

Editorial Note

Alissa Lienhard & Marielle Tomasic

Not so long ago, in the summer of 2023, we published the first issue of *In Progress: A Graduate Journal of North American Studies*, and we are thrilled to now present the second issue. In fact, this number can be understood as the second half of our inaugural issue since much of its content stems from the same pool of submissions and projects. As with our last issue, this one is divided into three different parts: an Academic Section that features three articles written by students, an Independent Studies Section that focuses on student projects at Leibniz University's English Department, and an Open Section, which, this time around, features a conversation about reading and our associate editors' favorite summer reads. We are convinced that offering this space to graduate students is important: it presents their unique perspectives, and allows them to contribute to their fields of study and form a community of young scholars, who are as passionate about their studies as they are about sharing their knowledge.

This issue's Academic Section features three peer-reviewed articles situated within the broad field of Anglophone Literary and Cultural Studies. The articles published here underwent a blind peer-review process as well as rigorous editing by our editorial team, ensuring their high quality. First, Lukas Fender examines the internet as a decolonial site, using the Indian residential school system as an example and analyzing how Facebook groups are used in a decolonizing practice. Then, Caroline Wachsmann's article discusses the marriage plot in Jane Austen's novel *Persuasion* through a postcolonial lens by applying Edward Said's method of contrapuntal reading. This is followed by Christine Poljanskij's article that examines the construction of gender in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* by applying Lévi-Strauss's ideas on systems of kinship as well as Judith Butler's feminist approach to Lévi-Strauss's writing. Taken together, this selection of graduate scholarship offers discussions of gender, colonialism, oppression, and violence, covering not only a broad historical range but also a variety of different forms and media, from literary classics to young adult novels to social media.

This issue also showcases student projects and other creative endeavors that originate from Leibniz University's international master program in North American Studies. We publish a variety of texts, art, and videos that emerge from seminars taught in our program's "Independent Studies" module. This issue's Independent Studies Section features a selection of video essays that were produced in the context of Kathleen Look's "Videographic Criticism" seminar, held during the 2021/22 winter term. This includes essays by Sofie Hilbrand ("Bringing Across Emotions in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*"), Can Ulucan ("*The Martian* and the Colonial Frame of Mind"), Alissa Lienhard ("*Blade Runner 2049* as Slow Science Fiction"), Sanne Brands ("The Male Gaze: A Look at Scarlett Johansson in *The Island*"), Alexandra Groapa ("The Parody of *Austenland*"), Sophia Trayser ("Jane Austen in Film"), and Setareh Ghasemireza ("Music as a Dialogue: A Video Essay"). In addition, the current issue contains two book reviews written in the 2022 Independent Studies course "The Booker Prize: Reading New Literary Publications," taught by Janna-Lena Neumann.



This includes Kerem Ak's review of Richard Powers' novel *Bewilderment* and Carolin Wachsmann's review of Patricia Lockwood's debut novel *No One Is Talking About This*.

Finally, the Open Section was created by our current team of Associate Editors. Eiman Alkhatib, Lukas Fender, Jessica Hille, Alissa Lienhard, Jia Shen Lim, and Marielle Tomasic engage in a written conversation that addresses common struggles and joys of reading – including reading slumps, long to-be-read piles, finding time to read for fun, and some favorite books we read over the summer of 2023. The conversation ends with a list of recommendations, which includes popular romances, Indigenous short stories, family dramas, and non-fiction.

As noted above, this issue of *In Progress* still profits from the work of our student editors who helped prepare our inaugural issue (vol. 1, no. 1). These student editors worked relentlessly over the winter semester 2022/23 to peer-review, edit and curate materials that ended up in this issue. Accordingly, we want to warmly thank them, again, for their time and effort. In addition, our thanks go to Felix Brinker and Kathleen Loock, our general editors, without whom *In Progress* would not exist. In their function as general editors they not only started this project, but they also keep on ensuring that all the necessary steps function smoothly as they supervise all other editors in their work. Of course, the work of our fellow associate editors, Sahar Al Kharsa, Eiman Alkhatib, Lukas Fender, Jessica Hille, and Jia Shen Lim, was also crucial for the publication of this issue. Among other things, they edited, proof-read, formatted, and uploaded materials; they provided introductory texts for the Independent Studies Section and the Open Section for this issue. We also want to acknowledge the work put in by our former editors Gülçin Dogan, Hanna Masslich, Shayan Rahmanian, and Harishnavi Sriskanthan, whose contributions were crucial during *In Progress's* founding period. Thanks to the efforts of all these editors, we are able to present this second issue that highlights both the graduate scholarship and the creative and explorative work being done by master students at the English Department in Hannover. And now, we invite you to read and watch the results of this shared labor. Enjoy the second issue of *In Progress*!

Author Biographies

Alissa Lienhard (she/her) is a former student assistant and current master student in the division of American Studies at Leibniz University Hannover (Germany). She holds a bachelor's degree in the Interdisciplinary Bachelor with English as first subject and Biology as second subject. Her bachelor thesis, "Don't Let the Bastards Grind You Down: Language(s) of Repression and Resistance in *The Handmaid's Tale*" develops an argument about the power of language in the context of feminist speculative literature. In her studies in the North American Studies master program, she focuses particularly on film, television, comics, science fiction, feminism, neuro-diversity, and gender/queer studies. Alissa Lienhard is a founding member of *In Progress's* editorial board.

Marielle Tomasic (she/her) is a student of the North American Studies master program at Leibniz University Hannover and holds a Bachelor's degree in English and Philosophy. Her bachelor thesis "Liminality as Resistance in Akwaeke Emezi's *Freshwater* and *Dear Sentburan*" critically engages with boundaries of genres and examines who gets to write what. It approaches literary studies of life writing through a lens of curious empathy and decoloniality. Beyond this, Marielle is deeply invested in figuring out ways that literary scholars can think, write, and work in ways that make the (literary) world a kinder place. Marielle Tomasic works as a student editorial assistant for a publishing house, is a student assistant at the Leibniz University Hannover, and a member of *In Progress's* editorial board.