

Doublespeaking American Immigration: The Language and Politics of Asylum-Seeking in Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers*

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Abstract. Drawing illustration from Imbolo MBue's *Behold the Dreamers*, this paper demonstrates that postindependence socioeconomic and politico-cultural disillusionment caused by the rise in a crop of populist or strongmen African leaders, conflicts, dictatorship, and the general failure of governance have exacerbated poverty and African youths have been "dying to reach Europe" by hazardingly crossing the Libyan Desert, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean. The paper argues that once in Europe or the US, African immigrants encounter convoluted immigration laws and nonchalant employers that doublethink and doublespeak them into disenfranchisement and marginalization thereby rendering their asylum seeking difficult and, in most cases, impossible. The paper concludes that emigration to Europe or the US both kindles and kills hope and (re)builds and destroys lives and that the coming to power of leaders such as Donald Trump (with very strong anti-immigration policies) has proven that the US border is gradually becoming as unsafe as the sweltering heat of the Libyan Desert and the tempests of the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Keywords: Immigration, Doublespeak, Marginalization, Asylum-seeking, Americanophilia

Introduction

Discussing Africa's lofty dreams of decolonization, Albert Memmi says that the end of colonization was naively expected to bring with it freedom and prosperity. The colonized were expected to birth into citizens and masters of their socioeconomic and politico-cultural destinies. But "unfortunately, in most cases, the long-anticipated period of freedom, won at the cost of terrible suffering, brought with it poverty and corruption, violence and sometimes chaos" (Memmi 2006, 3). Even though it was reassuring for African peoples to be governed by leaders of their own, replace the colonizer's flag with theirs, own a nascent armed forces, have a currency and boast ambassadorial and diplomatic representatives in the family of nations, all these represented only a change of masters and like new leeches, the new ruling classes turned out to be often as greedy and in some cases greedier than the colonizer (3). One of the numerous consequences of postindependence disillusionment has been the global rise in a crop of populist or strongmen leaders since 2012 such as Donald Trump (USA), Vladimir Putin (Russia), Boris Johnson (Britain), Xi Jinping (China), Tayyip Erdogan (Turkey), Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (Egypt), Narendra Modi (India), Viktor Orban (Hungary), Rodrigo Duterte (Philippines), and Paul Biya (Cameroon). Their rise and the development of policies such as Brexit and Trump's Border Wall against Mexico have questioned borders and destabilized citizenship and made the governance of migration and asylum-seeking buzz phenomena characterized by *doublespeak* and *doublethink*. Such doublespeak and doublethink remind us that there are people born into contexts where they feel they belong and suddenly that belonging is threatened, perhaps because of ideological, religious, cultural, and political reasons. For example, joining a group characterized as "fundamentalist" or "terrorist" and moving to Iran, Iraq, Syria or Afghanistan, may cost one his/her British or American citizenship or nationality in the same manner that joining a group designated as "secessionists", "restorationists", "separatists" or "Ambazonian" may cause a Cameroonian living in the country to be imprisoned and those in the diaspora with dual citizenship to be stripped of their Cameroonian nationality.

For people of African descent, the diaspora has been a central and challenging but attractive experience. For instance, Alain Locke in "The New Negro" declared that Harlem "is the home of the Negro's 'Zionism'" (1925, 14) and Jorge Amado in *The War of the Saints* refers to Bahia as the "capital of all Africa" (1993, 5). Locke's "home" and Amado's "capital" have escalated, and nowadays the African Diaspora represents a global space, a worldwide web, that accounts as much for the mother continent as for wherever in the world her offspring may have been driven by the (un)kind forces of history. The socioeconomic and

politico-cultural implications of the mixing and morphing mindscape; the scattering which is also a sowing; and the dispersion of a people that is also their implantation in a new land as a result of that escalation have been hyper-celebrated by several US presidents.¹ Ronald Reagan once recounted that he received a letter just before he left office from a man who “wrote that you can go to live in France, but you can’t become a Frenchman. You can go to live in Germany or Italy, but you can’t become a German, an Italian. He went through Turkey, Greece, Japan, and other countries. But he said anyone, from any corner of the world, can come to live in the United States and become an American.”² Bill Clinton boasted that, “More than any other nation on Earth, America has constantly drawn strength and spirit from wave after wave of immigrants. In each generation, they have proved to be the most restless, the most adventurous, the most innovative, the most industrious of people. Bearing different memories, honoring different heritages, they have strengthened our economy, enriched our culture, renewed our promise of freedom and opportunity for all.”³ George W. Bush also boasted that, “It says something about our country that people around the world are willing to leave their homes and leave their families and risk everything to come to America. Their talent and hard work and love of freedom have helped make America the leader of the world. And our generation will ensure that America remains a beacon of liberty and the most hope-filled society this world has ever known.”⁴ Barack Obama concluded that, “No matter who you are or what you look like, how you started off, or how and who you love, America is a place where you can write your own destiny.”⁵ Africans, especially the youths, have continuously found such immigration promises attractive. Granted the prevalence of conflicts, dictatorship and the general failure of post-independence governance, African youths have been “dying to reach Europe” by hazardingly crossing the Libyan Desert, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean. Many Africans have been fleeing the social pressure caused by the absence of economic opportunities. Political insecurity as a mother factor, has caused events such as the ongoing Cameroon Anglophone crisis, to precipitate emigration to the West, especially the US. However, testimonies, documentaries and experiences are continually proving that no sooner do African immigrants get to the US, than they are stunned by the fact that the US border is most often not safer than the sweltering heat of the Libyan Desert and the hazardous waves of the Mediterranean and Atlantic tempests.

This paper draws on Imbolo Mbue’s *Behold the Dreamers* (*Behold* hereafter) to critically analyse the Orwellian doublethink and doublespeak of the USA’s immigration policies by examining the encounters between asylum seekers and the migration regime in the novel. The paper investigates whether asylum-seek-

ing kindles/kills hope and (re)builds/destroys lives by arguing that most institutions that lay claim to facilitating asylum-seeking for US immigrants are often characterized by doublethink and doublespeak about the safety of those that arrive at the US border and that of those facing the sweltering heat in the Libyan Desert and the tempests of the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean. In *Behold*, doublethink which mostly takes the form of euphemisms, is a process of indoctrination whereby the asylum seeker is expected to simultaneously accept two mutually contradictory beliefs as correct, often in contravention to his/her memories or sense of reality. For instance, sometimes the asylum seeker is forced to reconcile the fact that even though the guarantors of asylum are purportedly for the withering away of the state, at the same time they stand for the strengthening of the most powerful of all forms of the state. In this novel the desperation of/asylum-seeking often forces the asylum seeker to become conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully-constructed lies. It also privileges the asylum giver to simultaneously hold two immigration opinions which cancel out on asylum benefits. Knowing them to be mutually exclusive but believing in both, the giver uses asylum-granting logic against asylum-seeking logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it. That is, the asylum seeker is expected to constantly doublethink by forgetting whatever is necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again when it is needed. The doublespeak of asylum-seeking discourse is a language that sometimes deliberately obscures, disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words. It also refers to deliberate ambiguity in language or actual inversions of meaning that disguise the nature of asylum-seeking truth and engenders the hostility of some US citizens towards African migrants. Drawing on the concomitant doublethinking and doublespeaking in *Behold*, this paper investigates: the extent to which USA asylum policies have upheld a seemingly hidden decision to systematically block migration into the US; the degree to which seemingly unpopular policies such as Donald Trump's Border Wall quintessentially represent US foreign policy towards immigrants; the degree of the flexibility or fluidity of both physical and psychological US borders that immigrants must cross before they become socioeconomically and politico-culturally engaged or disengaged, and how US borders and borderings have moved from the margins into the center of political and social life thereby affecting racialized minorities in their everyday lives while creating growing exclusionary grey zones in the US. These levels of analysis would affirm the compositeness and always-in-the-making nature of contemporary global citizenship and networks of governance. Most importantly, such an analysis would open a range of questions concerning the forces of spatial socialization that define and are defined by asylum seekers in *Behold*.

This paper garners its relevance from the fact that even though a lot of critical attention has been given to *Behold*, no critic has attempted to analyze its thematization of migration using doublespeaking and doublethinking as a critical lens.⁶

Orwellian Doublespeak and Doublethink as Part of Contemporary Society

On 25 April 2018, Emmanuel Macron delivered a speech to the joint houses of the US Congress in which he captured the reigning political zeitgeist by directly confronting the issues of fake news, post-truth, and misinformation as corrosives to the very spirit of democracies⁷ As early as 1946, George Orwell, in his essay, "Politics and the English Language," had referenced this ever-deepening linguistico-political malaise by identifying insincerity as a great enemy of clear language that is often manifested through the gap between one's real and one's declared aims and the use of long words and exhausted idioms (1946[1952], 137). Orwell went on to express his belief that language is an instrument for expressing and not for concealing or preventing thought by asserting that in our time political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible; political language consists largely of euphemisms, question-begging, and sheer cloudy vagueness; and "political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" (136, 139). Orwell's belief in the power of language to achieve and maintain political control is affirmed in his novel *1984* where the Party in Oceania understands the power of language to control of society. The official language of the world of *1984* is Newspeak, a language that deliberately diminishes instead of extending the range of thought; provides a medium of expression for the Party and its members; and hinders all other modes of thought (Orwell 1949, 247). Newspeak is the medium used to express mental processes in the labyrinthine world of doublethink. To Winston Smith, the protagonist of *1984*, doublethink involves knowing and not to knowing, being conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, holding "simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them," using logic against logic, repudiating morality while laying claim to it, believing that democracy is impossible and that the ruling party is the guardian of democracy (32).

Doublethink also involves forgetting whatever it is necessary to forget, drawing it back into memory when it is needed, promptly forgetting it again, and then applying the same process to the process itself. It equally prompts conscious inducement of unconsciousness and becoming unconscious of the act of hypnosis performed. Put differently, understanding the word doublethink involves the use of doublethink (33). As Lutz (1999, x-xi) rightly clarifies, dou-

blespeak is characterized by incongruity between what is said, or left unsaid, and what really is, between the word and the referent, between seem and be, between the essential function of language (communication) and what double-speak does (misleads, distorts, deceives, inflates, circumvents, and obfuscates). Doublespeak is language that avoids responsibility, makes the bad seem good, the negative appear positive, the unpleasant appear attractive, appears to communicate, alters our perception of reality, corrupts our thinking and breeds suspicion, cynicism, distrust and hostility. Doublespeaking and doublethinking are two concomitant processes. In most societies, doublespeak is often master-minded by the police. In Orwell's Oceania, the secret police, Thinkpol, are responsible for the detection, prosecution, and elimination of unspoken beliefs and doubts that contradict the Party. They use audio-visual surveillance via the telescreens and offender-profiling to monitor the populace. In *Behold*, double-speak and doublethink take the form of what Lutz (1989, 4-6), in his affirmation of Orwell's idea, calls euphemisms and jargon; Gobbledygook or bureaucratese characterized by the use of bombastic diction; and inflated language that makes the ordinary seem extraordinary, elevates the common, makes everyday things seem impressive, gives an air of importance to unimportant people, situations or things, and complicates the simple. The use of doublespeak as an analytical parameter for immigration discourse in Mbue's *Behold* is especially legitimated by the fact that Orwellian Thinkpol parallels immigration officials and economic operators in the novel.

Summary of the Narrative in Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers*

Set in Cameroon and the US, *Behold* tells the story of Jende Jonga (a Cameroonian immigrant in the US on a temporary visa pending his asylum case) and his wife, Neni Jonga, (a community-college student on a student visa). The couple have recently fulfilled their biggest dream by emigrating from Cameroon to the US in search of greener pastures that they hope would create a better life for their son, Liomi. Neni works as a home health aide to the elderly and studies chemistry at a community college, with the hopes of becoming a pharmacist. Clark Edwards, an executive at Lehman Brothers (the firm whose bankruptcy played a major role in the US recession in 2008), offers Jende a driver's job, which pays \$35,000 per year – far more than he earned when he was working as a dishwasher or driving livery cabs in the Bronx during his first couple of years in New York. Clark's wife, Cindy Edwards, is a nutritionist with a rags-to-riches background. The central plot of the novel focuses on the intersections of the lives of the Jonga and Edwards families; intersections that reveal their master-servant relationships as well as the parallelisms between high-class stress and lower class worries. Clark is increasingly an absent father who is stressed because he feels

a sense of premonition about the overdependence of Lehman Brothers on gim-crack bookkeeping and investments in subprime real estate products. He occasionally seeks refuge through encounters with prostitutes. Cindy, burdened by an imposter syndrome because she grew up in poverty and was conceived out of unforgettable rape, resorts to alcohol and Vicodin to soothe her worries over her marital insecurity and absent husband. Clark and Cindy's first son, Vince, on the brink of graduating from a prestigious law school, rejects his high-class-assured pathway into the wealthy elite by deciding to go to India to find his lost self especially because he considers his family as too materialistic. His younger brother, Mighty, grows increasingly unhappy as he overhears the ever-increasing acrimonious arguments between his parents. Similarly, Jende's life is complicated because of his pending immigration case, being overseen by a marginally competent Nigerian-American lawyer, who preys on Jende's misfortune by making constant requests for more fees.

Jende's request for asylum is rejected and deportation looms large. Matters come to a cataclysm for both families through a series of interrelated happenings: Vince overwhelms his parents by choosing to go to India; Lehman Brothers announces insolvency; and the judge rejects Jende's manufactured story of persecution back in Cameroon and he loses his asylum case. Also, a newspaper story about a madam with Wall Street clients confirms Cindy's suspicions about Clark's extramarital affairs and Cindy forces Clark to fire Jende for covering for his boss; Neni gives birth to their daughter Timba; and Dean Flipkens refuses to nominate Neni for scholarships and the pharmacy school becomes unaffordable. Determined to get a lawyer's fees for Jende and salvage their American Dream, Neni blackmails Cindy for \$10,000 to keep silent about Cindy's binge alcohol and drug addictions. Neni's attempts to secure her American future fails and Jende makes it clear that he is tired of struggling, and voluntarily opts to return to Cameroon. Neni's tenacity for her American dream makes her consider her friend Betty's idea of divorcing Jende and then marrying her cousin, an American citizen, for a green card, which infuriates Jende. Alcohol and drugs kill Cindy. Clark becomes a lobbyist for the credit union industry. The Jongas, using the windfall from Cindy as a nest egg, return to Cameroon, where Jende plans to become a ballsy entrepreneur and live comfortably in Limbe, where such money is enough for affluence. Neni acquiescently stands by Jende, despite her own obsession for America and disillusionment that her children may miss out on the matchless opportunities in America.⁸ The novel, therefore, explores the sustainability of the American Dream by taking a critical look at the idea that anyone who is willing to work hard can become prosperous in the United States.

The Disenfranchisement of Holders of Nonimmigrant Visas in the United States

In *Behold*, Mbue captures Jende and his wife, Neni's search for greener pastures through the novel's epigraph drawn from Deuteronomy 8: 7–9: "For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land – a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig-trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills" (Mbue 2017, 2). When the novel opens, Jende has been living in that Promised Land, the US (illegally?) for three years. Referencing Jende's visa application process to the Promised Land, the narrator tells us that when he went to the American embassy in Yaoundé to apply for the visa, he had told the consulate that he was going to be in New York City for only three months (18). The evidence he submitted to back his claim included: "his work supervisor's letter describing him as a diligent employee who would never abandon [his work] to go and roam aimlessly in America; his son's birth certificate, to show he will never remain in America and desert his child; [and] the title on a piece of land his father had given him, to show he intended to return and build on the land." There were also, "a letter from the town planning office stating that he had applied for a permit to build a house; [and another letter] from a friend who swore under oath that Jende wasn't going to remain in America because they were going to open a drinking spot together when he returned" (18). The relatively long incomprehensible list of requirements represents inflated language because it seems designed to make an ordinary global-village 21st-century visa seem extraordinary, impressive, and complex. No wonder, we soon learn that in his desire to get the impressive visa, Jende lied to the consulate, and the narrator affirms that people like Jende got to America and stayed until they became green-card conquerors or "American passport-bearing conquerors with pockets full of dollars and photos of a happy life" and that when Jende boarded an Air France flight from Douala, he was "certain he wouldn't see Cameroon again until he had claimed his share of the milk, honey and liberty flowing in America" (19). Jende is a contemporary symbolization of what Isidore Okpewho, Carole Boyce Davies and Ali A. Mazrui refer to as colonialism's "era of the *labor imperative*" that was marked by an exportation of millions of Africans to the Americas (vii). What slightly differentiates him from his forbears is that his movement is volitional while theirs was enforced by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. His mind frame reminds one of the brain drain that has been depleting Africa of her skilled human resources.

Referencing the spatial setting as an antagonist/foil to immigration dreams, Mbue reveals the devastating state of the Jendes' "sunless one-bedroom apartment" (27) when Vince and Mighty Edwards, the sons of Jende's employers, Clark and Cindy Edwards, visit them for a little dinner. The Edwards boys are fazed by the obvious signs of poverty such as the worn-out brown carpet; the retro TV sitting on a coffee table; the fan struggling to do the job of an AC; the fake flowers hanging on the wall; and the fact that everyone sleeps in the same bedroom (163). The apartment's size and the room furniture give a picture of the most telling signs of abject impecuniosity and remind us that on no account will these immigrants ever be able to find the kind of *lucullian* life for which they risked everything and moved to America. The narrator tells us that to sustain himself and his family, Jende is obliged to work two low paid jobs washing dishes at two restaurants with one of them named Hell's Kitchen. He works mornings, afternoons, evenings, and weekends (257). Like Jende, many other immigrants such as Betty, a close friend of Neni, are relentlessly working two jobs with different days and time. We are told that after thirty-one years in the US, Betty is still trying to survive even though she already has her papers. A citizen for over a decade and in her early forties, she is still working two jobs as a certified nursing assistant at nursing homes and stuck in a nursing school (315). The cultural subordination of the Jongas' periphery to the Edwards' center, the shattering of immigrants' apocryphal expectations of the American Dream and the underlying international economic hierarchy seen through the number of jobs that immigrants are forced to do, represent the emblematic practices and abuses characteristic of imperial capital. Most importantly, the Jongas' life of misery in a land of plenty (the USA) reminds us that the hyperbolic promises of the American Dream are as unattainable as the vaunted promises of African independence that the Jongas had tried to escape from by emigrating to the US. The unattainability of both dreams symbolized by Jende's workplace, "Hell's Kitchen," with its symbolic insinuations of hellfire, questions the socioeconomic and politico-cultural benefits of their visas. Furthermore, Mbue's "Hell's Kitchen" affords the possibility of a useful analogy – if one were to consider the US economy where Jende works as an apartment or a house that is hellish, then one could argue that the name "Hell's Kitchen" is an indirect suggestion that by emigrating to the US, Jende has moved into hell and even there, his situation is so bad that he neither finds himself in the comfort of a parlor nor a bedroom.

The above physical and psychological socioeconomic and politico-cultural borders confronted by immigrants especially the Jendes which are a product of their visa types testify to the unviability of the American dream. Jende and Neni have nonimmigrant temporary visas that have allowed them to visit the US for

work and studies respectively. Their stays are temporary and should have clear departure dates. Jende's temporary work visa is issued to people who come to the US for employment lasting a fixed period. A petition is usually required by a prospective employer, who needs to apply to the US authorities beforehand. An approved petition is then used by the worker to obtain a nonimmigrant work visa.⁹ The US Department of State's, Bureau of Consular Affairs offers at least 34 nonimmigrant visa and at least 16 immigrant visa categories that can further be subcategorized and this makes the US border as challenging as the Libyan Desert and the Mediterranean and Atlantic tempests.¹⁰ As an international student, Neni qualifies for either: the F-1 Visa (usually subcategorized into F-1, F-2 and F-3) for academic studies, the J-1 Visa (usually subcategorized into J-1 and J-2) for practical training, and the M-1 Visa for non-academic vocational studies.¹¹

In "What Makes a Concept Good?," John Gerring suggests eight-fold qualities: "familiarity, resonance, parsimony, coherence, differentiation, depth, theoretical utility and field utility" (1999:357). Granted the continuing surge in immigration to the US by even the half-educated like Jende and Neni, one could argue that even though the concept of the visa does well on most of these criteria, it would be difficult to say it is either especially familiar, parsimonious, or particularly coherent. By that token, one could also argue that its lack of familiarity, parsimony and coherence steadily makes it more enigmatic. The argument here is that a simplified, parsimonious, and coherent description of US visa categories would help ease comprehension for the Jendes and Nenis. Following Orwell's injunction that "Good prose is like a windowpane, it hides nothing" (1968, 6), one could analogically argue that a good visa description should be like a windowpane to emigration. Thus, the above relatively lengthy explanations of nonimmigrant visas, especially study visas, testifies to the jargon and Gobbledygook or bureaucratese of immigration and consequently its Orwellian language. Thus, to deal with immigration law is to experience the full force and power of language: the imprecisions, limitations, and problems. In many respects, immigrants' reading of immigration law is very much like reading poetry, where we sometimes miss the power by concentrating on the syntax of the poem. Immigrants, too, miss the power of immigration law by concentrating on its sometimes-convoluted structures. Taken together, the complex descriptions of Jende's and Neni's visas attest to the fact that they are symbols of socioeconomic restriction and that the study of immigration law can no longer be confined to the US geographic borders, that the matter of where immigration law begins and ends is always, necessarily, in a state of flux and cannot be settled conclusively in advance as immigrants usually naively think before immigrating to the US.

This is exactly what happens to the Jendes because they never fully comprehended the strengths and limitations their visas imposed on them. Even though Neni qualifies for, and is invited, to join the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society, her request for nomination for scholarships is turned down by Dean Flipkens who tells her that he does not nominate students by their requests. He decides to send Neni to financial aid but changes his mind because, as an international student, she is not eligible for scholarship or grants offered to citizens or permanent residents (295). He even tells Neni outright that the dream of becoming a pharmacist is not meant for people like her (296-97). The Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society thinks that Neni is a Talented Tenth, but the Dean thinks that she is a commoner striving for what only the distinguished can achieve. To some extent Flipkens reminds one of the need to decolonize universities and make them “pluriversities.”¹² In the same vein, Bubakar, Jende’s lawyer for his asylum case, affirms that immigration law/language induces/necessitates selective amnesia and prompts conscious inducement of unconsciousness, thereby engendering doublespeak when he advises Jende that immigration has “many things that are illegal and many that are gray (things that are illegal but which the government doesn’t want to spend time worrying about). My advice to someone like you is to always stay close to the gray area and keep yourself and your family safe” (72). Bubakar concludes that Jende must, “Stay away from any place where you can run into police [because] the police is for the protection of white people. Maybe black women and black children sometimes, but never black men. Black men and police are palm oil and water” (72). Bubakar’s advice corroborates the characterization of the US as both a gatekeeping nation and a nation of immigrants, making the history and contemporary state of US immigration law reflect a deep-rooted ambivalence about the role of immigration and immigrants in US society. Furthermore, his idea of many immigration things that are illegal and gray foregrounds US borders, not primarily those that are policed by the guards, which is how immigration controls are commonly imagined, but the borders between citizen and migrant, between us/Americans and them/foreigners. The doublespeak of immigration law asserts US international borders as highly selective filters, sorting out the desirable from the undesirable, the genuine from the bogus, the legal from the illegal, and permitting only the deserving to enter state territory physically and psychologically. Jende’s cousin, Winston, affirms this by telling Jende that a black man does not get a good job in the US by speaking the truth to white people (17).

Winston acknowledges that to make better Jende’s opportunity of getting a job as a chauffeur, he had lied to Frank that Jende drives a limo sometimes, and that he used to be a chauffeur for a family in New Jersey. This highlights

the importance of race in America. The issue of race is further confirmed when the narrator references the fact that once, while on Fifty-eight Street, Neni had observed that on both sides of the street people were relating exclusively with their kind: white men and women holding hands; black teenagers giggling with one another; white mothers pushing strollers alongside one another; and black women chatting with each other (94). She had further observed that, “Even in New York City men and women, young and old, rich and poor, preferred their kind when it came to those they kept closest” to avoid spending their limited energy trying to blend into worlds they were being excluded from (95). Winston believes that Black men are disenfranchised by their race and can only achieve success by compensating with lies. Through Bubakar’s disclosure of illegal and gray things of immigration, and Winston’s assertion of the necessity of lies on a black man’s CV for job seeking, Mbue reminds us of the linguistic duplicity and the disconnection between expectation/promise and outcome within which immigration proceedings operate to create gray areas manipulable according to the dictates of America’s malleable foreign policy. The act of lying to get jobs also reminds one of Orwell’s idea of doublethinking and doublespeaking as a metaphor in this paper. That this practice has been adopted by the immigrants is Mbue’s manner of suggesting that sometimes, powerlessness, just like power, corrupts absolutely. It is also Mbue’s way of telling the reader that power means being in a position to make one’s definition the only one people use. Thus, the great power of immigration law resides in its power to define, and to apply its definitions of who qualifies for jobs and who does not; to define what is illegal and what is gray by creating new illegalities and erasing old ones. In fact, what is illegal or gray on one occasion, city or state may not be gray in another and vice versa. Thus, much of immigration law involves learning definitions of legalities, illegalities, and grayness, and ways in which those definitions can be applied to specific situations.

US immigration law doublespeaks by promising possibilities but only to disappoint, and that forces Jende and Neni to doublespeak by lying. This exacerbates their disenfranchisement and marginalization in US society. Jende’s lies to the consulate, cited earlier, bespeak unbridled Americanophilia that is later captured through the narrator’s referencing of Neni’s dreams in her late twenties. The happy and successful, well-educated, and respectable African Americans she saw on TV in Cameroon made her believe that everyone could flourish in America. She saw the movies, *Boyz n the Hood* and *Do the Right Thing*, but was not convinced that the kind of black life they depicted was true. To her, these movies represented a very small percentage of black life in the same manner that she thought Americans understood that the popularized images of war and star-

vation in Africa were but a very small percentage of African life. "Every picture she'd seen of Cameroonians in America was a portrait of bliss: children laughing in snow; couples smiling at a mall; families posing in front of a nice house with a nice car nearby. America, to her, was synonymous with happiness" (Mbue 312). We are also told that shows such as *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *The Cosby Show* further gave Neni the impression that the US was a place where blacks had the same chance at prosperity as the whites. Through Neni, Mbue delineates a quintessentially naïve African who fails to make a distinction between the coziness of American life in the movies and shows and the reality on the ground. The episodic tales which the movies and shows gave her were not related to one another to produce a more complete American scene. Each was presented as an isolated, self-contained event rather than part of a wider tapestry of American experience. The life-in-the-US picture drawn by the movies and shows was incomplete; they engaged in shorthand by reporting rather than explaining, and this performed a great disservice to Neni's dreams. Thus, one could argue that Neni's naivety reminds us that the global entertainment media sits awkwardly between, and at the service of, a cultural imperialism and globalization that ensure that economies, politics, and cultures are interconnected by several asymmetrical power relations and processes without necessarily developing an acute understanding of the interdependencies between the national and the international spheres, the domestic and the foreign and global.

Mbue's use of the omniscient point of view to reference Neni's television-shows-nourished-naivety of the power dynamics in the US society and consequently in the US immigration realities/nightmares is perhaps her subtle manner of saying that almost everyone, except Neni, knows the difference between US television/immigration appearances and the US society's realities. It is important to recall that one of her favorite sitcoms, *The Cosby Show*, was filmed in New York because blacks such as Bill Cosby disliked working in Hollywood (the symbolic apex of the US entertainment industry) perhaps because of his sensitivity to Hollywood's service to cultural imperialism and hegemonic globalization. A neighborhood located in Los Angeles, California, Hollywood is synonymous with the glamour, money, and the power of the entertainment industry to shape minds and opinions. As the show-business capital of the world, Hollywood is home to many famous television and movie studios and record companies with glitzy statuses where stars are (still)born and dreams come true only for a lucky few. By referencing how these sitcoms have shaped Neni's perception of the US, Mbue seems to be reminding us that just like *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *The Cosby Show*, Hollywood and the US entertainment industry, US immigration on the surface reeks of glitz, but a dark side lurks

underneath. It is only when Neni learns how to strip away the phony tinsel (of glamor and success) of US immigration that she finds the real tinsel (of discrimination and marginalization) lurking underneath. Also, just like the appealing US entertainment industry that Neni's television shows represent, each year, the appeal of immigration attracts thousands of starry-eyed runaway Africans and naive dream-pursuers to the US with little chance of making it big. Like Neni and Jende, many spend what little money they have on pursuing false education and hiring legal agents such as Bubakar and when the money runs out, these would-be stars/immigrants often become desperate, even homeless. Those who are not courageous like Jende turn to drugs, prostitution, or the thriving porn industry. The US entertainment industry and US immigration, therefore, parallel each other with false hope, and this perhaps explains why hundreds of celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe, Judy Garland, William Holden, Truman Capote, Heath Ledger and Whitney Houston have experienced drug or alcohol-related deaths in the same manner that thousands of African immigrants die in the sweltering heat of the Libyan Desert and the hazardous waves of the Mediterranean and Atlantic tempests emigrating to Europe and the US. The US entertainment industry and US immigration are, therefore, two utopias that encourage Neni to uncritically embrace the belief that what is pragmatically possible is fixed independently in our imaginations and shaped by our visions without the interference of societal structures and ideologies. Through the sitcoms, the entertainment industry doublespeaks at the service of US immigration, thereby misleading immigrants.

The rhetoric of Jende's purported evidence (referenced earlier), that he will leave America when his visa expires, demonstrates that the immigrants' ability to circumvent immigration law through blatant lies-telling is not only a type of knowledge, but also a form of communication and a decision-making strategy based on persuasion or conviction through the mobilization of the persuasive potential of accepted and even objectionable verbal and nonverbal sequences and artifacts. That the consulate easily buys into Jende's lies – we are left wondering how, for instance, a child's birth certificate can prove that the father will return home after visa expiry – is Mbue's manner of saying that the maniacal mutual suspicion between the consulate and the immigrants often creates situational imbroglios where the consulate sometimes ends up trusting the dishonest/illegal immigrants and distrusting the trustworthy/legal ones. It is also her manner of demonstrating that the rhetoric that forms a structural component of immigration law sometimes forces immigrants to lie. Furthermore, the convoluted nature of Jende's proof of willingness to return after visa expiry equally signifies the bureaucracy that has clogged the immigration machinery. Immigration

law bureaucracy becomes a subtle communication form, a selection restriction blueprint and a decision-making strategy based on US authoritative impositions through the mobilization of the demonstrative potential of regularized procedures and normative standards. Thus, by referencing Jende's "temporary visa" and Neni's "student visa," Mbue navigates the US immigration landscape of confronting perspectives, aiming not so much to iron out the contradictions of US immigration law nor to disprove the verdicts (though such disproving will at times be necessary) as to think within the paradoxes, perplexities, and apparent certitudes that the American Dream is taken to insinuate. Brazenly cosmopolitan yet enmeshed in singular biographies and localities, saturated with conflicting promises, the limitations of nonimmigrant visas glimpsed in Mbue's novel are those of immigrants' creative practices of remembrance, anticipation, and active forgetting fueled by both the doublespeak of US immigration laws and the immigrants' art of blatant dishonesty.

The Doublespeak of the Business and Economics of Hiring and Firing Immigrants

The world of *Behold* can arguably be divided between the powerful employers and the powerless employees. Before Clark hires Jende, he strictly tells him: "Let me tell you what I want in a driver. I demand loyalty. I demand dependability. I demand punctuality, and I demand that you do as I say and ask no questions" (Mbue 8). It is important to remember that on the day of the interview, Jende wears a green pinstripe suit that symbolizes the subtle cultural markers of wealth in the US. When Clark is about to fire Jende, he lackadaisically says "I'm really sorry, Jende, but I'm going to have to let you go" (251). Words and expressions such as loyalty, dependability, punctuality, do as I say and ask no questions possess employer-determined fluidities which employers usually exploit to sound positive and justifiable the laying off of workers as constructive dismissal, production cessation, elimination of positions, strengthening global effectiveness, and synchronization of organizational structures. Sometimes they refer to firing as curbing redundancy, excessed, transitioned, voluntary severance, excess to requirements and correctsized (Lutz 117). Also, euphemistic expressions are often turned into dysfemisms when the need for firing a worker arises. This is what happens when labor ethic is manipulated to suddenly become the foundation for unethical dismissal from work. Clark's repetitive pronouncement of his expectations constitute Gobbledygook or bureaucratese because his piling of words is meant to overwhelm Jende. This explains why the only thing Jende says in response is "Yes, sir, of course, Mr. Edwards" (8). As if the intimidation is not enough, Clark tells Jende that he will have to sign a confidentiality agreement

that he will never say anything about what he hears him say or sees him do to anyone. Such an agreement implies that Jende does not have the right to report Clark even if Clark were to turn out to be a criminal of any sort. This affirms Jende's position as a symbol of powerlessness in the face of US corporate greed. In Chapter sixteen, Vince exposes the cannibalism of such greed by telling Jende that "the Americans killed Patrice Lumumba in their effort to stop the spread of communism and tighten their grip around the world" (Mbue 103). When Jende, just like his wife, naively expresses his Americanophilia by telling Vince that there is nothing Vince or any man can say to convince him that America is not the greatest country in the world, Vince explains that the problem is that people like Jende are not willing to see the truth about the US because the illusion suits them by feeding their ambitions. He cites his parents as an example of people struggling under the weight of so many pointless pressures imposed on them by US life (103). His parents, Vince concludes, have been going down "a path of achievements and accomplishments and material success and shit that means nothing because that's what America's all about, and now they're trapped" (103-104). In the novel, these achievements, accomplishments, and material success that symbolize the success of corporate greed are aptly symbolized through Vince's father, Clark, a workaholic, and authoritative investment banker who has been working at Lehman Brothers for twenty-two years.

Two weeks before the world learns about the collapse of Lehman Brothers, Jende has a dream in which his old friend, Bosco, reappears expressing his hatred for the Cameroonian "money doublers" (swindlers) who take money from people with the promise to double their sum but run off with all the money. In the dream, Bosco recalls how his mother once gave the doublers his school fees so that they could double the sum and help her use the second half to pay for Bosco's sister's school fees but they ran away with the money (168). Mbue uses the dream to foreshadow the financial doom that will befall the world when Jende wakes up. Though the doublers are street criminals in Cameroon, far removed from the elite, privileged world that the Wall Street brokers inhabit, both are linked by their immoral willingness to exploit people's dreams to enrich themselves. The doublers are parallel figures to Wall Street stockbrokers and investment bankers, signifying the possibility of corruption and exploitation anywhere. Lehman Brothers Holdings, Inc. was the fourth-largest investment bank in the United States at the time of the housing market crash (2007-2009), employing over 25,000 employees worldwide. When Lehman Brothers collapses, the narrator captures the spiral effects of "the plague that had descended on the homes of former Lehman employees" by indicating that restaurateurs, artists, private tutors, magazine publishers, directors, limousine drivers, nannies,

housekeepers, employment agencies, virtually everyone panicked because their bread and wine would disappear along with the billions of dollars that vanished the day Lehman Brothers died (174). Their bread and wine did disappear because the firm filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on 15/09/2008 (to date the largest bankruptcy filing in U.S. history) and is widely credited with being responsible for the financial crisis that ensued.¹³ The fall of Lehman Brothers constitutes a climax that is further aggravated when Mrs. Edwards learns of her husband's adultery. This massive upset in the Edwards's lives leads to a corresponding massive upset in the Jonga family's lives. Jende confirms that the crisis led to loss of jobs, postponements of retirements, withdrawals of college education funds, abandonments of the purchase of dream homes, reconsiderations of dream wedding plans and cancellations of dream vacations (184). Following the language of the doublespeak of the business and economics of hiring and firing, the death of Lehman Brothers implies that there would be constructive dismissals because a production cessation has occurred, triggering an elimination of positions. In other words, a need has arisen in the US economy for strengthening global effectiveness through various measures. Having worked with the Lehman Brothers for more than two decades, Clark has become an adept in the art of hiring and firing workers. It is, therefore, not surprising that one person who immediately suffers from the spiral effect is Jende. Clark calls Jende to his office and doublespeakingly tells Jende:

I hope you know, Jende, that I think very highly of you. You've been by far my favorite chauffeur, there really isn't any comparison. You're hardworking, you're respectful, you're a good guy to be around. It's been really great. I'm really sorry, Jende, but I'm going to have to let you go. I know it's a horrible time for something like this to happen, with the new baby. (251)

Jende demands to know why he has been fired and instead of coming out clearly and saying that his sack is a combination of punishment for having naively exposed Clark's extramarital affairs and also one of the side effects of the collapse of Lehman Brothers, Clark again doublespeaks: "There's just too much going on now, Jende... I'm really sorry. I'm trying to do the best I can... I really am, but, apparently, it's not good enough, and it's ... it's all getting to be a bit too much. I'm just... It's a very complicated—" (252). Clark does not realize that the more euphemistic he tries to be, the more Jende feels hurt because his euphemism suggests insincerity, evasiveness, and lack of candor.

Behold alludes to the time before the 2008 election, reflecting the hope that lots of black Americans and immigrants had about a black man running for

president, the economic horror that struck the country after the stock market crashed, and the fears and experiences of many Americans during that time. From this perspective, someone who sees things from Clark's perspective could argue that Clark's use of euphemism is aimed at protecting or shielding Jende against psychological harm; uplifting, talking him up and boosting his morale; provoking and inspiring him; and creating phatic cohesion by showing solidarity towards Jende's condition. But Clark's euphemism (in)advertently alters the direction of their conversation as Clark (un)consciously becomes arguably ludic thereby (un)wittingly making fun of Jende by mystifying, misrepresenting, and inhibiting clear communication especially as Jende wants to know the role that the discovery of Clark's adultery by his wife might have played in his sacking. Clark's use of euphemisms at the service of a neoliberal capitalist regime/corporation of which immigration is part and parcel reminds us that he is a symbolic representation of the policies of neoliberal capitalism such as its advocacy of fiscal austerity, its potential danger to workers' rights, its giving of too much power to corporations, and its worsening of economic inequality. To some large extent, Clark synecdochally represents ironfisted Reaganomics. He reminds us of neoliberalism's creation of monopolies that ensure that skilled workers command higher wages while low-skilled workers suffer from stagnant wages. The sack teaches Jende that the US he and Neni have long seen as a house of reason in which they have been working has proven to be a prison house of paradoxes whose rooms do not connect and whose passageways lead nowhere. The failure of Lehman Brothers dispels the immigration myth that there are global needs but only one (diverse) center, the US, where knowledge, economies, politics and socialities are produced to solve the problem of everybody. To contribute to breaking the code of Americanophilia, the Jendes will need to begin to argue that the anchor of deconstructing the doublespeak/doublethink of hiring and firing shall be that US greener pastures are greener only from a distance and so immigrants can (better) make it even in their home communities. Furthermore, such unexplained firing promotes cosmopolitanism of the fittest, and the fittest are those who fit capitalist and neoliberal designs, which, of course, are not universal, but, postulated as such, and leave out of the US cosmopolis all those who are not interested in "fitting" or are not qualified to fit in. Delineating such cosmopolitanism of the fittest is Mbue's manner of reminding us that today, in the US, the idea that the American Dream engenders a survival of the fittest that is in turn naturally connected with brutal competition is being contested. Her argument, therefore, is that it is possible for the US economy to think of survival of immigrant communities, rather than of the fittest so that the idea of the common good would return to liberal thinking through a constructive

detachment-without-antagonism of economy from capitalist greed. When this happens, both Americans and immigrants would enter into a fuzzy socio-economic and politico-cultural terrain where cosmopolitanism would cease to be a US project, and as such part of Americanization and become a project in which all will participate, in which every cosmo-polis (immigrant histories) will join as an ambitious design in which the pluriversal will be the multiversally accepted aspiration; that is, a cosmopolitan localism or cosmologicalism that would advance alternatives that would indubitably subvert dominant capitalist imaginary significations, attitudes, and modalities such as arbitrary firing. Even though some may argue that the liberal tradition that engendered capitalist competition was never based on such harmonization; that the postulation of such harmonization is rather evangelical and at odds with a civilization that has proven to be fostering competition, there is relatively an undeniable sense in which Mbue's narrative is also about the possibility of human utopia.

Jende's situation is compounded by his receipt of a letter from Immigration stating:

On the basis of being admitted to the United States on August of 2004 with authorization to remain for a period not to exceed three months and staying beyond November 2004 without further authorization, it has been charged that he is subject to removal from the United States. He has to appear before an immigration judge to show why he should not be removed from the country. (224)

After considering the extent of the economic doublespeak that has been engendered by the financial crisis, Jende opts for voluntary departure to Cameroon, telling Neni in mock instruction that she has been sold "the stupid nonsense about America being the greatest country in the world. America is full of lies and people who want to hear lies. Anyone who has no sense can believe the lies and stay here forever, hoping that things will get better for them one day. I won't live my life in the hope that someday I will magically become happy" (332-333). Granted that Jende's decision to return is economically motivated, Neni's incapacity to see how happy they would be in Cameroon, where the cost of living is far cheaper, compared with their current condition, reveals how economically biased Americanophiles can become. Neni's Americanized mind cannot conceive of the possibility that the poor people of their hometown, Limbe, Cameroon, could possibly be happy. Like the immigration laws that have been waged against them, her Americanized mind has a rigid, one-dimensional, and ideological understanding of the term prosperity. The immigration office's decision that the Jongas should leave the US implies that the once undying myth that the

Jongas' immigration will remove all poverty forever from their lives, now lies shattered. It is surprising that the Jongas, like so many people, believed it for so many years with such childlike innocence; forgetting that even US societies that had witnessed unprecedented prosperity before the financial crisis, were never able to exile either poverty or destitution completely from within US borders.

Jende reminds Neni that nonimmigrants are not the only ones for whom the pursuit of the American Dream has turned out to be a scam: "You should have been with me last week when I saw this man who used to drive another executive at Lehman Brothers. We used to sit together outside the building sometimes; he was a fresh round man. I saw him downtown: The man looked like he had his last good meal a year ago. He has not been able to find another job" (310). Arguing that the financial crisis has proven to be no respecter of race and visas, Jende further tells Neni: "Everyone is losing jobs everywhere and looking for new jobs. If he, an American, a white man with papers, cannot get a new chauffeur job then what about me? I don't know if I can continue suffering like this just because I want to live in America" (310). Mbue's tone that has been one of cautious optimism now turns to eventual pessimism about the American immigration experience. She has shown us the possible ways that immigrants can succeed, in a way that cautiously reminds us of how that can be taken away, and then shifts to a tone of pessimism as she makes clear that success for immigrants is almost impossible. If the argument that the Statue of Christopher Columbus Symbol Icon which stands in Columbus Circle in Manhattan (95) symbolizes the Jonga family's search for a land of prosperity and riches – not unlike the purpose of Columbus's journey; if the Jonga could be considered an explorer who led his family in this search and who, like Columbus, realized that the land where he disembarked was not what he expected; then just as Columbus eventually realized that he had not arrived in India, Jende has realized that despite his designation of New York as the center of America and America as the center of the world, America is not his true home. Through Jende's voluntary return, Mbue argues that as a pulsating beehive of humanity, the US Immigration needs to kindle the hope and build the lives of immigrants through Mignolo's general philosophical principles of *proportionality-solidarity* (proposals and motivations of political actions and thinking in favor of immigrants like the Jongas who have less); *complementarity* (encouraging participation, convergence, and conviviality of diverse cultures of various immigrants); *reciprocity* (creating rights and responsibilities from which no immigrant is exempt); and *correspondence* (encouraging the need for immigrants to share responsibilities) (Mignolo 2011, 335). Even though such ethical perspectives may not tie in with the psycho-social universe of the average American especially with the advent

of Trumpian politics, Mbue's narrative suggests that there is room for change.

Conclusion

Behold attests that immigration officials and economic operators such as the Lehman Brothers live in two worlds: the world of what they believe and the world they want the immigrants to think they believe in. In other words, they strive to use doublespeak to resolve the continuing contradictions between words and actions of immigration law and economics to explain and justify their actions or say that they did not do what they did, or what they did is not what immigrants think they did. They are spin doctors striving to construct verbal realities of immigration that are designed to tell the public that the immigration officials' reality is correct and what the public/reader saw or heard happened to the Jongas is not what it saw or heard. Jende affirms this spin doctoring by asserting that, "In America today, having documents is not enough. Look at how many people with papers are struggling. Look at how even some Americans are suffering. They were born in this country. They have American passports, and yet they are sleeping on the street, going to bed hungry, losing their jobs and houses every day in this economic crisis" (Mbue 307). He then concludes that "One can never trust any government – I don't trust the American government and I definitely don't trust the Cameroon government" (380). His lack of trust in both governments affirms this paper's stance that there is no immigration without proper conditions of immigration and so it is imperative to fight against the perversion of immigration laws and economics. In the context of Mbue's novel, to speak of the conditions of immigration implies speaking of the radicalization of US rules of entry. The novel attests that the immigration that exists in countries such as the US is false, simply because it is shrouded with doublespeaking. Mbue uses the Jongas' plight to suggest that immigration needs to be radicalized by deepening authority-sharing and respect for differences in the social domains where the immigration rules are established; spreading immigration rules to cover a larger number of domains of social life; and transforming it into a activity with the potential to regulate all social relations. Mbue also uses their plight to demonstrate that capitalist greed hinders the spread of this activity in the US; that we need to start thinking of a post-capitalist world that engages to make it possible because the collapse of the Lehman Brothers and the consequent firing of workers prove that capitalist greed leads only to more capitalist greed. For this to succeed, the immigrants themselves must be truthful about their immigration intentions and such truth must be national, in places such as in the US Embassy in Yaoundé (where Jende lies to the consulate); and in their relations with immigration officials in the destination countries (such as the US

Immigration to whom Jende and his lawyer Bubakar try to lie).

Behold also affirms that US-centric assumptions about immigration do not allow for a sufficiently wide-ranging circle of reciprocity capable of capturing the new called-for balance between the principle of equality and the principle of recognition of difference. Such assumptions define immigrants according to a narrow principle of marginalization which condemns them against many forms of sociability. Mbue uses Jende's volitional return to Cameroon to suggest that true immigration should be an internationalism aimed at acknowledging every society's celebration of her socioeconomic and politico-cultural diversity within the broad limits of mobility. It should encompass many different types of mobilities and see itself as a meeting ground where global citizens can interact freely and as an incubator of new networks generated at the exclusive initiative of those participating in them. The positive implications of such mobility emerge from, and are complicated by, Mbue's novel through her referencing of the existence of diverse African immigrants in the US and the US immigration institutions' equivocal acceptance of eccentric immigration lawyers such as Bubakar. Perhaps this is what the US has always been or maybe this is what it has always pretended to be because as mentioned earlier, Reagan, Clinton, Walker Bush, and Obama waxed lyrical about the US's role as the beacon of global immigration. They must now be looking back either in anger or disappointment because things have changed. The US border has never been, or is no longer safer than, the Libyan Desert and the Mediterranean and Atlantic tempests because during the same year that *Behold* was published, Donald Trump kicked off his presidential campaign on June 16 from the Trump Tower in Manhattan, and immediately touched off alarms and excursions with his negative comments about immigration.¹⁴ He said, "We want people to come into our country, but they have to come legally and properly vetted, and in a manner that serves the national interest. We've been living under outdated immigration rules from decades ago. To avoid this happening in the future, I believe we should sunset our visa laws so that Congress is forced to periodically revise and revisit them to bring them up to date." Insisting that US immigration laws were archaic and ancient, Trump reiterated that, "We wouldn't put our entire federal budget on auto pilot for decades, so why should we do the same for the very, very complex subject of immigration? So let's now talk about the big picture. These 10 steps, if rigorously followed and enforced, will accomplish more in a matter of months than our politicians have accomplished on this issue in the last 50 years."

Trump promised to, "issue detainers for illegal immigrants who are arrested for any crime whatsoever, place [them] into immediate removal proceedings, and terminate the Obama administration's deadly non-enforcement policies

that allow thousands of criminal aliens to freely roam our streets, walk around, do whatever they want to do, crime all over the place.” He was unequivocal that first among his 10 steps would be to build a border wall against Mexico, “On day one, we will begin working on an impenetrable physical wall on the southern border. We will use the best technology, including above-and below-ground sensors, towers, aerial surveillance, and manpower to supplement the wall, find and dislocate tunnels, and keep out the criminal cartels, and Mexico will pay for the wall.” Whether he ended up building the wall or not, what the events in *Behold* affirm is that US border walls have always been there especially against Africans because as Jende reminds Neni, “I work as a servant to people, driving them all over, the whole day, sometimes the whole week, answering yes sir, yes madam, bowing down even to a little child [because] I want to stay in America! But if America says they don’t want us in their country, I [cannot] keep begging them for the rest of my life” (230-231). There is a strong sense in which Jende’s knowledge of immigration, just like that of most Africans, jars with evangelical waxing, apparently gazing up to celestial sanction. No country would allow floods and waves of immigrants to bring down its walls and like Milton’s populous north, swarm into its territory. For instance, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea are blood brothers to the Yaoundé people of Cameroon, yet they still practice border protection. Racism may play a part in the US situation, but there are times that the movements of the Jendes raise nightmares about the receiving nations’ wholesome survival. No US president has ever truly prescribed an open-arms policy towards the thousands of the destitute trudging from Africa and Latin America to find dream succor in the States; it would be the deliberate courting of an apocalypse and no government is democratically elected to sink the nation. So, maybe, just maybe, the outrage that was unleashed towards Trump by both Americans and immigrants was a result of the fact that Trump had exercised the chutzpah of singlespeaking the doublespeak of US immigration.

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Notes

1. "Immigration Quotes from Great Americans." <https://citizenpath.com/immigration-quotes-great-americans/>
2. "Immigration Quotes from Great Americans." <https://citizenpath.com/immigration-quotes-great-americans/>
3. "Immigration Quotes from Great Americans." <https://citizenpath.com/immigration-quotes-great-americans/>
4. "Immigration Quotes from Great Americans." <https://citizenpath.com/immigration-quotes-great-americans/>
5. "Immigration Quotes from Great Americans." <https://citizenpath.com/immigration-quotes-great-americans/>
6. One Book 2019-2020: Immigration, Borders and Education - *Behold the Dreamers* & Papers: Behold the Dreamers: about the Author & Book <https://libguides.greenriver.edu/c.php?g=933213&p=6796193>
7. Macron, Emmanuel. "Address to the U.S. Congress." April 25, 2018. *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://transcripts.cnn.com/Transcripts/1804/25/ctw.01.html>
8. "*Behold the Dreamers* Summary and Study Guide" <https://www.supersummary.com/behold-the-dreamers/summary/>
9. Temporary U.S. Visas Explained. <https://www.boundless.com/immigration-resources/temporary-u-s-visas-explained/>
10. Travel. State. Gov. U.S. Visas. Directory of Visa Categories, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/all-visa-categories.html>
11. Temporary U.S. Visas Explained. <https://www.boundless.com/immigration-resources/temporary-u-s-visas-explained/>
12. Walter D. Mignolo defines a pluriversity as a multicultural center of learning that combines diatopical and pluritopic hermeneutics because it deals with a pluriverse of meaning. A Pluriversity is a "key argument for calling into question the concept of universality, so dear to Western cosmology." A pluriversity questions Western epistemology and hermeneutics universalization of their own concept of universality and asserting the fact that all known civilizations have been founded on the universality of their cosmologies. The pluriversity aims at seeing beyond the Western claim to superiority and sensing the world as pluriversally constituted; it is a decolonial institution dealing with forms of knowledge and meaning exceeding the limited regulations of epistemology and hermeneutics; it names the principles and assumptions upon which pluriverses of meaning are constructed. Consequently, the pluriversity teaches that the universal cannot have one single owner: the universal can only be pluriversal, a world in which many worlds coexist (2018: ix-x). See also Boaventura de Sousa Santos "From the University to the Pluriversity and Subversity," 2018: 269-292.

13. Kovacs, Kim. "The Lehman Brothers: This article relates to *Behold the Dreamers*." https://www.bookbrowse.com/mag/btb/index.cfm/book_number/3447/behold-the-dreamers

14. Fulltext: Donald Trump immigration speech in Arizona <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/donald-trump-immigration-address-transcript-227614>

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