

# BAISMAG

INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES



ISSUE 08

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the "what if" issue

hi there!

Here we are again. After editing the FOOD issue together, we asked ourselves: What if we'd edit a "what if" issue together? And so we did! In this issue, there is plenty of greatness to find, as all mind-blowing questions start with these very words. What if your ears were under your armpits? What if you had the magic powers of teleportation? What if all our professors were pineapples? What if eating chocolate was healthy? What if we would turn into plants while sleeping? What if hippos ruled Saudi Arabia? What if Putin had chronic hiccups?

The imaginative topic of 'WHAT IF' inspired many BAISMAG writers to write some fantastic articles for this issue. For starters, Lilit mused on what it would be like if people had no noses on page 10. Another prominent what if article was written by Anna, who imagined an uncolonised Africa on page 8. Oh Africa, the continent that fills our hearts with passion and hope. We realized we might be a little biased and Africa-centred (see page 13 for Erik's postcard from Uganda), so if you are not as fond of the

continent as we are, there is plenty more to read on the other pages. Make a swift visit to Alaska in the 'Into the wild' review on page 11 or take a philosophical ride on Sakari's train of thought on the whole concept of what if on page 14. This month, too, the Innovation and News2Muse pages bring us new insights into the strange world we live in (pages 6-7). If you'd also like to get a sneak peek into the minds of our first years' culture shock in The Hague, flip to page 4 for The Interview. For the dreamers of BAIS, Ecesu wrote an enchanting short story on page 12 – 13 that will bring your heart solace and give you wings to fly to your next tutorial. We wish you a merry Christmas, crazy New Year, and wonderful holidays. Hopefully this issue will accompany you on your flight home and make you muse on your what if's until your perfect landing back home.

Enjoy xxx

*nicchelle & ruth-marie*

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## HOW TO "WHAT IF" WITH ANNA CONRAD

We were driving down an empty road. It was quite the hot summer day, perhaps too hot for some, but the car had no roof and we were driving just fast enough to have an almost breeze travel past our faces. Looking up, the sky was blue, and nothing else. The cassette deck was playing "Candy" by The Fresh & Onlys. The far distance was marked by mountains and the heat kept shimmering and hovering above the asphalt in front of us. Down the yellow line, there was merely the horizon, and it felt like that was where we were going, really, to the end of the world and without being afraid of what would happen once we would arrive.

You must know, I cannot drive. It was always a regret of mine to have never had the chance to acquire a driving license. First, there was no money, later there was no time, or no need, really, living in big cities. So HE was driving now, and I was sitting in the passenger seat, feet up the dashboard and eyes gazing over the desert. It smelled exactly the way it looked, and the breeze occasionally blew pieces of sand into our faces. I looked to my left. He was driving so confidently, so sophisticated. He was wearing a sailor's hat, and his brown eyes were squinting against the sun, trying to avoid the sandy winds. He was only looking ahead and every now and then he would reach with his hand over to my arm, and I would hold his hand for a minute or so. We were best friends for life.



The past two years we had spent sitting by the lake behind our house close by Hampstead Heath. You might have heard of it. We had inherited this dreamy Georgian cottage surrounded by trees and hedgerows, shut off from society. We would often sit in the garden sipping on tea and

writing poetry, or sometimes reading to each other some Walt Whitman or the more pretentious Poe. We would talk politics and films and often watched them on a projector in the garden, invited friends of ours sitting in the grass and passing a bottle of red wine around. Later there would be long walks through the park and by the pond, whilst contemplating where to go from there. It was time to move to another dream of ours, though. We bought maps and sold our phones, rented out the house and took a plane to America, with the incentive of buying a Volvo station wagon to drive across the country. However, we ended up picking a mint colored AMC Ambassador convertible, which made an uncomfortable sound at moments, but that was okay, in all genuineness. Whatever the horizon would bring, we were prepared for the adventure.

...“If this is just in your imagination, why don't you drive?” he asks. “I can't imagine what it's like”. “Mh. Ok, well then perhaps you can throw in how we are drinking Coca Cola whilst approaching the Grand Canyon, to make it sound more authentic”, he says and looks at me with dissent. “Also, I want to visit Nabokov's grave in Montreux, please, if you can arrange that.” ... Oh, isn't it weird, how there is this dream world out there that we cannot fully grasp, that we occasionally imagine and jump into, to escape our realities. Not that our lives are not worth living...

But a life we would love to live, parallel to our own: a utopia that is nearly impossible in a world in which we are condemned to do the things expected from us by society. But it's all good: Perhaps there will be a loophole soon, one we will be able to jump through to have both. “My eyes are green”, he says.

# COLLECTIVE SELECTIVE MEMORY LOSS

RUTH-MARIE HENCKES



Photo: Sam Ling

WHAT IF  
no one remembers your  
riverbanks were once  
flooded with blood?

If your people have been slaughtered with knives, landmines and anti-aircraft bullets; the ruins of your homes overgrown by forest; the bones of your loved ones shattered over various mass graves; all you loved violently destroyed; and you're a refugee with nothing to come home to,

Would you be able  
to forget that?

No, but the whole world seems to have forgotten. No one sanctioning those who deny it, only blindness to the atrocities committed. Nothing was done to prevent the killing and nothing was done to stop them. They were there and watched the bloodshed, but no one moved.

Bringing justice would be the way for the UN and the EU

to compensate for their cruel apathy, however, for Bosnians justice has become a long lost hope, an empty word. Murderers are ruling the country now, and genocide is simply denied. War criminals receive statues and there is nothing Europe does about it. Europe happens to have forgotten to mention the atrocities to their citizens and slowly the genocide and thus the UN and EU's guilt are fading away from public memory.

This period of history is systematically overseen in history classes and while some people vaguely remember something happened in the Balkans, no one knows what precisely. Those guilty either deny or forget. Ignorance is bliss. But what if the man that killed your father is welcomed in the town like a football player who just won the world cup? What if the owner of the former rape camp where your best friend died still lives peacefully and

unpunished around the corner of your house? What if you still meet your brother's killer every day in the supermarket? What if there are too many bullet holes to even bother filling them up? What if you had to bury your brother's collarbone, because that was all that was found of him?

You would never forget.

It's easy for them, those so called institutions of world peace, but impossible for Bosnians, who lost everything they had and never saw justice. A nation, shattered, all over the world; a country deserted by the living, yet abundant in bones, tears and land mines.

By forgetting and denying  
justice, genocide is  
perpetuated.

There is too much to say and  
too much that goes unsaid.

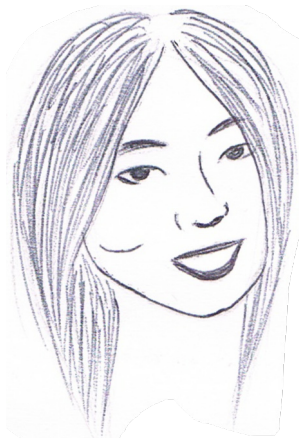
NEVER FORGET

*\*If you would like to know more about the Bosnian genocide, ask me or the other BAIS students that went to Srebrenica summer university, because we cannot and will never forget.*

# THE INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED BY JULIA BACCI AGGIO

*What do you feel like the main differences are between your own culture and the Dutch culture so far? What are the positive and negative aspects of this cultural difference?*



**YUKA TAGAWA YEH**

– Taiwan –

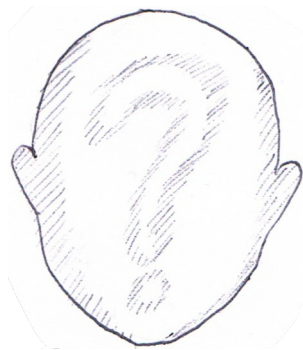
“It has been about three months since I first arrived in the Netherlands. Since it is not my first time living in Europe, I knew what to expect from the European system. I cannot stand how slow the system can be. You make an appointment in Town Hall, then you wait. You register and you wait. You go to the bank to open an account – appointment again! And after the appointment, you have to wait again. I have been spending most of my time waiting in the Netherlands, just waiting! Well, I think this is not only happening in the Netherlands, but every part of Europe (correct me if I am wrong)! Ironically, the slowness is one of the reasons why I moved here. People seem to be really relaxed; the atmosphere here is chill. Here, people get to enjoy their time and walk along the canal and take things easy. Also, biking is really new to me. I have to say, I love it! Where I'm from, we only have scooters and cars. Biking on the street there is a suicidal action. In the end, I think I have more love for Dutch culture than dislike!”

“The biggest difference between Americans and the Dutch is personality. While both tend to be friendly, Americans are a lot more open than the Dutch. For some Americans, some closed off Dutch people can be interpreted as rude, but on the contrary, I find the Dutch to be some of the friendliest people around. They are easy to talk to once you have broken the ice. There isn't much about Dutch culture that I dislike. Perhaps they could be more open, but that isn't much of a big deal. However, what I miss most about America is how easy it is to meet people and make friends.”



**LUKE FURY**

– United States of America –



**ANONYMOUS**

– Kenya –

“Kenyan culture differs greatly from Dutch culture in many ways. Firstly, Kenyan culture dictates a slow paced existence. For that reason, processes are very slow and relaxed in Kenya in comparison to the fast lifestyle in the Netherlands. I really appreciate the friendliness of the Dutchies. They are always willing to help.”

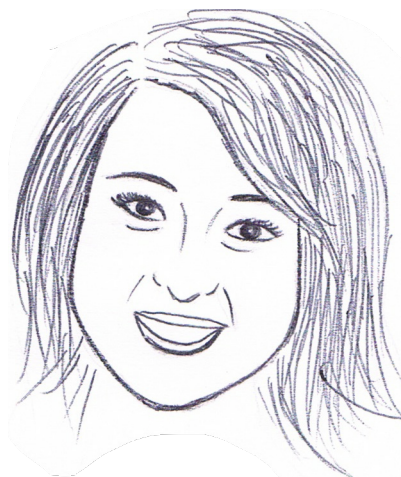


**EVGENIA GIAKOUMAKI**

– Greece –

“Greek culture is based on our history and religion, which is “Christian Orthodox.” These two aspects play an important role in our language, food, and music. Consequently, Greek language is more traditional and people have built their lives on these traditions. People love to study ancient history, eat traditional food and listen to folk music. For example, when a couple gets married in a Christian Orthodox church in Greece, there is always an after party, where people can dance to traditional music and eat Greek or Mediterranean food. Greek people are open, loud (in a good way), sociable and they talk a lot. They are hospitable and willing to help other people, but sometimes they can be a bit annoying with all their questions. Dutch culture differentiates in music, art, food and architecture. People here are quite different from the Greeks. I really like it that people here use bicycles and that it actually is a way of life. You can get everywhere fast, for free and at the same time exercise.” Moreover, I like the language and the architecture. Buildings here are nice and give personality to the city. Perhaps the language is not really useful in a sense that it is only spoken here, but it sounds nice and would be useful for people who are moving to the Netherlands. Dutch people are fun to be around. Some of them are not as friendly as Greek people, but they are nice in their own way. Dutch people, I believe, are direct in all occasions, in contrast to Greek people. If you did something good, they will tell you and Greeks will do the same. However, if you do something bad, they will tell you as well. Greeks would try to say it indirectly, because they do not want to hurt you. I like Dutch food, except for Herring. I tried it, and I will never make that mistake again. Sorry.”

“I have not had enough contact with Dutch people yet to be able to say that much about their culture, but if I compare them to Brazilians, they have their similarities, but also their differences! Brazilians and Dutch people can be quite chill, but we definitely do not ride bikes that often in Brazil. They seem to party a lot here, like in São Paulo! The way the girls always want to look good before leaving the house, reminds me of Brazil too. A stereotype is that they do not enjoy spending money and that’s different in Brazil, (although I haven’t seen that in practice so far)! What I do not like about the Dutch is that they become so aggressive when they are on wheels. If you want to see aggression in traffic, try driving in São Paulo! That is hell! So perhaps the Dutch are not so different from Brazilians at all.”



**BEATRIZ BURATTINI**

– Brazil –

# PRETENDING TO BE OBVIOUS

POLINA LIUBOMIROVA

**W**hat are the innovations of today about? Is it the exploration of a comet by landing a vessel in the first-of-its-kind manoeuvre, or creating self-restoring organisms? This may sound far removed from our everyday lives, but in fact, the innovations of today are getting much closer to us, willing consumers, and they are becoming much more obvious.



## YOU CHOOSE WHAT TO WEAR >> YOU CHOOSE HOW TO CARE

We can protect the environment simply by wearing a special type of clothes. Fashion label ByBorre has incorporated experimental fabric technique into their cutting edge fashion flows. They have created the BBSuit 2.0, capable of actually cleaning the air around the wearer. In the suit, there are sensors that analyse the quality of the air and when methane or carbon monoxide is identified, the high-voltage cold plasma technology starts the "save the environment mission". It simply splits particles into three radicals, and by doing that, it cleans the air.

[www.byborre.com](http://www.byborre.com)

## KNOW YOUR PLACES

Do you want to have an interesting swimming pool session and simultaneously engage your brain to get out of lazy consumerism? Dive into the Social Pool. Artist Alfredo Barsuglia, originally from Australia, has designed and built a small, Jacuzzi-like swimming pool, to be found on the vast expanses of the Mojave Desert (USA). You can make a reservation, get the keys and the GPS coordinates, prepare for hours of driving and walking, and engage with this exciting swimming pool session.

[www.social-pool.com](http://www.social-pool.com)



(With thanks to the *Protein* magazine for information.)

## "KOEKELOEREN"

It is commonly said that today we see our world through the lenses of technology, no longer interacting with the outside world. However, the 'Cucalu' phone app does just the opposite. It is a game that is translated from the Dutch verb 'koekeloeren' as 'to look around'. The idea of a game is to find a specific shape or pattern (like a circle or square and so on) in real everyday objects, for example, round sunglasses reflecting a geometrical form. It is not the app that shapes our thought; it just motivates us to think out of the box.

[www.cuca.lu](http://www.cuca.lu)

# NEWS 2 MUSE

WITH ANDRÉ HARRIS

## "ORDER, ORDER!"

If there's one thing we know plenty about here at BAIS, it's globalisation. As we hear every lecture, "*The world is getting closer together*" and "*people everywhere resemble each other more and more*". Today we live in a globalised, Westernised, ordered world. But if you've been following the news this last year, you might have noticed a few trends going the other way...

For one, old-school nationalism is definitely back in fashion. 45% of Scots voted to leave the United Kingdom, and the country continues to rejuvenate its Scottish identity. In return, UKIP is promoting a vaguely racist form of 'Englishness', and in Europe this traditional nationalism advanced as well. Nationalist parties – coating their ideas in anti-EU rhetoric – won big, showing that the nice idea of Europe coming together isn't as popular as it used to be. Russian nationalism too is proving to be anything but harmless.

Driven by a sense of anger at NATO and the West, Vladimir Putin is bringing great-power politics back. He's not inclined to go along with the peaceful, US dominated world order, and has decided to play hardball. Unfortunately for the people of Ukraine, this hardball is taking place in their cities. Thousands have died, and Russia is barely trying to hide its involvement. The basic 'rules' of today's world have been thrown out, and the West isn't quite sure how to deal with it.

More great-power politics that the West isn't sure how to deal with are in East Asia. 2014 has seen tensions between Japan and China drop to the worst point in decades, with no end in sight to arguments over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the South China Sea. China too is disputing the West's leading role in globalisation, and the US is wondering how exactly to make room for China without losing their own spot at the top.



Photo: wikipedia.org

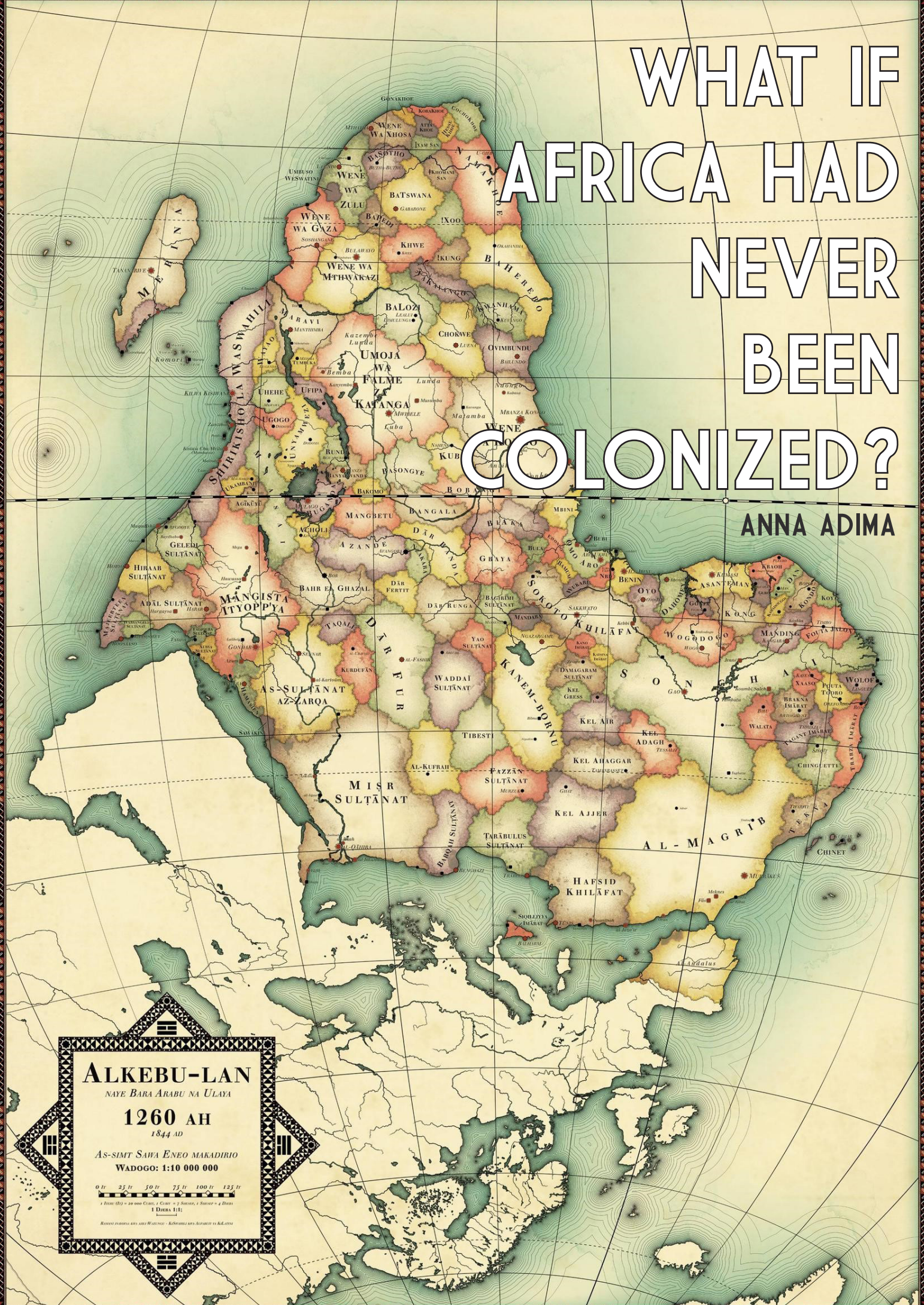
Finally, in the Middle East Islamic State is picking at the very borders of the world order. The borders between Iraq, Syria and Lebanon have been almost erased, and refugees, smugglers and jihadists cross them at will. But it's not just borders – IS's ideology is based on ideas so different from the West's that we can't even communicate. With the US keeping up the bombing, but very unwilling to intervene in Syria, it's anyone's guess what the Middle East will look like in a year's time.

So is this the beginning of the end for globalisation, or at least Westernisation? Well, it might be signs of a political decline of the West. For every action, there's a reaction, and 20 years after the end of the Cold War many countries are standing up for what they see as their 'sovereignty' – even if it means breaking the sovereignty of the smaller states around them. But this doesn't mean the West is done for. As we've all learnt – maybe a bit too often – globalisation is cultural, and the soft power of the West is still unparalleled. Even if the international order is starting to crack, globalisation will go on.

*André Harris has his own blog:*  
**[yourworldexplained.wordpress.com](http://yourworldexplained.wordpress.com)**  
*Check it out!*

# WHAT IF AFRICA HAD NEVER BEEN COLONIZED?

ANNA ADIMA



**ALKEBU-LAN**  
NAYE BARA ARABU NA ULAYA  
**1260 AH**  
1844 AD  
AS-SIMT SAWA ENEO MAKADIRIO  
WADOGO: 1:10 000 000

0 fr 25 fr 50 fr 75 fr 100 fr 125 fr  
1 Kilom. (10 = 10 000 Cms., 1 Cm. = 2 Sines, 1 Sine = 4 Dars  
1 Dars = 120

REPRODUCE PERMITTED BY THE AUTHOR - REPRODUCED BY ALKEBU-LAN



*Many people today attribute the wealth of problems in Africa – poverty, conflict, disease, to name just a few – to colonialism. Colonialism, it seems, is the go-to word for many politicians, academics and laymen – both African and non-African – when trying to find the root of Africa’s problems today. This brings to mind the question: what if Africa had never been colonised? Would it be in the same situation as it is today, rapidly developing and changing, yet at the same time lagging behind the rest of the world, being home to the world’s poorest nations? Or would the continent look completely different?*

Let’s take a look at the most ‘obvious’ issue – African states. Before the conference, African land was divided according to tribal kingdoms, and whichever tribe dominated a certain area. If Europe had not colonised Africa and divided the continent amongst itself at the 1884-85 Berlin Conference, in what is now known as the Scramble for Africa, Africa would not have any states, which in itself is a European notion, or any Western form of governance. Who knows, maybe the tribal system of ruling would have prevailed until this day.

Another matter that would be different if it had not been for colonialism is slavery. There was slavery in Africa for centuries before the first Europeans arrived, in the form of indentured slavery amongst Africans themselves, the Arab Slave Trade in the 8th Century and, later on, the Atlantic Slave Trade in the 16th Century. Africans themselves acted as slavers, often selling their conquered enemies’ soldiers. At the time, African slavers had no real attachment to the future of the slaves they traded, as there was no common feeling of African identity, which in itself is a sentiment that arose primarily as a reaction to ‘the white man’s’ presence. With the arrival of the Europeans, however, slavery in Africa was abolished – France first abolished slavery in Africa in 1794, and British Parliament passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1802. Today, there are a few parts of Africa that still maintain slavery or slave-like practices; if it had not been for colonialism, slavery would be much more prevalent in Africa than it currently is.

War and conflict are other two other issues that may well have characterised Africa as quite different from its present state, if it had not been for colonialism. It is difficult to say what would be more probable – whether the continent would see more or less conflict than it does at the moment. Both could equally be true; however, for simplicity’s sake, we will just look at the latter case. A good case

study is the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, an ethnic conflict involving the mass slaughter of members of the Tutsi tribe by those of the Hutu. In many ways, this conflict had its roots in the days of Belgian colonization of Rwanda: the Belgians categorised the two tribes, ascribing each certain external distinguishable features, and classifying the Tutsis as ‘superior’ to the Hutus. Thus, this example indicates that if the Europeans had not arrived in Africa, there may well have been less conflict in the period after independence.

These are but three examples of the different scenarios that could have been the case in Africa if the continent had never been colonised by European powers. Of course, there are many other subjects one could look into, one of these being disease. Many diseases were brought to Africa by the Europeans, such as Rinderpest, which came with the Italians in the 1890s. One cannot help but ask oneself, if the continent had not been colonised, whether Africa would be the disease-ridden place it is today. Related to this is the issue of health care: would life expectancy be lower or higher without the introduction of Western medical practices? Or would traditional medicines and practicing witch doctors still be the order of the day? And religion, which plays a huge role in Africa today, would also be very different had the continent not been colonised. Christianity, one of the most widespread religions in Africa today, was forced upon Africans by European missionaries. How would African societal structure be different if the religion had no followers?

There is no right or wrong answer to these questions; a discussion on these issues would be endless. But regardless of which stance you take – whether Africa would be better or worse off today if not for colonialism – we can all agree that not just Africa, but the world itself would be a very different place if Europe had not colonised the continent.



# WHAT IF PEOPLE HAD NO NOSE?

LILIT ZELTSBURG

*No, I am not high as I am writing this. Do not even start to tell me that you have honestly never asked yourself this question. Or maybe you asked yourself a slightly different question, instead: why do people have noses? It's a rather interesting question to examine, because, quite frankly, it makes no sense whatsoever. Many animals have elongated faces that stick out and away from their body, and while our jaw does stick out, our face is otherwise flat except for the nose. So what happened?*

First, let us have a look at what the nose actually does. First of all, of course, the nose is important for breathing. You could breathe through your mouth, but the nose just does it much more efficiently, as it has all of that blood and slime to warm up and filter the air that you breathe in. Breathing through the nose is also what makes us so great at eating, firstly because we can breathe and eat at the same time, and secondly, because our sense of smell helps us taste our food.

Smelling is also a thing that our nose does. Smelling can be quite underrated, too, which is unfortunate, because our sense of smell does not only tell us how something smells, but what its smell means. For instance, a foul smell coming from uncooked food usually means that you shouldn't eat it. Also, smell is connected to memories, in the way that certain smells remind you of certain times in your life, and sometimes smells can make you remember things that you had forgotten.

But why do our noses stick out? Scientists have hypothesised that our noses evolved into the shape they are now because humans migrated all over the place. A large nose helps warm up

cold air more effectively, so anyone living in a colder area would benefit from having a bigger nose. Chimpanzees, for instance, have very small noses that hardly protrude from their face, because they live in warmer climates. On the other hand, Neanderthals had very large noses, even for today's standards. (It didn't stop them from going extinct, though.)

The question of what would happen if we didn't have (protruding) noses is slightly more difficult to answer scientifically. We can speculate, though. If we didn't have noses, our life would be much colder, and not only in the literal sense. We would not have the efficient tool that we currently have to warm up our air for us. We would not be able to wear sunglasses – or any glasses, as for that. We would have one less defining characteristic – haven't you ever noticed how different celebrities look after nose jobs? We would be missing out on the gentlest moment of a kiss, when your noses brush lightly against each other, even before your lips meet, and you know exactly what is coming.

But then without protruding noses, we also would not really have to worry anymore about bruising the other person's face with our massive *shnabel*.

## WHAT IF AFTER GRADUATION FROM COLLEGE, YOU CHOSE TO LEAVE EVERYTHING BEHIND?

NICHELLE NAOMI BUYNE

*For this month's BAISMAG,  
I decided to review a modern classic:*

### **Into The Wild**

Recent college graduate, Christopher McCandless decides he is done with his parents, done with his seemingly perfect life and possible future in law school, and especially done with our materialist society. He transfers almost all of his savings to Oxfam, takes his car, and starts driving west – without telling anyone. We follow closely, while Christopher changes his name into Alexander Supertramp, meets many interesting people along his way and becomes more fascinated by the idea of living in the wild in Alaska.

Throughout his journey he keeps journals, in which he writes about his adventures and his process of self-discovery. He does not consider himself homeless, but free, idealizing what he calls the renunciation of civilization – the idea of going back to basics. While all the people he meets seem to think the plan is doomed, this only motivates Christopher to continue. Meanwhile, his parents become increasingly desperate to find him. Although Christopher's plan may seem flawed, the director never judges. Rather, utilising particular cinematography techniques, Sean Penn and Eric Gautier



are able to capture the beauty of Christopher's ideas. Elaborate shots of Alaska's beautiful nature accompanied by a soundtrack filled with Eddie Vedder songs written especially for the film, provide the story with an extra layer. Through breathtaking landscapes and close ups of beautiful moments alone, or with people he met along the road, we slowly start to believe in Christopher's dream as well. However, the movie shows us all sides of the coin. It tactfully demonstrates the happiness as well as the tragedy of Alexander's loneliness, while also providing an important outlook into the lives of those who stay behind.

During the movie, one slowly begins to understand why his determination seems intertwined with anger and bitterness, and why he insists on finding happiness in solitude. Sadly, nature proves to be as cold as people. We closely follow Christopher on his journey as it becomes increasingly difficult. When his freedom turns into his trap, we are trapped with him.

And during the slow, painful way down, we are left with the question: is happiness only real when shared?

## EVENTS

### **WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR**

Until 8 March 2015  
€11 entrance fee  
@ Museon, The Hague  
[www.museon.nl/en](http://www.museon.nl/en)

### **KONING WINTER DEN HAAG**

Christmas markets, ice-skating, live music, fireworks...  
Everyday another activity in The Hague to make the most of these cold winter days.  
7 December 2014 – 7 January 2015  
<http://koningwinterdenhaag.nl>

### **T.I.T.S.**

19 h, every Tuesday  
@ De Gekke Geit  
The Hague

### **STATE-X NEW FORMS**

Festival @ Paard van Troje  
14 – 15 December 2014  
Combi-ticket: €25

### **ROMANTIC FASHIONS**

19th Century Fashion Exhibition  
until 22 March 2015  
€13.50 for Students  
@ Gemeentemuseum  
The Hague  
[www.gemeentemuseum.nl/en/exhibitions/romantic-fashions](http://www.gemeentemuseum.nl/en/exhibitions/romantic-fashions)

### **THE VINCENT AWARD 2014**

Until 1 February 2015  
@ GEM, Museum of Contemporary Art  
The Hague  
<http://www.gem-online.nl/en/exhibitions/the-vincent-award>

### **SKI TRIP BASIS TRAVEL COMMITTEE**

2 – 10 January 2015  
Val Thorens, France



# THE THREE PATHS

ECESU EROL

"I see the three paths..." she said, while looking at the coffee cup in her hand. It was late at night, they had gathered around a table, enjoyed a delicious meal that was followed by Turkish coffee and now, finally, it was time for the fortune telling. "I see three paths; these are your relationships, three different guys in your life. One of them is blocked; you chose to block it without any consideration. Another one shines the brightest, it is a very clear path and this is the one that you choose to go along with. However this path gets darker, the end is dark and it is the wrong path, the wrong choice for you. There is one more path, but not as important as these two." She always found this fortune telling ritual exciting and mysterious, but never had she taken it as seriously as she did right now.

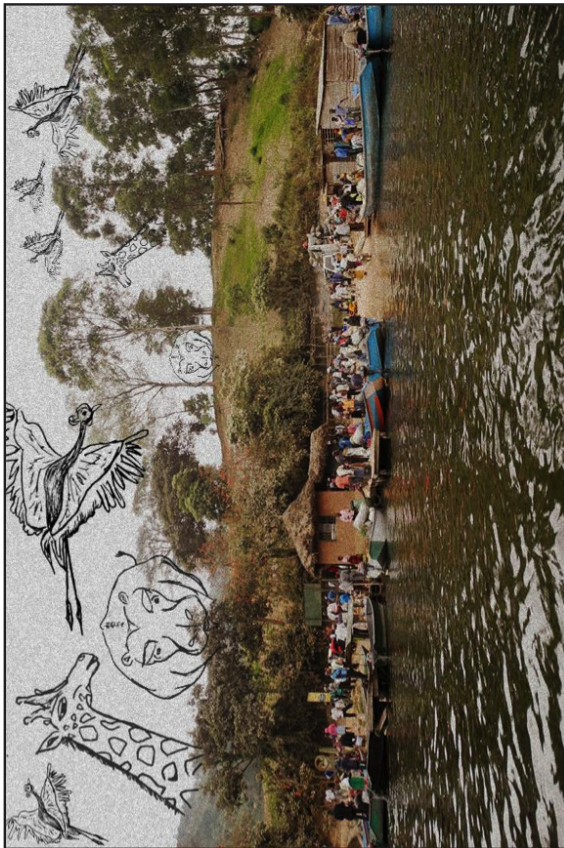
After a period of struggle to make a decision, she had finally decided and picked the guy that shined the brightest. Because he made her happy, because he was nice and sweet and gorgeous and caring... He was everything a girl could ask for. But now, she was being told that this was the wrong decision. As she listened to her fortune all her worries, all the questions she had in mind before making that decision came back to her. She found herself unsure, again. What if...? What if...? Lately all her questions started with "What if...?" "The guy that you blocked is actually the one you should be with. I see many seagull figures underneath that path." Seagulls, in fortune telling, represented good news and hopes for the future; it meant that happy days were ahead. "I see a letter underneath the path, it is hard to tell but it looks like a Y or a T."

She kept searching the corners of her mind - and heart - trying to relate those letters to someone. As she was lost in the depths of her mind a friend shouted a name and everyone else in the room agreed that it must be him. What they did not know was that she had someone else in mind, someone that she had blocked, for reasons she couldn't tell anyone, not even the people in this room. What if...? What if he was the one she was supposed to be with...? "You are discarding this guy, I do not know why but without giving him a chance." The woman put the cup down and started looking at the tiny plate now. "Make a wish." She closed her eyes and made her wish, for the guy that shined the brightest. To be happy with him and to love him. The woman flipped the plate and watched

the last bits of coffee as they slid through the plate and reached halfway only to slow down. "Your wish will come true, but only partially." She assumed this meant that she would be happy with him but not in love... Well, that was the way things were at the moment anyway. The women shook the plate a little, hoping that the drop would reach the center, making the wish come true, but it did not. And so leaving the wish behind, she started looking at the plate for the second part of the fortune telling. "I see a big heart, and a letter on it, K."

There was silence in the room as everyone kept looking at each other but this time no one shouted any names... She knew what the K stood for but she dismissed it, not allowing another what-if to pop up in her head. As she did so, the women flipped the plate again to check the drop and said "Your wish will indeed come true, it will take time and real effort but it will come true." If her wish was going to come true, if she was indeed going to love the guy that shines the brightest, how could there be a K in the heart? As if she felt the question, the woman repeated once again that there was a heart on the plate and the letter K on it and that there was nothing else left to tell. The woman went on to the next cup, telling someone else's fortune, but she was stunned, still under the effect of the things she had just heard, with so many questions running through her mind. What if she chose the wrong guy? What if she was the one who was going to lead to the dark end? She always thought it would be her because that guy, the one that shined the brightest was so innocent...

And in contrast she was the dark one. What about the guy that she blocked? She had let sin take over their bodies one night but that was it. She had told herself that was it, that it was a one-time mistake that would not be repeated. But what if that was wrong? What if they were meant to be? What if he could've been the one to bring her not only happiness but also the passion and love that she needs...? No, she was romanticizing things, like she always did. But had she not made her decision long ago already? She waited for everyone to leave, made herself a cup of coffee, took a deep breath and lit a cigarette. She felt the menthol of the cigarette on her lips and the coldness of the night that made her shiver. She watched the smoke come out of the cigarette and dance in the dark while she only had one question in mind: What if...?



To BaisMag,

Things are great here in Uganda! I am doing my internship at IDSS, which aims to develop Africa with a backbone of students. We train and empower students to become agents of development in their own communities. But the best thing is that I co-founded it myself and govern the organisation with two other Ugandan students. So, from 12:00-14:00 I work as an intern at the IDSS office and in



the evening I decide what I will do the next day. I love it here. I even made it to the most prominent newspaper of Uganda with the headline, "Mzungu ends tour in slum after guide falls in sewage." Need I say more?

Hamna Shida!

Erik Van der Zanden

BAIS MAG  
SCHOUWBURGSTRAAT 2,  
2511 VA,  
DEN HAAG,  
THE NETHERLANDS

Merhaba from Al-Quds! And Shalom!

Jerusalem is confusing! On the other hand, historically rich, beautiful + electric - Jerusalem has this special something! on another hand it is frustrating, frightening & crazy. I have gotten use to the sound of surveillance helicopters constantly circling above my house, the occasional explosion of sound bombs in my neighbourhood + the IDF soldiers hanging around my street corner. I will never get use to so many people wearing guns - the soldiers,

guards on every train university security + even my university counselor.

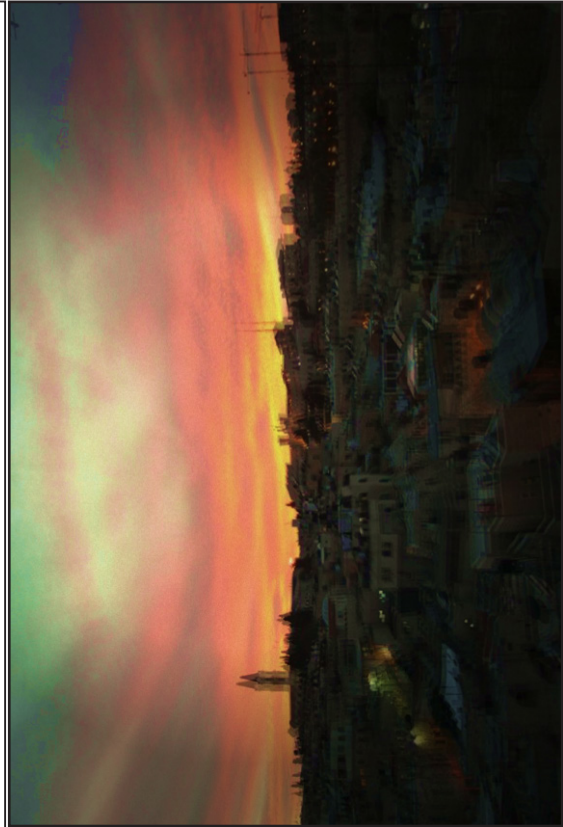
I am in love with hummus + falafel and the Palestinian dialect (forget everything you learnt in class - the most important word of all is "Sheh" - "What?"). I want to stay in Jerusalem.

All the best,  
Theresa

BAIS MAG,  
SCHOUWBURGSTRAAT 2,  
2511 VA,  
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THE NETHERLANDS

# POSTCARDS

FROM 3<sup>RD</sup> YEARS A B R O A D



# THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "WHAT IF"

SAKARI NUUTTILA

The eternal question of what if has a dangerous dual nature. When wondering about the future, it has the potential of opening the horizon to seemingly unattainable opportunities that are made possible just because we dared to ask. But when contemplating the past, the vexing question will cause us nothing but anxiety, regret and resentment.

It is easy to wallow in self-pity, and to torment oneself with imagined realities in which events would have happened differently, but it doesn't help much. Realising that there is no need to ask these questions will make life much easier to bear. For there is no such thing as what if – there is only what is.

Just the fact that out of all the possible choices you could have made at any given moment, you chose precisely the one you did, proves it is the only choice you could have made. There is only one reality we are capable of perceiving, and in that reality we are capable of acting only in a certain way in a particular situation. Only one course of action is possible at one moment, and it will define a unique chain of other options, of which you can only choose one.

Let us consider the classic example of a fork in the road, with multiple trails leading in different, unknown directions. No matter how long you deliberate over which path to

choose, you will ultimately walk – or be pushed down – only one of them. At that very moment the die is cast; all other options become obsolete, you can only go forward, to the next fork in the road.

Asking yourself "What if I had gone down a different path?" leads only to fruitless speculation. After all, you were the one who chose the path. This is not to say we are all helplessly caught in some predetermined causal vortex. Our life and choices are our own – we just need to realise that what if only exists in front of us, never behind us.

Stop blaming circumstances, or other people, for the situations you've gotten yourself into; it is up to you to make the best of it. As it always has been. Besides, every single action we have taken during our lives has made us the person we are today. If it weren't for these choices, for better or for worse, we would not be who we are.

Then heed this creed:

**Everything that happens, happens the way it happens, and could not happen in any other way.**

It is futile to wonder about what if at this point. Whatever you do, you have done the only thing you could have done. And if you did the only thing possible, how could you ever do anything wrong?

It is a comforting thought - if you believe it.

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THE OF YOUR



# NETHERLANDS

1. **Groningen Christmas fair Bourtange** -  
*A festive Christmas fair near the border of Germany- 6<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>th</sup> December*  
<http://www.bourtange.nl>

2. **Amsterdam Opera La Boheme** -  
*Dutch National Opera showcasing Giacomo Puccini's La bohème (Quattro quadri- 4th-30th December*  
<http://operaballet.nl/en/opera/2014-2015/show/la-boheme>

3. **Amsterdam Hippie Market** -  
*Find some quirky attire and knickknacks in the heart of Amdam. 21<sup>st</sup> December; 12:00-18:00*  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/898055583552655/?ref=ts>

4. **Hague Paardcafe** -  
*hip place to jam, with hip hop to electronic music, weekly events*  
<http://www.paard.nl/page/paardcafe>

5. **Rotterdam PRSPCT XL 20 2014**-  
*Largest Dutch hardcore drum and bass indoor rave -24th December*  
<http://www.maassilo.com/events/prspct-xl-20/>

## YONCA'S TOP PICKS:



Once the exam palaver is over, you'll probably find me at the **ROTTERDAM PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION** trying to relive all the pain that was anguished in the previous weeks. I would also like to stress the importance of attending at least one **CHRISTMAS MARKET** during the season to be merry- so don't waste any time and choose one from our 'recommended' list. Have fun little ones!



6. **Rotterdam 'Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists'**-  
*Exhibition of the development of contemporary art and art practice in China- 4th September - 4th January*  
<http://www.wdw.nl>

7. **Hague Christmas with Anúna - A whisper of paradise**- *Irish a capella choral ensemble* - 14<sup>th</sup> December  
<http://www.ldt.nl>

8. **Utrecht China Light Festival 2014**-  
*Light display that draws on centuries of tradition and Chinese culture* - 21 November 2014 - 04 January 2015  
<http://chinalightutrecht.nl/en>

9. **Eindhoven 'The Nutcracker'**-  
*Live dance performance by Bolshoi Ballet*- 21st December  
<https://www.pathe.nl/film/20271/nutcracker-live-2014-the>

10. **Maastricht Christmas Market**-  
29<sup>th</sup> November- 30<sup>th</sup> December

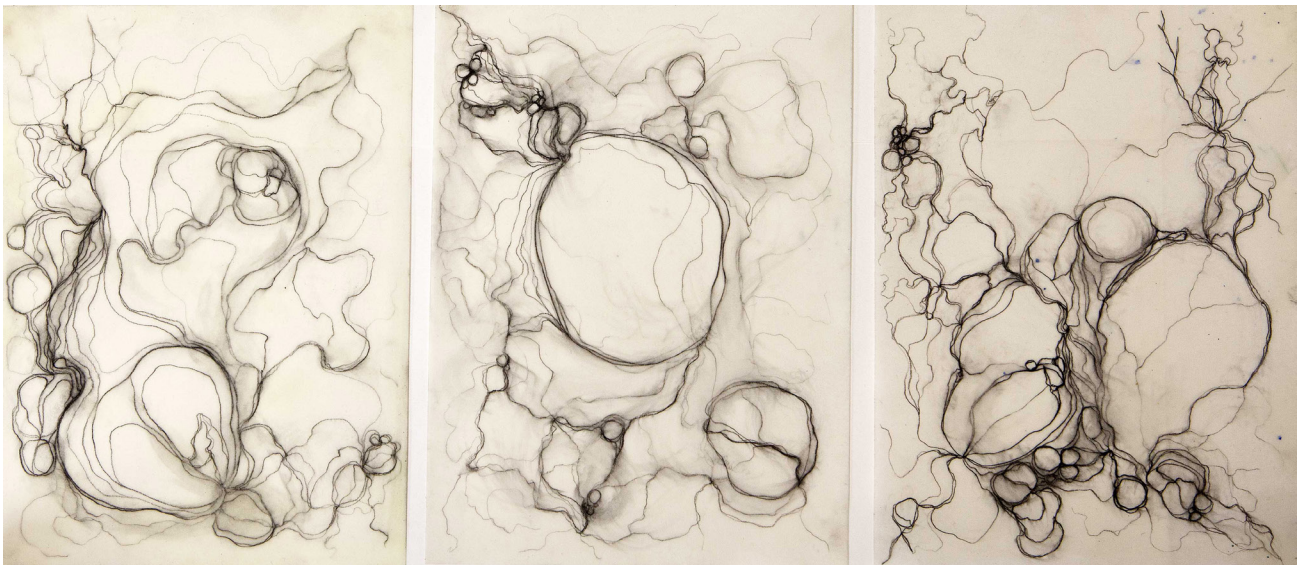


## GRAINNE'S TOP PICKS:

With Christmas just round the corner and exams almost over now is the perfect time to go to all the exhibitions; nights out; shows, you dreamed of all semester! On the top of my list would be the **AMSTERDAM HIPPIE MARKET**, pick up some quirky clothing along with a bite to eat, and enjoy your first day of freedom, post exams. An alternative would be to do a railway trip to another city or even nip over the boarder to Antwerp- explore the world (+country) that we live in.

# lets get naked and draw

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“skin”  
pencil and linseed oil on paper  
Fiona Glen

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**[WWW.ONLINEBASIS.NL/BAISMAG](http://WWW.ONLINEBASIS.NL/BAISMAG)**

( A big thank you to everybody who supported us on our year-long journey so far! )