationship between the government and the population is seen constructed by a hierarchy of power that seeks to maintain authority by the securitization of sovereignty, which has produced limitations on freedom through right.

To see politics from the position of the state has perpetuated sovereignty by the process of governance, but to see like a city is to identify relationships that are not unilaterally tied to sovereignty. For Magnusson, to see like a city is able to deconstruct the historical legacy of modern power trapped within homogeneous time as:

“when we see like a city and so adopt a political ontology of urbanism as a way of life, it is much easier to see the stakes involved in submitting to the rationalities of economy and ecology... cities exist by virtue of the practices of government and self- government that enable strangers to live together in great numbers.”²⁴⁵

The depoliticized categories of self-representation come into political focus within urban politics, as they are located within the intimate space of the city. It is within the city that the cultural differences hidden by the state are seen by the relationships that enable the population to live within civic society. Within the city, cultural difference is apparent since, “what was once the exception- a meeting with the Other: strangers from another tribe, clan, or village- becomes increasingly the norm.”²⁴⁶ The conceptual imagining of the subject and citizen that has been produced through difference is shattered, as these relationships are physically bound to the space of the city.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 136.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 22. In this quote, Magnusson is directly referencing Georg Simmel’s concept of the stranger. In Simmel’s writings, he describes the stranger to be different but also similar. The stranger is to be understood by a positive notion because despite difference, the stranger is too universal to be alien. As the strange is positive, the stranger is able to settle in foreign places despite being inorganic to the region. See Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

Within the space of the city, cultural difference is not conflated; rather, it is rather confronted. By removing the homogenous narrative of the citizen and its representation of the sovereign state from political narrative allows for one to:

“focus on what we do, how we think, and interact with one another without assuming *either* that how we are ruled is the central issue *or* that how we act is predetermined by processes that unfold behind our back. The focus is on human agency and hence of purposive activity.”²⁴⁷

For Magnusson, urban politics is able to provide the capability to focus upon the relationships between people in the political. As the city is dynamic in its characterization, the city is a space that is imagined in heterogeneous or tragic temporalities. In a dynamic rethinking of the political, the city is able to disrupt modern historiographic narratives since “it is an ensemble of movements, and those movements give rise to new authorities.”²⁴⁸ The city is able to reframe political questions as it recognizes positions of power beyond the sovereign state. This quality of the city is an interlocking moment between Scott and Magnusson, as the city is a space in which cultural difference can be located and contextualized.

To translate the dynamic quality of a city’s temporality to the problem- space of scavenging in the informal sector, it allows for the recognition of the social conditions that have allowed for these practices to evolve. As scavenging has been legislated as illegal, the city provides an adaptive space to think of the informal sector of scavenging beyond the boundaries of sovereign infringement. As the compensation packages provided during the closing of Jardim Gramacho exemplifies Chatterjee’s examination of welfare administration in political society, the Brazilian state is foreclosing the potential

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 35.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 19.

to address the condition of social exclusion. Although scavenging in Brazil has been formally recognized as a profession, Jardim Gramacho is only a sole example of open-air landfill scavenging that will be closed due to the modernization of Brazilian waste management facilities. As scavenging has been legalized in Brazil and thus no longer formally infringes upon the sovereignty of the state, Foucauldian finality can be seen to have occurred due to waste to be matter out of place. This idea is further developed by the case in Buenos Aires, as waste directly came to represent the economic crisis, which had accelerated the conditions of social exclusion.

While the city presents an alternative ontological position to understand the political, the city is seen to act within political space by being a political actor that is represented by the municipality. The municipality describes the centralization of legislative power within the political, but is outside of the state. However, the legislative relationship between the state and the municipality described by Magnusson is seen by a relationship of conflict since, “state power is commonly deployed to keep municipalities from undertaking initiatives that would interfere with state objectives”²⁴⁹. In alignment with classical notions of state sovereignty, the modern state is seen to subordinate the municipality to its own legislative policies. Despite contestation between these two locations of political agency, the city is a viable position to think differently of the political because, “in principle, the municipality offers people the opportunity to do something different in the public sphere.”²⁵⁰ While the state is inevitably able to assert sovereignty over a municipality, the city nevertheless enables the ability to think of political questions outside of the problem of sovereignty. As the city is characterized by

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 52.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

the relationships between people, the issue of social exclusion physically confronted the city of Buenos Aires, as waste that had been openly left in public space became a representation of this crisis.

Conclusion

As Magnusson clearly identifies, “when we see like a state, we assume that the state is the necessary solution to the problem of sovereignty, and miss the fact that this purported solution may be part of the problem.”²⁵¹ The notion of sovereignty is seen to have manifested itself by the assertion of right, which has depoliticized relationships that are culturally and socially conditioned. To further express the gravity of Magnusson’s proposal to rethink the political through the city, I look to some final words from Chatterjee. In an interview, Chatterjee comments on the ineffectiveness of civil society as, “once the autonomy of the local is called into question, what begins to appear is the inadequacy of the *overall* arrangement. This is when the whole thing became exposed and began to unravel”²⁵². In this statement, Chatterjee is seen reinforcing Magnusson’s concept of the city when referencing the local. Exemplified by Buenos Aires, as a representation of the city and of the local, is an ability to address conditions of social exclusion, as this space is able to identify cultural and social relationships that have been depoliticized by the state. However, the experience of Jardim Gramacho is seen to further perpetuate conditions of social exclusion by the Brazilian state addressing scavenging through the administration of welfare through the concept of right.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 120.

²⁵² Partha Chatterjee, Interview with Nermeen Shaikh, in *The Present as History: Critical Perspectives on Global Power*, ed. Nermeen Shaikh (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) 85.

To think of the local in relation to Scott's dilemma of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought is to reformulate the trajectory of critique. By seeing the other of sovereignty, it is an attempt to think of self-representation outside of colonial Enlightenment, and how the legacy of colonialism reconstituted relationships of difference by the identification of representation through right. As Asad writes to the transformative force of modern power, Kant provides the structure to understand the political ordering of modern power through the conscription to colonial Enlightenment. Colonial Enlightenment transformed self-representation by conditioning political relationships to the notion of the sovereign state by the assignment of right to the subject. It has been by this assignment that the sovereign state has been able to regulate the population by modes of governance that seek to restrict cultural difference by legislation that prohibits, or promotes. As Douglas describes, dirt has historically been prohibited in both premodern and modern cultures, the notion of hygiene has constituted the temporal distinction between these two cultures. While pollution has maintained its symbolic value of being matter out of place, the prohibition of scavenging has been informed by the symbolic representation of waste to be matter out of place.

This notion of prohibition is able to interlink the example of scavenging to the hopeless condition of both anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought. Colonization, as political process, has been informed by the enforcement of political rule over a colonized space. Relationships of difference that are seen between the colonizer and the colonized signify the loss of an origin of self-representation in the political. Similarly to relationships of difference between scavengers and public space, cultural relationships that seek to prohibit or promote have been depoliticized by modern power. This thesis

has attempted to represent Scott's concern over the contemporary state of critique by the development of scavenging as a response to social exclusion that is seen to be a contemporary symbol of prohibition. When introducing the concept of urban politics and thus the position to see the political from the city, I saw an opportunity to address the depoliticization of cultural relationships of scavengers with political space, but also for the postcolonial thinker. As the city is described to be a dynamic space of heterogeneous and tragic time, cultural relationships of difference that socially exclude are recognized. Inspired by the dynamic legislative change depicted by Buenos Aires municipal government, this thesis finds resolve in the ontological illuminations provided by Magnusson to inform the position of the postcolonial thinker that has been conscripted by the sovereign state.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have identified my problem to concern the status of the political in postcolonial societies. In particular, I have been concerned with how this status has affected anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory. From this problematic, my primary point of contention has been framed by the introduction of modern power and the modern state to postcolonial societies through the process of colonization. By constructing this framework, I have intended to pursue a theoretical analysis of the status of the political in postcolonial societies by reading a critique of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory, but have also attempted to positively rethink postcolonial critique by a politics of urbanism.

While pursuing this thesis, I have attempted to do a hermeneutical reading of postcolonial critique while also incorporating an examination of two case studies within my theoretical analysis. These case studies depict an examination of scavenging practices at Jardim Gramacho and within the streets of Buenos Aires. As scavenging has been a longstanding practice outside of the political and the formal economy, this practice acts as a provocation to rethink the theory that I utilize within this thesis. In attempting to refashion postcolonial critique, I found scavenging to be a practice that enables an alternative reading of social exclusion in political space that is able to address relationships that have been culturally conflated to political and economic categories. Social exclusion, as a derivative of modern Enlightenment, has been transferred to the postcolonial world through the process of colonization, and has restricted emancipation by conscripting both anticolonial resistance and postcolonial theory.

Although anticolonial resistance and postcolonial critique were originally movements against colonial power that were meant to act as a voice for the colonized, colonialism has continue to exist in the world today, and postcolonial theory is riddled with internal cleavages. To develop these contentions, I have read through David Scott's critique of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial criticism as Scott details modern power to have transformed postcolonial political space. Not only does Scott provide a critique of criticism, he also constructs the concept of a problem-space, which enables the historiographic reading of colonial conditions that have refigured authentic modes of self-representation. I utilize Scott's methodological approaches of a problem-space and tragic reading of time to investigate the concept of the political in postcolonial societies.

As Scott emphasizes past modes of emancipation to be irrelevant, the creation of scavenging as a problem-space is to illustrate contemporary forms of social exclusion in postcolonial space. To perform a tragic reading of history enables the construction of scavenging as a problem-space that can refashion critiques of political emancipation but also rethink postcolonial political space. I chose to develop my analysis of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial critique by a study of scavenging for the purpose of developing a theoretical position that seeks to refashion the hopeless condition of postcolonialism by rethinking political space through the introduction of urban politics. I use these steps to develop my own problem-space of the political in the postcolonial world, which helps enable the development of a critical analysis of the political.

Through the construction of my problem-space, I describe the replacement of authentic origins of identification by utilizing the concept of social exclusion. By appropriating Scott's methodological function of performing a tragic historiographic

reading of time, I utilize the works of Immanuel Kant, Partha Chatterjee and Rita Wilson to develop my own conceptual position of the political. These three authors develop my problem-space of the political in the postcolonial world by theoretically detailing the structure of modern political space, but also politicize waste. From this conceptual space, I identify the insertion of the modern state to be a point of contention within postcolonial political space. It is through this framework that I am able to further this critique of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial criticism by the introduction of a politics of urbanism, as urban politics attempts to find an alternative to modern sovereignty.

While a politics of urbanism works within a tragic and heterogeneous temporality, questions of self-identification are seen to be political because cultural differentiation is no longer conflated. Political relationships are no longer bound by the value of right, which is produced by the identification with the sovereign state. The space of the city provides an alternative standpoint for thinking the political as cultural difference is encountered. By thinking of Scott's crisis of critique through the case studies of scavenging in the Global South, I attempt to illustrate a moment of exclusion in the contemporary present. To use the example of scavenging within the Global South, I have attempted to develop an examination of how the postcolonial state has dealt with social exclusion. By inserting modern power into the political, colonization reformed authentic modes of self-representation of the colonized by the condition of cultural conflation that acts to conceal difference.

The concept of difference has constituted the shift from premodern to modern power, which has changed cultural concepts of difference into a legislative value that is

legitimized through right by the sovereign state. For scavengers in the informal economy, the value of difference is seen derived from the prohibition of waste. The impact of value is seen by the perpetuation of social exclusion for scavengers outside of formal cooperatives and within the informal economy, as this position does not identify with civic values of modern power. For this thesis, the refiguring of the political to the sovereign state forms the inability of the state to respond to conditions of social exclusion, as seen by the example of Jardim Gramacho. By using case studies on scavenging, I have attempted to exemplify the impact of colonial Enlightenment. However, I have also attempted to find resolve to Scott's predicament of the hopeless position of critique by thinking of the political in the postcolonial world through the ontological position of the city as an alternative to modern power.

When I began to think of this topic, my first encounter with scavenging in the Global South stemmed from experiences in Central America. From meeting volunteers working on the La Chureca, an open-air landfill located in Managua, Nicaragua, to seeing the workings of social exclusion within the urban periphery directly in Managua. While having encountered the slums commonly described by the condition of the urban periphery across Central America, I was never prepared to come across a public park covered by a garbage bag ceiling for those living in this urban space of Managua. It was those experiences that have become the foundations of this project.

At first, I too was conceived of waste as matter out of place. When initially thinking of how to research a thesis on scavenging, I began with naïve perceptions of scavenging, but I also began with the aim to resolve the confusion I encountered when thinking of these original encounters. However, that naivety and confusion was

challenged when I began to read accounts regarding how the *catadores* working at Jardim Gramacho were extensively concerned about their future. Through this project, the changes in perception that I have researched and experienced are seen hidden from the political by the reduction of politics to be identified with the state. Designated as a cultural, rather than a political, category, it is an ontological challenge of the political that can begin to address these contentions within the contemporary present. For this project, I used scavenging in the Global South as a palpable example of the hopeless legacy of anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought. To refashion anticolonial resistance and postcolonial thought is to take alternative positions within the political seriously, and it is to take cultural relationships of difference seriously.

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