

Hegemonic Ideological Coordinates and the Rhetorical Construction of “The Illegal Immigrant” in the United States

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Abstract: *This study examines American constructions of “the illegal immigrant” as it appears in popular and political discourse. In doing so, it advances the idea of “hegemonic ideological coordinates” as the domain of a social field that helps individuals to come to terms with their belief in illegal immigration restrictions. Hegemonic ideological coordinates are defined in this essay as the parameters that influence the symbolic construction of political belief. Specifically, they are a collection of socio-centric statements which condition identity with the values and judgments of preceding generations that “subject” individuals through language of constraint and/or liberation. This essay examines the hegemonic ideological coordinates of anti-illegal immigration rhetoric. It examines American anti-illegal immigration rhetoric surrounding twelve coordinates: (1) “Un-American,” (2) “Alien(iz)ation of the Enemy,” (3) “Criminality,” (4) “Economic Deterioration,” (5) “Public Services,” (6) “Infectiousness,” (7) “Bestialization,” (8) “Racialization,” (9) “God,” (10) “Environmental Contaminants,” (11) “Overpopulation,” and (12) “Pieces of Shit and Other Expletives.” In the end, it is possible to gain valuable insights into the illegal immigration controversy, the formation of American political belief, and the U.S. rhetorical construction of the scapegoat.*

Keywords: *Rhetoric—Lacan—hegemony—immigration—scapegoat—psychoanalysis—ideology—Gramsci—culture—subjectivity*

In the United States (U.S.), illegal immigrants have been subject to a plethora of rhetorical¹ constructions. For example, in focusing on the rhetoric of "the border," D. Robert DeChaine found that the "alienization" of illegal immigrants is a "reactionary rhetoric goaded by a profound anxiety of incompleteness."² Anne Demo analyzed rhetorical constructions of the illegal immigrant as rooted in a concern with "the erosion of U.S. sovereignty as the defining warrant of immigration restriction and border enforcement arguments."³ In a different essay, she advanced the idea of "afterimages" and found that "the relative lack of afterimage stories on immigration enforcement tactics underscores a tacit acceptance of a paramilitary approach to illegal immigration."⁴ Moreover, Demo has correctly noted the contribution of studies by Kent Ono and John Sloop, Marouf Hasian and Fernando Delgado, as well as Otto Santa Ana and several others concerning how "[d]iscourses of criminality, immorality, and disease, which form secondary themes in the literature, further animate economic arguments by scapegoating undocumented immigrants as sites of contagion, prone to criminal behavior."⁵ J. David Cisneros analyzed the metaphor of the immigrant as "pollutant," arguing that such a metaphor in popular discourse "is significant for the ways in which it constructs immigrants, through racial

- 1 Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing, in any given situation, the available means of persuasion." Thus, throughout this essay, I use the term rhetoric to allude to language use in a strategic way in public discourse with the intent to persuade people.
- 2 D. Robert DeChaine, "Bordering the Civic Imaginary: Alienization, Fence Logic, and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95 (2009): 45.
- 3 Anne Demo, "Sovereignty Discourse and Contemporary Immigration Politics," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 91 (2005): 292.
- 4 Anne Demo, "The Afterimage: Immigration Policy after Elian," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 43.
- 5 Demo, "Sovereignty Discourse," p. 292. She is referring here to the following works: Kent Ono and John Sloop, *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California's Proposition 187* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Otto Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Marouf Hasian and Fernando Delgado, "The Trials and Tribulations of Racialized Critical Rhetorical Theory: Under-standing the Rhetorical Ambiguities of Proposition 187," *Communication Theory* 8 (1998): 245-70; Kevin R. Johnson, "An Essay on Immigration Politics, Popular Democracy, and California's Proposition 187: The Political Relevance and Legal Irrelevance of Race," *Washington Law Review* 70 (1995): 629-73; J. Park, "Race and Discourse and Proposition 187," *Michigan Journal of Race and Law* 2 (1996): 175-204; George Sanchez, "Face the Nation: Race, Immigration, and the Rise of Nativism in Late Twentieth Century America," *The International Migration Review* 31 (1997): 1009-30; Kitty Calavita, "The New Politics of Immigration: 'Balanced-Budget Conservatism' and the Symbolism of Proposition 187," *Social Problems* 43 (1996): 284-305; and Dorothee Schneider, "'I Know All about Emma Lazarus': Nationalism and Its Contradictions in Congressional Rhetoric of Immigration Restriction," *Cultural Anthropology* 13 (1998): 82-99.

and xenophobic stereotypes, as objects, aberrations, and dangers.”⁶ Furthermore, Lisa Flores analyzed the rhetorical constructions of race in opposition to illegal immigration.⁷

The contemporary rhetorical constructions of illegal immigrants are the product of American attitudes throughout history. In the U.S., there has been popular opposition and concern about illegal immigration since at least the 1830s when many Americans began expressing a “growing concern” about “the increasing volume of immigration in both absolute terms and relative to the U.S. population, and the facts that more of the arrivals were Catholic and unskilled.”⁸ Despite the circulation of anti-illegal immigration rhetoric in popular discourse, there were no restrictions on immigration to the U.S. until 1882 when the U.S. passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. Before 1882, individuals could basically get off the ship and go about their business even if they did not choose to become naturalized citizens. Since then, we have seen a number of demands for ways to restrict immigration to the U.S. including the adoption of a literacy test in 1917, the Quota Act of 1921, The National Origins Act of 1924, and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. Still, those restrictions would pale in comparison to the increased activity at the state level. In 2006, states passed a record number of immigration-related bills by enacting 84 laws. Furthermore, that number tripled in 2007 when 240 laws restricting illegal immigration were enacted. Since 2007, states have enacted an average total of roughly 220 laws each year.⁹ The passage of these laws would not

6 J. David Cisneros, “Contaminated Communities: The Metaphor of ‘Immigrant as Pollutant’ in Media Representations of Immigration,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 11 (2008): 591.

7 Lisa A. Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders: Peons, Illegal Aliens, and Competing Narratives of Immigration,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20 (2003): 362-387.

8 Raymond Cohn, “Immigration to the United States,” *EH.net*. Operated by the Economic History Association, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/cohn.immigration.us>, (accessed February 1, 2010). There were other anti-illegal immigrant sentiments prior to 1830, though the sentiments were more broadly conceived and not narrowly targeted at illegal immigrants. For example, the Naturalization Act of 1790 was passed because it sought to create lines between who had citizenship rights and who did not. Certain people who were currently within the geographic boundaries of the U.S. (e.g., slaves) as well as immigrants were not citizens under the Act. Immigration to the U.S. was not illegal—immigrants just could not enjoy the benefits of citizenship unless they became naturalized. So, the Act did not really create “illegal immigration” so much as it created “non-citizen immigrants.” Notably, the first use of “illegal alien” in a legal sense did not occur until the early 1900s. See Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U P, 2004).

9 Immigration Policy Center: American Immigration Council. Immigration Policy Project. “2010 Immigration-Related Bills and Resolutions in the States (January-March, 2010),” April 27, 2010. Available at <http://>

be possible without the rhetorical constructions of illegal immigrants as a danger to the American way of life.

The purpose of the current study is to contribute to the understanding of American constructions of the illegal immigrant as it appears in popular and political discourse. In doing so, this essay advances the idea of "hegemonic ideological coordinates" as the domain of a social field that helps individuals to come to terms with their belief in illegal immigrant restrictions. Hegemonic ideological coordinates are the parameters that influence the symbolic construction of political belief. For example, current hegemonic ideological coordinates in American political rhetoric are framed in terms of Democratic and Republican philosophies since they are the dominant parties. One can imagine U.S. political beliefs being very different if the Democratic Party ceased to exist and the hegemonic ideological coordinates were framed in terms of Republican and Libertarian philosophies, or if the Republican Party ceased to exist and the hegemonic ideological coordinates were framed in terms of Democratic and Green philosophies. In the context of immigration, hegemonic ideological coordinates that construct an opposition to illegal immigration contribute to the rhetorical framing of the "illegal immigrant problem." Therefore, the study of the hegemonic ideological coordinates that oppose illegal immigration promises to provide insights into the social field that frames American thought in opposing illegal immigration.

Thus, this study provides both: (a) further analysis of anti-illegal immigrant rhetoric, and (b) analysis of many coordinates that are previously unexamined in rhetorical scholarship. In the end, we will be able to discern a more enriched view of the nature and scope of the hegemonic ideological coordinates of anti-illegal immigrant rhetoric. In order to achieve this purpose, the essay is divided into three main sections. The first section begins by explaining the importance of studying hegemonic ideological coordinates and explains the method of text construction that has resulted in a broad account of the social field that opposes illegal immigration. The second section identifies and analyzes the many characteristics of the hegemonic ideological coordinates of anti-illegal immigrant rhetoric. Finally, I share a summary and some implications.

Hegemonic Ideological Coordinates

In order to understand the meaning of hegemonic ideological coordinates, there is a need to define each of the terms. According to Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, texts shape people's taken-for-granted understandings of social reality as they relate to class relations. Gramsci stressed that "though hegemony is ethico-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity."¹⁰ Important to note here is that Gramsci's notion of hegemony is not a form of economic reductionism. Rather, economics is *a part* of hegemonic texts. For Gramsci, those who control the material and cultural means of production could use that power to produce hegemony. Hegemony is understood as a system of values, attitudes, morality, and other beliefs that passively or actively support the established order. In terms of hegemonic depictions of illegal immigrants, there have already been several scholars who have documented the hegemonic portrayals of illegal immigrants as they impact and support the established economic order.¹¹

The usage of the term "ideological" refers to the idea of ideology as denoting, "a set of related beliefs held by a group of persons."¹² According to Bernard Brock, Mark Huglen, James Klumpp, and Sharon Howell, ideology provides consistency for political actions and assures that these "actions and their rationale are not isolated but woven into a broader fabric of understanding, anticipation, and value."¹³ More specifically for the purposes of this essay, part of the study of hegemonic ideological coordinates involves the practice of *Ideologiekritik*. Michael Calvin McGee describes *Ideologiekritik* as the practice of studying ideology as "an attempt to describe human life from the perspective of history—from our knowledge that the values and judgments of preceding generations may function to constrain or to liberate presently-living generations."¹⁴ The study of contemporary hegemonic ideology concerning illegal immigration is important

10 Antonio Gramsci, *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*, edited by David Forgacs, (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 211-212.

11 See note 5.

12 Hans Toch, *The Social Psychology of Social Movements*, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 4.

13 Bernard L. Brock, Mark E. Huglen, James F. Klumpp, and Sharon Howell, *Making Sense of Political Ideology: The Power of Language in Democracy*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 40.

14 Michael Calvin McGee, "Another Philippic: Notes on the Ideological Turn in Criticism," *Central State Speech Journal*, 35 (1984), 48.

as it functions to create a social field whereby future generations will negotiate their way through current ideology, constructing their "own" ideology from the fragments of the ideology that came before them. Taken together, this essay is concerned with the rhetorical critique of anti-illegal immigrant ideology as hegemonic in American culture. Anti-illegal immigrant rhetoric is hegemonic because it serves the current dominant interests of regulating immigration in a variety of ways (only open borders advocates are opposed to regulating immigration, a view that is far from hegemonic in the U.S.). Any attempt to justify immigration reform short of advocating open borders necessitates drawing the line somewhere between legal and illegal immigration, and thus reinforces an anti-illegal immigrant ideology.¹⁵ For example, even when an illegal immigrant advocates amnesty for all illegal immigrants, they may secure amnesty for current illegal immigrants while maintaining any restrictions against future illegal immigrants—such advocacy merely redraws the border. More specifically, when the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 passed, nearly 3 million illegal immigrants who sought amnesty were thrilled to receive it. At the same time, the bill did not call for open borders and provides a good example of how even amnesty, short of open borders, reinforces the rejection of illegal immigration even as it accepts current illegal immigrants. Thus, while there are complex legal, social, economic, cultural, and political issues concerning illegal immigration, anti-illegal immigrant rhetoric is the hegemonic ideology.

By "coordinates," I refer to the social field in the psychoanalysis of culture. Specifically, I am referring to the observation of Yannis Stavrakakis that "Lacan was aware of a two-way movement between the individual and the social level."¹⁶ The "social level" is what I refer to in this essay as the "social field." Stavrakakis reminded us of the more "socio-centric" statements in Lacan's doctoral thesis indicating a movement from the social to the individual. Lacan wrote: "We have admitted as explicative of the facts of psychosis the dynamic notion of social tensions, whose state of equilibrium normally defines the personality in the individual."¹⁷ Individuals are generally introduced to the "problem of illegal immigration" by their

15 To be clear, I am not advocating open borders here. Rather, I am speaking about the line that must be drawn if one advocates immigration regulation.

16 Yannis Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political*, (London: Routledge, 1999), 3-4.

17 Qtd. in Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan, The Absolute Master*, (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 22

introduction to the idea in the social field. Individuals who have direct contact with actual immigrants have more favorable views toward immigration than those that have little or no direct contact.¹⁸ This suggests that individuals gravitate toward coordinates in the social field that are abstracted from encountering the material bodies of illegal immigrants.¹⁹

More importantly for the purposes of this essay, the psychoanalysis of culture occurs with the confluence of Lacanian theory of subjectivity and the field of political analysis. Ernesto Laclau pointed out that Lacanian theory permits the confluence between these two fields, “neither as the addition of a supplement to the former by the latter, nor as the introduction of . . . the unconscious instead of economy—but as the confluence of the two, around the logic of the signifier as a logic . . . of [real] dislocation. . . . The logic which presides over the possibility/impossibility of the construction of *any* identity.”²⁰ The opposition to “the illegal immigrant” is part of a political identity. By combining the three terms “hegemonic,” “ideological,” and “coordinates,” we begin to articulate the nature and scope of this identity.

Taken together, hegemonic ideological coordinates are those socio-centric statements that condition identity with the values and judgments of preceding generations that “subject” individuals through language of constraint and/or liberation. Slavoj Žižek has argued that “Hollywood is literally a ‘dream factory’: its main function is to fabricate hegemonic ideological dreams, to provide individuals with coordinates for their private fantasies.”²¹ The same may be said for the larger social field concerning opposition to “the illegal immigrant”—political conversation, blogs, news

18 According to an NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Poll, 32 of those with high contact with immigrants (legal and illegal) believed recent immigration is bad for the U.S. compared to 51 percent with low contact; 37 percent high contact vs. 59 percent low contact believed recent immigrants take jobs; 50 percent high contact vs. 29 percent low contact believed recent immigrants are discriminated against; 56 percent high contact vs. 68 percent low contact believed immigrants do not pay their taxes; 58 percent high contact vs. 32 percent low contact believed immigrants strengthen the U.S.; 37 percent high contact vs. 62 percent low contact believed immigrants burden the U.S.; 59 percent high contact vs. 72 percent low contact believed government was not tough enough. Poll accessed July 7, 2010 at <http://www.npr.org/news/specials/polls/2004/immigration/>.

19 For example, rarely, if ever, is an “illegal immigrant” even interviewed in major media outlets let alone interpersonal encounters. Obviously there are complications with representing illegal immigrants even if the media were to interview an illegal immigrant.

20 Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, (London: Verso, 1990), 96

21 Slavoj Žižek, *Revolution at the Gates: A Selection of Writings from February to October 1917*, (London: Verso, 2004), p. 240.

outlets, personal conversation, etc., may not always “fabricate” hegemonic ideological dreams, but they provide individuals with coordinates for their private perspectives that oppose illegal immigration. Hegemonic ideological coordinates are important to study because, “[i]f, today, one follows a direct call to act, this act will not be performed in an empty space—it will be an act WITHIN the hegemonic ideological coordinates.”²² Specifically, if one follows a direct call to act for immigration rights, the act will occur within the hegemonic ideological coordinates. Examining the hegemonic ideological coordinates that oppose illegal immigration is thus necessary in order to contextualize any act.

Identifying hegemonic ideological coordinates is no easy task. Complications include the instability and proliferation of signifiers in the social field, the fragmentation of culture, the changes to the material conditions of illegal immigrant labor, and others. At the same time, scholarship is capable of examining major points that constitute hegemonic ideological coordinates (as is the case with much of the existing rhetorical scholarship on immigration—see introduction).

What follows is a movement toward further analysis of already discovered hegemonic ideological coordinates and the discovery and analysis of coordinates yet to be addressed in scholarship. In order to get a better understanding of the hegemonic ideological coordinates that oppose illegal immigration, I examined over 500 “texts” that urge for the “prohibition” of the “illegal immigrant.” The eclectic mix of data sources is justified as Americans do not receive information from any one data source, but rather a culmination of several that exist in the social field. These “texts” include FDCH (Federal Document Clearing House) testimonies, newspaper articles, editorials, websites, blogs, billboards, pamphlets/flyers, documentary films, movies, television news transcripts, web broadcasts (pod casts, You Tube, etc.), personal conversations, journal articles, law reviews, books, lectures/public talks, sermons, and political cartoons. In my analysis, I make no claim to comprehensiveness. At the same time, I believe that such a collection of texts has resulted in the discovery of many points in the hegemonic ideological coordinates concerning illegal immigration that may be subject to rhetorical analysis. Undoubtedly, any deficiency in the current examina-

22 Slavoj Žižek, “Lenin’s Choice,” *Repeating Lenin* (lacan.com, 1997/2001), <http://www.lacan.com/replenin.htm> (accessed July 7, 2010).

tion may be the topic of subsequent research.²³ At the same time, I believe that what follows is a good start since after searching through over 500 texts, I did not come across any new components of the hegemonic ideological coordinates.

Anti-Illegal Immigrant Hegemonic Ideological Coordinates

(*Un-*)*American*. There is nothing more (un-)American than the “illegal immigrant.”²⁴ The concept of “citizen” is the primary signifier in this coordinate. Kenneth Burke’s concept of the negative in language reminds us that in order for there to be a concept of “American,” there must be a concept of “un-American” that is the undesirable underbelly of the term. Therefore, it is not surprising that the “legal” immigrant or “citizen” is held in opposition to the “illegal” immigrant. For instance, Albert Rodriguez said that “we are not against legal immigration, we are against illegal aliens from all over the world.”²⁵ Similarly, on the United States Citizens for Immigration Law Enforcement website, they made sure to clarify: “We are not against legal immigration. The borders must be closed to illegal immigration in order to maintain regulated, orderly immigration.”²⁶ “Citizenship” and “legal immigration” are the terms associated with control over the border as a “regulated” and “orderly” process.

The concepts of “citizenship” and “legal immigration” are used to legitimize a deeper founding violence necessary to create and sustain such concepts. This is not surprising given that “there is no national identity

23 The “test” for whether the texts are all encompassing is whether scholars find additional portrayals not listed in the hegemonic ideological coordinates found in this study. So, for example, if another portrayal of the illegal immigrants becomes manifest by characterizing illegal immigrants as “ugly,” then ugliness would be part of the hegemonic ideological coordinates not found in this essay. While I believe the current study to have found the characterizations in the hegemonic ideological coordinates, there could be some missing. If this is the case, future scholars should be free to contribute scholarship with other characterizations so as to trace the coordinates more accurately. This study should be viewed as another step in that direction.

24 See for example, Leo R. Chavez, *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

25 He is the founder of You Don’t Speak For Me, which is a group of Latinos opposed to illegal immigration. Qtd. in Edward Sifuentes, “Activists Gear Up for Immigration Reform Debate,” *North County Times (CA)*, (March 4, 2007)

http://www.nctimes.com/articles/2007/03/05/news/top_stories/3407194916.txt (accessed July, 2010).

26 United States Citizens for Immigration Law Enforcement, “About Us,” <http://www.uscfile.org/events.htm> (accessed May 10, 2007).

before its (colonialist, etc.) 'oppression'; national identity constitutes itself through resistance to its oppression—the fight for national revival is therefore a defense of something which comes to be only through being experienced as lost or endangered. The nationalist ideology endeavors to elude this vicious circle by constructing a myth of origins."²⁷

Aside from the justification for maintaining violence against illegal immigrants, there are two particular founding myths that rely on violence and occur in the hegemonic ideological coordinates of illegal immigration: the Puritans and Thanksgiving, and the Founding Fathers. In emphasizing "legal immigration," one writer emphasizes, "America has nothing to fear from *legal* immigration, even at significantly higher levels. Immigration has historically been a source of American strength." Then the writer makes a note based on the Thanksgiving holiday: "That's a point that even the most xenophobic policymakers may find themselves reminded of this week as they gather to feast on the bounty of our land and to give thanks to God in a tradition that was started by the religious pilgrims who took the first steps toward the creation of America."²⁸

The idea of "legal" immigration tied to the pilgrims' role in "creating" America paints a picture free from the founding violence as one of the "first steps" of the Puritans—namely the violence against Native Americans. For example, Pilgrim Governor William Bradford ordered his militia to conduct a night attack on the sleeping people of a Pequot Indian village in a land grabbing act. To Bradford, a devout Christian, the massacre was imbued with religious meaning: "It was a fearful sight to see them frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching the same and horrible was the stink and stench thereof. But the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice and [the Massachusetts militiamen] gave praise thereof to God."²⁹ Reverend Increase Mather, Pilgrim spiritual father and still a hero in most U.S. textbooks, asked his congregation to give thanks to God "that on this day we have sent 600 heathen souls to hell."³⁰ The idea of a "legal citizen" is tied to historical violence against Native Americans because such violence is

27 Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*, (New York: Verso, 2002), 213-214.

28 "The Immigration Fight," *New York Sun*, (November 21, 2005), <http://nysun.com/article/23339> (accessed July, 2010).

29 Qtd. in William Katz, "Rethinking the Thanksgiving Holiday," *Fault Lines*, (November 20, 2004), <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2004/11/20/17062741.php> (accessed July, 2010).

30 Qtd. in Katz, "Rethinking the Thanksgiving Holiday."

viewed as “necessary” for the establishment of America whereby a person can be deemed “illegal” in the first place.

We see this also in the invocation of the “founding fathers” in the hegemonic ideological coordinates. For instance, according to the Americans for Immigrant Control Website, “[o]ur Founding Fathers did not encourage unlimited immigration. George Washington felt that immigration should be limited to ‘useful mechanisms and some particular descriptions of men or professions.’”³¹ The group also noted that Thomas Jefferson “was concerned that unrestricted immigration of peoples from lands unacquainted with the principle of representative government might undo the careful work of our Founding Fathers.”³² This glorification of the work of the “Founding Fathers” serves to stress the “careful work” as opposed to the horrific work that was hardly caring of Native Americans. Daniel Friedenbarg described in detail the horrific tactics of land grabbing by “the founders” including particular accounts of Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, George Rogers Clark, Ethan Allan, Robert Morris, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson.³³ For instance, in 1780, General George Rogers Clark burned more than “500 acres of corn as well as every species of edible vegetable” that the Shawnee relied on to eat. He would scalp Native and white captives, and he would continue his campaigns into what are now the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.³⁴

To coordinate the terms “Founding Fathers” with “careful work” is to use them as sources of authority that are cleansed from the violence intrinsic to the nation’s founding symbolic documents. The Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution are made possible because, “[a]t the beginning’ of the law, there is a certain ‘outlaw,’ a certain Real of violence which coincides with the act itself of the establishment of the reign of law: the ultimate truth about the reign of law is that of a usurpation, and classical politico-philosophical thought rests on the disavowal of this violent act of foundation.”³⁵ At its core is an “illegitimate violence” that must be

31 Americans for Immigrant Control, “A Brief History of Immigration,” http://www.immigrationcontrol.com/short_history.htm (accessed July 1, 2007).

32 Americans for Immigrant Control, “A Brief History.”

33 Daniel Friedenbarg, *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Land: The Plunder of Early America*, (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1996).

34 Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to Present*, (San Francisco: City Lights Books), 149, 185.

35 Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 204.

concealed because the secret is “the positive condition of the functioning of law: it functions in so far as its subjects are deceived, in so far as they experience the authority of law as ‘authentic and eternal’ and overlook ‘the truth about the usurpation.’”³⁶ The appeal to the “Founding Fathers” in this case is a way of granting legal precedence as authentic and eternal. In other words, the hegemonic ideological coordinate concerning the immigrant as “un-American” and “illegal” legitimizes “ethical” violence as a pre-condition for the establishment of the illegality of immigration in the first place.

“*Alien(iz)ation*” of the Enemy. The rhetoric of the “Un-American” coordinates with rhetoric concerned with the foreign “invasion” of “aliens” as common terms in the hegemonic ideological coordinates.³⁷ For instance, the Missourians Against Illegal Immigration made a plea that read, “Help Stop the Invasion of Illegal Aliens into Missouri and into the U.S.A.!”³⁸ The Americans for Legal Immigration created a flyer that featured the words “Help STOP Illegal Aliens” in big bold words at the top to draw attention.³⁹ Fox News published a story Entitled “Illegal Alien Influx May Threaten Security” in order to warn of the threat that “aliens” pose.⁴⁰ Mark Dwyer even labeled illegal immigrants as “Mexican invaders” that are hedging a “desert invasion.”⁴¹

The labeling of illegal immigrants as “alien” is given context by a set of rhetorical constructions of an enemy that is found in mainstream media discourses. Ono and Sloop document: “The production and proliferation of new enemies to blame, to oppose, and to conquer” as “part of a distinct contemporary culture.” They continue: “Mainstream media discourses, whether fictional or documentary, portray terrorists, welfare mothers, people with

36 Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 204.

37 For further support of this, see Leo R. Chavez, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*, (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

38 Missourians Against Illegal Immigration, <http://www.missouriansagainstillegalimmigration.org/missouriansagainstillegalimmigration/index.html> (accessed July 10, 2010).

39 Americans for Legal Immigration, http://www.immigrationcontrol.com/short_history.htm (accessed July 10, 2010).

40 “Illegal Alien Influx May Compromise Security,” *Fox News*, (March 16, 2005), <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,150520,00.html> (accessed July 10, 2010).

41 Mark Andrew Dwyer, “U.S. Attorney General Protects Mexican Invaders,” *Conservative Voice*, (August 17, 2006), <http://www.theconservativevoice.com/article/17215.html> (accessed March 3, 2007). Other terms used to describe the “illegal immigrant” as the abstract enemy include: “Brown Tide Rising,” “Sea of Brown Faces,” “Foreigners Flooding the Country,” “Third World Takeover,” and “State of Siege.” For a more detailed account of these enemy metaphors, see Otto Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

AIDS, homeless people, young black men, [and many others] as threats to the national body.”⁴² Within the hegemonic ideological coordinates, “the illegal alien” appears to be a perfect supplement to Ono and Sloop’s list of new enemies to blame. Ono and Sloop point to the work of Robert Ivie who notes how Americans have traditionally exonerated themselves of guilt, “by de-civilizing the image of their adversaries.”⁴³ Ono and Sloop argue that in contemporary politics, “it is more likely that internal and external enemies are needed to explain existing political, economic, or social problems” and that “the other and stereotypes of the other are always shifting.”⁴⁴ In the post 9/11 era, the “alien” as enemy has led people such as Guillermo Gómez-Pena to write: “There’s been an overnight shift in attitude toward, say brown people. We are no longer hip, sexy, exotic creatures on the global menu. In the world according to Bush and his evangelical cowboys, we are all ‘suspicious.’”⁴⁵ “The illegal immigrant” as “alien” exists in the hegemonic ideological coordinates to create a placeholder for stereotypes that contribute to the absolution of guilt and/or internal problems that threaten American unity.

This function is further demonstrated by the fact that “alien” often appears close to ideas of “invasion.” One of the best examples of this coordinate appears in relation to the construction of the Mexican flag. Patrick Buchanan describes a “sea of Mexican flags” when commenting on a protest in Los Angeles against anti-illegal immigration legislation.⁴⁶ Ono and Sloop explain: “In the discourse, ‘floods’ of people carrying Mexican flags within the United States are portrayed as the impending—if not already accomplished—invasion of the United States.”⁴⁷

We can further Ono and Sloop’s observations by placing “alien invasion” rhetoric within our theoretical understanding of space alien abduction rhetoric. Jodi Dean notes: “In abduction, the alien takes away our agency, and the sense of security and certainty upon which our agency was predicated. The theft of agency is manifest not just in the power of the alien to paralyze

42 Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 35-36.

43 Robert L. Ivie, “Metaphor and the Rhetorical Invention of Cold War ‘Idealists.’” *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology*, Revised Edition, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 119.

44 Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 36.

45 Guillermo Gomez-Pena, *Ethno-Techno: Writings on Performance, Activism, and Pedagogy*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 272.

46 Patrick J. Buchanan, “What Will America be in 2050?,” *Los Angeles Times*, (October 28, 1994), 7B.

47 Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 53.

us and abduct us at will but also in its technological superiority and pernicious breeding project."⁴⁸ This is precisely analogous to "illegal alien invaders" who lead America to "economic paralysis," and an increase in criminal activity including "abduction" (discussed below on the "criminal").

In addition, the hegemonic ideological coordinates of the "illegal alien" relate to fears of "technological superiority" and the "pernicious breeding project" found in alien abduction narratives. The fear of losing America's technological edge over the "alien invaders" is manifest in the context of the war on terrorism, a "suspicious" China, and a fear of the "alien" from Canada. For example, in war against terrorism rhetoric, the "illegal immigrant" is coordinated with terrorism. For instance, Americans for Legal Immigration posted a warning from the F.B.I. about "special interest aliens" with "ties to al-Qaeda" that have "crossed into the United States from Mexico, using false identities."⁴⁹ Suspecting a world takeover by China, the same group posted an article about illegal Chinese immigrants being "charged with stealing vital U.S. military secrets."⁵⁰ Fear of Canadian immigrants is typically coordinated with a loss of technology jobs.

In terms of the "pernicious breeding project," hegemonic ideological coordinates resist a "race-mixed" nation. James Owens argues, "Ethnic and racial identity—and the urge to preserve it—have endured throughout history as the central fact of human nature and among the most powerful forces on Earth. . . . Nothing ranks as more surely Euro-white suicide than whites' tolerance of non-white immigration."⁵¹ This idea both equates the "alien" as brown and as a threat due to a "chaotic collection of tribal breeds" that results from illegal alien invasion.⁵² The rhetoric of "illegal alien invasion" serves to perpetuate a fear of losing American power over the world.

The hegemonic ideological coordinates are thus aligned to perpetuate the belief in an "alien nation." According to Dean, "[t]he alien is always

48 Jodi Dean, "The Familiarity of Strangeness: Aliens, Citizens, and Abduction," *Theory & Event*, 1 (1997): 62.

49 Americans for Legal Immigration, "FBI Warns of 'Special Interest' Aliens," (2007), http://www.alipac.us/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=32, (accessed July 10, 2010).

50 Americans for Legal Immigration, "Chinese Immigrants Charged With Stealing Vital U.S. Military Secrets," (2007), <http://www.alipac.us/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=875>, (accessed July 10, 2010).

51 James Owens, "Ending the Race Crisis in the 21st Century," (December, 1999), <http://www.ourcivilisation.com/usa/index.htm>, (accessed July 10, 2010).

52 Owens, "Ending the Race Crisis."

foreign, an other. An alien nation would be a nation of foreigners, of those always outside the nation. An alien nation is not just without nationalism; it is without nationality. It is a non-nation, an anti-nation.”⁵³ Coordinating the “illegal immigrant” with “illegal alien” reinforces the idea that the American nation is the greatest nation in the world—that around the world there are inferior beings that the U.S. should defend against. Supporting the conflation is the perception that the “motive” of the “alien” is to “steal” global hegemony—an assumption coordinating the “illegal alien invasion” with the un-“American” as previously discussed.

The “Criminal.” The “illegal immigrant” also appears in the hegemonic ideological coordinates as a “criminal.” For example, the Immigration’s Human Cost organization took up the task of compiling a list of numerous crime victims of “criminal illegal aliens.”⁵⁴ On their website, they collect a host of news stories to construct the “illegal immigrant” as a drug dealer, murderer, terrorizing sniper, gang member, identity thief, drunk driver, reckless driver, public drunk, kidnapper, vehicular man slaughterer, cop killer, child internet seducer, child molester, bank robber, terrorist, violent assaulter, rapist, drug addict, car thief, illegal firearms distributor, horse killer, carjacker, hate criminal, child abuser, and uninsured driver.⁵⁵ The Federation for American Immigration Reform (2007) made a keen observation by pointing out the tautological claim that “illegal immigration is a crime” (because it is illegal).⁵⁶ Tammy Bruce blamed the “illegal immigrant” for other crimes in the U.S. by citizens because “police departments in virtually every major city (and not so major ones) spend their time responding to crime by illegal aliens, looking for the illegal alien culprits, arresting illegal aliens (when their local laws allow them to), processing them through the system” which means that “more officers, more departments, are stretched to the limit, by people who shouldn’t be here in the first place.”⁵⁷

53 Dean, “The Familiarity of Strangeness,” 45.

54 Immigration’s Human Cost, <http://www.immigrationshumancost.org/>, (accessed July 10, 2010).

55 The portrayal of the “illegal immigrant” as a kidnapper and a hostage taker is congruent with the “alien abduction” narrative in the “alien(iz)ation of the illegal immigrant.”

56 The Federation for American Immigration Reform, “Illegal Immigration is a Crime,” (March, 2010), http://www.fairus.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=16663&security=1601&news_iv_ctrl=1007, (accessed July 10, 2010).

57 Tammy Bruce, “Illegals: The Crime Rampage,” *Front Page Magazine*, (October 7, 2005), <http://97.74.65.51/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=7016>, (accessed July 10, 2010).

The conceptualization of “the illegal immigrant” as a “criminal” serves to maintain the consistency of “law abiding” identity by condemning the “criminal” other. Rhetorical scholars have noted in many places that “the illegal immigrant” and criminality are so closely connected rhetorically that the slippage from immigrant to criminal seems almost natural.⁵⁸ We can add to this scholarship with the Burkeian insight about how the construction of the criminal shapes our view of reality and motives when it comes to justice. Burke writes that we might approach a criminal “from the vocabulary of sufficient grace, whereby we look upon his transgressions as a deliberate choice of ‘evil’ where he might as well have chosen ‘good,’ so that we make our prison justice ‘retributive.’”⁵⁹ The treatment of the criminal would be different “if we approach him from the vocabulary of determinism, whereby his transgressions become ‘symptomatic’ and justice becomes rather a matter of prophylaxis and reclamation. Here we see the destiny of thousands dependent upon a mere shift of terminology.”⁶⁰

Since the hegemonic ideological coordinates construct “the illegal immigrant criminal” as symptomatic of “inevitable” (deterministic) crime, the notion of justice becomes prophylactic (like placing a giant condom around America to prevent “crime”) and reclamative (i.e., “reclaiming” the land “stolen” by immigrating on it). Implicit in this version of crime is the belief in keeping “criminals” in other countries so that they can commit “inevitable” crimes against “other” people (presumed to matter less). Thus, the hegemonic ideological coordinates explicate what bodies matter (U.S. citizens) and what bodies do not matter (illegal immigrants AND those in other countries that will “inevitably/deterministically” be subject to the “criminals” kept away from the U.S.).

Economic Deterioration. Amongst the circulation of signifiers in the hegemonic ideological coordinates, the “illegal immigrant” as a detriment to the “economy” is commonplace. Consistent with “the illegal immigrant” as “criminal,” Numbers USA wrote a statement accusing the “illegal immigrant” of wage thievery by stating: “They break the law to steal jobs to which they are not entitled and in the process depress wages of millions of

58 For examples, see Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*; Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders”; and Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*.

59 Qtd. in Robert L. Heath, *Realism and Relativism: A Perspective on Kenneth Burke*, (Atlanta: Mercer University Press, 1986), 86.

60 Qtd. in Heath, *Realism and Relativism*, 86.

other American workers.”⁶¹ Another website clarified that “they” are “not immigrants, but illegal aliens” that “are stealing our jobs. They are and have been by the 10’s of millions.”⁶² In a more sophisticated argument about “the illegal immigrant’s” impact on the economy, the Colorado Alliance for Immigration Reform used Federation for American Immigration Reform data to argue that “between 40 and 50 percent of wage-loss among low-skilled Americans is due to the immigration of low-skilled workers. Some native workers lose not just wages but their jobs through immigrant competition. An estimated 1,888,000 American workers are displaced from their jobs every year by immigration.”⁶³ Moreover, The American Resistance explained: “Immigration is a net drain on the economy; corporate interests reap the benefits of cheap labor, while taxpayers pay the infrastructural cost.”⁶⁴

As noted earlier in the introduction of this essay, the economic rhetoric concerning illegal immigration has been analyzed to great extent in previous literature, so there is no need to rehash all of those arguments here.⁶⁵ However, an analysis of hegemonic ideological coordinates affords us one previously undiscovered observation concerning illegal immigrant labor. Namely, by de-individualizing the subjectivity of “an” illegal immigrant and emphasizing a cultural subjectivity against “the illegal immigrant” (abstracted), we begin to witness an illegal immigrant (wage)slave trade in the context of globalization. Specifically, there are numerous places in the hegemonic ideological coordinates that talk about immigration raids of companies, while at the same time mentioning an individual illegal immigrant with the number of times they have been deported.

While the analysis of an illegal immigrant (wage)slave trade deserves further attention elsewhere, we can get a glimpse of how it functions here. For example, once the “illegal immigrant” makes the decision to seek work that is available in the U.S. they must decide to sneak across the border by themselves or rely on a smuggler to get them over the border—both options

61 Numbers USA, “Immigration Reform: Recognizing Reality or Surrendering Principles,” <http://www.numbersusa.com/interests/CPAC2005speech.html> (accessed July 10, 2010).

62 “Are Immigrants Stealing Our Jobs?,” *Yahoo Forum*, <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid+20070402190552AAPF0Dg> (accessed July 10, 2010).

63 Colorado Alliance for Immigration Reform, (2007), <http://www.cairo.org/econ/econ.html>, (accessed July 10, 2010).

64 The American Resistance, “The Economic Costs of Illegal Immigration,” (2007), http://www.theamericanresistance.com/issues/economic_costs.html, (accessed July 10, 2010).

65 See note 5.

risk death (terrain and border violence) and involuntary servitude (smuggler sells into sex slave trade, etc.). Once the "illegal immigrant" makes it to the U.S. they work for an employer who uses the threat of deportation in order to create a condition that "assures the ability to super-exploit with impunity and to dispose of this labor without consequences should it become necessary."⁶⁶ For instance, once an employer finds a particular illegal immigrant unruly, all they have to do is pick up the phone and call the Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) to tell them they have an "illegal immigrant" that has presented them with false documents. Even if the "illegal immigrant" is not unruly, the employer may still phone the ICE as a disciplinary mechanism to ensure the productivity of labor. Once this happens, the "illegal immigrant" is placed in a detention facility that is built by private companies such as KBR (Kellogg Brown & Root), a subsidiary of Halliburton (who received a \$385 million contract to build large-scale detention centers in case of an "emergency influx" of immigrants).⁶⁷ Once in the detention facilities, they are subject to remain there indefinitely. If released, they are deported to their country of origin, while those "ahead" of them in the cycle fill the jobs that they left behind. In other words, once the "illegal immigrant" is deported, they are re-entered into the super-exploitable labor pool by being able to "illegally immigrate" again to fill the job made available by the detaining of the previous "illegal immigrant." It is no wonder then that there are many stories in the hegemonic ideological coordinates concerned with "the illegal immigrant" being deported 10 or 11 times, since it merely confirms the minimal number of times the "illegal immigrant" has been through the cycle of the labor trade, as well as the number of "false document" reports that are used as justification for deportation.

Public Services. According to the hegemonic ideological coordinates, "the illegal immigrant" is a drain on social services such as "education," "health care," and "welfare" at both the state and federal level. For instance, Dan Stein stated: "Most Californians, who have seen their taxes increase while public services deteriorate, already know the impact that mass illegal immigration is having on their communities, but even they may be shocked

66 William I. Robinson, "'Aquí Estamos Y No Nos Vamos!': Global Capital and Immigrant Rights," *Race and Class*, (October-December), 84.

67 Robinson, "'Aquí Estamos.'"

when they learn just how much of drain illegal immigration has become.”⁶⁸ At the federal level, Jennifer Wipf and Peter Wipf wrote: “Illegal immigrants cost the United States billions each year in welfare and healthcare costs, and this is when they are not even eligible for benefits. . . . Immigrants should work to earn a living for at least a few years before they can tap into public services.”⁶⁹ Ron Paul argued: “We must end welfare state subsidies for illegal immigrants. Some illegal immigrants—certainly not all—receive housing subsidies, food stamps, free medical care, and other forms of welfare. This alienates taxpayers and breeds suspicion of immigrants.”⁷⁰ In terms of the educational “mooching,” Frosty Wooldridge explained that “the illegal immigrant’s” presence in the U.S. education system “gives us a frightening harvest of illiterate, uneducated, antagonistic and non-invested young people exploding our society with no academic skills. That’s WHY the Third World suffers what it suffers: lack of an educated citizenry.”⁷¹ In short, the hegemonic ideological coordinates construct “the illegal immigrant” as a drain on taxpayer money and as being responsible for ineffective government programs.

Underlying this construction in the hegemonic ideological coordinates is a generalized resentment. According to Robert Halsall, “the feeling of resentment is generalized: it seeks to identify someone or something, a target, however imprecise, responsible for the feelings of contempt which the mass subject feels.”⁷² Resentment in the hegemonic ideological coordinates appears to be targeted toward “the illegal immigrant” because of a generalized contempt for American rights being largely procedurally based. Delgado and Stefancic explain: “Rights are almost always procedural (for example, to a fair process) rather than substantive (for example, to food, housing, or education). Think how our system applauds affording everyone equality of opportunity, but resists programs that assure equality of

68 Qtd. in Robert Longley, “Illegal Immigration Costs California Over Ten Billion Annually,” (December, 2004), <http://usgovinfo.about.com/od/immigrationnaturalization/a/caillegals.htm> (accessed July 10, 2010).

69 Jennifer Wipf and Peter Wipf, “Welfare and Healthcare, Licenses for Immigrants in the U.S.,” *About.com*, http://immigration.about.com/od/ussocialeconomicissues/i/WelfareHealthC_2.htm (accessed July 12, 2010).

70 Ron Paul, “Immigration and the Welfare State,” (August 9, 2005), <http://www.lewrockwell.com/paul/paul269.html> (accessed July 12, 2010).

71 Frosty Wooldridge, “Illegal Immigration Education Meltdown in America,” *NewsWithViews.com*, (January 10, 2005), <http://www.newswithviews.com/Wooldridge/frosty22.htm> (accessed July 12, 2010).

72 Robert Halsall, “Sloterdijk’s Theory of Cynicism, Resentment and ‘Horizontal Communication,’” *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, 1.2 (2005), 174.

results".⁷³ Since rights are abstracted away from the guarantee of substantive rights, "legal" Americans may experience resentment—not because the "illegal immigrant" receives social services, but because "legal" Americans are not guaranteed those rights themselves.

Infectiousness. "The illegal immigrant" is also constructed in the hegemonic ideological coordinates as being "diseased." For instance, according to WorldNetDaily, "the increasing number of illegal aliens coming into the United States is forcing the closure of hospitals, spreading vanquished diseases and threatening to destroy America's prized health-care system."⁷⁴ "Disease" is also used in conjunction with "epidemic" as Dave Gibson argued: "The illegal immigrants pouring over the U.S.-Mexico border are endangering this country with actual epidemics. Tuberculosis, hepatitis, dengue fever, chagas, and even leprosy are being imported into the U.S. inside the bodies of illegal aliens. . . . And you thought they only carried heroin-filled balloons inside their bodies!"⁷⁵ Moreover, the Dark Side of Illegal Immigration reported that "[i]llegal aliens are not screened and many are carrying horrific third world diseases that do not belong in the USA. Many of these diseases are highly contagious and will infect citizens that come in contact with an infected illegal alien."⁷⁶

Aside from the problematic assumption in the hegemonic ideological coordinates that diseases "belong" in the "third world," there is the problematic conflation that occurs between "the illegal immigrant" and the "disease." In other words, "the illegal immigrant" is not just a "carrier of disease," they are a "disease" in their agent status. The hegemonic ideological coordinates rhetorically de-humanize "the illegal immigrant" by constructing their bodies as vessels of disease, rather than people worthy of treatment and help. Importantly, this dehumanization coordinates with claims about social services by contributing to resentment—not only is "the illegal immigrant" a "container" of disease, Americans with diseases often do not re-

73 Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 23.

74 WorldNetDaily, "Illegal Aliens Threaten U.S. Medical System: Docs Journal Reports Hospitals Being Closed, Previously Vanquished Diseases Spread," (March 13, 2005), http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=43275 (accessed July 12, 2010).

75 Dave Gibson, "Illegal Immigrants are Spreading Dangerous Diseases Across This Nation," *The American Daily*, (May 12, 2005), <http://www.americandaily.com/article/7751> (accessed July 12, 2010).

76 Dark Side of Illegal Immigration, "Impacts of Illegal Immigration: Diseases," (No Date), http://www.us-illegalaliens.com/impacts_of_illegal_immigration_diseases.html (accessed December 9, 2011).

ceive needed treatment. Thus, the hegemonic ideological coordinates conveniently construct "the illegal immigrant" not only as a carrier of disease, but also as a figure that challenges such coordinates by causing dis-ease to the rhetorical order of such coordinates.

Bestialization. Consistent with constructing "the illegal immigrant" as a de-humanized "container of disease," the hegemonic ideological coordinates also identify "the illegal immigrant" as "an animal" or just plain "less than human." Santa Ana analyzes this coordinate in great detail. In analyzing articles in the *Los Angeles Times* over the course of a six-year period, Santa Ana finds that the dominant metaphor for the "illegal immigrant" is an animal. They are seen as "animals to be lured, pitted, or baited," as well as "attacked," "hunted," and "eaten." "The illegal immigrant" is also characterized as a "pack animal."⁷⁷ Santa Ana argues that "as frequently and as exclusively as the mapping is used in daily discourse, the dominant ANIMAL metaphor persists as the major productive way to conceptualize immigrants. Its effects are profound."⁷⁸ A prime example of this is the comment made by California Senator Bill Craven in a 1993 meeting of the Special Committee on U.S./Mexico Border Issues: "It seems rather strange that we go out of our way to take care of the rights of these individuals who are perhaps on the lower scale of our humanity."⁷⁹ More currently, a popular metaphor for the "illegal immigrant" is "catch and release" implying that the "illegal immigrant" should be managed as Michigan regulated fish in 1952 with a catch and release policy.⁸⁰ It is not surprising that "the illegal immigrant" would appear in a bestialized form in the hegemonic ideological coordinates since its rhetorical function is to establish a "hierarchy" regarding the sanctity of some lives ("identified" with the hegemonic ideological coordinates) and not others ("divided" from the hegemonic ideological coordinates).

Racialization. One way racism manifests itself in the hegemonic ideological coordinates is in overtly racist language. Terms that are overtly racist in the hatred of the "illegal immigrant" are different depending on the

77 Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 83-84.

78 Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 86.

79 Quoted in Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 86.

80 Juan Castillo, "How 'Catch and Release' Became 'Catch and Return': Taylor Detention Facility Began With Bush Administration's Frustration and Embarrassment," *Austin American Statesman*, (March 25, 2007), http://www.statesman.com/news/content/news/stories/local/03/25/25_policyhistory.html (accessed July 12, 2010).

race and nation of origin. When referring to anyone from Latin America, such racial terms include "taco nigger," "border nigger," "border hopper," "border bunny," "wetback," "river crosser," "wab," "ban," "beaner," "bean bandit," "bean burrito," "beanbag," "berry picker," "cherry picker," "fruit picker," "orange picker," "tomato picker," "amigo," "dirty sanchez," "Juan Valdez," "low rider," "pepperbelly," and "spic." When referring to anyone from Canada, terms include "canyada (as unimportant as someone from Latin America)," "51st stater," "cankee," "canuck," and "canucklehead."⁸¹ When referring to anyone from East and Southeast Asia, terms include "chink," "buckethead," "Chinaman," "chap," "Bruce Lee," and "bug-eater." For every racialized other, there are a host of terms that are invented to refer to the different variety of "illegal immigrant."

These terms are usually found in passages where argument breaks down and the threat of violence surfaces. For instance, in some hotly contested discussions about immigration on blogs, conversations usually end not with further argument, but with the threat of violence to sustain the hatred of the "illegal immigrant." One blogger named Fuckofflady ended a conversation by writing, "if your country is o so fuckin great y the fuck are u shit heads here u do nuthin 4 us except make this country look bad and if u got a problem wit racist people mayb I should teach u a lesson I don't think u wanna b fuckin around with a klan member so get the fuck out u stupid ass spics!!!"⁸² (Fuckofflady, 2007, p. 1). Importantly, violent threats began in the hegemonic ideological coordinates where attempts at rationality ended.

Jokes are also the location of racism in the hegemonic ideological coordinates. The racist material in jokes is funny only insofar as there is a shared "attitude" that frames the joke. According to Burke, the attitude of the comic frame is a frame of acceptance as "the more or less organized system of meanings by which a thinking [person] gauges the historical situation and adopts a role in relation to it."⁸³ The targeted race of the joke, however, views it from a grotesque frame as a frame of rejection. According to Burke,

81 The denigration of Canadian illegal immigrants is more common from textual fragments gathered from the Northeast portion of the United States.

82 Fuckofflady, "Comments," from http://www.youtube.com/comment_servlet?all_comments&v=mC2_posttps&fromurl=/watch%3Fv%3DmC2_posttps, (accessed July 12, 2010).

83 Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, 3rd Edition, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 5.

"[h]umor specializes in incongruities. . . . The grotesque is the cult of incongruity *without* the laughter. The grotesque is not funny unless you are out of sympathy with it (whereby it serves as unintentional burlesque)."⁸⁴ The racist jokes about the "illegal immigrant" are thus grotesque since they are not targeted to be funny to "the illegal immigrant."

God. The hegemonic ideological coordinates opposing illegal immigration emphasize God's "disinterest" in the "illegal immigrant." The "illegal immigrant" is a sinner for disobeying governmental authority. Judeo-Christian scripture is the religion of choice in the hegemonic ideological coordinates. Biblical scripture that is invoked in order to calm the fears about the "illegal immigrant" includes Romans 13:1-7, Acts 5:29, Daniel 9:11, Deuteronomy 28:15, 43-47, 1 Peter 2:13-14, Galatians 6:7, and scripture about abortion being immoral. For example, one person wrote, "Romans 13:1-7 makes it abundantly clear that God expects us to obey the laws of the government. The ONLY exception to this is when a law of the government forces you to disobey a command of God (Acts 5:29). Illegal immigration is the breaking of a governmental law. There is nothing in Scripture that would contradict with obeying immigration laws" ("How Does," 2007, p. 1). According to Kevin Johnson, "the 'religion' argument appears in texts to invoke authority."⁸⁵ Sonja Foss demonstrated that the church is the "Body and Bride" of Christ and has "divine authority in Christ." The authority is revealed through the "holy Gospel," "the Bible," or "that Holy Scripture."⁸⁶ Biblical authority is "a theological claim that cannot always be logically demonstrated, but that rests in the conviction that God is uniquely related to the scriptures now. The Bible has authority with Christians because they believe that it is divinely inspired."⁸⁷ Thus, statements about "God's will" appear in the hegemonic ideological coordinates in order to provide a voice of authority for the "sinful nature" of "the illegal immigrant."

Environmental Contaminants. "The illegal immigrant" also appears as an "environmental pollutant" in the hegemonic ideological coordinates. For example, one report stated that "the illegal immigrant" is responsible

84 Burke, *Permanence and Change*, 58.

85 Kevin A. Johnson, "From Hawaii to Massachusetts: A Comprehensive Account of Anti-Same-Sex Marriage Arguments, 1993-2004," *Journal of Intergroup Relations*, (2004/2005), 6.

86 Sonja K. Foss, "Women Priests in the Episcopal Church: A Cluster Analysis of Establishment Rhetoric," *Religious Communication Today*, (1984), 1-11.

87 Johnson, "From Hawaii to Massachusetts," 7.

for the destruction of national wildlife refuge areas that “encompass more than one million acres of desert wilderness and are home to a stunning array of imperiled wildlife including the Sonoran pronghorn, jaguar, desert longhorn sheep, Gila monster, tropical kingbird, and desert tortoise.”⁸⁸ The claim that “the illegal immigrant” is responsible for environmental destruction has been documented and analyzed elsewhere in rhetorical scholarship. Namely, Cisneros writes: “Images of immigrants as dangerous and destructive pollutants dehumanize immigrants by constructing them as threatening substances, denying them agency and reinforcing common stereotypes.”⁸⁹ A notable addition to this implication is that in the hegemonic ideological coordinates discovered in this essay, environmental concerns were framed in terms of a localized “national” environment (a wildlife “refuge,” etc.). Implicit in this logic is that the hegemonic ideological coordinates are less concerned with educating “the illegal immigrant” to work toward a more sustainable global environment, and more concerned with keeping “the illegal immigrant” at a safe distance (free to pollute the earth as long as it is “over there”).

Overpopulation. The rhetorical construction of the “illegal immigrant” problem as a problem of “overpopulation” is conjoined with several places in the hegemonic ideological coordinates that I have already covered above including the “un-American,” breeding “aliens,” increase in crime, economic deterioration, stealing of public services, increases in diseases, and an increase in environmental contamination. The reasoning takes both the form of arguing that more people cause these problems to worsen and that the problems do not currently exist, but more people will cause the problems. Oftentimes, appeals to overpopulation appear in conjunction with appeals to democratic majority. For example, one commentator wrote: “Limiting immigration has the overwhelming support of most Americans, regardless of party affiliation or race. . . . 68% of Colorado voters say overpopulation is a major problem in Colorado.”⁹⁰ According to the Population and Development Program, some of the problems with the rhetoric of over-

88 “Environmental Damage From Illegal Immigration, Border Enforcement Activities in America Southwest,” *California Chronicle*, (February 1, 2006), <http://www.californiachronicle.com/articles/viewarticles.asp> (accessed July 12, 2010).

89 Cisneros, “Contaminated Communities,” 591.

90 “Americans Have Spoken: Cut Back on Immigration,” http://www.npg.org/factsheets/imm_americans_spoken.html (accessed July 14, 2010).

population are that it masks the complex causes of poverty and inequality, it reinforces racial and ethnic stereotypes, it limits solidarity with other people across the globe (such as rejecting rather than working in solidarity with “the illegal immigrant”), and it encourages apocalyptic thinking that legitimizes human rights abuses.⁹¹

Pieces of shit and other expletives. The final coordinate worth analyzing here pertains to the way the hegemonic ideological coordinates reject the “illegal immigrant” by using expletives. Reference to “the illegal immigrant” as a “piece of shit” is a popular expletive to label “the illegal immigrant.” For instance, Killemall provided a typical economic argument with the “piece of shit” as a supplement to the language of stealing jobs:

I’m an American carpenter that [h]as had my wages totally (*sic!*) fucked over do (*sic!*) to the fact that these pieces of shit beaners will work for a nickel. . . . HEY AMERICA YOU BETTER START FIGHTING FOR YOUR COUNTRY BEFORE YOU HAVE NOTHING. Also any of you beaners reading this you better hope my government doeant (*sic!*) make it legal to shoot motherfuckers because i (*sic!*) will be the 1st to start pulling triggers and believe me i won’t lose 1 nite (*sic!*) sleep over it.⁹²

Gunn reminds us of Burke’s writing in *A Grammar of Motives* where he “led to (de)posit a ‘demonic trinity’ of the fundamental principles responsible for the invention of ‘cloacal ambiguities’ in discourse: ‘the erotic, [the] urinary, and [the] excremental.’”⁹³ Gunn continues by noting Burke’s argument that these principles “can be said to organize the any number of tropic innovations in the register of the purely purposive—particularly in terms of mystical speech.”⁹⁴

The “excremental” function in discourse is positioned such that “once smell is caught within the logics of capital, like bad speech, it becomes associated with those marginal subjects unwilling or unable to deodorize: the classes, the raced, the ‘shit’ of society.”⁹⁵ Thus, it is no surprise given the other symbolic constructions of the “illegal immigrant” that they would

91 Population and Development Program at Hampshire College, “10 Reasons to Rethink ‘Overpopulation,’” <http://popdev.hampshire.edu/home>, (accessed July 12, 2010).

92 Killemall, “Discussion Board,” (December 11, 2006), <http://bashmyex.com/members/Blacksnday/117> (accessed July 14, 2010). This is exactly quoted and the (*sics!*) are the author’s errors.

93 Joshua Gunn, “Blasphemy: Impious Speech in the West from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century, A History of Shit (Review),” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, 6(1), (2003), 194.

94 Gunn, “Blasphemy,” 194.

95 Gunn, “Blasphemy,” 198.

qualify as the "shit" of society in both classed (i.e., "work for a nickel"), and racial (i.e., "beaner") ways. The "illegal immigrant" functions as the necessary waste of the hegemonic ideological coordinates in a very explicit manner since the "illegal immigrant" is literally labeled a "piece of shit."

Summary and Implications

Recently we have seen states and localities such as Arizona and Fremont, Nebraska, pass ordinances to crack down on illegal immigration. Anti-immigration sentiment in the U.S. has been present since at least the 1830s. If the recent rhetoric against illegal immigration is any indication, the controversy over illegal immigration is not going away any time soon. Previous rhetorical scholarship on anti-illegal immigration rhetoric has analyzed the construction of "the border," the concern with an "erosion of sovereignty," the acceptance of a "paramilitary approach" to illegal immigration, the way discourses of criminality, immorality, and disease animate economic arguments, "the illegal immigrant" as "pollutant," and the racial and xenophobic anti-illegal immigrant rhetoric. The purpose of this essay has been to further the analysis of many of these previous studies while at the same time to provide an analysis of many of the hegemonic ideological coordinates previously unexamined by critical/cultural rhetorical scholarship. In so doing, I have been able to analyze the hegemonic ideological coordinates that depict "the illegal immigrant" in the social field as a "less than human," "piece of shit," "un-American," "criminal," "alien," "beaner/canucklehead/chink" that works against the will of "God" by contributing to "overpopulation," "polluting our environment," "stealing and deteriorating our public services," "infecting us with disease," and "causing economic decline." Undoubtedly, the social field will continue to produce new coordinates to oppose illegal immigration, and there may be some coordinates left unexamined in this essay. My hope is that future research will continue to trace the hegemonic ideological coordinates against illegal immigration and/or offer further analysis of the coordinates already examined in this essay. There are at least two implications that stem from the current study which may help in analyzing future hegemonic ideological coordinates in both anti-illegal immigrant rhetoric and other social fields in the context of globalization.

First, the formation of hegemonic ideological coordinates appears to rely on scapegoat(s) to sustain the U.S. social field. This is not a new observa-

tion. For example, Stavrakakis writes: "Every utopian fantasy construction needs a 'scapegoat' in order to constitute itself—the Nazi utopian fantasy and the production of the 'Jew' is a good example."⁹⁶ He continues by noting that "[e]very utopian fantasy produces its reverse and calls for its elimination. . . . [S]tigmatisation is followed by extermination. This is not an accident. It is inscribed in the structure of utopian constructions; it seems to be the way all fantasy constructions work."⁹⁷ The important implication stemming from the current essay is that focusing on figures of the scapegoat (i.e., "the illegal immigrant") forms the basis for the tracing of hegemonic ideological coordinates to create a rhetorical text suitable for criticism. Michael Calvin McGee agrees with Edward Said's observation that the root of frustrations for critics in studying technological proliferation of communication is "our inclination to treat scraps of social problems and fragments of texts as if they were whole. In [Said's] vocabulary, the solution is to look for *formations of texts* rather than '*the text*' as a place to begin analysis."⁹⁸ Although McGee uses the term "formation" he wants to be clear that "we are dealing with fragments, not texts, and that we mean to treat a 'formation' as if it were a singular text—only then can we interpret, analyze, and criticize."⁹⁹ Hegemonic ideological coordinates are a particular type of textual formation that is not stable per se, but as long as the scapegoat remains the scapegoat, the formation is stable enough to rhetorically analyze in important ways.

Second, this essay has suggested that the abstraction of a figure that is representative of a person in hegemonic ideological coordinates allows for the de-individualization of subjectivity in a way that emphasizes cultural subjectivities.¹⁰⁰ This is not to be confused with a refusal or denial of a "personal" subjectivity. Rather, the study of hegemonic ideological coordinates shifts emphasis into the social field whereby "personality" is subject to a plethora of coordinates, including those that form "political identity." For example, each person's belief about illegal immigration is shaped at least in part by the way they travel through the ideological coordinates in the

96 Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political*, 100.

97 Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political*, 100.

98 McGee, "Text, Context," 287.

99 McGee, "Text, Context," 287.

100 This implicates the study of illegal immigrant politics of representation. For example, see Hugh Mehan, "The Discourse of the Illegal Immigration Debate: A Case Study in the Politics of Representation," *Discourse & Society*, 8, 249-270.

social field (hegemonic or not). By emphasizing the studying of ideological coordinates in the social field, the rhetorical critic is able to shift perspective to the scene that forms a significant portion of ideological personality. The insights gained from such a perspective are numerous. This essay has led to several discoveries including the discovery of an illegal immigrant (wage-)slave trade. Undoubtedly, as the study of hegemonic ideological coordinates develops in future critical/cultural studies in communication, we will learn more about the rhetoric that sustains a wide array of hegemonic ideological coordinates.

Understanding the nature and scope of hegemonic ideological coordinates (along with legal, social, economic, cultural, and political issues) is a precondition for contingent or historical theory and strategy concerning illegal immigrant agency because the coordinates function to weld individual ideologies together in the service of systemically rejecting illegal immigrants to keep them away. Hopefully, this understanding will create positive conditions for creating a world of connection with people by deconstructing those ideologies that discourage human connection and understanding.