

THE SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FORCED MIGRATION

A Multi-Media Educational Tool

Summer 2021

Migration through Metaphors

Target audience: high school (grades 10-12), see note below*

Keywords: terminology, othering

Research by Malvika Dang (Bennington College)

Metaphors can be defined as literary devices that help to define something unfamiliar in the form of an analogy; oftentimes poetic, other times literal. [A quick search for the definition](#) reveals the power it yields to turn the analogy into something concrete – the day’s eye, a dead metaphor now the noun ‘daisy’. But when metaphors break away from the Shakespearean into the real world, what are the implications? What is lost in looking at the unknown through the known?

This section aims to provide materials for educators and educatees to test this very power of metaphors in the realm of migration studies.

**This section is intended for grade 10 and above, covering media and language studies as areas of study. Students should be primed about the use of snide language in marked texts that carry racist and/or xenophobic tones. The exploration of such texts is meant for analysis purposes only and is up to the discretion of the teacher.*

PRIMARY TEXT AND THE LESSON PLAN

Primary Text: Keith Cunningham-Parmeter, [Alien Language: Immigration Metaphors and the Jurisprudence of Otherness](#), *Fordham Law Review* (2011)

Read: Part I. A, B, C

- **Define** “conceptual metaphors” and “doctrinal metaphors”.
- Who gets to establish these? Does ‘experientialism’ impact both equally?

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- **Select** 2 articles from any credible* daily or journal covering an issue related to migration. Highlight as many metaphors as you can.
 - Mind map the metaphor and its probable association (as seen in p. 1557 – alien, illegal, Mexican). Refer to a dictionary for definitions if needed.
 - Correlate the metaphors with its visual images, creative medium up to your own discretion. (e.g. “flood” of immigration with the obvious. “wave” of refugees with the crests within a wave [Why is “up” the first association? Who decides that?])

Watch: [“Metaphors We Live By: George Lakoff and Mark Johnson” \(2020\), Then and Now via YouTube \(video\)](#), based on Lakoff and Johnson’s book *Metaphors We Live By*.

- Additional, advanced text: [Susan Sontag, “Disease as Political Metaphor,” *The New York Review of Books*, February 23, 1978.](#)

Read: Part II, Prior to Part A.

Explore: [“U.S. Immigration Timeline,” A&E Television Networks, 2018.](#) (Additional [source](#).) Mark the year 1965, and skim the passed/proposed acts prior to this year.

Read: Part II. A, B, C, D (till p. 1580 before “Immigration is Flood”)

- Looking at the stats on p. 1575, would you say that the “doctrinal metaphor” of “alien” has replaced the term “immigrant”? Does this example align with your initial understanding of the definition of doctrinal metaphor?

Explore: (1) [“Special Immigrant Visas for Afghans – Who Were Employed by/on Behalf of the U.S. Government,” United States Department of State, 2021,](#) intended to provide refuge to Afghans who worked for the US government, now facing threats due to their alliance with the US. Search the term “alien” on the webpage.

(2) [“Foreign Students, Scholars, Teachers, Researchers and Exchange Visitors,” Internal Revenue Service, August 9, 2021.](#) Search the term “alien” on this site too. Are both uses of “alien” the same?

Read: p. 1580-90.

- If you were to propose alternatives to such metaphors, what would they be?

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- **Skim** through Cristina Beltrán, "[Going Public: Hannah Arendt, Immigrant Action, and the Space of Appearance](#)," *Political Theory* (2009).
- **Watch** "[Coverage of Spring 2006 Immigration Rally in DC](#)" (2006), Politicstv via YouTube (video) to see the demonstrations mentioned in this article.
 - Are metaphors always literary?

BEYOND THE PRIMARY TEXT: THE PRESENT

Read: Emily B. Ndulue, et al., "[The language of immigration reporting: Normalizing vs. watchdogging in a nativist age](#)," *Define American* (2019)

- As stated in Paul Colford, "['Illegal immigrant' no more](#)," *AP Style Blog*, April 2, 2013, "The campaign was based on the fact that while actions can be "illegal," people cannot be illegal, and that the media should use the most accurate and humane terms to refer to people." Do you see the implications of this in the jargon you encountered during your exploration in Part 2?
- What surprised you the most about this study, if anything? What does it say about our reliance upon one source of news?

Americans learned to define American-ness by excluding, controlling, and containing "foreign-ness" in Otto Santa Ana, Juan Moran, and Cynthia Sanchez, "[Awash under a brown tide: Immigration metaphors in California public and print media discourse](#)," *Aztlán* (1998).

Scholar Erika Lee writes about the advent of the exclusive nature of the American Immigration policy through the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 or the Page Act. To paraphrase, Americans constructed their identity by framing foreign-ness as grounds for exclusion. Instead of constructing the American self or an absolute sense of belonging, America relied on excluding the other.

- Based on your understanding of the *Define American* report, what would you say this quote by Erika Lee does in defining the constructed definition of immigration? [what literary tools, as discussed in this section, highlights her argument?]

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REFLECTION SPACE

- Were you familiar with the usage of the “denigrating terms” mentioned on p. 8? If so, how/where/when?
- Taking the suggestions made by the authors about the ethics of reporting, what can you apply in your practice of talking about the metaphors of migration? How could you criticize the use of “denigrating metaphors” without perpetuating the use of them further?
- The broader question: Could migration metaphors be reclaimed?

ADDITIONAL READINGS

[Bram Frouws, “Op-Ed: Negative Narratives, Mistaken Metaphors. The Need for Careful Language on Migration”](#) Mixed Migration Center, March 8, 2021

Santa Ana, Otto, Juan Moran, and Cynthia Sanchez. [“Awash under a brown tide: Immigration metaphors in California public and print media discourse.”](#) *Immigration Metaphors in Public Discourse* (Fall 1998): 137-176

ALL SOURCES IN THIS LESSON PLAN

Cristina Beltrán, [“Going Public: Hannah Arendt, Immigrant Action, and the Space of Appearance,”](#) *Political Theory* (2009)

Department of History, [“Timeline”](#) Immigration History, The University of Texas at Austin (2020)

[“Foreign Students, Scholars, Teachers, Researchers and Exchange Visitors,”](#) Internal Revenue Service

Keith Cunningham-Parmeter, [Alien Language: Immigration Metaphors and the Jurisprudence of Otherness,](#) *Fordham Law Review* (2011)

[“Metaphor”](#), Merriam-Webster Dictionary

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Emily B. Ndulue, et al. ["The language of immigration reporting: Normalizing vs. watchdogging in a nativist age."](#) *Define American* (2019)

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["Special Immigrant Visas for Afghans – Who Were Employed by/on Behalf of the U.S. Government,"](#) United States Department of State, 2021

Then & Now, ["Metaphors We Live By: George Lakoff and Mark Johnson,"](#) YouTube (2020), video

["U.S. Immigration Timeline,"](#) History.com, A&E Television Networks, (2018)