

Editorial Note

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This second, trilingual issue of *Blue Gum* with contributions in English, Catalan and Spanish sees the light just before the Christmas period, and so is a gift of sorts. It boasts a broad range of authors, some international and others from Catalonia. Five contributions are from Australia and a spin-off from research in Barcelona as part of a university student exchange programme between the University of Barcelona and the University of Southern Cross in the Northern Rivers region in New South Wales. The students in question all have a visual art and media studies background, and their writing moves between non-fiction and fiction. We have also received contributions in the shape of fiction and its critique from young Catalan academics, as well as poetry from students, postgraduates and lecturers from Catalonia. In the end we have opted for presenting the work in three balanced sections: fiction, non-fiction and poetry; its listing within each section is done alphabetically according to the authors' family names.

Non-fiction

This section is entirely written by SCU exchange students. **Svea Bjornsson** is an architect and visual arts student whose fascination with Barcelona balconies leads her to an investigation of the development of what we could call an interstitial social space between the private and public with its roots in the Middle Ages. Using Hundertwasser's work, in "*Balcons de Barcelona*" Svea traces how the function of the balcony changes over the centuries and how it remains an important space in contemporary life in Barcelona.

In “*Drawing through Travel Experiences*”, **Emma Gardner** uses her drawings as the writing that reflects on her journeys into India, England and Spain, and turns her sketchbook into a suggestive, colourful and shapely re-invention of the travel diary so popular in the 19th century. In search of a spirituality beyond the material, her drawings bear witness to the different moods she experienced while on the road in diverse and divergent cultures, and reach beyond the limitations of the verbal to express meaning.

In “*Puddles, Stains and Remnants*”, **Georgi Milln** reflects on art and artistic embodiment from a philosophical point of view, engaging Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and other theorists, and ties that into her photographic work carried out in Barcelona which investigates the artistic trace.

(On) Fiction

In the fiction section, **Alison Allcock** picks up on the detectivesque in her account of her research stay in Barcelona in a piece which is appropriately entitled “*In Search of jd*”. Using a hard-boiled approach ironically to give shape to her comparison of cosmopolitan Barcelona and the more provincial world of Lismore, NSW, these worlds are shown to be manifestly different but also merge across time and space in the search for “Jimmy”, a fellow art student and artist she had long lost track of.

With “*A Glimpse at Paul Auster and Jorge L. Borges through the Tinted Glass of Quantum Theory*”, **Myriam M. Mercader Varela** has shared with us a very appealing piece exploring some coincidences between the works of Paul Auster and Jorge Luis Borges, bringing them to bear on quantum and other scientific theories. The work of these labyrinthine authors offers amazing parallelisms which Mercader carefully unfolds, laying emphasis on the unusual attributions of blue stones, other-worldly textual gems which, as she argues, allow us readers to apprehend what she calls the “inherent ubiquity” of the authorial figure throughout her or his work -in this case, the latter. This research was part of the preliminary work of Mercader’s doctoral dissertation in progress, a venture which at present is coming to its conclusion.

Emile Pavlovic, one of SCU’s ex-change students, set out to research the Abject as conceptualised by Julia Kristeva in its manifold manifestations in Barcelona. However, as he confessed in his project’s presentation at the University of Barcelona, rather than local spaces of the Abject, what he had found was himself to be its manifestation, which led him to using Barcelona as the backdrop to his own psychological journey in film format. His short, *Lost Rambler*, which can be watched online, may be confronting to some viewers, but is also testimony to his creative genius.

Sara Sender has chosen to submit to *Blue Gum* “*Experimentos de un café de Richmon*”, a disturbing love story taken to its very limit, which shakes the reader into unrest while simultaneously providing a strange sense of... peacefulness? Yet this exquisite story is indeed disquieting. Perhaps because it reminds us that it is only at the very limits where real love stories

begin, or because it manages to awaken those uncanny echoes which can never be fully grasped, but only intuited; or perhaps, simply, because this story is also a blue stone.

Poetry

In the poetry section, **August Bover** delights us with three exquisite poems, heartfelt and intrepid, which evoke spatial and temporal distances and are thus nostalgic of either past times or of places away from the present: “*Long Distance Call*”, “*Xaloc/Sirocco*” and “*Paradís perdut/Lost Paradise*”. They are written in Catalan and beautifully rendered into English by Kristine Doll, herself a poet. This is the first translation published by *Blue Gum*, and while celebrating such inspired inauguration of a trend we would like to cultivate in our journal, we take this chance to explicitly invite contributions of this kind.

His work is followed by the writing of a gifted undergraduate student to our Department of English and German Studies, **Joan Carles Cullell Ibáñez**, who surprises us with four poems—“*Holi*”, “*Faces*”, “*The Nights*” and “*Downriver*”—which express a keen grasp of (the) language as well as a profound reflection on life.

From Malaysia, **Carol Leon** has sent us a poem which in itself contains a whole world. A world full of grief, love, memory and absence is ensconced in the sparse and profound lines of “*His Chair*”, which Leon dedicates the memory of her father. We are grateful that she decided to share with *Blue Gum* this delicate piece, and are sure that our readers will appraise its full worth.

Carme Paradís i Puig has chosen three of her poems for *Blue Gum*. “*Wine is Wine*” is written in English, and it is both an ode to the bounties of this elementary liquid and homage to the many who praised it before her, from Pliny and Strabo to Bukowski and Pablo Neruda. Her contributions include two further poems, “*La pluja*” and “*L’hora violeta*”, both of which are accompanied with paintings by Josep Güell Manzanars. The trio, or rather, the quintet, compound a very suggestive ensemble, and we congratulate ourselves that Catalan has gained noteworthy presence in this second issue of our journal.

We wish to thank all authors for their contributions.

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