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Using Close Reading, Frame Analysis, and the U.S. Immigration Debate to Provoke Independent Thinking and Engaged Social Participation among First-Year Community College Students

I. Introduction: Conceptual Overview

I introduce this unit by orienting students to its overarching aims, which are to understand that "sympathy, empathy, and mutuality are the foundation of human society [and] we cannot understand our own interests unless we understand the interests of others" (Rosenthal, "Common Good"). Using this critical lens, I submit that "ethical values and principles [need to] always take precedence over nonethical ones" because they fulfill our social contract to create a more equitable and inclusive social order ("Making Ethical Decisions"). I suggest, too, that to become ethically aware thinkers, keen writers, and informed actors, we need to educate ourselves on how communication, for example, logical fallacies, rhetorical devices, and framing techniques, may be engaged for persuasion and ideological ends. Specifically, it has been widely substantiated that in oratory and writing, the manner in which information is presented affects attitudes. Experiments in behavioral economics have found that theories of rational choice do not hold in everyday life and that individuals "systematically violate the requirements of consistency and coherence" (Tversky and Kahneman 453). Perception and social variables that inform attitudes and behavior include cultural norms, personal preferences, experiences, cognitive biases, and more (Ert and Erev 214). The most central finding, however, is that individuals react more intensely to the fear of losses than to the possibility of gains (Tversky and Kahneman 454). In terms of immigration, Trumpian rhetoric asserts that immigrants threaten our national character and economic order, which make losses loom large on the horizon (Johnson and Hing 1348). From an ethical perspective, this creates what Hannah Arendt has called in her writings on statelessness "the calamity of the rightless," where some people's welfare is seen as irrelevant and their lives disposable (qtd. in Lechte 227). It is important to focus on the immigration crisis, therefore, because it may be seen as not just a crisis of numbers but a crisis of national identity, given that recent executive orders targeting migrants at our southern borders in Texas, California, and Arizona were previously held unthinkable, un-American, and illegal. Democratic philosophy at its best refers to what Dewey has termed a "mode of associated living" (qtd. in Festenstein). Yet, asylum seekers have been turned away and unaccompanied minors have been caged without adequate care and attention. It is part of a political trajectory that Richard Wolin calls a "new age of regression" (xiii). That is why I foreground the notion that "we need to ask a basic question that

we have evaded over these last decades: What do we owe one another as citizens?" (Sandel). The issues involved are far from abstract constructs or limited to the issue of immigration because they literally involve life, death, and the habitability of the planet. They are questions that relate immediately to whether we will accept "a new 'politics of unreason'," or if we commit to resisting it (Wolin xxx). To adopt this new tribalism seems to me that "that way madness lies" *(King Lear* 3.4.24). If we and other liberal democracies allow ourselves to be swept into the vortex of what Wolin calls "'designer fascism,'" we risk, in the future, creating a Hobbsian state of nature. The hope and the belief in possibility that I bring to this unit and my teaching in general revolves around identifying how each of us might choose to defend and enlarge ethical action. This involves direct participation. As Richard Wolin lays out:

> [t]he remedy for these omnipresent signs of authoritarian political regression is a reaffirmation of the values of "active citizenship": a return to the precepts of participatory democracy at the local, regional, and national levels. This means simultaneously cultivating the values of enlightened citizenship: nurturing a network of horizontally linked, informed political actors who are capable of counteracting, at every turn, the blandishments and chicanery of today's "prophets of deceit." (xxx)

The pressing purpose of this unit is to illuminate how the Trump administration uses rhetoric to affect our thinking about migrants, but its more comprehensive objective is to help young people learn to distill the intentions behind discourse, making the invisible visible. It is to support them in thinking their own thoughts—according to Fredric Jameson, to crack the "'walls around our minds'" in order to engage in "'genuine thinking'"—and to realize their own sense of agency to affect principled change (McPheron).

II. Priming

Philosophically, I inform my teaching based on theories consistent with "cosmopolitanism on the ground" (Hansen). As such, in order to resist oversimplifying the U.S. and world immigration problem, and other frames that deny our shared humanity, I state that it is vital that we become sensitized to the arts that are employed to influence, incite, and undermine our duty to others. "Ethics really begins with awareness and sensitivity to our responsibilities" (Rosenthal, "Patriotism"), and I approach teaching based on the idea that moral duties transcend borders to include the most vulnerable wherever they reside because our "moral obligations to the rest of the world (. . .) are real" (Nussbaum). Without a moral and political core and a commitment to act with time-honored virtues, I assert, we may overlook abuses that corrupt the body politic, shrug off individual responsibility, and leave governance on all levels to others. Drawing on historical references, I note that in times when people are not vigilant and do not provide checks on power, dictatorial personalities "full of passionate intensity," as Irish poet W.B. Yeats phrased it (8), will find their way to podiums, and too often their subjective fetishes and ruthlessness can lead to genocides carried out in daylight before our eyes. We have seen this with figures such as Mussolini, Stalin, Kim Jong un, Omar Al-Bashir, and Hitler. One of the most essential ways to guard ourselves

against manipulators who employ ingenious linguistic strategies, falsehoods, and highly-charged symbols to normalize what is unacceptable is through education. I note that omissions as well as exaggerations divert and mislead, and that rhetoric that boldly demonizes and dehumanizes others as well as rhetoric that elevates and mythologizes individuals or groups are equally dangerous; they create distortions that lead to conformism, social exclusion, oppression, and inequality (Horkheimer 399).

Labeling and learning the strategies of persuasion are teachable. Therefore, to understand the concept and practice of applied ethics through U.S. immigration policy at our southern border, I structure the unit from "smaller to larger," starting with critical thinking skills and the fundamental values of the academy. I present that facts are considered current knowledge and information needs to be balanced in order to be considered reliable. We review the subtopics we will cover, including learning vocabulary, engaging in close reading and listening techniques, focusing on formal outlining methods, and interpreting media messages. We build on this in order to "study language not as an abstract system, but [as] (. . .) concrete lived reality" (Maybin 64), to decode framing devices in rhetorical and visual sources, to sort assumptions from facts, and to identify "the moral dimensions of (. . .) issues" in policy debates (Rosenthal, "Rising Fences"). The culminating student projects are a 1000-word argument essay on a controversy related to U.S. immigration policy and a search for organizations—school, local, national, or international—that are dedicated to social issues that are of concern to them. What I recapitulate is that the more far-reaching objectives of this academic work are to help them to recognize their own availability biases and thinking processes, to analyze how influence is constructed in personal appeals, popular culture, and sociopolitical discourse, and to discover their own sense of agency and ability to enact change by joining with others within society.

III. Selected Readings

As a way to establish the importance of ethical thinking and action, I ask students to consider the following quote by Simon Critchley: "There [is] no absolute knowledge and anyone who claims it—whether a scientist, a politician or a religious believer—opens the door to tragedy. All (. . .) information is imperfect and we have to treat it with humility" (388). I then ask students to paraphrase, interpret, and find relevant examples of this assertion in news articles. Currently, conversations have revolved around data on the COVID-19 pandemic and emerging statistics on global warming. Student-generated topics serve as an opportunity for me to reflect on relevant examples of how and why the date and the country of publication of sources are critical to perceiving their historical and contemporary significance. Similarly, I am able to reiterate that scholarly language is qualified and information is provisional. We then re-enter the entire essay to understand its subtext and open questions. Decoding subtexts, I believe, is one of the skills that is foundational to understanding framing but, based on my observations, it has not been stressed in some high schools. I try to address this deficit because "the subtext expresses the author's aims, agenda, and voice" (Amir and Mazuz). Accordingly, we analyze the title of the essay, its historical details, its first-person point of view, its symbols, and its inferences. By doing so, we confront the

unstated, hypothetical inquiry that Critchley makes, namely, "What would you do if you were a non-Jewish citizen living in Nazi Germany under a regime that totalized others and pursued racial cleansing through a 'final solution,' and what do you imagine citizens could have done under such circumstances?" This is a starting point for discussions about competing goods, our ethical responsibilities to marginalized peoples who are voiceless and powerless, and "[h]ow should one live?" It offers the opportunity, too, to introduce the think-pieces of Jacques Ranciere in *Aesthetics and its Discontents.* Ranciere is concerned with the way governments have erased individuals and, conversely, how marginalized groups have fought to be recognized and treated with human dignity. In considering power structures, he states that "the whole question, then, is to know who possesses speech and who merely possesses voice." He continues by saying, "[f]or all time, the refusal to consider certain categories of people as political beings has proceeded by means of a refusal to hear the words exiting their mouths as discourse (. . .) [because they have] been perceived as noisy animals" (24). This vocabulary of "othering" is precisely what we will hear when we listen to Trump's rhetoric on immigration.

Next, I discuss that knowledge is not value-free or static by assigning the *New York Times* article "Two States. Eight Textbooks. Two American Stories." Author Dana Goldstein reveals that middle and high school history textbooks by the same authors and publishers are customized for different school districts in the country. She reports that the numerous editorial accommodations that are demanded by large public systems, specifically those in Texas and California, center on some of the most divisive issues our country faces. For instance, information and perspectives on Reconstruction, abortion, LGBTQ rights, and subsidies for environmental initiatives are contrasted. Goldstein goes on to predict that these longstanding flashpoints have and will continue to affect social attitudes, cement political beliefs, and impact voting patterns for the next generation (A1). The larger academic point that students learn is that although history and other narratives may be based on primary sources, compositions are always informed by the sociopolitical worldview of their creators, publishers, and communities. According to works on discourse analysis, this is crucial to teach so that students can build neural connections and memory. It offers them insight into the ways that language is socially rooted, ambiguous, and context-dependent (Maybin 64-65; Bernard). This introduces how context, framing, repetition, codes, and imagery inform communication. Because Goldstein's article focuses on middle and high schools, something in their not-so-distant past, students can relate to the information on a personal level. As they consider Goldstein's evidence, I am able to highlight that "the greater part of truth is in that which is absent" or suppressed (Marcuse). One of the factors that has determined whether students are willing to read closely and take intellectual risks hinges on the culture of the in-person or virtual classroom. Based on personal experience and research studies, communication and cohesiveness are critical ("Honoring Student Experience"). By appealing to their curiosity, valuing their participation, and engaging in exercises of metacognition, I attempt to create classrooms as places of hope, an expression coined by Wayne Au et al., where students become more open to exploring the small and large questions of how we should live, how we can make choices given competing claims, and what our obligations are to others in our globalized world. The responses to these

intertwined questions impel students to think abstractly, listen respectfully, and draw judgements incisively. It sparks many of them to begin to see themselves as capable of acting within a wider sphere of influence.

IV. Close Readings: Argument and Counter-Argument

Before moving to frame analysis, I have students focus on the structure of argument and counter-argument in the context of immigration texts as models for their own upcoming 1000-word essay. We explore the debate among public intellectuals Mathias Risse, Ryan Pevnick, and Philip Cafaro in the Carnegie Council's *Writing in Ethics & International Affairs Journal.* The authors cite statistics, question assumptions, and contest assessments about the greater good. By outlining one article, students can have a visual organizer with which to work. We examine how the essays are built from the sentence level up, noting how refutations are indicated with signal words and transitional phrases. To help students synthesize this learning and build schema, I assign a short "Immigration and Ethics" paper on one of the topics we have just covered. This provides scaffolding for their longer work to come (Seifert and Sutton 33-40). A number of my students hold strong feelings about U.S. immigration policies—many are immigrants, international students, first generation citizens, or Dreamers—so most immerse themselves and produce strong work. They engage in finding, organizing, and integrating evidence into a well-developed and carefully constructed paper, and they learn vocabulary that assists them in joining larger scholarly conversations in the future.

V. Framing

Framing may be conceptualized as a superstructure that includes the different strategies used to influence peoples' points-of-view and preferences. Based on the work of Erving Goffman in the 1970s, sociologists, psychologists, economists, and neuroscientists have since expanded the field by conducting experiments on responses to different types of stimuli. Today, framing, which is used ubiquitously in business, medicine, politics, and other fields, refers to the art of deliberately shaping stories to produce effects and decisions. By reading excerpts from recent journal articles, we perceive how priming, repetition, inflammatory language, information asymmetry, anchoring, the status quo bias, and appeals to fear and uncertainty create tunnel vision (Walker-Wilson). We learn that fear "floods (. . .) consciousness," distorts perceptions, and magnifies anxiety, freezing beliefs to the extent that "even sophisticated actors are subject to the framing effect" (Bar-Tal 7; Walker-Wilson). Highly relevant in terms of social justice, we focus on information asymmetry (Walker-Wilson). The concept of valence framing is where "the frame casts the same critical information in either a positive or a negative light" (Levin et al. 150).

VI. Framing in the Immigration Debate

When watching press briefings with Trump administration officials, we hear them repeat oversimplifications, overgeneralizations, and inflammatory language to create images of asylum

seekers and economic migrants as marauders or "the wretched of the earth" (Fanon). Similarly, we discover that many proponents of more lenient immigration policies use analogous devices, extolling the benefits of immigrants to the U.S. culture and economy. Realizing that social and political stakeholders on both sides of this and other debates employ asymmetrical framing is, I rehearse, of central concern because it is only by identifying a creator's intent and the aesthetics employed to advance that intent that we perceive masking (Galasinski 72).

For example, beginning with Trump's characterization of third-world countries as "shithole" nations catches the attention of students because of the incongruity between the social expectations of the office of the presidency and the unsophisticated colloquial language that he uses (Silva). We then read Trump's assertions about the immigration lottery; he said: "'They come in by lottery. They give us their worst people, they put them in a bin (. . .) the worst of the worst'" (qtd. in Valverde). Here, Trump confuses the operation of the lottery system and denigrates those applying and arriving to the U.S. through this legal program. In reference to undocumented individuals, he has referred to them as sub-humans, saying that "'[t]hese aren't people. These are animals,'" reminding us of Ranciere's insights into concepts of domestic colonialism, power, and powerlessness (qtd. in Korte and Gomez). Because using dictionaries and thesauruses in teaching has been shown to be valuable learning tools, we use these to understand the denotations and connotations of his expressions (Campoy-Cubillo 119). In doing so, we find that one may interpret Trump's statements literally and derive from "animals" and "bin" that he perceives Hispanic migrants and immigrants, legal or not, as herds to tame, inanimate refuse, dirty laundry, or garbage.

Conceptually, these linguistic examples sharpen the contrast between the ethical principles we have been discussing that argue for our interconnectedness and the "equal moral worth of every human being" with the othering and reification of migrants at our southern border (Rosenthal, "Patriotism"). In opposition to ethical tenets of cooperation and obligation— "placing globality at the heart of political imagination" —the administration shows that it calculates human value in terms of monetary value (Beck 484).

Other quotes by Trump, where he presents distortions as objective fact, provide additional examples of his appeals to ethos and pathos where he conjures the fear of potential economic and cultural losses due to immigrants (Galasinski 85). For instance, he has argued that, for the most part, those seeking refuge in the U.S. from Central America and Mexico are drug dealers, rapists, murderers, or terrorists (qtd. in Williamson and Gelfand). His administration has insinuated that many asylum seekers are frauds who try to game the system to take advantage of America's social welfare programs (Woods 110). As a group, Trump has labeled those presenting themselves at the southern border as an organized "invasion" or a "caravan" (Varela). Taken together, his repeated warnings foretell the "last ding dong of doom" for our republic if these migrants were permitted to enter (Faulkner). By sounding alarms about existential extinction, we see framing in action. I ask students to recognize that disconfirming examples are suppressed, improbable negative outcomes are amplified, and an ontological sense of our responsibility to act on the greater good is lacking.

This is foregrounded so students learn how to pull back the curtain on the wizard, because once they gain the skills to isolate ideological schema, they will be able to assess whether to support or oppose high leadership, they will be able to consciously organize and put into practice Foucault's idea that power is distributed throughout society and can shape institutions, and they will be more prepared to act on behalf of others.

In contrast to many of Trump's portrayals, "Little America," published in *Epic.com* and released as a book in 2020, offers a positive, inclusive, and optimistic counter-narrative to the role and value of immigrants in everyday American life. Its aim is to explode the messages of blame and fear by celebrating the stories of newcomers who have attained personal and professional prestige for their grit, achievements, and contributions to the nation. Starting from the top of the magazine page, the title is arresting because it is unassuming but paradoxical. Before one enters the world of the "Little America" essay, its title announces dichotomies. According to Jacques Derrida's theories, "even the most apparently simple statement is subject to fission or fissure," so, by explicating the title through a deconstructionist lens, one may perceive its complexities and contradictions (Royle 26). I ask students to brainstorm and, as needed, I add suggestions; for example, I submit that the fifteen people showcased in the article symbolize American immigrants in general. Simultaneously, by engaging in a symptomatic reading, I offer that "Little America" may be viewed as a reference to those whose voices and judgments are small-minded and who accept the image of non-native born individuals from third-world nations as uneducated, childlike adults whose impulses and drives tend to place others in danger. Alternatively, I pose, the reference to "little" may allude to the fact that within our geographic borders we function essentially as small, self-governing communities. One may see this through name designations such as Little Italy, Little Cuba, Koreatown, and Chinatown. On the other hand, the entire phrase "Little America" could be an homage to Jean-Francois Lyotard's post-structuralist philosophy that "legitimacy can only reside in what he [Lyotard] terms '*petits recits*,' or 'small' or 'localized' narratives which are provisional, contingent and make no claim to universality" (qtd. in Cuddon 432). The title, additionally, may signify that we all play a little part in the larger mosaic of the nation. Through my students' free reflection and my cues, therefore, this multilayered title is analyzed. It is an effective exercise because it jolts students to ask the larger questions about their identity, belonging, privilege, and ethical responsibility.

Structurally, "Little America" falls loosely into the category of group profile multimedia journalism packages and is an eclectic assemblage of color portrait photos and brief, edited autobiographical statements by fifteen immigrant or first-generation individuals across the nation (Jacobson et al. 527). The work coheres thematically versus through plot. It incites tension not only through its title but also through the way its cutting-edge digital design is juxtaposed to traditional modes of storytelling. In essence, it mixes genres and aesthetics, attracting, holding, and entertaining readers as a piece of literary performance art.

The opening text begins: "Everyone here came from somewhere else. Even Native Americans crossed the Bering Strait at some point. This is the basic American idea—an identity

open to all—but it can be easy to forget from inside" ("Little America" 1). It rejects the lens that migrants and immigrants are "less than," and its subtext prompts our recognition that acculturation and assimilation are ongoing, dynamic, and comprehensively inclusive processes. Likewise, "Little America" focuses on specific individuals as opposed to the Trump administration's ethnically-driven group caricatures. Those featured in the piece include Daniel Pohl who, with his "mad scientist" friend Marcus, built a contraption and zip lined out of communist Czechoslovakia. His homemade chariot is now on display in the Checkpoint Charlie Museum. Also featured is Reyna Pacheco who entered California as an undocumented child, discovered the game of squash at age thirteen, and has since become a legal resident and a nationally ranked player representing the U.S. at home and abroad. Additionally, there is Elizabeth Kizito from Uganda who built a business, became a local legend in Kentucky, and sells gourmet baked goods online and in stores. In "Little America," these three and the others that are included personify what Paul Slovic has coined as the paradox of empathy—"Little America" puts a human face and voice to immigrants through particular profiles, depicting that they are everyday heroes who have not diminished America but enhanced her. It highlights the reciprocity among people and advocates that we reject protectionist attitudes in favor of "moral commitments [that] extend to the least well-off wherever they are" (Rosenthal, "Patriotism"). It implies that we each have a role that we can fulfill in the real fight for greater equality and dignity for others, and that we recognize that, as Gershom Scholem stated, "'justice is the elimination of fate'" (qtd. in Lesch). We do not need to acquiesce but can act to contest inclinations and policies that tend toward totalitarianism. Thus, it presents, in the form of a parable, why it is everyone's interest to relieve suffering and champion inclusion.

Clearly, it is uplifting to hear these Horatio Alger-style success stories and to be inspired to action by noble causes. Yet it is important to realize, too, that "Little America" employs valence framing techniques as a way to influence and enlist others to its point-of-view. I ask students to contrast and compare the collection of Trump's assertions with the narratives and portraits in "Little America." I ask them how these distinctly different representations of immigrants may be considered similar. Depending on the responses, I return to the concept of symptomatic readings, or searching, as Marcuse suggests, for what is suppressed or absent. What I help tease out is that counter-arguments and counter examples are erased from Trump's and from "Little America's" depictions. Both offer an incomplete, "single story" (a term Adichie used in the title of her 2009 *TedTalk*), so both may be considered biased and unreliable. They both exploit asymmetrical framing to impress and persuade.

To delve into this analysis more deeply, I reference Walter Benjamin who, with the rise of fascism in Germany in the 1930s, originated the phrase the "aestheticization of politics," (qtd. in Hillach et al. 99). This may be applied to the spectacle of Trump's rallies and the political souvenirs Trump sells along with the idea that he is "'the only one who can make America truly great again!'" (Campbell; Cillizza). His events bait crowds to abandon rational thinking and join an "in-group" (Aronson 28-31). Under these circumstances, frames go unanalyzed. What President Trump's tent revival meetings show is what research has exposed—compliance and conformism are

catching. Trump's efforts at colonizing the population, an idea that is important to teach based on recent research on "the colonization of democracy," offer new insights on social dynamics (Allan 251). As such, I promote that if we are not aware of cognitive biases and sleight-of-hand omissions, we will not know what questions to ask or gain any insight into others' calculations and aims. We will, instead, be part of a "susceptible circle" that is vulnerable to being persuaded by the loudest voice in the room or the best Method actor on the stage (Thoroughgood et al.).

The Trump administration's use of asymmetrical framing relies not just on ideas but also on images. I begin, therefore, by teaching that deciphering visual material involves analyzing a vocabulary of symbols through which creators construct values and worlds. Photos and documentary news coverage are too often, I suggest, accepted as unambiguous factual representations. Criteria to interpret pictures include angles, color, perspective, costuming, lighting, background, context, the creator's reputation, and more (Struken and Cartwright 9-48). If we return to "Little America" to concentrate on the pictures individually and as a group and use the principles explained by Struken and Cartwright, we can see what Jacques Ranciere terms "relational aesthetics," or how context and the interaction between spaces and forms affect perception and worldview (22). Specifically, we see that each person is well-groomed and dressed in the way they chose to be viewed. The figures are centered in the frame and pose outdoors. Each person's face is seen clearly, and each character's physical presence is unique. The interviewees are essentially very different in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, and location. There is no underlying sense of urgency, disorganization, or desperation about them. And, of course, they are not in a large group but shot singly, suggesting that they need and deserve to be seen as individuals. This is a metaphor for the idea that all migrants and immigrants need to be perceived as humans and should be treated with dignity and human rights. From this short analysis alone, the signifiers within each photograph, the accompanying texts, and the publication of the piece in a respected on-line magazine suggest that potential immigrants will be drivers of innovation and stability in the nation.

In contrast, when one views news footage and hears Trump's descriptions of the migrants en route from Mexico to the U.S., we are immersed in a different sense of reality. In these pictures, streams of weary and bereft individuals pouring toward ports of entry are filmed in motion. Through valence framing, by calling these foreigners a potential incursion, the administration asks viewers to regard them as imminent risks to our economy, our bodies, and our homes. Trump's rhetoric is designed to strike revulsion and anxiety in the populace. However, if one visualizes the world map and establishes that the U.S. is an idealized free-market democracy that is mythologized in the popular imagination, one is prompted to remember the motives of one's own immigrant ancestors, respond with empathy, and see these migrants more as pioneers than rural undesirables. If we envision these aspirants as suppliants on a kind of sacred pilgrimage—individuals making an exodus-based faith and hope—we are more likely to identify with them and recognize our spiritual selves in them and their holy quests.

Re-imagining and rewriting the commentary around these migrants that are crossing hundreds of miles toward the U.S. is a framing thought experiment. It serves as a reminder to analyze framing. It forces a conversation about ethics and our obligations toward those in need. In this context, Paul Bloom reminds us that "it is impossible to empathize with seven billion strangers [but] (. . .) our best hope for the future (. . .) lies (. . .) in an appreciation of the fact that, even if we don't empathize with distant strangers[,] [we acknowledge that] their lives have the same value as the lives of those we love." By redefining the people Trump has labeled a caravan and embracing Bloom's ideas about human dignity, questions about ethics are intentionally placed at the forefront of our conversations and held as a precondition to analyzing dynamics with any degree of objectivity and empathy.

VII. Moving Forward

To inspire the idea that ethical and meaningful action is available to everyone, I ask students to research the *Time Magazine* 2019 Person of the Year cover story on sixteen-year-old Greta Thunberg. A kind of modern day Joan of Arc, I show the class news clips of her speaking to large gatherings, and I reiterate that in 2018 "'she was a solo protestor with a hand-painted sign [but] (. . .) she's now led millions of people around the world, 150 countries, to act on behalf of the planet'" (qtd. in Flynn). We learn, too, about seventeen-year-old climate activist Howey Ou who, inspired by Thunberg, continues to violate China's ban on publicly discussing climate change, and whose bravery has earned her international recognition. Building on this, I ask students to identify areas in their own worlds—school, local, national, or international organizations—where they might engage with others on issues relevant to them and join organizations in order to act for greater social justice.

VIII. Conclusion

In summary, my efforts are to use the immigration debate as a way to provoke students to become more cognizant of asymmetrical framing and its powers of persuasion. I endorse Dorothy Smith's thesis that facilitating change involves "negotiat[ing] with structures rather than simply submit[ting] (. . .) to them" (Mills 29). We listen to the *TedTalk* by the recently elected president of Belarus, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who embodies hope and models paths forward to fight authoritarianism together; she states, "Fear is the province of one. It feeds on isolation (. . .) Fearlessness takes two. It only works if and when we show up for each other." I urge that this is doable within the context of what Foucault has called "the transformative possibilities within the present" (Mills 16). These affirmations correlate with the investigative findings of Noble Laureates Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman who make explicit that understanding frames is of metaphysically consequential importance because "the adoption of a (. . .) frame is an ethically significant act" and ontologically definitional to who we are as individuals and a nation (453-58).

During the course of this project on immigration and ethics, I am very privileged to witness and contribute to students' academic and personal growth as writers and deep thinkers.

Their argument essay on immigration related to those from Central American and Mexico is due at this point, the conclusion of this unit. Reading their papers, I am continually gratified to hear their syntheses of the psychological and philosophical ideas we have studied together, and I find myself renewed each semester by the collaborative and transformative power of education in all of our lives.

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