New "Passages" between Africa and the United States: An Introduction
Elisa Bordin

This article explores the relationship between Africa and the United States, and how it has been changing because of the so-called "new African diaspora" in the US. Whereas the historical transatlantic diaspora was marked by slavery, the recent migration from Africa at the beginning of the 2000s triggers new reflections, especially in relation to how blackness is perceived and represented in the United States. In particular, this essay considers the literary production of the new black diasporic writers such as Chris Abani, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Edi Edugyan, and others, and how their works highlight a double movement with respect to the US African American literary tradition: a desire of closeness and inclusion, and of explicit difference, often due to a different understanding of race.

Afrofuturism: Texts, Music, Art and Experiences
Lauretta Salvini

In 2000, the publication of *Dark Matter,* edited by Sheree R. Thomas, marked a pivotal moment in the debate on the role of African American writers in the genres of science fiction and fantasy. Moving from Thomas's anthology, this essay explores the concept of "alienness" by bringing to the surface fertile connections between multimedia and multi-sensorial artistic practices that are part of the complex afro-futurist movement. From Paul Gilroy's notion of "Black Atlantic" to W.E.B. Du Bois's short story "The Comet"; from Octavia E. Butler's novels to Afrika Bambaataa's hip hop; from Vodou in Nalo Hopkinson's *Brown Girl in the Ring* to the collaboration between the techno music group Clipping and Rivers Salomon; from the artist-videomaker-photographer Arthur Jafa to Greg Tate's thoughts on pop music, the boundaries between artistic genres are as liquid as the aquatic metaphors that many of them propose. The influences, contrasts and collaborations amongst these creative figures cut across time and space by means of writing and painting, recovering and reworking myths, editing music clips and television footage, singing and dancing. These artists draw from the past, searching for a common origin and project themselves

into the possibilities of a techno-future with multiple visions, aware that one does not create to propose solutions but rather to provoke emotions and bring up change.

Nnedi Okorafor: *Black Panther* between Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism
Marco Petrelli

Naijamerican author Nnedi Okorafor describes her sci-fi works as belonging to the Africanfuturist genre rather than to Afrofuturism writ large. In her opinion, Afrofuturism is characterized by a strong focus on African American culture, while Africanfuturism needs to be rooted "first and foremost in Africa," privileging the continent and the black diaspora as its subject matter. Okorafor is vocal in supporting this distinction, but she shies away from giving a thorough definition of the genre, briefly hinting at the differences between Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism through Ryan Coogler's film *Black Panther* (2018). Comparing Okorafor's contribution to the *Black Panther* Marvel comic with Coogler's cinematic adaptation and Ta-Nehisi Coates's critically acclaimed installment of the superhero's adventures, this essay provides a closer inspection of the relationship between Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism in relation to the narrative universe of Wakanda.

Written on Water: The Invasion of Lagos between Ecology and Memory
Nicoletta Vallorani

The essay offers a reflection on the way in which invasion as a recurring *topos* in science fiction is reshaped in Nnedi Okorafor's *Lagoon*, narrating the alien landing in Lagos. Comparing the novel with the paradigmatic model mostly provided by H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, I intend to show how an important link with consolidated and familiar models is maintained, while at the same time a new approach is proposed in the light of the characteristics of Africanfuturism, a movement of which Okorafor is one of the most vocal representatives. Like other writers from Africa, she works on the process of Othering by proposing an anti-colonial and postcolonial viewpoint and shaping a narrative that interweaves science fiction, eco-fiction, petrofiction and cli-fi, combining different mythologies and folkloric figurations in the portrayal of an invaded city that is radically dif-

ferent from London, though presented as a global metropolis.

Diasporic Entanglements: *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi
Anna Scacchi

The title chosen for the Italian translation of Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016), *Non dimenticare chi sei* ("Do not forget who you are"), suggests that the novel narrates the story of a successful quest for ancestral roots. The interpretation of the novel as a heritage tour back to Africa is further reinforced by paratextual elements, such as the cover image and blurbs. In this the Italian edition of *Homegoing* seems to follow in the steps of those US and British reviewers who have read the novel as a third millennium version of Alex Haley's *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. Gyasi, however, does not offer the story of a royal male ancestor and a recovered patriarchal lineage, nor a pastoral portrayal of Africa, but a parallel account of the ravages caused by patriarchy, the slave trade, colonialism and racism in the two branches of a family separated by rape and the slave trade. Choosing to focus on the ruptures, violence and separations of an African family following the rape of the ances-

tor Maame, she resists the sense of closure and healing associated with return narratives and challenges the reduction of Africa to a void and/or pre-modern times in Gilroy's paradigm of the Black Atlantic.

Updating the Black Atlantic: New Notions of Nation, Agency and Solidarity in Dinaw Mengestu's Works
Brandon Michael Cleverly Breen

This essay positions itself within the debate on the limits of Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic paradigm (1993) in order to better understand narrative conceptualizations of African diasporas through an analysis of the works of the Ethiopian American author Dinaw Mengestu. Gilroy suggests that the artistic and intellectual production of members of the Black Atlantic indicates an overcoming of the idea of nation, affirming that an individual's journey is more significant than their nation of origin. Differently than what Gilroy proposes, Mengestu does not reject the idea of nation, rather he renews its very concept through the central positioning of the native land and the various countries of arrival of the Ethiopian protagonist in *All Our Names* (2014). The

author further expands upon Gilroy's model, which mainly focused on the experience of men, through female characters like Miriam, an Ethiopian immigrant in *How to Read the Air* (2010) who strenuously fights to affirm her own voice, thus displaying an effective use of agency. Unlike the critics (Chude-Sokei 2014; Duboine 2017), who see in Mengestu's works evidence of the existing tension between African Americans and new African immigrants in the United States, the present article argues that Mengestu, while exploring such tension, also creates moments of positive contact between the two groups. Mengestu's works, therefore, demonstrate that the nature of these relationships cannot be taken for granted neither as fully antagonistic, nor as always characterized by a sense of blind solidarity based on skin color alone.

Far from Paradise: Black Identity and (Un)belonging in *We Need New Names* by NoViolet Bulawayo
Chiara Patrizi

We Need New Names by NoViolet Bulawayo is a journey between two delusive heavens: the shanty town ironically named Paradise (in Zimbabwe) – with its urban and human blight, but where the protagonist, Darling, cherishes a sense of home – and the United States, the "Western Paradise" par excellence, the land of the American Dream – which turns out to be unattainable for illegal/undocumented migrants. They are trapped in a limbo in which the social invisibility they suffer contrasts with the hyper-visibility they are subjected to as black bodies, making them potential targets for racial hatred.

Borrowing from Stuart Hall's concept of cultural identity and analyzing the implications of the new identities embodied by the recent diasporas, this essay focuses on Bulawayo's novel as an example of how the literature of New African Diaspora manages to convey a problematic, multifaceted image of blackness. Indeed, through the voices of Darling and of the two worlds she inhabits, the novel ultimately creates a conversation between Afropolitanism and Afropessimism, thus portraying a hybrid identity in which different consciousnesses often tend to collide instead of blending together.

Blackness and Death in *Notes of Grief* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Stephanie Li

While Adichie's most recent book, *Notes on Grief* (2021), is pri-

marily a meditation on the devastating loss of her father, the book highlights her struggle to negotiate between two separate geographic and cultural worlds. Her father's death catalyzes a divide between how she and her Igbo relatives contend with his passing and thus how she comes to identify herself in relation to others. Even as she longs for the comfort of her Nigerian homeland in the aftermath of his death, she resists accepting the rituals of her people because they feel more performative than genuine and remain bound to outdated notions of gender. *Notes on Grief* is an exploration of her complex feelings following the death of her father and as such largely eschews the political valence of Black precarity in contemporary American life. However, her reflections on the passing of James Nwoye Adichie suggest a new awareness and comfort with her racialized American identity.

Algorithmic Governmentality and the COVID-19 Pandemic
James E. Dobson

This essay examines the use of smartphone applications for contact tracing during the COVID-19 pandemic through the theory of algorithmic governmentality. It considers the drive toward personalization associated with contemporary technology as highly compatible with the biopolitics of these government-supported frameworks. The contact tracing applications operated according to proxy logics in which proximity to devices rather than personal identification was used to determine the possibility of connection and contagion. Such proxy-based mechanisms are similar to the profiles constructed from the correlations of attributes used by big-data corporations and governmental organizations. The pandemic has intensified the thinking of the self and others as sets of attributes; what will be necessary in the aftermath is a reconstruction of alternative relational networks organized around not discrete attributes but rather potentialities.

bell hooks: Deviating and Subverting
Maria Nadotti

Drawing on her experience as translator and editor of the Italian collections of bell hooks's books and essays, the author comments on her greatest difficulty in translating hooks' works – finding an Italian publishing house interested in them. The

essay briefly traces the story of the Italian translations of hooks' books, highlighting how the first translations gained some popularity when they appeared in the late nineties. They were then forgotten to be rediscovered after the recent publication of the Italian version of *Feminism Is for Everybody*: *Passionate Politics*. While retracing the fortunes of hooks's work and highlighting its subversive potential, the essay provides an outline of the intellectual's intersectional feminism, focusing on her perspective on and understanding of the reappropriation of the English language by the enslaved, the oppressed, and the marginalized.