Writing and Différence, Violence in Language: Finding the Roots of Oppression and Violence in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*

A thesis presented to
the faculty of
the College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

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May 2013

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This thesis titled
Writing and Différance, Violence in Language: Finding the Roots of Oppression and
Violence in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*

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ABSTRACT

DICKMAN-BURNETT, VICTORIA L., M.A., May 2013, English

Writing and Différence, Violence in Language: Finding the Roots of Oppression and Violence in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*

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Abstract: Derrida's most well known theoretical work *Of Grammatology* often comes under fire from critics as being "frivolous," "playful," or "playing language games." In my thesis I will argue that this is a misinterpretation of Derrida's work, exploring the implications of the his concept of arche-violence, and the role the originary violence of language plays in oppression. Exploring various theoretical schools of thought from a Derridean lens, I will highlight the ways that arche-violence poses a real problem in the lives of oppressed peoples.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank the members of my thesis committee, Drs. Ghirmai Negash, Janis Butler Holm, and Sherrie Gradin for their willingness to be a part of this project and their continued patience as I worked on this project and struggled with my health. My heartfelt thanks go out to my colleagues in the Ohio University English department M.A. program, specifically Billy Collins, Kristina Deonaldo, and Brianna Mauk for their support. I would also like to thank Sarah Einstein for her helpful guidance as I began to explore critical disability studies. To all of you, I owe a great debt of gratitude.

To my parents, Mark and Pixie, the emotional support has been greatly appreciated, as has been the attempts to understand and engage with this project, for patience and guidance as I grappled with these question.

Special thanks to my mentors, Dr. Mark H. Dixon and Dr. Pat Croskery of Ohio Northern University for his support and continued engagement with my academic interests long after I ceased to be their student. To Merrill Miller I owe a great deal, as our conversations always spurred me to higher thought. And finally, my most earnest thanks Mike Witcombe of the University of Southampton for his moral support and willingness to listen to my frustrations as I engaged with this difficult project, and his willingness to offer feedback at any time.
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INTRODUCTION

Jacques Derrida frequently faces charges of being "frivolous," or "playing empty language games," in much of his works, particularly in his seminal work, *Of Grammatology*. The common misconception is that because Derrida focuses on language, his work is somehow disconnected from the real world, and therefore not as serious as the work of theorists who directly address serious matters like oppression and violence. While it is understandable that someone who has suffered such conditions to be skeptical about Derrida's argument that violence begins with language and is deeply embedded in the process of differentiation which we consider to be an essential part of language, Derrida's perspective has implications for violence and oppression. Language, in Derrida's view, does not just influence violence and oppression; it creates it, perpetuates it, and sustains it. The goal of this thesis is to explain Derrida's perspective against the criticism of perceived frivolousness by exploring the ways in which arche-violence can be seen in acts of oppression and violence in varying schools of thought. In this way, Derrida's work is highly relevant to academic conversations about power and oppression.

The first chapter explores the idea of arche-violence, examining how the structure of arche-violence mirrors rape without being a metaphor, and the implications of the parallel structure. This chapter goes on to explore Foucault's concept of epistemic violence and offer a bridge between the two ideas and a tentative reconciliation between the two scholars famous for their disagreement by exploring the commonalities between the two concepts and contextualizing Derrida's understanding of arche-violence with the
relationship to the Foucauldian understanding of the role power plays in the discourse of
difference and oppression.

The second chapter explores rape from the perspective of arche-violence,
examining the feminist implications of rape. This chapter will also examine two
contemporary instances of rape using arche-violence as a lens for understanding not the
acts themselves, but the meaning we give them. I will first examine the epidemic of rape-
murders of the women of Juárez, Mexico as an example of how violence is situated at the
intersections of power, and how arche-violence reinforces these ideas. I will then briefly
comment on the recent Steubenville case and how arche-violence can help us to better
understand the events and what they mean as we move forward as a society which is
deeply imbedded in rape culture.

The third chapter will discuss disability and the tenuous relationship between
disability as a social construction and disability as embodied experience and the way
language plays a role in navigating this relationship, particularly the way that arche-
violece is reimagined in the instability of the category. This chapter will focus on how
we talk about disability and how the near constant shifting in the language used to talk
about disability can subvert arche-violence.

The final chapter will discuss the inherently violent experience of learning a
second language, particularly as the result of having been colonized. Using accounts of
people who have learned English as a second language, I will explore how the way we
understand the world is embedded in our language. Violence and language converge
when one is forced to learn, think and live in a new language because it is not just the language, but one's whole conceptual framework that has been changed.

The ultimate end of this thesis is to explore the ways that arche-violence is relevant to the conversation about oppression and violence through exploring the ways in which arche-violence interacts with language to further oppression. Each chapter offers a different facet, advancing the analysis of the ways arche-violence functions. It is important to note that each chapter offers a unique perspective that advances the conversation of arche-violence rather than just interpreting arche-violence from the perspective of a different form, giving the same reading while simply changing the terms.
CHAPTER 1: THE STRUCTURE OF ARCHE-VIOLENCE

I

In *Of Grammatology*, Jacques Derrida introduces his reader to the idea of arche-violence with an analysis of Claude Lévi-Strauss's interactions with the Nambikwara of South America, who had a prohibition against speaking their proper names. Drawing on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea of the noble savage, Lévi-Strauss had made the assertion that the introduction of writing had made the Nambikwara violent. Lévi-Strauss recounts an incident in which he manipulates two small girls into revealing each other's proper names, and then the proper names of the rest of the Nambikwara. He defends his actions because he saw the children fighting and feared they would soon resort to violence if he did not intervene. Derrida counters this claim, asserting that it was Lévi-Strauss, not the girls who acted violently, and that Lévi-Strauss's actions constituted arche-violence, or originary\(^1\) violence. Of arche-violence, Derrida writes

> There was in fact a first violence to be named. To name, to give names that it will on occasion be forbidden to pronounce, such is the originary violence of language which consists of inscribing within a difference, in classifying, in suspending the vocative absolute. To think the unique within the system, to inscribe it there, such is the gesture of arche-writing: arche-violence, the loss of the proper, of absolute proximity, of self-presence, in truth the loss of what has never taken place, of a self presence

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\(^1\) The term "originary violence" does not suggest a metaphysical origin, a notion that Derrida ultimately argues against. The term is used to suggest that arche-violence is the origin of all other violence, as its description suggests.
which has never been given but only dreamed of and always already split, repeated, incapable of appearing to itself, except in its own disappearance (112).

Derrida goes on to explain that the first violence (arche-violence, originary violence) is the assigning of proper names. To assign proper names is to mark out difference between people, which Derrida asserts is always inherently violent. Beyond the establishment of proper names, arche-violence can be any instance of establishing difference, as demonstrated when Derrida writes about arche-violence being "inscribed within difference." The violence of writing is the violence of division. Proper names illustrate the idea of arche-violence because they serve to mark the differences between people; however, it is not only the use of proper names that creates arche-violence, as the passage suggests, arche-violence is inscribed in any system that serves to divide people, any system that is created by difference, in which meaning is assigned to difference in a way that results in a value oriented hierarchy. Simply put, arche violence arise when meaning is assigned to difference in a way that determines the value based on the difference, often forming binaries that are ranked in value.

From arche-violence, two subsequent forms of violence arise. The second violence is the resulting proscriptive or "moral²" system, which arises from the

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² While Derrida uses the term moral system to describe the process of the second violence, I will use the term proscriptive, because the second violence establishes a system of proscriptive rules, and while our understanding of morality does arise from this second violence, I fear using the term "moral" beyond offering it as Derrida's own words is problematic because it suggests that any instance of the second violence establishes a moral system, and the term "proscriptive" allows me to discuss the second violence without having to worry about such questions of morality that arise when the language of
establishment of difference. While Derrida does not spend as much time discussing the second violence, it is easy to see how this "second violence" is an extension of the first and is violent in Derridean terms, and why Derrida would find it to be violent in turn. Derrida describes how a proscriptive or moral system arises from arche-violence when he writes,

Out of this arche-violence, forbidden and therefore confirmed by a second violence that is reparatory, protective, instituting the "moral," prescribing the concealment of writing and the effacement and obliteration of the so-called proper name which was already dividing the proper, a third violence can possibly emerge or not (an empirical possibility) within what is commonly called evil, war, indiscretion, rape; which consists of revealing by effraction the so-called proper name, the originary violence which has severed the proper from its property and its self-sameness [proprété].

(112)

By proscribing a system that arises from the difference established through arche-violence, the "moral" system that arises as the second violence effectively assigns value to difference, or rather, makes the differences created by arche-violence value ordered. The second violence naturalizes the first, making it seem as if the value of difference is inherent in those who are defined as different. Having established a value ordered morality is used. The term "proscriptive system" may be more accurate because it allows one to discuss the idea of the establishment of rules and value ordered hierarchies that arise from arche-violence without having to either defend their morality or reject the morality while still using Derrida's language of morality.

3 It is interesting to note for purposes that will become clear later in this chapter, that this is the only time Derrida makes mention of rape when writing about arche-violence.
difference between two people, or groups of people, the second violence establishes what might be done with the difference in values. Simply put, the first violence creates hierarchy, creates a system of privilege, making certain differences preferential to others, and the second violence codifies these differences. The second violence succeeds the division created by the first and makes it systematic. While difference exists, and has already been established, the second violence takes difference and establishes, on one side of the difference, a standard, and any difference from the standard is perceived as a deviation. The first violence is to say not just that $a$ and $b$ are different, but that $a$ is different from $b$. $B$ has become the referent that everything else is defined against, therefore, even if "$b$ is superior to $a$" is never overtly stated, the role that $b$ plays in defining $a$ (any other cases in the event we are not dealing with a binary), suggests its superiority. From there, the second violence establishes the rules that erase yet cement difference.

The second violence follows the first violence almost immediately. The beginning of a proscriptive system can be seen almost immediately after difference has been established and value ordered, because in noting difference, a value is assigned to the difference, and rules arise as the result of the values. The proscriptive system arises as a very simple "moral" system at first: there is a difference and condition $b$ is superior to $a$. However, that is not the end of the development of the proscriptive system. From the value assigned to difference, many different rules arise, both in the law, having official, sanctioned punishments for their transgression as well as de facto rules, social mores that also often have punishment when violated. All of these rules continue to add meaning to
difference, regardless of whether they are enforced by law or not. When, for example, there is a particular behavior that is acceptable for men but not women, the fact that such a distinction is made is a statement about the difference between men and women. As the proscriptive system grows and more rules develop, it becomes even harder to undo the original arche-violence, no matter how inaccurate it is because the difference has become more defined and surrounded by rules and expectations.

From the second violence arises the third violence, which is what we traditionally know to be violence. It is only after a proscriptive system has been established that one can even speak of transgressions against it. Without a system (social, political, religious, or racial) to understand and establish order, the idea of violence, as we understand it would be nonsensical. Without arche-violence to define difference, no such system could exist; therefore, it is necessary for arche-violence to precede what we know as violence to be comprehensible. One could theoretically see an act of physical violence without the previous two violences, but we would not be able to understand the act of violence.

Derrida notes that, as empirically verifiable possibilities, these two violences may or may not occur. That is to suggest that, while the second violence always follows arche-violence as an attempt to make sense of difference, the third violence, being deviations or transgressions against the system does not always necessarily follow from the first two, though it is an empirical possibility. However, if and when the third violence occurs, it is incomprehensible without the occurrence of the first two violences, because, without them, violence as we understand it cannot occur.
Derrida uses the idea of three violences as a refutation of Lévi-Strauss's assertion that he feared the girls would behave violently, and that his manipulation of them was only serving to prevent such violence from occurring. Because Lévi-Strauss's behavior introduced difference into a space where it previously did not exist, he is responsible for violence. Christopher Wise asserts that to Derrida, Lévi-Strauss becomes a "pedophile or child rapist," (Wise 10) in his behavior toward the Nambikwara girls.

Wise's assertion gives Lévi-Strauss more censure than is immediately evident in Derrida's assessment of the incident. Additionally, there was nothing about Lévi-Strauss's actions toward the girls that can be interpreted as overtly sexual. Why, then, does Wise use sexual language to discuss Lévi-Strauss's treatment of the girls? The answer lies in Derrida's own accounts of arche-violence and the Nambikwara. While Derrida never uses overt sexual language to describe the originary violence of Lévi-Strauss's actions, he does use subtle sexual language to discuss arche-violence to the reader. In the introduction to the section *Of Grammatology* from which this anecdote has been drawn, "The Battle of Proper Names," in the chapter entitled "The Violence of the Letter," Derrida writes,

>The entire "Writing Lesson" is recounted in the towns of violence repressed or deferred, a violence sometimes veiled, but always oppressive and heavy. Its weight is felt in various places and various moments of the narrative: in Lévi-Strauss's account the relationship among individuals and among groups, among cultures, or within the same community. What can a relationship to writing signify in these diverse instances of violence? Penetration in the case of the Nambikwara. (107)
For Derrida, the illuminating case of arche-violence is a case of forced penetration, a "rupture" of the "virginal space" (107), or in short, a rape. The link between rape and arche-violence is problematic itself, because the description Derrida offers demonstrates that it was not a literal rape, yet to say that arche-violence is metaphorical rape, or that the rape taking place is a figure of speech would undermine the entire idea of arche-violence, because literal rape can only be understood after arche-violence and the second violence have taken place. Therefore, how we understand the connection between arche-violence is important because it will help us to better understand the both the nature of arche-violence and the nature rape, as well as the relationship between the two.

Derrida's outline of the three violences makes it obvious as to why viewing arche-violence as metaphorical rape is problematic. The nature of metaphor, as well as other figures of speech, is that it uses an existing concept to stand in for a new concept. To call arche-violence metaphorical rape is to imply that rape precedes arche-violence, which given the structure which Derrida gives arche-violence, is impossible, as my account of the interaction between the three violences demonstrates. Because arche-violence and the resulting proscriptive violence must take place before we can understand an instance of

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4 In this instance and here forward, "literal rape" refers to forced sexual contact, similar to the legal definition of rape, though the legal definition in itself is problematic, because it is defined from a male perspective, and often rejects certain borderline cases involving coercion. It is not necessary to pin down a precise definition of "literal rape" for my purposes here, as long as the reader is aware that it denotes an act of physical violence.

5 The second chapter of this thesis addresses this process in great detail.

6 Perhaps it is the case that Derrida does unknowingly use rape as a metaphor in this instance, subtly undermining his critique of metaphors and destabilizing his own system. This warrants further exploration, which does not fit my purposes here. That said, I do not believe that the link between arche-violence and rape I explore in this chapter is any less significant even if Derrida subconsciously relies on a metaphor.
literal rape, it can never be a metaphorical rape. Furthermore, within Derrida's own writing, there is evidence to suggest that treating arche-violence as a metaphor is inconsistent with his other work, and by extension *Of Grammatology* as well. One could even argue that if arche-violence is reduced to an empty metaphorical rape, Derrida's entire argument about arche-violence and the following violences could collapse upon itself and become meaningless.

In the preface to Gayatri Spivak's translation *Of Grammatology* she discusses the thinkers who influenced Derrida's work, not limited to *Of Grammatology*. While Nietzsche believes that metaphors are where thinking, and, in turn, the will to power begins (xxii-xxv), Derrida argues that this is problematic because it only replaces signifiers with other signifiers, resulting in "an endless chain of signifiers. Therefore, in the case of metaphors, meaning is always deferred, with one word or concept standing in for another. We cannot arrive at meaning when speaking in terms of metaphor because each word is removed from its original meaning. For example, the metaphor "the clouds are animals" is, from a Derridean perspective, meaningless, because the clouds are not literally animals, and one signifier is replaced with another ill-fitting one. This raises a problem, because arche-violence is originary. It serves as the origin from which all other violence arises, and therefore, it cannot be a part of a metaphor, deferring its meaning, or else the whole idea of arche-violence would be undermined. Originary violence is the process of using signifiers to divide people into groups. Therefore, there can be nothing that comes before arche-violence, it cannot be part of a chain of endless signifiers, because it is where violence begins.
While arche-violence does not provide an origin, metaphysically speaking, and does not serve as a transcendental signifier (a notion Derrida finds inherently problematic) arche-violence is where violence begins. It is where difference is first understood, and therefore, cannot be part of a metaphor. Metaphor cannot exist without the idea of difference because without difference, it would be nonsensical to think that the comparison being made in a metaphor matters. While metaphor is associated with similarities, relying on commonalities of the objects being compared in order to convey the meaning in question, without difference, those similarities would be meaningless. In a world full of differences, metaphor relies on difference because it marks out the sameness between the two objects or concepts being compared, temporarily erasing the difference between the two. Metaphor also relies on difference because it uses the difference between the two objects being compared to create meaning. In order for a metaphor to work, the audience must understand the difference between the two and suspend the difference. If a metaphor states "x is y" those exposed to the metaphor obviously understand that the two are not really the same, yet the connection between the two is significant in a way that relies on both sameness and difference to make the meaning of the metaphor understood. Therefore, metaphor can only follow arche-writing or arche-violence, it cannot precede it.

If arche-violence is neither literal nor metaphorical rape, the question that arises is how then are we to understand the structure of arche-violence? The fact that Derrida has, in discussing arche-violence, given it the structure of a rape, such that Wise would make the assertion that Derrida sees Lévi-Strauss as "a pedophile or child rapist," suggests that
the connection between rape and arche-violence is not coincidental or insignificant. However, the question as to how we must understand the relationship between the two still remains. Is there anyway to understand the rape structure of arche-violence that does not reduce to metaphorical or literal rape? Furthermore, is the rape-structure of arche-violence an inherent part of arche-violence or is it Derrida's own trace? Can arche-violence be understood any way other than the rape structure?

In addition to avoiding metaphors, it is also important that our discussion of the relationship between rape and arche-violence not be used to diminish the evils of rape in an effort to take arche-violence seriously. The relationship between arche-violence and rape should not downplay the fact that rape is a horrible act, or simply reduce all violence to language. In defining its originary role, we should not overlook the fact that the third violence can arise from the first two violences, and that, while arche-violence may create trauma, it is unlikely that the victim of a violent crime is going to find the process of differentiation more, or even equally traumatic to the experience of physical violence. Arche-violence is not worse than physical violence, but according to Derrida, it is a necessary condition for physical violence. In that respect, we cannot separate physical violence from arche-violence, and therefore the impulse to view the two concepts as competing interests ceases to be an issue.

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7 Trace, in Derridean terms, is the gap between signifier and signified that each person brings with them, which is shaped by environment and experience. For example, somewhere between the word "cow" and a real bovine, for the average American, comes the idea of a black and white creature that provides milk and serves as a source of beef. For someone from India, the trace would be very different because of the Hindu prohibition against eating cows.
How then, do we understand the relationship between arche-violence and rape? Perhaps we should ask whether arche-violence can be re-conceptualized as another crime. Could we perhaps understand arche-violence as robbery or murder? The problem that arises when we attempt to understand arche-violence as another sort of crime is that only rape and hate crimes are rooted in difference. Crimes that are motivated by individual hatred (as opposed to hatred of a particular group of people), financial gain, or anger\(^8\) do not highlight the radical differentiation of rape or hate crimes\(^9\). Because of the "penetrative" nature of arche-violence, rape is the most fitting connection.

Perhaps we can solve the link between rape and arche-violence by beginning the discussion of arche-violence rather than with rape. Because arche-violence precedes rape and is a necessary condition for rape, the connection between the two arises because the nature of rape seeks to reinforce and further the violence that has been done with the originary violence\(^10\). The act is an act of radical differentiation, an act that cannot be understood without an Other. When originary violence arises, it is a method of inscribing difference. The second violence occurs to simultaneously erase difference while offering a proscriptive system to understand it. When the third violence arises, it can either act against the proscriptive system (most acts of violence), or it can reinforce it (rape and other hate crimes). In the next chapter, I will explore the connection between rape and arche-violence in more detail, but before I do so, it is necessary to explore the

\(^8\)Anything can be a hate crime if motivated by hatred of a group of people (robbery can be motivated by hatred of a particular class of people, for example), but it is important to acknowledge that crimes that are not motivated by the hatred of a particular group of people do not reinforce arche-violence in the same way that hate crimes do. 

\(^9\)I would argue that rape is a hate crime.

\(^10\)The same is true of all hate crimes.
The Foucauldian concept of epistemic violence in relation to arche-violence and the implications of that relationship. Because the two are often posited as competing concepts, it is necessary to demonstrate that the two are not just compatible, but actually complementary. Understanding the relationship between arche-violence and epistemic violence can actually enhance our understanding of each individual concept.

II.

Derrida's arche-violence is often contrasted with Foucault's concept of epistemic violence. For Foucault, epistemic violence is "a complete overhaul of the episteme" (Can the Subaltern Speak 25). That means a reassignment of knowledge, what we know, what we understand, etc. For Foucault this happened when insanity was redefined at the end of the eighteenth century (Foucault). Gayatri Spivak applied Foucault's idea to the postcolonial context, examining how the colonizer attempts to replace the knowledge of the colonized with his own knowledge, often violently. In both Foucault's and Spivak's examples of epistemic violence what an entire society knows and how they understand the world is replaced by the "knowledge" or worldview accepted by those in power. Because, in the case of Foucault, the redefinition had implications for people previously assumed to be sane or insane as well as how society understood their sanity, the "overhaul" of the episteme meant changing what people previously thought they knew or how they understood themselves. This was inherently violent because it replaced a subject's knowledge with someone else's knowledge and reassigned how they were supposed to understand themselves in relation to the world and the people around them. While Foucault would argue that all knowledge was the product of social constructs, by
redefining what a group of peoples know, those doing the redefining are substituting their knowledge for someone else's. The implication of epistemic violence is that those with power not only control the world in which we live, they also control what we know and how we view the world. Furthermore, the new "knowledge" that arises as a result of epistemic violence supports the current power structure, which is often oppressive.

Epistemic violence is externally imposed—that is to say those doing the defining what people know or how they know themselves does not belong to the group being defined. For example, in the case of Foucault, madness was defined by the sane, and as the definition of madness shifted, the definers remained defined as sane. This does not mean that all advances in the knowledge of society constitute epistemic violence. A medical diagnosis may change what we know about ourselves, without imposing a new episteme on our lives.

At first glance, epistemic violence may appear to be very different from arche-violence, because arche-violence is rooted in language while epistemic violence is rooted in knowledge. However, for Derrida\textsuperscript{11}, knowledge, language and writing are one and the

\textsuperscript{11}While the goal of this section is to reconcile the Foucauldian concept of epistemic violence with the Derridean concept of arche-violence, because the thesis is primarily concerned with arche-violence, I feel it is only necessary to show how epistemic violence is compatible with the Derridean understanding of arche-violence, so therefore if there were to be further objection from the Foucauldian perspective about the nature of arche-violence, it is not material for the sake of this thesis, because my purpose is to show the compatibility of the two concepts within the larger Derridean framework it is not necessary that they fit perfectly within the larger Foucauldian framework. So while Foucault may ultimately reject the idea that knowledge, language, and writing are all the same, because my thesis takes the Derridean view, it is not necessarily that it be perfectly compatible with the work of Foucault, as long as the concepts are accurately represented. In short, the burden of proof is to prove the compatibility of Foucault's epistemic violence
same. Therefore, arche-violence, the violence of language, is closely related to epistemic violence, the violence of replacing someone else's knowledge—including their systems of naming and classification—with your own.

Arche-violence and epistemic violence are not the same, however, because in order for knowledge to be replaced with other arche-violence has already taken place. It is possible that arche-violence can occur alongside epistemic violence, as epistemic violence often re-categorizes difference and therefore establishes a new system of difference in the process of replacing what was previously "known" in a society. While it is impossible to know every instance of epistemic violence that has ever occurred, the most prominent examples of epistemic violence (those would be Foucault's, Spivak's and examples that follow along similar lines) replace an imperfect understanding of difference with another imperfect understanding of difference\(^\text{12}\), therefore committing arche-violence once again. However the arche-violence that takes place when epistemic violence occurs is part of the process of establishing a new proscriptive system, so epistemic violence is, effectively the second violence. Anytime arche-violence occurs and a proscriptive system arises, someone's worldview is being replaced. Arche-violence

\[^{12}\text{In the case of Spivak's example, I would argue that we cannot say whether the understanding of difference before epistemic violence occurred was imperfect or not, because an existing episteme/worldview was replaced by people who did not really know or understand it. Foucault's example took place in Western society and we can look back upon it and ask how difference was understood before "the radical overhaul of the episteme" he describes through the process of archeology and genealogy that he uses to uncover structures of power. However, in Spivak's example, a worldview Western society have never understood has been erased, so some difficulties would arise in reconstructing it.}\]
occurs to establish difference, and the proscriptive system that arises from it is used to establish how a society understands the difference. The establishment of difference and assigning values to difference always replaces a prevailing worldview with a different one. The proscriptive system that arises from arche-violence cannot happen without replacing someone's world-view, so it would seem that every time the second violence occurs, which, in the Derridean framework happens every time the first violence occurs, one could make the argument that epistemic violence also occurs. However, both Foucault and Spivak have described epistemic violence as occurring on a societal level, such as Eighteenth century Europe redefining what it means to be mad or a newly colonized society being forced to learn the language of the colonizer and adopt his religion. Because not every instance of defining difference results in difference being defined by an entire society, it would seem that the second violence is only the same as epistemic violence in the instances when it is an entire society that has its understanding of the world reassigned. When it is one or a few people, the second violence fills the same role as it does on a societal level, but it does not constitute epistemic violence because it does not effect the way an entire society thinks.

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13 Derrida establishes the second violence as always following the first. From his description, the second violence would immediately follow the first, or at least the beginnings of a proscriptive system to establish value with regards to the difference established by arche-violence, though the proscriptive system continues to develop and become more complex in the years that follow.

14 I would argue that it is possible that Derrida's own example from the Nambikwara is not necessarily occurring on a societal level, because, while Lévi-Strauss did establish difference between individuals, it is unclear how many people were actually affected by his intrusion.
An alternative perspective is that arche-violence and epistemic violence re-conceptualize a similar concept in different ways and it is a question of which most accurately represents the relationship between violence and knowledge. However, it seems as if epistemic violence can be understood in relationship to arche-violence and the subsequent second and third violences, as imbedded in the process. By "radically overhauling the episteme," (Can the Subaltern Speak 25) the process of arche-violence and the following violence of a proscriptive system is collapsed to a single "epistemic violence". Epistemic violence therefore denotes the first and second violence, whereas Derrida explores the process through which the two arise. That is not to suggest that we need to dismiss Foucault's concept of epistemic violence; but rather to underline that Derrida's explanation of how arche-violence and all subsequent violences arise is also useful in understanding how epistemic violence happens.

Most incidents of arche-violence and the violences that follow happen on a societal level because it would be difficult to assign meaning to difference without them being enforced. Arche-violence and the second/epistemic violence only occur when the person or people defining the difference has the power to do so. If someone were to notice a difference between herself and I, and subsequently attempted to define our relationship by that difference, and she is the only one who finds the difference significant and she lacks the power to influence the other people I interact with to pay attention to the difference, she lacks the power to define the difference in a meaningful way. While the difference has been described, it has not been used to define a power relationship. While one person may consider the difference to be meaningful, others
refuse to give the difference meaning\textsuperscript{15} therefore refusing to allow the difference be a determining factor in dynamics of a relationship. For example, the hand a person used to write was at one time assigned meaning. A left-handed person was thought to have criminal tendencies, which resulted in parents training their children to use their right hands, violently if necessary (and this could be thought of as epistemic violence of a lesser degree, as it changes the way a person thinks and interacts with her environment). When science proved that there was no links between being left handed and criminal activity, this difference ceases to have meaning in relation to the power structure. The difference continued to exist, but it ceased to matter.

Another Foucauldian element useful in the discussion of arche-violence is the relationship between arche-violence and power. Does arche-violence arise simply from observing difference? If someone were to attempt to make meaning of difference and create a value-ordered hierarchy based on what people drink with their coffee and fail at implementing this hierarchy, fail to make the difference meaningful, what has happened? Clearly some differences matter more than others. Those that matter are differences that are divided along the lines of power—those who have power define themselves in opposition to those who do not, and those who have power have the power to define. For example, I do not have the power to define myself as superior to people who drink their

\textsuperscript{15} Some people may reject the meaning of various differences that are established by arche-violence. Their strategic rejection of difference is not the same because the power structure has established the difference and given it meaning. It may have no meaning to you, but that does not prevent difference from being acknowledged because it is already imbedded in the power structure. In fact, at that point, failing to acknowledge difference is problematic because it is also failure to acknowledge privileges that exist and prevents differences from being rectified.
coffee with milk or sugar. If I were in a position of power, or a lot of like-minded people with a similar privilege tried to make a value oriented hierarchy from a particular difference between groups of people, archen-viole would arise. If power is inherent in the difference—if sugar where exorbitantly expensive and only those with a degree of material wealth—the difference is more likely to matter, because the difference is backed by the system of power. In the sugar example, for instance, using sugar in coffee as a defining difference compounds already existing inequality. Those in power already have social advantages, which allows them to entirely define difference. Arche-violence is self-perpetuating—we cannot fail to acknowledge who is defining, who is perpetuating archen-viole.

Perhaps the biggest problem reconciling Foucault and Derrida is how they characterize language and oppression. For Foucault, language is reflective of power, and for Derrida, power arises from language and we cannot make meaning of power structures without first understanding language and its role in oppression. While this seems as if it is a chicken/egg problem, failure to resolve it could result in an inability to reconcile Foucault and Derrida's position. From a Derridean perspective, the answer to a Foucauldian's claim that language reflects the power structure is that the power structure was built by language and therefore in order to wield power, one must first have an advantage reflected within the language, and from this point, one has power to shape the language in turn, as the Foucauldian position suggests.

In fact, Foucault brings something to the conversation of archen-viole that Derrida was lacking—a discussion of power. Archen-violence creates power—difference
is noted, it is assigned value, a proscriptive system arises, and is either reinforced or
subverted with individual acts of violence. Arche-violence is rooted in power, not only
because it creates it, but because it gives those who have it the ability to perpetuate it, to
create further arche-violence and more firmly establish their power.

The role of arche-violence is key in the perpetuation of oppression—without the
process of creating value-ordered hierarchies, we would not understand difference and
without difference, no one can oppress or be oppressed. In the future chapters of this
thesis, I will explore the ways in which oppression arises from arche-violence. The
practical implications of Derrida's work will become evident as we explore the
implications of arche-violence in the following chapters.
CHAPTER 2: ARCHE-VIOLENCE AND RAPE

Since Susan Brownmiller published *Against Our Will*, which re-conceptualized rape as a matter of power rather than uncontrollable sexual desire, the feminist scholarly discussion of rape has, in large part, never questioned that assertion, even to ask why the expression of power takes the form of forced sexual contact. While there has been much discussion of rape as a feminist issue in light of the gang rape cases in India and Steubenville, Ohio, and many talented feminist writers have contributed brilliant analyses of the issues at play, a common refrain can be heard, one that has not been substantially changed since the 1970's "rape is about power." In our scholarly introduction to feminism, we are taught to chant that refrain as one would arithmetic tables. Rape is about power. Once, when I was discussing my undergraduate thesis, which argued that rape was a hate crime, with my uncle (a well informed fellow who is sensitive to these sort of issues), he stopped me to tell me that "actually, rape is about power." I found this response telling for two reasons: First, because hate crimes are so obviously matters of power that it would seem the claim that rape is a hate crime would not contradict the idea of rape as power and secondly because it appears that the idea of rape as a matter of power has become so ingrained that we cannot question it or move beyond it. A Derridean analysis of rape mirroring arche-violence and supporting a system of difference does not dismiss the idea of rape as a matter of power, but it allows for the complexity that the traditional power explanation does not allow in understanding rape, which, in reducing rape to a matter of raw power, cannot give us an understanding of why rape, as an expression of power, takes on its particular form.
Because rape highlights the structure of arche-violence and reinforces difference, we can better understand arche-violence by exploring how it relates to rape. We cannot understand rape without arche-violence. While the same can be said of any other act of violence because of the relationship between arche-violence and physical violence, any act of violence that arises from systemic difference, systemic arche-violence needs to be investigated because not only can we better understand the relationship between arche-violence and the act of violence, but we can better understand arche-violence itself. The problem with understanding rape as a matter of power is that "power" is used to dismiss further discussion of why power takes on a dynamic of sexual violation when rape occurs. We need to ask questions about what causes the power to be expressed in a sexualized form and why this violent expression of (typically) gendered power so closely mirrors arche-violence. Perhaps the question we need to be asking is how do arche-violence, power, and rape intersect? Exploring these questions will allow a more nuanced understanding of rape, as opposed to the current understanding of rape as a matter of simple power that collapses when examples of which problematize the matter of rape as gendered power.

The context of rapes and other hate crimes function to highlight arche-violence because the act of inscribing difference is so extreme that the victim\textsuperscript{16} is effectively erased in the process. In other words, rape effectively renders the victim invisible—the crime is underreported, the perpetrators seldom punished, the conversations surrounding

\textsuperscript{16}While feminist anti-violence activists (and I would consider myself in that group) use the term "survivor" because "victim" is disempowering, but no all of victims I discuss survive, therefore it is easier to use "victim." Additionally at times the expression "survivor" creates linguistic difficulties in the discussion of victimization.
the crime often absolve the perpetrator of responsibility, even when they do not go to the common extreme of implying the responsibility of the victim. In the cases I explore in this chapter, the victims have been erased in process of reinforcing arche-violence. Because the second violence simultaneously reinforces and erases the first, it can be difficult to see how rape can reinforce arche-violence when it appears that we are rightly horrified by rape and seek justice for the victims of rape. We must critically analyze how the second relationship between the second and third violences to understand how rape can reinforce originary violence when it appears to be prohibited by every existing proscriptive system. To do this, we must push beyond the idea that rape is a matter of power; it is, but we cannot end our exploration of the subject there because to do so falls short of actually understanding how the power at play actually functions to perpetuate gendered (and often race, class, etc.) oppression.

Rape is the product of arche-violence, the process of radical differentiation. The first violence—the differentiation of sex and/or gender—draws a distinction between male and female (or men and women). The second violence establishes a proscriptive system that makes meaning of the difference while erasing arche-violence. This means, in this case, that the process of differentiation is outlined and a proscriptive system arises—a system that results in the social construction of gender along the lines of the sexual difference, a system reflected in the mores of society as well as the law. In turn, the proscriptive system results in violence that supports the idea of difference by reminding both the victim and the group the victim represents of the disproportionate power. The
proscriptive system responds in turn, subtly masking the ways violence is used to reinforce the idea of power.

When we discuss rape in relation to arche-violence, specific motives of individual rapists are not important. While an individual motive might further support the system of arche-violence inherent in the nature of rape, no motive can remove the act from arche-violence, even if the motive of the act is specific to the person it is being committed against, there are larger issues at play. It is necessary, in these cases, to reframe the issue from "Why did they rape?" implying a focus on the individual motive to "why rape?" which focuses instead on why, if someone wants to enact power—in order to assert dominance or revenge—why have they chosen rape as their means of doing so? Rape may be about power, but it is not the only way to express power over a person, and often people fail to critically interrogate the ways power functions in the act of rape in relation to other ways in which power can be expressed. Catharine MacKinnon posits that while rape is a matter of power, it takes on a sexualized form because of the power inherent to the sexual hierarchies (267).

The examples I use in this chapter involve male-on-female rape, but the general structure of rape in relation to arche-violence is applicable in all instances of rape. It does not erase when differences beyond sexual differences (such as differences of race, class, sexual orientation, or social position) are a factor in a rape, but instead highlights how such differences can be reinforced by rape. Male-on-male, and even female-on-male rape

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17 For example, it is speculated that the rape in the Steubenville case occurred as revenge against Jane Doe for ending a relationship with one of the perpetrators. While this motive may appear to negate the idea of rape functioning systemically, to accept that view would ignore the fact that they chose rape to enact their revenge.
can be understood in a context of arche-violence, but the examples are so few because of the shame associated with men being raped, shame that is directly tied to being put into the sexually subordinate (traditionally female) position. The examples focus on male-on-female rape because it is more common and more visible, though even that visibility is problematic when we consider how vastly underreported of a crime it is.

To explore the implications of rape as a way to illuminate arche-violence, there are certain examples that are particularly enlightening. The rapes and murders of the women in Juárez, Mexico, particularly illuminate the nature of arche-violence. To give some background, since the early 90's, several hundred women have been raped and murdered in Juárez, Mexico. Howard Campbell places the number of deaths at 3,111, a disproportionate number of them women who have also been raped before death\(^\text{18}\) (19). Because of the varying power dynamics at play in the violence of Juárez, we can see arche-violence acted out in a number of ways. As in most cases of rape there is a dynamic of sex/gender\(^\text{19}\) and power, but additionally, Juárez is at the border of the Global North and South, the "open wound" of the U.S.-Mexican border Gloria Anzaldúa discusses in *Borderlands/ La Frontera*, as well as the cite of *maquiladoras*, factories that provide cheap products to be sold to those living in the Global North. In addition to being the site of an open wound, Juárez is the site of intersections of race, sex/gender, class, status as a

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\(^{18}\) As of May 2011

\(^{19}\) Perhaps if I were to expand this analysis further, I would explore the different dynamics of social construction relating to gender and how that interacts with rape. For the purposes of this thesis, rape reinforces the gendered expectations of a person's sex—that is to say that it reinforces perceptions of gender falling in line with sex. Rape often collapses the idea of sex and gender onto each other, reinforcing that we draw between sex and gender expression.
member of the Global North and South (perhaps that is the cause of the wound Anzaldúa sees forming at the U.S-Mexican border), and the rapes and murder show the marginalization of the most powerless inhabitants of Juárez.

According to Zygmunt Bauman, the byproduct of globalization is that a large number of people, particularly those living in the global South are disposable or superfluous (6). Put another way, as the result of industrialization, global capitalism, and the disproportionate power of the global North, we have created people who have become so marginalized that they can make no "meaningful contribution" to the market of exchange. The women of Juárez are such superfluous people, and as such, their deaths went ignored for several years before anyone realized that there was a pattern of rape and murder. The pattern in question does not mean that there is a serial rapist/murderer, but something much more dangerous—the status of women as disposable bodies in Juárez. The various differences compound the violence done, leading to the erasure of the women from Juárez in the process.

How does arche-violence factor into the violence against the women of Juárez, Mexico? Beyond the simple application of Derrida's three violences, what special meaning can understanding the violence of Juárez bring to the conversation of arche-violence? As I discussed in the previous chapter, arche-violence is divided along lines of power. The most extreme examples of disproportionate power that we can see arche-violence arising illuminate it best because we can see the implications for what they are: as the result of radical differentiation (arche-violence), the women of Juárez have been raped and murdered and thrown away by the hundreds. Because they are women, because
they are poor laborers, because they are non-white, their difference from all indicators of value in globalized society makes them both more likely to be the victims of violence and also more likely to be ignored when violence is enacted against them.

The system of defining difference serves to keep the women of Juárez invisible. They encounter economic disadvantage in an increasingly global society that allows for the rape and then murder of the women of Juárez. They become visible only after their bodies are found, only after it is too late. Up until that point, their invisibility allows for their rapist/murders to act against them without a chance of being caught. It allows dozens, if not hundreds of women to be killed before anyone recognized the rapes and murders of women in Juárez were part of an epidemic. The number of intersectional differences that lead to the murders in Juárez is perhaps more significant than any individual motives, because all individual motives for violence arise from arche-violence. The violence against the women of Juárez has erased them. In the process of differentiation created by arche-violence has created a disproportionate power structure. Because the women of Juárez live at the intersections of many different forms of power, their deaths have been rendered invisible. The erasure of the women of Juárez has been so effective that the crimes themselves have been erased, resulting in only bodies. Not only have the women of Juárez been erased, but so have their murders and the crimes which have been committed against them—that is the true meaning of invisibility—life, death, and the violence that occurs in between have been rendered unseen. Inherent in the process of arche-violence and the following process is the idea that the difference has been erased. The process that follows the violence of arche-violence obfuscates the
inherent writing of difference. For that reason, the Nambikwara forbid the speaking of proper names and proscriptive systems arise to make meaning of the difference. The meaning of the difference in the case of Juárez means invisibility. Perhaps the example of Juárez seems extreme to the reader, who sees how this might be the case, but finds the overall context of the rapes and murders in Juárez incredibly unfamiliar to what she knows. It is for that reason that the second example figures prominently in this chapter as well.

Recently, rape has gained much media attention with the trial of the Steubenville football players involved in the gang rape of 16-year-old "Jane Doe." The media conversation surrounding the case has been troubling, as the focus of the case was the "ambiguity" of rape when alcohol was involved and the possibility of the perpetrator's lives being ruined. The victim and the violence that had been done to her has been erased by the media in their discussion of the trial. In both Juárez and Steubenville, the end result of arche-violence is erasure. Like a word that has been put "under erasure"—crossed out but still visible—the women in each of these cases renders them invisible while their specter remains. Jane Doe is absent in the consideration of the media, but present in the blame directed at her by the community as she received threats after the trial. The women of Juárez have been erased in the sense that they have been found in shallow graves, treated as disposable by the systems of power, yet visible in the sense

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20 The information regarding the Steubenville trial, beyond that which is considered common knowledge, comes from private correspondence with a friend who was at the trial, because to use the mainstream media reports would be to buy into the erasure of both the crime and Jane Doe.
that the murders were treated as a pervasive social problem only after the people realized that there was a general trend.

With the Steubenville case, we can see the erasure of the victim most clearly in the media coverage of the trial, not because the young woman chose to remain anonymous but because the media refused to consider her perspective. When CNN commentators discussed the "lost potential" of the young men found guilty of rape, they erased the victim of the crime entirely, making the matter about something that was done to the rapists, not justice being served. While the young men could be said to be victims of rape culture, the media places the blame for the "destroyed futures" on the justice system, making it clear that the justice system, as the representative of Jane Doe, is to blame, not a society that condones rape. Therefore, the responsibility, in the eyes of society, ultimately falls back upon the victim once again.

Why is this matter important? Much of the mainstream media has extensively considered the rapist perspectives. They have lamented the proceeding as if the perpetrators themselves had been wronged and in the process, they have shown that they would rather sympathize with young men whose acts could be categorized as atrocities rather than a young woman who has encountered them. Even if the media does not directly blame her, they refuse to empathize with her and render her invisible in the discussions of the fate of the young men who raped her. From a Derridean perspective,

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21 I am not exaggerating when I say that the acts perpetuated in Steubenville are atrocities. In many ways the account of what was done to her mirrors accounts of rape being used as a war crime—the collection of trophies, the public display, the encouragement of bystander participation, and the act of urinating on her body all strike a sickening parallel to the ways in which rape is used as an act of war.
we can see all three violences at play—difference, the difference that defined the young men as having power—in this case, sex/gender was not the only factor, living in a community that confers god-like status to athletes reinforces and widens the idea of difference between themselves and the girl—a proscriptive system in place that reinforces that difference, and an act of violence along the lines of power. What makes rape and hate crime different from other acts of violence is that they reinforce the proscriptive system rather than acting against it. So when the men involved in the Steubenville case acted, they reinforced power that had already been bestowed upon them.

How does the act of rape reinforce the difference of arche-violence and resulting proscriptive system? As I have discussed in depth in the first chapter, the concept of arche-violence mirrors the structure of rape—a violent (penetrative) invasion, a process of radical differentiation. Rape (and other hate crimes) reinforce the system of value-ordered difference by reminding someone of their place within the value-ordered hierarchy. When someone is raped, the act reinforces the belief of their sexual inferiority—the victim has been reduced to a literal sex object, reminded that those acting against them have the power to do so. When a rape occurs, those who have been acted against have been quite literally defined by the difference, defined by the sexual expectations surrounding that role, and what follows is as much a reinforcement of that role as it is a reinforcement of

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[22] That is not to say that it is simply a matter of sexual difference, but when other factors are at play such as race, sexual orientation, economic status, etc. the victim is usually sexualized in some way as a result of the defining difference. When women of color are raped by white men, the racial element is just as significant as the gender element, but we
power. In fact that role would not exist were it not for a system of power that arises from arche-violence. Had gendered (and race and class in the case of Juárez) roles not existed, as the product of arche-violence, there would be no gendered (racial, class, etc.) power to reinforce, and rape would be incomprehensible.

The discussion of the Steubenville rape case would be incomplete without a discussion of the guilty verdict. Does the fact that they were found guilty subvert the idea of power and arche-violence? Has a blow been struck for equality? Does the fact that they were found guilty mean that the value ordered hierarchies that rape reinforces are collapsing? While I would like for nothing more than a collapse of the hierarchies that rape routinely reinforces, as that would likely mean and end to, or at least a drastic decrease in, acts of rape, the verdict in Steubenville does not suggest that there has been a radical change in the system. However, understanding the guilty verdict serves to illuminate how one potential criticism of "rape reinforcing arche-violence" falls short.

One could potentially make the argument that rape and hate crimes do not reinforce the initial division of arche-violence because if they did, the proscriptive system that arose in Derrida's second violence would reinforce the difference by making such acts of violence permissible. The logic follows that because rape is recognized as a crime, it goes against the proscriptive system and therefore cannot reinforce the system of difference created by arche-violence.

The problem with that reasoning is that the second violence obfuscates the first: in the original example of the Nambikwara the second violence is the prohibition of

must note that the system of disproportionate white privilege has led to the sexualization of women of color.
speaking names, which can only come after the initial naming. The second violence arises from the first and simultaneously reinforces difference while attempting to erase the original act of arche-violence. For the Nambikwara, this means that names cannot be spoken. With sexual and gendered difference, this means a proscriptive system that thrives on the idea of obvious, inherent differences between the sexes that subsequently translates to gender expression. Because the proscriptive system tends to erase difference, the proscriptive system can contain prohibitions against acts that actually enforce the idea of difference, because the goal of the second violence is to hide the first while reinforcing it. The prohibition of violent acts that reinforce the system of difference acts to make such acts public, to make them seen. It supports those who deny inequality within a system of difference exists because on the surface, such prohibitions make it appear as if attempts to rectify arche-violence are being made. Ultimately, this makes the oppression of those at the bottom of hierarchies more subtle and harder to abolish. Additionally distinguishing it is essential to distinguish between what the proscriptive system says is prohibited and how we handle the prohibition.

There is a link between the first and third violence in cases where physical violence actually supports arche-violence. In these cases, the third violence undoes the obfuscation of the first violence by the second. Because the proscriptive system functions to hide the first violence, physical violence that supports and reinforces originary violence can strip away the proscriptive system that appears to have "undone" arche-violence. It is for this reason that the proscriptive system appears to abhor these acts and
may even place them in a special category such as "hate crimes" that defines them as even more reprehensible than other acts of violence.

That is where the conviction of the Steubenville rapists comes into the discussion. To some, a conviction means that justice has been served—in a perfect world, that would be what a conviction means. However, what really happens is that the conviction erases the injustices that have been committed without rectifying them. It is a way for the legal system to ignore the fact that the law enforcement mishandled the trial, Jane Doe faced hostility and threats from the community, and many of the people involved in harming Jane Doe were granted immunity. The conviction allowed rapists to become victims in the eyes of the media.

The reactions of the media and the justice system reveal just how the punishment functions to continue to reinforce the idea of difference. It is natural to talk about the consequences of one's actions, but the media discussion of the case goes beyond simply considering the consequences—there conversation of the young men's lives being ruined implied that the justice system was to blame by pressing charges, which means that Jane Doe is responsible by extension. While she was not overtly blamed by the media, she was also not considered, completely erased from the conversation about the act that had been committed against her. Her perspective is not granted the necessary consideration, and the value ordered hierarchy remains in place, even if the rapists get convicted. It is telling that even female reporters sympathized with the rapists and made them to be the victims—and even more telling that we find it easier to identify with the rapists than the victim.
There are major differences between the Steubenville case and the rapes and murders in Juárez, and it is important to realize that the two are not perfectly analogous—if they were, there would be no point in writing about them both. However, both highlight the ways that rape is not just a matter of gendered archetypical violence and other elements—other differences—can shape the violence. Whatever the dynamic, it is important to remember that the crime serves to highlight difference and reinforce physical violence while simultaneously supporting and erasing a system of difference, and then going further, to erase those who have been defined against the standard and fall short.

The next question that arises is how rape functions as a form of oppression. Derrida lays the framework for discussing how archetypical violence relates to all other forms of violence, but violence does not necessarily equal oppression. However, according to Iris Young, violence can be a face of oppression if it supports the continuation of value ordered difference. According to Young, if violence functions to further difference, it can be oppressive. She writes,

Violence is systemic because it is directed at members of a group simply because they are members of a group. Any woman, for example, has a reason to fear rape…. The oppression of violence consists not only in direct victimization, but in the daily knowledge shared by all members of oppressed groups that they are liable to violation, solely on account of the group identity. (13, Young's emphasis)

It is easy to see how archetypical violence is foundational in this account: underlying the power structure that makes rape and other forms of violence systemic is the idea of difference,
difference that follows lines of power, difference where groups of people are defined by what they are not, and as a result, have everything to fear.

The implications of this chapter are then clear: Derridean arche-violence has an important place in the feminist conversation about rape, and can help to further the discussion of rape as a matter of power beyond where the conversation has gone in the past. This perspective allows us to avoid talking about rape reductively, embracing the complexity of an issue that is not as easy as the "rape is a matter of power" refrain does not allow. A further implication of the relationship between rape and arche-violence is that, as I have hinted at in other places, rape is a hate crime. However, as our discussion of Iris Young and other feminist thinkers indicates, the understanding we gain from arche-violence is not so far from the feminist line of thought that the ideas arising from arche-violence are difficult to reconcile with feminist thought.

The discussion in the first two chapters makes clear the way in which arche-violence functions in relations to acts of violence. From the analysis of the first two chapters, one can easily apply the existing framework to an act of violence in order to understand how it supports arche-violence and the resulting proscriptive system of rules, as well as how it ultimately works against the framework that arises from arche-violence. In the next chapter, I will explore the way in which disability theory introduces a possible answer to arche-violence, a way beyond arche-violence, or, at the very least, a way to minimize the damage of arche-violence.

23 In reality, arche-violence helps us better understand the way hate crimes function to perpetuate the power structure within society.
CHAPTER 3: ARCHE-VIOLENCE AND DISABILITY

When one considers disability, one sees a competition between embodied experience and social construction and the ways in which the two concepts both compete and work together. Disability is constructed by society in the sense that we define what it means to have disability based on seemingly arbitrary norms, which means that these norms can shift overtime, as we can see in Foucault's discussion of madness—the constructed nature of disability means that how we define disability can shift based on the perception of society. In contrast, the embodied elements of disability are not constructed. Looking at the role arche-violence plays in the construction of disability helps to illuminate how the process of social construction relates to arche-violence. The role language plays in constructing disability is telling, because language is frequently constructing and re-constructing disability, shifting our understanding of disability.

Michel Foucault discusses the redefinition of madness in the 18th century, which is how he arrived at the idea of epistemic violence. This shows how the idea of disability shifts over time and is defined by the dominant discourse. The redefinition of madness led to the great confinement Foucault discusses in the first part of A History of Madness. Suddenly more people were defined as mad when they previously were not, and nothing had changed with regard to their embodied circumstances. Suddenly, more people were mad, though not because anyone's condition had changed, but because of the redefinition of madness. As a result, society had no way of dealing with the increase in the number of people defined as "mad" and did so by introducing the idea of institutionalization (46).
At the intersection of embodiment and social construction, we see the trouble arche-violence can cause in relation to disability because arche-violence creates binaries and value ordered hierarchies that do not adequately reflect the complexities of disability. In fact, what makes arche-violence violent, is the fact that it often simplifies nuanced differences and allows difference to be defined in opposition to the dominant position in society. This is precisely how embodiment and construction work together—people whose embodied experiences differ from what society considers "normal" embodied experiences are defined by their embodiments. The level of ability we expect is constructed by society. According to Susan Wendell, there is more to the social construction of disability than simply defining people by their embodiment—the standards for embodiment are based upon male standards. She writes, "The entire physical and social organization of life tends to assume that we are either strong and healthy and able to do what the average young, non-disabled man can do or that we are completely unable to participate in public life" (26). The multi-dimensional nature is a manifestation of the second violence because it makes the proscriptive system even more difficult to deconstruct.

When we examine the language used to talk about disability, we see a navigation of the boundaries and an attempt to undo the arche-violence. Initially, arche-violence in the case of disability arose because disability has been defined in opposition to people who do not have disabilities. Since its emergence, the disability rights community has critically examined the language used to talk about disability, attempted to root out ableist language and replace it with neutral language. I would characterize this as a
successful attempt to subvert arche-violence and take ownership of language. This arises from the use of language that does not define disability as a lack or opposition to the able-bodied.

The process of social construction rests between the first and second violence, because the proscriptive system that creates order and makes sense of the differentiation that arise as the result of arche-violence. Social construction cannot arise without making meaning of difference. When difference is acknowledged and given value a proscriptive system arises. That proscriptive system aids in the process of social construction. Social construction illuminates the nature of the second violence, demonstrating that the second violence does not occur overnight. The proscriptive system of the second violence arises over years. In order to simultaneously reinforce the violence of arche-writing and erase it, it takes years of construction to make difference and the power to make the system of oppression more subtle and harder to undo. The proscriptive system that arises in the second violence takes on the form of both law and informal social codes, which are harder to modify. Therefore, by changing the formal rules that arise out of the second violence will not undo the second violence, or rectify originary violence. For example, removing discriminatory laws will not undo unequal conditions that have arisen from arche-violence, as evidenced by the number of groups who gained voting rights (women, African Americans, etc.) only to have a long fight for substantive equality years later. However, the disability rights community's efforts to take ownership of the language that talks about language demonstrates what I believe is the beginning of an effort to undo arche-violence.
While it may appear that constantly shifting language would only perpetuate the violence of difference by allowing there to be further violence of re-categorization, because the disability rights community takes ownership of the task of naming and defining, the traditional mode of language and naming arising from those who have power naming those who do not is subverted. While this does not completely undo the construction of disability, or the previous violence that has been done, it serves as an answer to arche-violence, a previously inescapable problem. From this, we can take away the knowledge that there can be a solution to arche-violence and not all hope is lost. However, while I believe this is the answer to addressing arche-violence, we still have a long way to go before it can be completely undone.

Arche-violence is all-pervasive and, given the claims he makes about its relationship to thought and writing, it does follow from Derrida's argument that arche-violence does, to some extent, structure the way we think. Therefore, it is uncertain whether we can ever escape arche-violence, from a Derridean perspective. We can, however, minimize its effects as groups who have been marginalized by arche-violence claim the authority to name and define themselves. Let the name giver beware, though, one must be careful not to define others in opposition to oneself too much, lest they perpetuate the idea of arche-violence, as many social movements have inadvertently perpetuated inequality, like many early feminists who were incapable of thinking in terms of white, middle class, educated, able-bodied women. Or perhaps it is all arche-violence, and it only differs in as far as the proscriptive system that arises is built on difference, but the difference is less value-ordered. That is not to say that arche-violence or social
construction can be overturned overnight, and we certainly have yet to see an effort to undo arche-violence on a large scale, so there is no telling how effective a large scale attempt to undo arche-violence would be.

Implicit in the idea of arche-violence, is that arche-violence defines or creates an identity category for people, usually by defining them in opposition to whatever society considers the norm (which, in our case would be a cisgendered, straight, white, normate man). Therefore, the people who benefit most greatly from identity politics are those who have suffered from arche-violence the most. However, Lennard J. Davis contends that disability is an unstable category and therefore should not be defined in terms of identity politics (Davis 304-05). Davis argues that disability is an unstable category because one can gain a disability by age or injury, but one can also recover from a disability or be deemed to no longer have a disability as technology improves. Because this is an unstable category, Davis believes that deriving a sense of identity politics from disability is counter-productive. Davis goes on to destabilize other categories frequently used to establish identity, noting that race, sex/gender, and sexual orientation are less stable than we previously imagined.

When we dismiss identity politics do we undo arche-violence or constantly refigure it? In other words: does destabilizing identity politics make negate arche-violence by destabilizing definitions, or does it make arche-violence constantly recurring by constantly shifting how we understand someone's identity. To destabilize identity politics means to not allow certain categories into which people define one's identity by acknowledging that hard binaries between such categories as black and white, male and
female, disabled and normate, and consequently no need to use such categories as a major source of identity. Davis offers a sketch of what this will look like when he talks about the ways disability as an identity category can fluctuate—certain disabilities offer the hope of recovery, technology can make what was once a disability no long an issue, a person who does not have a disability can, at any time become disabled through injury, and most people become disabled with age—as a result, defining our lives by a category that could change is largely impractical. Davis's discussion hinges on the idea of the changing understanding of disability, and because embodied circumstances can change, which results in whether or not someone has a disability changing with aging, injury, or recovery/being cured. Is the result of any of these shifts more arche-violence? Can we reject arche-violence by rejecting identity politics or can arche-violence occur even without defining someone's identity? If we do away with identity politics as Davis suggests, can we even understand arche-violence?

To suggest that arche-violence disappears by dismissing identity politics is inherently problematic. On one hand, it could be seen as denying agency to suggest that arche-violence defines someone's identity and leaves her without the ability to do anything about it, yet arche-violence is really only a pervasive phenomenon if it has lasting results. If arche-violence can be too easily undone, it really is not noteworthy. Furthermore, given that physical violence arises from arche-violence, it suggests that there are very real, very serious implications to arche-violence. Therefore, we must navigate the relationship between arche-violence and identity politics, and the implications of Davis's rejection of identity politics.
Davis seeks to move beyond defining identity based upon unstable categories, and perhaps this is an answer to arche-violence. When someone takes responsibility for choosing which language is to be used to describe herself, she is, without ignoring difference, defining difference on her own terms. When people with mental disabilities chose to accept the term "mad" while rejecting terms like "crazy" or "insane," they were taking ownership of the difference and refusing to allow people at the other end of the value hierarchy to define the difference. We must recognize that arche-violence is the product of social construction that is not easily undone, and that we have not arrived a place where everyone rejects identity politics like Davis suggests. This means that we must not look at arche-violence in a vacuum, and we must take material circumstances into account. As it stands today, we may not be able to end arche-violence entirely, but we can reject to be defined by it. Simply put, differences would still arise, be observed, and those who have a place of privilege would still try to maintain their privilege by value-ordered definition, but by refusing to allow difference to be a defining marker of identity, by recognizing that, while difference exist, they do not break into the easy categories the definer would have the world believe, and this would take the sting out of being regarded as different. By rejecting to define one's identity based on arche-violence, we cannot undo arche-violence, and we cannot necessarily avoid being harmed by it, but the harm can be minimized by refusing to be defined by arche-violence. Material circumstances play a role in this, because as people accept arguments like Davis's, it is possible that the perspective of society will change, and as a result people will be less defined by arche-violence. However, acknowledging that Davis's insight that most
identity categories are unstable might be the way to undo arche-violence or create a society with less arche-violence does not equal the failure to resolve arche-violence under the current circumstances.

However, there are problems that arise from Davis's perspective. While his argument about identity politics is compelling, the argument can be made that the benefits to identity politics like solidarity with likeminded people and to make an effort to rectify the damage done by arche-violence and it's oppressive consequences outweighs problems that Davis addresses. As stated above, the material circumstances surrounding arche-violence are crucial to better understanding whether solidarity or dismissal of identity politics is the best approach. However it should be noted that, if within identity politics themselves and the process through which they arise, if the identity categories create or perpetuate arche-violence by their very existence (for Davis, this might be the notion of essentialism, that these identities are somehow written on the body (Davis 303), the group might stand to re-examine the way they position themselves, but, if they work to undermine arche-violence by destabilizing the idea of difference within the identity category or reject hegemonic defining factors. When we acknowledge that all existing identity categories are unstable, we are acknowledging that we are defining much of what we know about people based on categories that can easily collapse or implode. So when disability advocates renegotiate the language used to describe disability in an attempt to find the best words to talk about various aspects of disability, the result is a possible answer the problem of arche-violence.
Perhaps the best way to navigate the difference between arche-violence and identity politics is to examine the consequences of arche-violence. Because the consequences of arche-violence are often seen in the way people belonging to groups marginalized by arche-violence develop a double consciousness, it is not far from the mark to suggest that people can have a traumatic response to arche-violence that mirrors, in many ways, the trauma one experiences as a result of physical violence. The next chapter explores the idea of arche-trauma, particularly the ways in which people have trouble relating to a language that is not their own and often feel a sense of alienation from language as the result of arche-violence.
CHAPTER 4: ARCHE-TRAUMA

The violence of language can be seen in the language policies of the postcolonial state. We see the violence of language most prevalent in the stories of those who have been forced to learn a language that is not their own and abandon their mother tongue. It is telling that the process colonial teachers often used to teach colonized children was an inherently violent process. Ngugi wa Thiong'o discusses the violence done to him and his classmates in the name of teaching them English (438). Students were beaten and forced to wear signs comparing them to animals. However, beyond the acts of violence, there is another violence at play, the violence of forcing someone to speak, think, and exist in another language. Someone who does not think critically about language may see being forced to learn another language as a minor inconvenience, however that does not take into account the fact that language defines us. It is, as Wittgenstein contends, the vehicle of thought. Forcing someone to learn a language is forcing them into a foreign conceptual framework when speaking the new language. To learn to speak a language, one must think in that language while speaking. When an entire nation of people are forced to speak a language that is not their own, we see another "radical overhaul of the episteme" as Foucault (or his translator) would say.

The trouble with colonial language policies is that not that they make someone adopt a different language or a different conceptual framework, but because the colonized (as well as the postcolonial, quite frequently) must either adopt the language or face being disenfranchised. The colonizer's language is privileged over that of the colonized, and consequently, so is his way of thought. The "project" of colonialism, beyond gaining
political power and access to resources, was to transform the lives of the colonized to meet western standards, and perhaps the easiest way of doing so is to force them to learn the language, because in doing so they will absorb the ways of thinking associated with the colonizer's language.

That the language politics of the colonial and postcolonial world caused people to speak and think in another language and as a result harmed them is not a new idea, however, what is notable is that this has yet to be discussed in the context of Derridean arche-violence, despite the fact that Derrida frames arche-violence as a problem of imperialism in his discussion of Lévi-Strauss. The concepts of arche-violence and epistemic violence are highly useful in a post-colonial context, which may be why Spivak uses epistemic violence to discuss postcolonialism. Where this chapter departs from the existing scholarship on arche- and epistemic violence is looking at the violence inherent in the forced learning of a new language, to examine the ways that this disrupts pattern of thought and forces one into a new way of thinking.

When Lévi-Strauss named the Nambikwara, the violence of naming was two-fold. First, the obvious violence of naming, that it is a process of inscribing difference in the act of naming. Second, when Lévi-Strauss learns the names of the Nambikwara, he is forcing them into his conceptual framework. He has colonized them by manipulating the children into revealing names, because, in doing so, he is attempting to assign *his* value to names, that is, the Western ideal that names are used as identifiers, without any prohibition on speaking them. His earlier attempt to rename the Nambikwara by assigning them European names or nicknames based on their physical attributes.
Ultimately, Lévi-Strauss sees the corruption of the Nambikwara arising from the introduction of writing, as evidenced by the leader of the Nambikwara using writing to manipulate his subjects. He does not see this for what it is—the Nambikwara leader re-appropriating a concept forced upon him by the invader who has already made multiple overtures of arche-violence against his people.

Derrida's critique of Lévi-Strauss has hidden implications, implications that, when fully understood, negate the critique that Derrida's arche-violence is nothing more than a frivolous language game of little consequence. While the arche-violence begins with proper names, implicit in Derrida's critique is the idea that Lévi-Strauss should not have been there, but for imperialist tendencies. Underlying arche-violence is the idea of invasion, colonialism and people overstepping the boundaries that are in place. Lévi-Strauss's critique of the Nambikwara is rooted in the Western logocentric view that dismisses non-Western cultures that has no form of writing (in the Western sense) as both primitive and yet morally superior to Western writing, a la Jean-Jacques Rousseau's noble savage. Derrida critiques that view as imperialist, because Rousseau and his supporters refuse to step outside of their Western worldview to consider the writing of the Nambikwara to be legitimate.

The product of violence is trauma, and so it is not impossible that there is a trauma resulting from arche-violence. Arche-trauma, or the trauma of originary violence, can be seen anytime someone has internalized a difference that falls upon lines of power. When someone believes that her language is inferior to the colonizer's or loses her language as the result of colonialism, it is obvious she has been traumatized by arche-
violence. Double consciousness, the internalization of one's status as Other, is a sign of trauma. When someone experiences double-consciousness, they find themselves positioned between how they see themselves and how society sees them. One can only experience double consciousness if one has been defined by difference, as those at the top of the value ordered hierarchy are not defined by what they are not. Arche-violence is the violence of division and in these instances, the self has been split. Double consciousness is the traumatic result of arche-violence because in the process of forced difference creates awareness of the perception of society based upon the difference and how that alters the perception of self. It should be noted that the goal of discussing the arche-trauma is not to offer a diagnosis, but to look at the ways in which language can be oppressive and result in trauma.

Anna Wierzbicka discusses her attempts to translate her life between Polish and English and the difficulties she encounters in the process of doing so (96). She encounters problems not because particular words do not have a direct translation, but because certain ideas are culturally constructed and embedded in the language in a way that does not easily translate into languages that do not share the culture surrounding these ideas. The problem is not simply having the words, but that one actually cannot communicate the idea, and any rough translation would weaken, or at the very least modify the original idea. For example, when a friend gives her a music tape that she finds particularly moving, she is unable to convey the emotion she feels, because it is a Polish concept, similar to being moved, but a more permanent experience (97). The use of diminutives in Polish defines her relationship with her granddaughter and so she feels like she cannot
convey the proper amount of affection in English (98-99). Perhaps it is for this reason that Wierzbicka often feels like there are English words just outside of her reach, that she can never have access to the right words. The relationship Wierzbicka has with language demonstrates the way that someone can feel distance when living in a language that is not their mother tongue. Wierzbicka speaks English because she married an Australian and moved to Australia. While the specifics of her marriage and subsequent move to Australia are never mentioned, it is safe to assume that Wierzbicka had some degree of choice in learning English. While one can image that it must be difficult to feel as if one can never access the correct word, to feel that way with a language which one had no say in learning is the heart of arche-trauma.

W.E.B. Du Bois defines double consciousness as simultaneously understanding oneself as one is perceived by the world, while seeing oneself as one is and being unable to reconcile the two (898). In relation to language, it is easy to see how the colonial or postcolonial subject, learning to speak the colonizer's language might feel a sense of double consciousness. Having ideas that can only be expressed in one's mother tongue while simultaneously being told that one's ideas only matter if they are expressed in the colonizer's language leads to feelings of diminished self-worth. What are one's ideas worth if they cannot be expressed in English (or French, or another colonial language)? The difference, or différance, of arche-violence in language politics is the difference between languages itself. It is the words that may not exist that Wierzbicka feels she is missing when she speaks in English, and the ideas that she can only express in Polish. The second violence that attempts to both codify and obfuscate the difference is the idea
of translation—the myth that everything can be perfectly translated and that all ideas can be expressed. This myth makes all languages appear to be equal and erases the idea that learning a language can be traumatic. The third violence is the violence we see in colonial and postcolonial language policies that led teachers to abuse and humiliate their students for speaking their mother tongue. It is the violence that leaves people disenfranchised because they do not speak the invading language. It is when parents can no longer communicate with their children because, in an attempt to give the children the best possible future, they insist upon making them learn the colonizer's language at the expense of their own.

Three figures in the language debate in the African context—Franz Fanon, Chinua Achebe, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o—each offer a different perspective on the relationship of the colonizer's language, and while they are often seen as opposing positions (especially Achebe and Ngugi), all reflect the trauma of learning a language that has been forced upon them. They respond to the trauma in different ways, and perhaps they are best read as questioning "where do we go from here?" since the traumatic experience of speaking a forced language has already arisen.

Fanon recognizes that trauma is inherent in the speaking of a colonizer's language. Perhaps that is because, for Fanon, the trauma of language is inextricably linked to the trauma of slavery. The closest Fanon has to a mother tongue is Creole, which has arisen in part from the French of the former master. While vestiges of the mother tongue (or grandmother tongue?) remain in Creole, Fanon has been robbed of a mother tongue. Unlike Ngugi and Achebe, who can return to their mother tongue, at a cost, Fanon cannot
do so. He has known the violence of the absolute destruction of his language. At the culmination of her vitriolic jeremiad, *A Small Place*, Jamaica Kincaid expresses similar sentiments. In her angriest moment, she discusses how the crux of the problem is that she is not even expressing these ideas in her own language, because she no longer has a language in which to express these ideas. Because she does not have a language of her own, the structure and meaning of her ideas has been mediated by the culture of the colonizer. When Audre Lorde asked whether the master's tools can ever dismantle the master's house, she was asking if one could ever have ownership of ideas that are tied to a language that has been a tool of one's oppression (Lorde). When a language "belongs" to a group of people, how effectively can it express ideas that are critical of its owners? This enduring question takes on special meaning when, as is the case with Lorde's discussion of gender or Kincaid and Fanon's discussion of the descendants of slaves, one has no other language to use.

The following debate on the use of language between Achebe and Ngugi has a different perspective that Fanon or Kincaid may have claimed is slightly more privileged because they have alternative languages to use. While the colonizer has forced Achebe to learn a language that is not their own, dramatically and traumatically influencing their ways of the thinking, they still have a language in which to resist, whether that resistance takes the form of using one's mother tongue to create new englishes or to reject English entirely. In contrast, Fanon and Kincaid have no language but that of the colonizer to express their ideas, making it difficult to "decolonize the mind" as Ngugi suggests they should. However, both of them attempt to offer an answer to the question of whether the
master's tools can dismantle the master's house. In each perspective, however, the specter of arche-violence remains, the trauma of forced language is evident.

Achebe proposes working within English to express ideas, claiming that while English has been violently forced upon the Nigerian population, there is a hidden blessing of a common language. Whereas before, the peoples of Nigeria may have been incapable of speaking with each other, with English, they have a means of communication that allows them to exchange ideas. Of course, Achebe does not argue for pure assimilation, but rather for new englishes that incorporate the mother tongue of colonized peoples, for postcolonial nations to make English their own. In doing so, he believes that they can move forward. Achebe's willingness to use English or englishes should not be interpreted as a lack of trauma. At various points in his narrative, it is evident that he does feel a sense of loss of his mother tongue, when he writes, "For me, there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it" (434).

With Ngugi, the violence done is clearer, and it is evident from his response. Ngugi neglects the master's language and argues that African writers should all write in their own languages. He believes that the violence done by forcing students to learn English cannot be undone and a literature cannot truly belong to a group of people if it is not in their own language. Ngugi does not object to translation for wider audiences, and he does not even mind the idea of self-translating one's own work into the colonial language so that more people can read it, but he believes the piece must first be written in the mother tongue.
It is interesting that Ngugi does not consider the possibility that translation is violence to a text—it forces ideas that translate imperfectly, if they can be accurately translated at all—to be represented in a language that does not hold the same ideas. His stance on translation raises the question of whether the act of translating a work into colonial languages works to subtly reinforce patterns of thought associated with the western worldview. The methods for translating ideas determine whether a translation either reinforces or subverts the colonizer's values by how true a translation attempts to stay to the original ideas. While it may be difficult to translate every idea, if a translation makes an effort to translate these concepts, rather than replacing the concept with a corresponding western concept.

In "Between Zal and Emotional Blackmail," Mary Besemeres explains the Polish concept of zal, which has no English equivalent, but can be roughly translated as a feeling of a lack of warmth from a loved one. For her non-Polish friends, this idea is difficult to grasp, and is often compared to "emotional blackmail," though she does not find this label, which implies some sense of emotional manipulation, fitting in the least. To call zal "emotional blackmail" would be to offer an incorrect translation, or to manipulate the ideas to fit an Anglo construct (135-36). However, if one attempts to translate a concept as closely as possible, acknowledging the difficulty as Besemeres or Wierzbicka attempt to do, one is attempting to give the best representation of a concept constructed by language and it is possible to translate without doing violence to the text. We can see an example of this kind of translated violence in Sir Richard Francis Burton's translation of The Thousand and One Nights, in which he plays up the exotic, eroticized
version of the Middle East. Often when a translator takes more liberties, has a particular agenda, or lacks the understanding from living in the language of the original work, the translation will reflect some level of violence to the text.

While many of the accounts I have discussed relate to the trauma of having to live in a language that is not one's own, some people experience a similar trauma, when, like Fanon, they learn someone else's language and not their own. For Kim Scott, this process was reversed and her first language was not the language of her ancestors, the Noongar, but English. She says of her experience,

There's not time here to go through all the reasons why I didn't grow up speaking Noongar language—that long story of dispossession, disconnection, assimilation and 'shame'—but suffice it to say that I grew up thinking of myself as 'of Aboriginal descent', and was told that my Aboriginality was the 'best part of me'. Trouble was, when I looked around me through the filter provided by my formal education and the popular media, there seemed little empirical proof to confirm the truth of those sentiments. (1-2)

She goes on to discuss her experience learning and attempting to preserve and reconstruct the language, and I believe that the unstated result of learning Noongar as a second language. What she is experiencing appears to be the reverse of what Wierzbicka is experiencing when they attempt to negotiate between English and Polish, except that it is the language of her ancestors from which she feels alienated. I am not asserting that

— Aboriginal Australians
there is something essential to the identity that would cause Scott to feel a "natural connection to the Noongar language," because Scott invests much of her identity with being aboriginal, despite also having European ancestors, it is clear that the disconnect she feels with the Noongar language is a traumatic experience for her, similar to the experiences of second language learners who have been forced to learn a language because she cannot feel at home in the language of her ancestors. Again I do not believe that there is any essential part of someone's identity that ties them to a language they do not speak because of their genetic link to people who were speakers of a language, but with the case of Scott, she does focus on her heritage. The conceptual link between Scott's alienation from her own language and her language is similar to the experiences of people who have been forced to learn a second language. Because she feels a connection to the Noongar, the alienation she feels is similar to the experiences to the other accounts. Implicit in this sense of alienation Scott feels from Noongar is also a sense of alienation from English as well—because she identifies as Noongar, there is a sense that she is disconnected from English as well because of her chosen identity.

The trouble with arche-trauma and the relationship between arche-violence and language discussed in this chapter, a critic may object, is that it can also be applied to any language learning beyond the first language, and if we use Scott's example, anyone can feel a sense of alienation from either the language they speak and the language of their ancestors. I certainly do not wish to deny that there can be a sense of loss when one is navigating a language that one feels no ties to, even when someone chose to learn or adopt a second language. A number of examples used in this chapter, such as Wierzbicka
and Besmeres, did not come to English through colonization or forced language policies, and yet the sense of loss in their writing is real. So, instead of denying the possibility of arche-trauma when language is not forced, I would argue that the traumatic process of learning the language is compounded with colonial language policies, i.e., forced learning of languages, and the erasure of languages. Recall that for Derrida, all language contains some degree of arche-violence. It follows that the process of learning another language is also inherently more violent, because of the epistemic repositioning it requires.

Additionally, some may find it problematic that I am relying exclusively on anecdotal evidence. I do not believe that this is problematic because Derrida relied upon the anecdotal account to explain arche-violence. In using these anecdotes, I am looking at the phenomena that arise within these accounts to discuss how it illuminates arche-violence. Looking at the intersections of the anecdotes helps to further illuminate these anecdotes. In doing so, we better understand arche-violence as it applies to forced language learning, yet any incidents in which do not fit the theoretical framework described are no less valid.

Language shapes the way in which we think about the world, and, for Derrida, this is an inherently violent process that is fraught with drawing attention to difference. For a person with a considerable amount of privilege, this violence can go unexamined or even unnoticed. When we force someone to adopt another language, we force h/her to live in another language, and, by extension adopt a new system of difference, which compounds the violence, and makes them unable to ignore it. The ability to ignore arche-
violence is a privilege, and while we all experience arche-violence, we are not all scarred by it.
CONCLUSION: A MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE

A year ago, I presented my early research on the subject of Derridean arche-violence. Later, when discussing my research with fellow attendees who had not been present when I presented my paper, one of them asserted, "Derrida's violence is not violence, it's playful." I have since encountered a number of people who have made the same assertion, and the general consensus amongst these people seems to be that Derrida cannot be taken too seriously on violence, it is merely language play. To take this view is to neglect the idea that words have power, that their meaning shapes and constructs us, and that the violence of language is disconnected from physical violence. I reject the idea that simply because Derrida plays with language, that arche-violence is a playful process with no real world implications. Each chapter of this thesis offers a refutation of that claim and further proof of the real life implications of Derrida's arche-violence. I think it is fair to say that after fully exploring arche-violence and its implications, the claim that arche-violence is "playful" or "frivolous" collapses. Additionally, play with language need not be frivolous, as it often exposes where binaries break down and inconsistencies arise. Derrida's engagement with language can be playful while still being a serious matter—it is the implied frivolity that is problematic, and as the previous chapters have all demonstrated, completely false.

While Derrida is not above criticism, and would probably be skeptical of anyone who would accept his work uncritically, the criticism that he does not care about serious problems and is instead worried only with frivolous language games does not stand with an understanding of arche-violence.
Each of the preceding chapters offers proof of the serious, real world implications of Derrida's work, showing that he does not fail to consider the ways in which the subject he discusses in depth can be translated to issues that affect the lives of numerous people. I concluded the second chapter by arguing that arche-violence plays a role in the feminist anti-rape discourse, as it takes the discussion beyond the static conversation of power as an end. In truth, arche-violence has a place in all conversations about oppression and power, and despite the long absence of Derrida from this discourse, adding arche-violence to the conversation could reshape it drastically, to help all involved in the fight against oppressions better understand the way oppression functions, and in turn, minimize the damage which has been done by arche-violence over the years. Perhaps it is naively optimistic to think that perhaps one day this could be essential in ending all forms of oppression, but I believe that in this particular instance, optimism is worth the risk.

Finally, I realize that my discussion of oppression, is, in places, fairly conventional. The goal of this thesis was to insert Derrida into the conversation and to demonstrate that his work had serious implications beyond language, and so consequently the burden of proof was to establish that his work was pertinent to the on-going critical reflections on the problem of violence. While I believe that a Derridean reading can revolutionize certain aspects of the conversation, particularly follows from my discussion of rape, construction of disability and (colonial) language and their relationship to arche—violence that the exteriorized forms of these types of violence are rooted in a hierarchizing originary violence, which cannot be undone without dismantling or diminishing that same order of hierarchy.
WORKS CITED


