

BAISMAG

INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES



THE BOOKAZINE ISSUE



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PRaised READERS

We present a fresh, unique, and remarkable approach to BAISMAG, the 'Bookazine'; a healthy mixture between a book and a magazine, an issue complete with more articles than any before, an issue with unseen journalists offering their novel observations. Such a novel piece cannot be bound by a set theme or topic, rather we have endeavoured to capture and bind alike articles, creating chapters for the 'Bookazine'. We have an array of segments, ranging from an interview with a high-end escort to the pressing British referendum issues, shaped by the inquisitive minds of BAIS students from all years. Enough opinions, stories, interviews to satisfy even the most discerning. However, one might ask themselves: why such drastic changes? This issue is an ode to those who have created BAISMAG, and who will graduate at the end of the semester. However, fret not for the future of this magazine, rather fret for your ability to acquire a copy of this issue, as BAISMG will flourish, calling upon the bright minds of this course to contribute and share your skills, knowledge and opinion.

Your dedicated editors,

ISIDORO AND POLINA



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ELUSION

The sun was shining, I could feel its warmth on my face. When I finally opened my eyes, I realized I was lying on my old bed, in my parents' house. Although I had left it a while ago to get a job in the capital city of my country, I knew I could always find comfort in this house. I did not remember getting to this place, nor did I remember the previous day, but I was not worried; I was in a safe place, after all. My books, my old paintings, everything was still there. I looked at the open door.

My little brother was standing there. Although I could not see him clearly in the dark, I recognized his face and his clothes. He was exactly the same as I remembered him, or maybe a little taller than I would admit. I smiled at him, but as he looked at me, he suddenly looked like a stranger to me. His innocence had been taken away, I could see it in the way he observed the world, the way he observed me. He walked towards me, stepped outside of the shadows, and the light coming from the window enabled me to see him with more detail. I could also notice something I had not noticed before: there was blood on his shirt and on his pants. He was almost covered in it. I wanted to speak, to ask him what was wrong, what had happened, but I could not utter a word. After what felt like an eternity, I was finally able to whisper:

- "Is this... Is this blood...on your shirt?"

I knew my voice was broken, weakened by fear, and I could not stop shaking. Yet, I could not hide the panic that had invaded my body. I feared what he would answer, I feared it so much that I was not even sure that I wanted to hear the answer anymore.

- "Eliam died today. I was with him, but there was this bullet... It came from nowhere. He told me he knew he was going to die, so he asked me to stay by his side until the end. I was his only family left, I had to stay. I held him because I could not leave him. That's his blood."

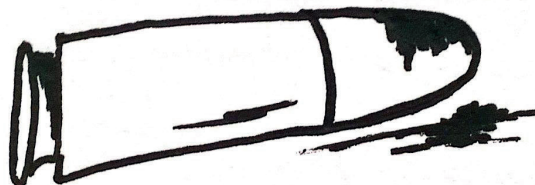
I could not believe he talked with such detachment about his best friend, the one he had considered like a brother for years. He was obviously sad, but it seemed to me that he was used to it. How could one ever be used to losing their relatives? His expression revealed he finally realized that I did not understand anything of what was going on.

- "We've been in this situation for the past year. Soldiers come and go, they wear different uniforms. Some promised they would help us, but every time I look outside, all I see are more buildings destroyed, more lives taken away. Why would anyone want a war like this? Does anybody really feel so much hate that they want to exterminate us?"

I was in a state of shock. He talked about a war, but I could not remember any of this. I turned to the window to see the outside world. What I had before my eyes was a scenery of war and horror. Wherever I looked, it seemed that there was no place to find comfort anymore. All the buildings I remembered, all the places where I had spent my childhood, they were no more. All my assumptions about safety were torn apart with this sight. I was still in the exact same room as when I woke up, yet my feelings had changed dramatically. I felt something I never thought I would feel in my life: I was fearing for my brother's life and my own. The same questions my brother had asked me a minute ago kept running through my head. It did not make sense. I was holding my head, closing my eyes and praying "Please, erase all of this madness" until I could not feel anything anymore.

Suddenly, I woke up with this fear still anchored to my heart. As I started to recognize the objects around me, I realized that this was all a creation of my mind, a nightmare. I began to feel safer, yet still doubtful. I knew that I would never be able to erase these images from my mind. I kept wondering "If it has happened somewhere in this world, why would it not be here?"

BY EMYLIE BOBBI



THE UNDENIABILITY OF RACE:

4 EXPERIENCES

For us BAIS students - open-minded, diversity-loving globetrotters - the issue of skin colour is practically obsolete. As a wise man once sung, it doesn't matter if you're black or white! Many of us won't even notice someone's skin colour, but most people see the world very differently and time and again, people are attributed certain characteristics and labels based purely on the colour of their skin. Whilst you might think outside of such boxes, some people tend to place you in one the moment they encounter you. Below are the experiences of the authors of this article (all of whom have some connection to Africa), who describe their experiences of labelling and categorisations based on their skin colour, both in Africa and in Europe.

Disclaimer: do not take this as a diatribe of self-pity; the authors are merely describing what they have experienced in the past.

A white girl in Africa's account

MZUNGU! Mama! Nyeupe! Baby! I love you whity! The incessant hail of name-calling bordering on catcalling is overwhelming, to say the least, for a European used to going around the city unnoticed. I felt as misplaced as a life-sized fluorescent Pikachu at a UNSC meeting, while walking my way back from work through the relentlessly busy streets of Dar es Salaam. "Mzungu, njoo hapa!" A man holding a baby points my way and shows the child what a white person is. Being the association to the word "white person" isn't too bad, but the proposals on the bus somehow felt very alienating. The chitchat with the chai-vendor and the political discussions with the taxi-drivers made me think at times I was "one of them".

But I realized that was an illusion when entering the lavishly luxurious Hilton hotel bar, with its gorgeous palm tree-framed sunset and live jazz. Despite my unease with only 5000 Shillings (2.5 euros) in my pocket, nobody questioned me being there, in the upper-class white side of town, so reminiscent of colonialism it is sickening. It's a lush life, there, and I, so white, went by unnoticed in that luxurious world that wasn't mine. But in my 'local' neighbourhood, with its bumpy roads, lingering youth and street-vendors, I was the odd one out.

Race is a construct, but it is also an undeniable reality. I could not be one of them. I was the white, exotic, strange Other. As much as I tried to blend in, the first thing anyone would notice was still my skin.

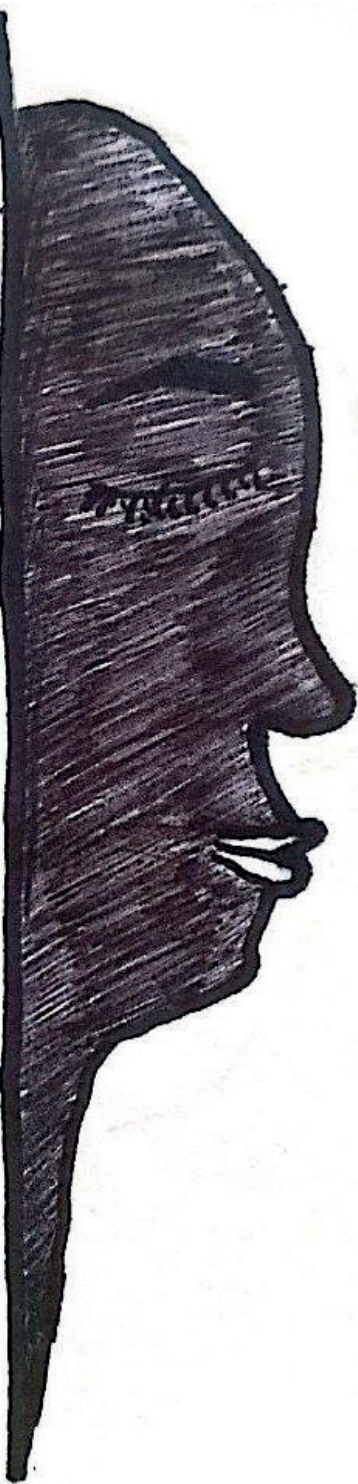
A mixed race person's account

As a person of mixed race (black father, white mother), and having grown up in different countries and experienced a plethora of cultures, I tend not to identify with strict categories regarding nationality or social groups. However, time and time again, I encounter people who feel the need to label and categorise me. In Europe, I am seen as black, and it is interesting to watch how people's treatment of me changes, once they hear me speak fluent English or German (depending on where in Europe I am), or show them my German passport.

In Africa on the other hand, I am most commonly classed as 'mzungu' (white person), once people realise that despite my darker skin colour, I do not speak an African language (However, this too changes when I am in Uganda. After I explain to people that my father is Ugandan and that I spent most of my childhood there, then people tend to see me more as 'one of them'). Most people in Africa though are puzzled about my origins and will not hesitate to ask – I was once stopped in the street walking home from school and asked whether I was white, African, or Arab!

It is puzzling to me why so many people still feel the need to categorise and label people, especially today, when a person's skin colour probably says the least about where a person is from. I identify myself as both African and European, but my skin colour (too light for the one, yet too dark for the other) prevents me from being fully accepted by societies in either continent. As much as we would like to imagine ourselves in the utopia in which race and racial barriers do not exist, the sad reality is that they do, and still determine people's treatment of each other.





An Afro-European guy's experience

As a Ghanaian born in Belgium and raised in international environments in both Belgium and Ghana, I was always surrounded by people who appreciated cultural diversity. However, the more exposure I gained in life, the sooner I came to realise that my utopian dream was a dream not shared by everyone.

My confrontation with racism started in my late teens, when I was stopped several times by police officers because I was suspected of stealing a bike that I rightfully owned and was taking to the repairs. It may surprise you that this incident did not happen in the village that I come from in Belgium, but a rather vibrant multicultural city like The Hague. Unfortunately, that would not be my only brush with racism.

After many years of living in Europe, being in Ghana for six months for my internship was exhilarating. I felt at home. I no longer felt like I was being stared at, I was surrounded by people who look like me and funnily, I was no longer the only black guy in the room!

However, that necessarily did not end my confrontation with discrimination. I can say I was "positively discriminated", if that's a thing. Having lived abroad and being a foreigner in my own country of origin, I was ascribed qualities such as success, educated and wealthy. These qualities meant people would charge me extra for the price of goods and services and give me preferential treatment. This sort of discrimination would only end if I switched to my Ghanaian dialect. So, although I did feel at home, I also simultaneously felt like an outsider.

The power of speech shown in another mixed race person's account

I'm mixed race. I have a Dutch passport with a picture of a brown, scarfed girl. In the Netherlands people see me as an 'allochtoon', an immigrant, a foreigner. I am just a pebble in the avalanche of other Turkish, Moroccan Muslim girls. When I tell Dutch people I have a Dutch father they don't think of a white, blonde, blue eyed man who grew up as a farmer and wore clogs into his late 40s. They think of a brown man, an immigrant like me. I know this because my Dutch surname always comes as a surprise. In Tanzania I'm too white to be one of the Tanzanians. I pay a visa to go home. I am 'Mzungu', Indian, Chinese or albino (yes someone once called me albino). Even in Zanzibar, an island off the coast of Tanzania with a strong Arab influence, where other girls look like me, people view me as a foreigner. I've been told it's because I have a European nose.

Yet there is one thing that helps to transform me from the other to the us. Speech. My Dutch doesn't carry an accent. It is non-confronting. It cancels out my brown skin and scarf. Even with all the stutters, it is "good", "accent-less" Dutch. Whereas my Swahili is different. Despite having never lived in Pemba, also an island off the Tanzanian coast, I carry the thick, melodious accent of rural Pemba. It makes people laugh or step back in shock. It's not elegant. It hits you hard. It is the accent of the "ignorant" people who smell of fish and sweat. Some people see my Swahili as a curse and my Dutch as a wonder. I see them both as blessings. I think my speech is the little miracle that God gave me. Both to make me feel at home and to help me crush the racism of my own people.

**BY: RUTH-MARIE HENCKES,
ANNA ADIMA,
LINFORT LAMPTEY
MARIAM DE HAAN**

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

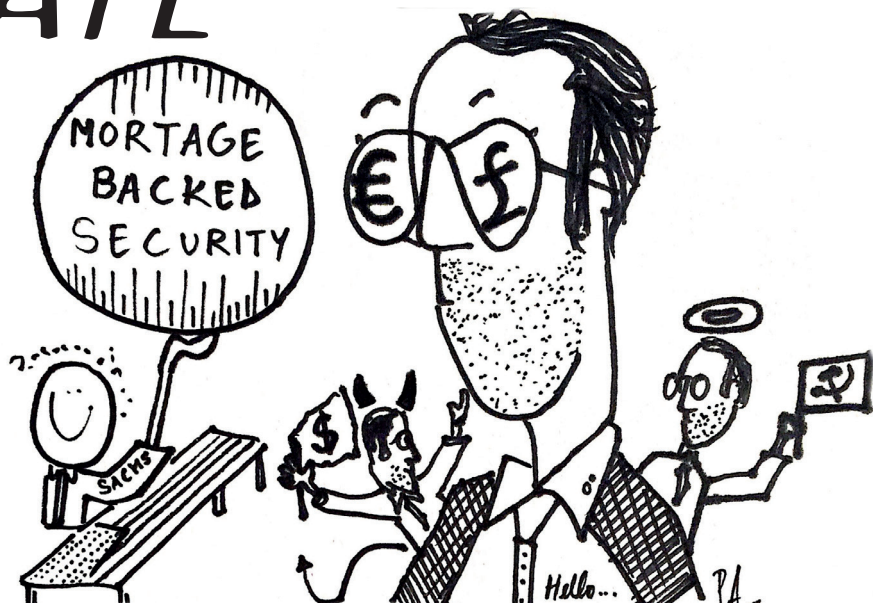
BY PRATYAKSH ARNEJA

It is highly unlikely that you've laid your eyes upon anything remotely related to investment banking, especially, in this study programme. However, you'd be surprised to know the number of liberal arts/social science majors who pursue their long-term goals in Finance. There's definitely more than meets the eye and that's why I plan to unearth some of the cultural conventions of Investment Banking with a little help from a social media parody page called "Goldman Sachs Elevator Gossip".

Before I commence elaborating on the aforesaid, it is imperative to establish a little background check. Imagine the kind of people who graduate from schools like Harvard and Wharton, boast a GPA of 4, perfect transcripts, just the right balance of partying in Greek fraternities and co-scholastic ventures turn out to be in their lives: Snobs. Albeit, really smart ones. These are the kind of people that Goldman Sachs, world's biggest Investment bank, wants to pocket. Now, before you get critical, I realize that I can't generalize investment banking culture on the basis of just one firm, but try to stay with me on this one.

Unless you weren't living under a rock all this while, I am certain you have come across a page called "Goldman Sachs Elevator". The page entails and satirises the way "elitist 1%" think, feel, behave and so forth. There are two ways to go about it. First, individuals like me, who can't help but laugh how eerily accurate the tweets can be. Secondly, ones who can take great offence at all the crass content that's posted.

In a Bloomberg interview I was watching, a journalist was quick to point out how the very mention of Goldman Sachs triggers polarized answers. The way I see it, it isn't entirely wrong to have conflicted opinions for the bank. Their name is systematically important and caters to a global clientele. On the flipside, their name resonates with one of the largest Wall Street meltdowns in the recent memory. The fact of the matter remains that Goldman indeed adheres to the strictest norms of institutional rulings, however, there will always be media outlets and such which will mould how we perceive these bankers. Unfortunately, it does not go to elucidate the bigger picture.



Facebook and Twitter pages, like the above, capitalize on the inherent inability of the few and don't think twice before generalizing it to all. We, today, perceive bankers as vile, blinded by wealth, extremely sexist and highly machismo in their thinking. If there's one concept that Cultural Studies has taught me, it is that of 'Bourgeois'. It is due to people like me and pages like 'Goldman Sachs Elevator' who have no qualms in throwing around that word so synonymously with these bankers.

Initially, the entire point of this article was to provide you an insight into the Investment Banking culture, however, whatever I say stands nullified. Do you know why? Because I have never worked in a bank before. Neither has the individual behind the parody page.

I do understand that the article took a rather inconspicuous turn, but let this be an ode to those financial honchos. It's about time we cut them some slack and stop giving financial institutions a bad name. Yes, they did mess up countless times. They do earn good money. They do flip out on the moral compass, but, who doesn't? I don't know any institution that hasn't been tampered with.

If there's one thing that I have noticed here at BAIS, that the notion 'right wing' creates quite a stir among us. People are sceptical and critical. I don't blame them. Feel free to have your say, however, let's re-think stuff. If it means being the devil's advocate once in a while, I say go for it. You've taken wrong decisions before. Just like my friends at Goldman have.



Get your Alternative Perspective™ here,

courtesy of Kremlin News Network:
the rise of RT in the West

About a month ago, I came across a panel-style debate show from RT online, Crosstalk, with the headline “Assad Will Win”, discussing the impacts of Russia’s air offensive on the situation in Syria. To RT’s credit, the guests did have varying opinions on the issue, but any real objectivity ended there. Whenever international lawyer Franklin Lamb tried to assert that Russia’s intervention was about propping up Assad and little about fighting terror, he was immediately shouted down by the condescending host, fellow American Peter LaVelle. Never before had I seen such blatant drowning out of an opposing opinion from a host himself, not even on Fox News. The related videos and articles? “Hybrid Warfare: Anti-Russia propaganda finds a new buzzword” and “Pimp my tank, Hamas edition”. Welcome to RT, a new reality in online news.

RT has managed to achieve online what mainstream Western media has failed to do, due to its foresight in seeing the internet and social media as news platform for huge potential expansion. However, this in itself is not enough; to effectively capture a new market, the content must be altered to cater for those who would not usually consume news and current affairs. RT has achieved this by utilising viral, clickbait journalism mixed in with the regular news: from “fascists” in Kiev, straight to an amputee boy playing concert piano. RT has perfected this style to spread their brand in this manner to a largely untapped Western audience.

Worryingly, along the course of its expansion, the anti-Washington political agenda of RT has managed to strike a chord with a generally less-informed, self-described “anti-establishment” demographic in America: think Trump-supporting 9/11 conspiracy theorists. This was painfully apparent reading the top comments of the above-mentioned video, such as: “ISIS: Israeli Secret Intelligence Service” or “so sorry American/Zionist backed ISIS/Al Nusra is loosing, that’s why lunatics in Washington need peace to save ISIS”. These may seem like the voices of radical idiots, but it’s exactly these views that RT promotes, such as when they “dutifully reported” Chechen strongman, Kadyrov’s theories about Western backing of ISIL “with no skepticism”, according to Casey Michel of RT Watch.

The West, has come to a crossroads in its systems of media and politics. This year’s US election campaign has displayed damningly the huge influence of mainstream media in shaping politics and national opinion, but also how the rise of online and social media has begun to erode this paradigm. Having jumped into the vacuum of online media with an efficiency that has left mainstream news sources with their tails between their legs, RT have cornered a large portion of the anti-establishment audience in the West, and proceeded to flood audience with even less objective news, straight from the Kremlin.

The next ten years will be crucial for the formation of a new 21st century media paradigm, and how things play out will be unnerving, but fascinating to watch.

By: Francis Farrell



COFFEE TALKS

Why would you ask somebody to go for a coffee and not for a tea? Let's go for tea! Does that sound ridiculous? Probably not ridiculous, but certainly not something you would offer on a daily basis. Also tea seems to be more intimate than coffee. Coffee is this social slut that will go well with everybody and everything.

A friend of mine invited me to have a coffee with him, «Recently I have headaches from coffee, can we have something else?» I said, «But I'm not gonna drink coffee either, I just said coffee so we can go», he answered, «Oh, well, I guess, it can work then».

I got the ginger tea with honey and he got a hot chocolate.

So in the daily conversation coffee itself is no longer a drink you want to sip, or skin on milk you want to cream off, it is the time spending that does not necessarily involve the actual idea of what you have been invited to do.

Coffee is betrayed.

You know, there is this conversation from the movie Airplane that I like:

Young Boy with Coffee: Excuse me, I happened to be passing, and I thought you might like some coffee.

Little Girl: Oh, that's very nice of you, thank you. [takes coffee]

Little Girl: Oh, won't you sit down?

Young Boy with Coffee: Thank you. [sits down]

Young Boy with Coffee: Cream?

Little Girl: No, thank you, I take it black...like my men.

If a woman dancing with a man is some kind of an imitation of sex, and sometimes alcoholic drinks are a pre-sex necessity, than coffee is the polite version of it. A sexier version of it. You don't have to dance after coffee, it is the elegancy of it.

We invite somebody for coffee because we want to break up, then you will take a bitter coffee or the quick one, so you will end this faster; or because we want to make an affair, then coffee should be sweet and pleasant and hot so you prolong the moment. We do not usually make business deals while drinking coffee, it is a lunch's task; coffee is not serious enough for that, coffee is a playing ground with many variations. Coffee gives you future, it makes your heart beat faster, it is this social construction we successfully use, let it be. Or not?

Read while Listening Bleu Citron Dorado Schmitt and after Watch Coffee and Cigarettes

BY POLINA LIUBOMIROVA

It is not a very healthy lunch, just the coffee and cigarettes.



STUDENT BY DAY, SEX WORKER BY NIGHT

AN INTERVIEW WITH A HIGH CLASS ESCORT

BY ANTONIA MCGRATH



Simone is in her early twenties and looks like any other university student, she's pretty, wearing ripped skinny jeans and trainers, and you'd never guess what she does for a living. Simone works for a high-class escorting agency, making more money in one night than most students will earn in a month. Five minutes into a conversation with her though, you can tell she's incredibly intelligent, talking knowledgeably about current political and economic issues - not what you would expect from the stereotype of a girl in her profession. "I'm myself first and an escort second," she says. "I do my job because I love it. Sex work is obviously still very stigmatized, so I don't really tell people about it, but there's such a misperception of what escorting actually involves. Most of what I do isn't sex at all." Simone gladly sat and talked to me about her experiences in this somewhat unusual field of work.

What made you decide to start escorting? How did you get into it?

It was something I'd thought about doing for a while actually. I wanted something that gave me adrenaline. I felt very normal, as if I could have been living the same life anywhere in the world, and I wanted some more excitement. So, I googled escorting in my city and came across a few agencies. I have no desire to become a full-time escort, so, for me, working for an agency is good (even though you make less money) because I have the support of other girls and a boss who does all the security checks. I ended up choosing my current agency because they had a very unique selling point, being that they only work with students and non-full-time escorts, and their website shows very normal girls in a totally non-overly-sexualized manner.

What was your first escorting experience like?

After talking to my now-boss on the phone and then meeting up for coffee, I had a trial run. I met my first client in the lobby of one of the city's fanciest hotels. To be honest, from the moment I met him I never looked back. I had an amazing time, and since then I've gone on to meet loads of interesting people and had really interesting experiences.

Do your parents or any of your friends know about what you do? Are they okay with it?

No, my parents have no idea, and I pray to god that it stays that way forever. I dread to think what my mother would say!

When I first started, I told three of my closest friends, and they've been so supportive and open-minded about it they really understand it and see it from a different point of view now than they might have before. I've told a few more people since, but I try not to unless it's necessary.

Do you still get nervous before you see clients?

Oh yeah! Every time before I go meet a client, I pray. It sounds funny, but it's my way of just relaxing.

I always get the nerves, but it's good nerves, more excitement and anticipation really.

At the start, it was because of worrying that something would happen to me safety-wise, but now I've realized that the men actually have a lot more risk than I do. The power lies very firmly in the hands of the girls: we get the final say in any decision, and if we feel a client is dodgy, we can get him blacklisted in the whole city! I'm in touch with my boss before and after dates as well, so it's all very safe and structured. But yeah, there's always a sense of nervous-excitement before dates!

Who are the clients usually? Why are these men paying for sex?

My average client is probably 40, married, usually with kids who are probably not that much younger than me. They're usually incredibly successful, being either the owner or top manager of a big business, or they're doctors or lawyers. They come from very diverse backgrounds, countries, careers and religions, so it's a really big melting pot of people that I never would have met in real life.

As for why they pay for sex, most of my clients married very young, and they all travel a lot with work. It's a very lonely life, so often they're paying to have a girl that they can just spend time and have intimacy and companionship with because they don't get the chance to do that in their personal lives.

What do you like about escorting?

Meeting really interesting people. Really, I meet such interesting people. And it's really good fun! I love the dynamic, because there's no judgement as neither of us is in a position to judge.

Is there anything about escorting that you don't like?

Yeah, of course, like any job. Sometimes I'll have clients and they'll request that I dress "sexy" and then they'll want to take me out in public to go shopping or something, and he wants to show affection in public even though it's very clear that he is older than me. In those situations, people just know that I'm an escort, and I find that really uncomfortable.

Something that's also really hard to deal with sometimes is hearing everyone else's problems all the time. Because escorting is such a bubble of trust, clients naturally feel that they can share their personal problems with me. I like trying to help people, but it can have quite an adverse effect on me mentally.

What sort of person do you think you have to be in order to be a good escort?

You have to be the sort of person that, if someone is in your company, you make them feel relaxed. Most of escorting is not actually sex- it's talking to people. My agency in particular really focuses on having girls that are educated and intelligent. You have to be a very good listener and someone who genuinely cares about people. My job is far more about that than sex.

What's the weirdest thing you've ever been asked to do?

I got tied up one time; that was funny. On the whole, most of my clients aren't into anything too kinky. My second client though, made me put on this leather dress and then he blindfolded me and handcuffed me to his bed. I assumed we were going to have sex, but he just gave me a massage which was a bit pointless- all that and we never even had sex!

What do you think you've learned from your escorting experience?

Incredible amounts. I've learned more about humans and human nature since I started doing this than I've ever learned before, and it's taught me how to read a person. I don't know how to describe that, but I can just look at a man now and know exactly what he wants. I can just read them so easily because, well, it's my job!

I've learned a lot about myself too. I don't think it changed me, but it made me think differently about things like sex, relationships, love and stuff.

I have to ask: How much do you make?

I make 450 euros an hour. On average, I probably make 2,000 a week, but if I wanted to I could work every night and earn up to 10,000 in a week, but that would be ridiculous. As someone who hasn't yet graduated from university, that is a crazy amount of money to be making.

What do you think is the biggest misconception about working in the sex industry?

That it's forced, that women don't find any pleasure out of it, and that it's all about sex. I know that maybe if you were in a different branch of the sex industry, those things might be true, but with escorting, it's definitely more about companionship than sex, and most the girls that do it, do it for the experience rather than for money- and all of us are doing it out of choice.

Sex work still has a lot of stigma attached to it. Have you had any negative experiences because of this? What do you think about the prejudice against sex workers?

I think in the media at the moment, people find it completely unnatural that a female would actually enjoy sex and would want to become an escort or a prostitute of her own free will. Although the money is very, very good - much more than we could ever hope to be earning at this age in any other profession - many of us do it for the experiences and the satisfaction we get from it much more than for the money. That's a massive misconception. I can hand-on-heart say that I really do enjoy it.

How do you think escorting fits in with feminism or female empowerment?

That's something I've thought about a lot. People often see it as making women objects who sell their bodies for money, but that is the black and white way of seeing it. The grey area, where the reality lies, is women embracing their own bodies and embracing their own rights to do what they want to do. And if that's not empowering, be it for feminism or humanity in general, then I don't know what is.

THE ENCOUNTER WITH FRIDA

Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) was a Mexican artist and activist. She was involved in a big traffic accident in 1925 and got seriously injured. This accident had a significant impact on her life. She had to undergo 35 operations, couldn't have children and got her foot amputated later in life. Because of lonely and painful months spent in bed not being able to walk Frida started to paint – mostly self-portraits as she was the best known material for herself. Besides being her own inspirational source Frida was also deeply influenced by revolutionary ideas in Mexico, love life full of hardships with a painter Diego Rivera and nature, in particularly her own garden which is considered to be her piece of art. Frida and Diego spent their life together despite Diego's infidelity with a lot of women including Frida's sister. Living in constant physical and emotional suffering Frida found strength in painting and developed a strong personality finding hope and light in acceptance of the world as it was with all its gifts and struggles. Frida's self-portraits inspired thousands of people to explore themselves and realize that the deepest sensation and strength reside inside you – you just need to give yourself a chance to be your own inspirational source.



Who are you, Frida? Why are you looking at your garden? Your frozen sight is a part of your memory garden. Your love, your pain, your art, your forgiveness and never-ending hope to live are the matters that nourish the flowers and keep memories alive. Let's get lost in your memory garden. Paint one more self-portrait, Frida. Dive deeper into yourself; you are your inexorable source of muses and ideas. I came to you Frida, to ask for a favor. Inspire me Frida to tell a story about you. Who am I to tell this story? I am just a stranger. Remember, you were thinking about me. About me who feels "bizarre and flawed in the same ways" you do. I came to you and asked to show me one more self-portrait of your broken and so many times healed world. I desire to spread the feeling you create inside me, to share this emotional connection, which makes my heart and mind revive fearlessly. I came to your memory garden to watch you paint your pain... your unfaithful Rivera whose sins created the holiest love any woman can feel; your youth tragedy in a trolley - the golden dust was never washed out from your palms. Your paintings are made of that golden dust you were covered with when a mundane accident left your body completely broken. I came to stay with you in your silence for a while. To watch how you give flowers a never-ending life in your paintings. You gave a never-ending life to yourself. You are a flower, Frida. I am repeating your name to assure you are staying here with me that I am staying here with you. Frida Frida Frida. Be my mantra. I came here to tell a story about your suffering, your strangeness, your mystery. You see me getting confused – I realize that I don't know who you are and you see my fear that I can't tell anything new about you, although I am full of those sparkling emotions you trigger in my mind. But you come to me, put a flower wreath on my head, kiss my temples and whisper: "Forget about me. Paint a self-portrait; write about yourself, you are the material you know best. This is all I can give you and you can give to others. Explore your suffering and joy, let your fingers create a material existence of your pain and happiness. Be your own mantra." Then Frida left. And I left Frida's garden keeping her words clinging in my ears. I wanted to tell the story about Frida for a very long time, but no one can do it better than Frida herself. The only thing I can take from her and give to the universe is a self-portrait. Exploring my own story, my own garden I will show the world a part of Frida's life as well... I'll meet you in my memory garden.

BY LINUTĖ JUŠEVIČIŪTĖ

OBAMA IN CUBA

President Obama has been the first US president since 1928 to finally breach the wall that stood between America and Cuba, whether this breaching of the wall is a blessing or a curse, only time can tell. Since late 2014, Obama has been moving past the Cold War-era policy against Cuba, and is aiming to normalise relations and lift the trading embargo. But what do the main parties involved aim to achieve, and how do they view this effort?

What is President Obama's objective in Cuba? Obama states that it has been a long run goal of America to empower the Cuban people and create an open and democratic country, although the isolation policy adopted over the past 50 years has not supported this goal. Obama also acknowledges the Castro and communist regime, and recognizes that attempts to ruin the administration through the trade embargo would, and has, only added to the burden of the Cuban citizens. Thus, the president encourages reforms within the country. Apart from wanting to re-establish the democratic relations, Obama intends to enable commercial travel with Cuba, authorize bi-lateral trading (although he does not believe this will happen during his term), and increase the population's access to internet and social media/communication (free speech).

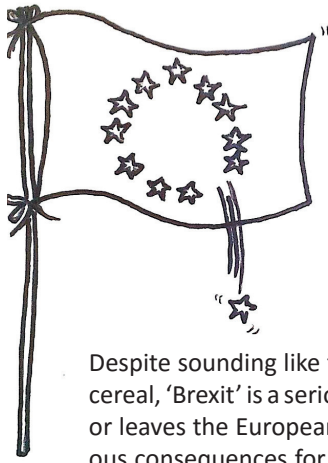
How does the USA view the effort? Many democrats have been supportive of Obama's actions in Cuba since his promise in the 2009 elections for a new and strategic approach with Cuba. On the other hand, republican presidential candidates (Trump, Cruz and Rubio) have expressed disapproval with the actions taken by Obama. They have stated that such actions show weakness as well as supportiveness of communism and the infringement of human rights. These statements are not ungrounded; in the days and hours leading to Obama's arrival in Cuba, protestors against the governance and

BY ISIDORO CAMPIONI-NOACK



What do the Castro brothers think about Obama's visit? Although Raul Castro (current dictator of Cuba and brother of Fidel Castro) failed to show at the arrival of Obama in his country, he has been open to the stabilisation of relations and lifting of the embargo between the two parties. When questioned about political prisoners and human rights, he failed to answer the questions adequately, or at all. Fidel Castro has given signs of life, and written a letter stating his opinion on the latest developments with the USA: he affirmed that Cuba did not need any gifts from the 'empire', he described Obama's words as 'syrupy' and that American intervention would ultimately hurt the Cuban people. Fidel also reminisced about the Bay of Pigs and the CIA's failure, and finally damned Obama's visit, viewing it as too frail for the time being.

How do the Cubans view America's efforts? In a BBC interview with some young Cubans, an obvious willingness to experience the change Obama promises can be inferred; especially with regards to the increased access to internet/social media. However, they remained conservative with regards to Americans strolling their streets.



Brexit: Between Brussels and a Hard Place

Despite sounding like the name of an obscure breakfast cereal, 'Brexit' is a serious issue. Whether the UK remains or leaves the European Union, the choice will have serious consequences for the economy, politics, and everyday life in Britain, and across the continent. Europhiles let their imagination run wild with worst case scenarios – British students at universities like Leiden paying twice the fees, expats extradited, and the pound's value becomes on par with the rouble. Many fear Scotland holding a second referendum, choosing independence, and floating away to become the sixth region of Denmark. Yet while it is true that there would be repercussions for EU nationals living inside Britain (such as for the 650,000 Poles), for British living abroad, and for the United Kingdom as a whole, the process of leaving the EU would be long, tedious, and potholed with caveats. Even while I will be voting to stay, it isn't hard to see why people want to leave. The EU's inefficiency, and in some cases outright corruption, is no secret. £350 million is sent to Brussels each week, and many dislike being bound by laws made in Brussels, not London.

Politicians like the leader of the UK Independence Party, Nigel Farage (a kind of own-brand Geert Wilders), states that leaving would allow the country to take control of its own borders. Although these arguments are valid, Farage ignores the fact that not only 570,000 square kilometres of water in the form of the North Sea has done a pretty good job of controlling our borders for millennia (except for the odd French invasion), but also that most immigrants come from outside of the EU. According to some sources, three million jobs rely on Europe, as well as its market of 500 million consumers. Moreover, it is true that the leader of the Scottish National Party has stated a second referendum on Scottish Independence would be necessary in the case of Brexit, creating even further divides. Political instability goes hand in hand with economic instability, with the IMF and Bank of England warning of the serious harm a 'Brexit' would entail. In any case, by the end of June a decision will have been made. Whether it is the right one, only time will tell.

By: Elsa Court

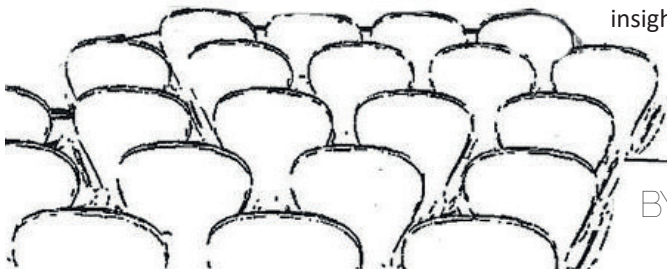
WHERE DOES THE TRUTH LIE?

Lying is genuinely considered to be immoral. Lying is bad they say, a lie never solves problems. As Immanuel Kant stated, humans are uniquely rational agents. To be a human means to be able to have the power of free choice and to guide one's decision by reason. Thus, by consciously choosing not to tell the truth, lying becomes morally wrong. But can there ever be a lie for benefit?

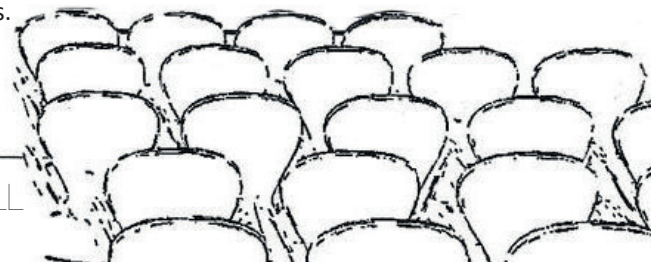
This topic has been touched upon by Alejandro Casona's classic play of contemporary theatre. *Trees Die Standing Tall* is Casona's most performed and widely translated play in which he opens a world of illusion opposite to the disappointment of reality.

An old couple from Barcelona has been living in sorrow for over 20 years after their only grandson ran away from home at 14 years old. The elderly man, in order to bring joy back to his wife, decides to write letters from his grandson's name. As the lies become deeper and the letters longer, the husband arranges for a false couple to pose as their missing grandson and his spouse. The false grandson was invited over for dinner and while they are having a good evening, the real grandson unexpectedly enters the house. At that moment, when the old lady meets reality, where does the truth lie?

I watched the play this spring in Moscow and was impressed by the beautiful combination of surrealism and romance, illusion and hope, a battle between reality and emotions. The inner truth seemed to be more real than anything in the external world. It was an opening for a human's soul, which was in desperation to free its love from the pain of loss. Can we live in our world of comforting illusions created by the lies? If a lie is necessary to maximize benefit or minimize harm, may it be immoral not to lie? Do we even think about rationality, when one's actions are triggered by feelings? *Trees Die Standing Tall* may give you a new insight to these questions.



BY LEAH COHILL



THE BOOKAZINE ISSUE BAISMAG

CULINARY ESCAPADES BY YONGA ZAIM

Student life makes it hard to cook for ones' self. Being adamant on eating home cooked food, I will share some of my favorite recipes. All of these are simple and, frankly, quite delicious – at least that's what I think/or have been told.

Enjoy and let your inner chef take its toll on the kitchen!



Ingredients:

- Red Lentils
- 2 Onions
- 3-4 Potatoes
- 2-3 Carrots
- 1 stock cube (preferably the veg kind)
- Olive oil
- Salt

TIP: you can melt butter and red pepper in a separate pan & pour over the soup before serving for extra flavor!

Preparation:

1. Wash and peel all vegetables.
2. Then cut them into small cubes.
3. Add some olive oil into a large pot and simmer the onions till soft.
4. Add the diced potatoes, carrots, red lentils and salt into the pot and stir.
5. Pour small amounts of water into the pot (wait until the vegetables soak it up, then add some more).
6. Once all the vegetables are 'softish' add as much as water as you see fit (less for a thicker soup, and more for a runny one).
7. Lastly, add the stock cube, shut the pot lid and let everything cook on a low fire till soft and mashable.



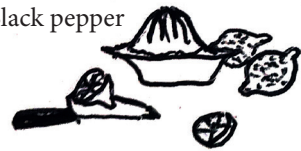
RICE WITH CHICKPEAS

Preparation:

1. Wash rice.
2. Add some oil into a pot and add in the rice.
3. After stirring for a few seconds add cold (room temp) water (make sure it's only 1 finger above the rice) this is a crucial part for fluffy results)
4. Add in some salt and close the lid, letting it cook on LOW heat.
5. Once the water is absorbed add in the chickpeas you soaked from the night before (or for the less inclined, the tin kind) DO NOT STIR THEM.
6. Once cooked slowly mix everything together, making sure not to 'break' the rice.
7. Sprinkle some black pepper, and BONNE APPETITE!

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ - 2 cups Jasmine rice
- Olive oil
- Chickpeas
- Water
- Salt
- Black pepper



TURLU



Ingredients:

- (Any fresh seasonal vegetable)
- 2 Onions
- 5 tomatoes (grated)
- 3-4 Potatoes
- 1-2 Courgettes
- 1 Aubergine
- ¾ cup Olive Oil
- 1 tsp Tomato paste
- Salt
- Pinch of sugar

Preparation:

1. Wash and peel all vegetables.
2. Cut them into small cube shapes.
3. Place them all in a large cooking pot and add some of the olive oil.
4. Dollop in the tomato paste.
5. Mix and stir in everything on medium heat.
6. Add some salt, sugar, the rest of the olive oil and ½ a glass of water, then shut the lid and cook on the lowest heat.
7. Once all the vegetables are soft you are ready to consume!
P.s. When cooking the vegetables should let out some water of its own – if this is not enough you can add some more.



DECONSTRUCTING THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

BY: RUTH-MARIE HENCKES
ANNA ADIMA
MARIAM DE HAAN

*Take up the White Man's burden, Send forth the best ye breed
Go bind your sons to exile, to serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness, On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child.*

We all know the story of *The Jungle Book*, a lovely book and film, which probably played a role in many of our readers' childhoods. What fewer may know is the fact that the author, Rudyard Kipling, was a big supporter of colonialism and encouraged Western conquering and domination of other parts of the world. He even wrote a poem in support of this, titled *The White Man's Burden*, and it has become emblematic of racism and 19th century white supremacy. The authors dissected the first verse of the poem – read below if you are curious about its racist innards.

Take up the White Man's burden, Send forth the best ye breed

And the very best they sent, like the beloved King Leopold II who bore the heavy burden of civilization. Or was that exploitation? Kill Africans' gods, burn their thrones, steal their hoes and chain their hands. What a burden indeed, these savages, who slaved to ornament European kings' royal heads with crowns of colonial gold, diamond and ivory. For civilization? The irony of the cruelty under the pretext of altruism, it is sickening and yet it prevails somehow in less bloody but just as stringent ways. Africans are still exploited, but indirectly. They are still killed, but obviously. And the most hopeful, altruistic and naïve souls (the best of western breed?) still take up the white man's burden.

Go bind your sons to exile, to serve your captives' need

Yes, go on then, send "your sons", white men, to conquer and dominate Africa, exploiting the continent for decades to come, and thus cement their position at the top of today's global social hierarchy. Because of course Social Darwinism is correct in explaining your actions. Send "your sons to exile", the hell that is primitive and underdeveloped Africa, so desperately in need of the white saviour to introduce western modernity to these heathens of creatures. That societies have been living there productively for centuries without needing the white man? Unthinkable! That is why the people there must be held "captive". They must develop and be inspired by the light that is western modernity, while, incidentally, at the same time allowing the "sons" to help themselves to the "captives'" raw materials and use them as cheap labour. What an excellent notion.

To wait in heavy harness, On fluttered folk and wild—

Harness is such a beautiful word. As a verb it means to exploit and as a noun it means the straps you use to control draught animals. Basically, Kipling is telling white imperialists that it's okay to put a harness on black people, like a horse and drag them through Africa, then shove them onto a crowded, disease infested boat and ship them to another continent. In the meantime, Kipling suggests exploiting the resources of your slaves' country. Maybe by now you're thinking why is this poem even considered literary work? To that, I say clearly Kipling knows what alliteration is. "Fluttered folk" is the epitome of poetry.

Your new-caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child.

Damn Rudyard, back at it again with the extensive racism. Just a reminder this is the same man who wrote *The Jungle Book*. First of all the only reason those 'new caught peoples' are sullen is because you caught them in the first place. Nobody wants to be caught Rudyard. People want to be free. Secondly, if you are "half-child" you're not a child anymore. You are dead.



FACES FROM

AROUND

THE WORLD

BY JALESA GREENING









NO WAR IN SYRIA



Someone else is already in his room, unpacking a dirty plastic bag, spilling its contents across the bed. A wadded pair of black socks, a small book with green covers, a half-eaten bag of potato chips, a battered can of hummus.

The man doesn't even lift his gaze as Joshua walks in, is not startled by his tiptoeing into the candlelight. Only when Joshua sits down on his bed across the room, emitting a loud creak, does the man turn around, slowly, to gaze distantly in the intruder's direction. His eyes are vacant, they do not focus. As Joshua stares at him, attempting to form eye contact, he sees the man's pupils slowly travel from one side of their socket to the other, stopping on nothing, seeing nothing. He is wearing tattered red Nike sweatpants, a t-shirt with the faded icon of the Washington Redskins. He has taken off his shoes, the ones that have traveled hundreds of miles, here and there, back and forth, in no direction at all.

The man turns away again, scavenging the contents of his plastic bag. A cell phone charger. A crumpled bus ticket for the Nazarene Tours. A torn, faded red pack of cigarettes – a generic Arabic brand Joshua does not recognize. The man retrieves a cigarette, the last one, caresses it, digs deep into his pockets with his other hand. He turns around again, this time focusing his empty gaze on Joshua, who get up and offers him the candle streaming by his bed.

"Quiet night", Joshua remarks.

The man lights the cigarette and inhales a deep, savoring drag.

"Did you just get here?"

"Yes. I am here now."

Something in the essence of the man makes Joshua doubt whether he is indeed there. He is translucent, somewhere near the edge. He is not in the room, definitely not most of him. There is a shell, distinctly resembling a human being, standing in the middle of the room, sucking on the filter of the cigarette, but within that shell is but a fading glimmer of a person, less than a suggestion.

"This is a beautiful country," he says, almost soundlessly. "It is the season and the olives are ripe."

"Where do you come from?" Joshua, his voice wavering.

"Syria," the man breathes, staring at the ground.

"Ah... not a good place at the moment, is it."

"Why not a good place? Syria is good place."

"I mean now. You know. The war."

Now the man looks at him directly. His eyes are mocking.

“What war. There is no war in Syria.”

Joshua swallows uncomfortably. “What do you mean? Of course there’s a war in Syria.”

“There is no war in Syria.”

He tries to study the man, the ghost of a man, but the phantom has already turned away, retrieving another cigarette from the pack Joshua thought was empty, and lighting it with the magmatic remains of the candle. The entire room flickers, violent flashes across the walls, as if the whole space will be extinguished along with the light of the faltering flame.

“You should not believe everything you hear about Syria. You should not read newspapers. You should not watch al-Jazeera. Bombs and guns, houses falling, mothers dying, children crying. Boom boom boom.”

He emits a short, hollow laugh that makes Joshua’s skin tingle.

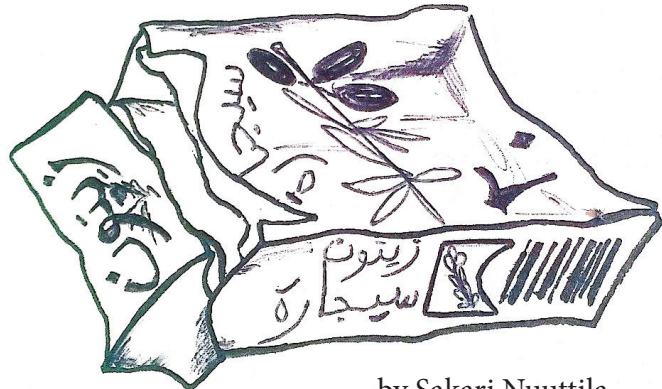
“Everything they say. Al-president... Mister Prothero. Diplomat journalist NGO. They are lying to you, I tell you. And you, and you. I come from Syria two days ago. I go back Syria tomorrow. There is no war in Syria. You should visit the old souq in Damascus. Tourists like very much. My cousin owns a hotel there, he will give you a good price.”

Joshua knows he should not continue the conversation. He should go back out, sit in the courtyard and wait for the man to fall asleep. Still, tentatively, “Are you completely sure? I’ve seen the refugees. They’re all around, even here. You can practically see the explosions from the hills here. I wouldn’t go back to Syria if I were you.”

The man sighs, starts slowly repacking his belongings into the plastic bag. “When they are on the sand... You count them yourself. Is better. And you see, the white widow is there, she looks at you. Smiles. And when you look...” He turns to Joshua, slashes a finger across his own throat, emits the same hollow, dark laughter.

Without another word he climbs into bed now, swaddling himself in the thin sheet. Joshua swallows, looks around for a moment, retreats into his own bed smashed against the opposite wall. The candle beside the man’s bed has nearly disappeared, but the flame lingers on as he lights another cigarette and begins devouring it. He sits in an electric silence, staring into space, smoking one cigarette after the other, an endless chain of ember. Smoke rises in thick swirls into the darkness, and Joshua’s final thought, before troubled dreams overcome him, is a faint hope the man will not fall asleep with the smoldering cigarette still in hand.

When Joshua awakens the following morning, the man is already gone. The bed is made, the pillow fluffed. All that remains on the floor is the battered pack, with one single cigarette rolling in the void.



by Sakari Nuuttila



Understanding the Blame Game

After the attacks in Brussels many nationalist fearmongers were quick to point fingers at refugees and “Islam” in general. Accusing it to be the root-cause of all terrorism. Or saying things along the lines of: “Oh, what a tragedy in Brussels. See, that is what happens when you let refugees in.”

I always find such statements enraging, foremost because they are used to make political gains from the suffering and grief of others; the first to shout and point fingers were after all nationalistic instigators seeing a chance to rise again.

Secondly, the way these statements are made leaves no room for meaningful discussions on how to actually tackle the terrorist challenge. Asking: “That surely has nothing to do with Islam ...?” gives no doubt to the view of the writer. The statement is accusatory, not interested in starting a discussion, nor provides a starter for a meaningful solution nor does it leave room for other explanations.

At this point I think it is important to note that I don’t propose on seriously having discussions on such ridiculous questions as: Are all Muslims terrorists?! Rather I propose to discuss challenges such as terrorism and large scale migration in a nuanced way, aimed at understanding and finding practical solutions, not at blaming and fear-mongering.

To give a more concrete example I want to look at a statement given by many commentators on the other side of the political spectrum: “That is a consequence of American interventionism!” or “That is the fault of the West, selling weapons to terrorists!” - something along these lines.

I agree, that the invasion of Iraq by the US played a major role in destabilising the country and in creating a power vacuum for the emergence of groups such as Daesh (ISIS). And that many groups there fight with US-American or German weapons also seems to be no secret.

But at the same time the “East” is not just passively involved into some evil western power play. Other facets of this topic are the roles of regional regimes, or the societal structure. What about economic struggles? What about older historical lines, such as remnants of colonialism, or ... wait for it, the Mongols? Does social marginalisation have something to do with the recruitment of new terrorists? How can we effectively integrate newcomers into our societies to prevent social marginalisation? I am sure there are many more aspects to the topic. These ideas and questions are not meant to be played against each other but to be possible stepping stones to a deeper understanding of the problem that is terrorism. And I firmly believe that understanding a problem is the best starting point to find solutions. If we start right away with accusations and pointing fingers, we remain blind for other important aspects which might not fit into our worldview(s).

In that sense let us strive for understanding not for hatred and blame games.

by Mathis Gilsbach



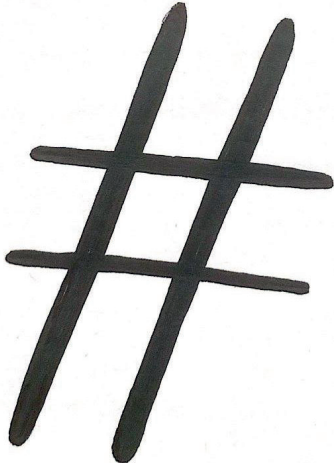
I Would Not – S.S. Bartlett

Slit my veins in sleep one night,
I would pass in peace.
That I endure these darkening tides
Is pain that will not cease.
Many eyes have seen me,
But their sight averts mine own
And upon this wretched rock,
This dirt which I call home
They flog me and inflict me
Their words like whips and thorns
So please do slit my veins this night,
I would not see the morn.

Drown me in that lake one day,
I would gargle green
And watch her slowly slip away,
And leave this world unseen.
I have watched in silence
This thing they say is love
And whimpered at the God who made it
For unanswered prayers above.
Whose hands then made me monstrous?
Whose words then slurred my speech?
So drown me in that lake this day
The night is grave and bleak.

Throw me off a cliff one morn
I would meet the stones
Which moan amid the rolling waves
And have them break my bones.
What worldly works could hurt me?
What ill fate twist the heart?
This dead cold space has had its place
For many years now past.
Wailing winter whipped me
And spring still lingers grey
So throw me off that cliff this morn
I would not see the day.

**Note – I would like to mention that I am in no way suicidal. I was merely trying to understand the trouble of the human condition while simultaneously trying to understand the thoughts of people who deal with self-loathing and depression.*



Hashtags. They carry personal thoughts, emotions. But being more than a simple trend for social media addicts, they have a social function too: hashtags create campaigns, start protests and express compassion. Whenever we feel an injustice, we are oppressed by the powerful, or our equals become victims of terror, we tweet about it and we condemn through hashtags. Hashtags do more than expressing us: they bring us together.

#Je Suis Charlie When nine caricaturists who were known to draw satires of religion were massacred by Islamist terrorists, we didn't care much about the details. It was an attack against the freedom of expression, an attack against the rights of us all, and we were all victims. I was Charlie, we all became Charlie. Those who got killed soon became martyrs of freedom of expression, and we united against those who were trying to deprive us from our rights.

#Je Suis Paris #Pray for Paris The same spirit of solidarity revived following the Paris attacks in November 2015. The so-called "European 9/11" was a wake-up call for all of us. Violence had never been so close to Europe, and it was innocent civilians, like you, me, who died this time. I was, we were all victims of Paris attacks, because we knew that we could have been one of those to have lost their lives that night. We prayed together for those who passed away, and thanked in shame for being still alive.

#Je Suis... Rien du tout. Je m'en fous. One would expect that having experienced the bloody terrorism in our home we would now be more compassionate towards other victims of terrorism around the globe, dying everyday under exploding bombs or stray bullets. But instead, while terrorism took hundreds of innocent lives in Turkey, Nigeria, Mali, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and so on, we didn't even care enough to talk about it. Not only mass media, but also social media closed their eyes to the victims of terrorism anywhere but Europe and the "West", and continued discussing pop stars and football.

#Je Suis Bruxelles! And all of a sudden, Europe was struck again by terrorism. March 22nd, bombs detonating at Brussels' airport and subway took 32 European lives. Twitter woke up and compassionate messages for Brussels victims overtook social media. However, the "rest of the world" woke up too; victims of terrorism outside Europe started to contest European hypocrisy toward attacks and asked more attention from western countries.

#Je Suis Sick of This Shit Trying not to look hypocritical, we became further discriminative. "#Je Suis Sick of This Shit" was the evidence that we were not Ankara, we were not Middle-Eastern nor African and never would be. We were European. We rejected to show compassion to other human beings like us, just because they lived under a different flag. We traded solidarity to hate and disgust against terrorism.

#Je Suis the World I am the World, because I understand that terrorism is our common problem. I am the World, because I don't assume that the lives of others are less precious than mine. We all should be the World, because the only way to achieve peace is through global fraternity.

by Zeynep Egeli



To those destined to stick in the Netherlands in June ... Do not despair! BAISMAG has you covered. Find here a selection of our favourite happenings in June.

BAILAR

4: Knights of Neon

18: Indigo Fullmoon Party

26: Reggae Fever
>> Utrecht

EXHIBITIONS

1/6 - 1/9: Urban Campsite
>> urbancampsitesamsterdam.com

12/3 - 5/6: Une Femme
>> Huis Marseille

26/5 - 9/7: S(H)E: searching for the other
>> CBK Zuidoost Amsterdam

18: the Art of Banksy
>> Beurs van Berlage

FESTIVALS

11-12: Verborgten tuinen
>> Rotterdam

18: Modular-Festival
>> Schiedam

19: Pleinvrees am Strand
>> Bloemendaal

10-19: Oerol
>> Terschelling

INTERESTING

18: Nacht van de Vluchteling

4: The Hague African Festival

9: „From ruler's instrument of exploitation to buttress of democracy“ Lecture in Leiden
>> House of Wisdom

LETS GET NAKED AND DRAW

HAYIR



HAYIR



HAYIR



by Grainne Charlton

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