

Chaos and Hybris: Editorial Note

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Chaos and hybris, the two defining aspects of life, of tragedy, of literature. Perhaps those which make us human to the core, tainting our love for others, our desire, our fears, our ambitions.

By topic alone, this was never meant to be a neatly-tied scholarly issue: it was meant to be chaotic, eclectic, overly ambitious, doomed to fail. Its greatest strength was also its fatal flaw. But we have persevered, and the result has been a curated list of artwork, where each contribution has been carefully crafted, thought-out, and offered timidly to the world, worried that no one will like it, no one will read it, no one will appreciate it enough.

In the face of such a charged topic, chosen due to the tumultuous times we are living in, contributors have turned to more specific and personal turmoil, cutting open hearts with surgical precision to reveal a complex inner world.

This issue opens with *Temperance*, an illustration by Cristina Segura Navas that sets the tone for the rest of the issue. Inspired by tarot cards, Cristina reverses Temperance on its head to sow chaos. Its ominous aura, coupled with a predominance of the color red, pushes the spectator to take a guarded stance, a feeling they will carry throughout the rest of the issue.

In *Offerings at the altar*, Stella Motta takes a mundane occurrence (an ant infestation) and sublimates it through the artistic experience, weaving images of mass murder, prayer, and devotion with the physical reality of insects taking over her kitchen counter and dying.

Mortals Are Not Supposed To Love With The Intensity Of Gods is my own contribution to this issue, a poem that takes a look at the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus through Patroclus' perspective. It is difficult to speak of one's own work, but the poem was meant to highlight the connection between love and hybris, and how all-consuming love—in all its forms, always, but in this case specifically romantic—pushes us to limits we never would have thought possible. This poem, however, would not be complete without its companion illustration.

Thus, *Heart Aching Lovers* is born. Noelia Abregú Romero's soft and whimsical illustration contrasts deeply with the desperate tone set in *Mortals Are Not Supposed To Love With The Intensity Of Gods*, showing a new facet of the myth. Despite the

bloody scars that mar their bodies, and the war setting that can be glimpsed in the distance, Noelia shows a tender moment shared between lovers, the light golden tones seeping into our hearts until everything looks like a dream. Even in desperation, love can be tender. Just as mortals are not supposed to love with the intensity of gods, no god will ever be able to love with the tenderness of mortals.

Hearth is another one of the collaborative pieces, a short anonymous poem embedded in an illustration by Corine Schimith Carreira. Corine's style, reminiscent of the darkest fairytales, has a warm quality that cannot be easily replicated. Poem and illustration offer each other a nuance that, alone, they would never be able to accomplish. The red background, akin to a womb, wraps the piece like a security blanket, while the girl's hair takes on a menacing quality that contrasts greatly with her innocent and placid face. Meanwhile, the poem is deeply nostalgic, reminiscing over a lost love, while giving the impression that, if she could, she would eat her lover alive.

Every year, *Blue Gum* prides itself on showcasing the work of talented exchange students in its miscellaneous section. This year, regardless of circumstances, we are happy to continue with the tradition.

In *Urban Nature; Restricted Growth, Adaptability and Perseverance*, Sophia Franks reflects on the connection between nature and the urban environment that coexist in the city of Barcelona. She searches relentlessly for the hidden evidence of the natural environment in the central urban parts of the city, showing the tenacity with which nature rears its head in the most inhospitable spaces.

In *Discarded: The Truth in Ruin*, Juliana Potts explores the ramifications of discarded items on the curbside of four metropolises (central London, Paris, Venice, and Barcelona) through the prism of capitalism and global consumerism, offering a gut-wrenching contrast between the city's most opulent architectural aspirations (the supposed markings of civilization) and the literal waste of its inhabitants.

I am deeply grateful to Isabel Alonso Breto, Maria Grau Perejoan, and Marta Ortega Sáez for the opportunity to edit this issue of *Blue Gum*. It has been a challenge, yes, but also a privilege. My most heartfelt thanks to the contributors who have submitted their work and who have shown a genuine passion for this project.

Thank you for reading.

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