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**Terrorism 2016**

Why I chose this topic:

I chose the topic, Terrorism in 2016, because I want to learn more about the violence that goes on the world. I am a pacifist so in previous times of violence, I have avoided talking about the subject to limit my frustration. I have learned that this is not an effective way to handle an issue, so by researching this topic I am trying to further inform myself and possibly change my opinion on violence. Right now, I feel as though there are better, kinder ways to handle an issue but I am open to being swayed. I want to focus on the two attacks that took place this summer in July in Istanbul, Turkey and Nice, France because I feel like I had more of a connection to these attacks than previous attacks. While these attacks took place, I was away from my family in a foreign country and I had feared that something might happen to them. I have been lucky to feel safe my whole life and this was one of the few times in my life where I felt relatively unsafe. Initially, when the France attack took place, I was not informed of where it happened, and I was the most scared I have been in my entire life. In this moment, it not only made me realize how much I love and appreciate my family, but also gave me a very small taste of the life people live in war zones 24/7. I now feel an obligation to be aware of what is happening so that I at least have the information to help better the situation in every way that I can.

 Bibliography

Kassem, Ramzi. “France’s Real State of Emergency.” *New York Times*, August 4, 2016. Accessed September 19, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/05/opinion/frances-real-state-of-emergency.html?\_r=0.

This source is an article from the Opinion page of the New York Times. While this article is certainly biased and based on the background of the author, it represents a point of view that has not been commonly voiced. The author uses a post-colonialist lens, giving a voice to the minorities whose opinion is seldom heard. In France, the French Muslims are being targeted and are practically on probation as a result of the terrorist attacks in the past year. The rest of the country is assumed innocent and this segregation is only causing more problems for France.[[1]](#footnote-0) This divide leaves French Muslims scared and vulnerable, and for no good reason. The author argues that a French Muslim was one of the first victims of the attack and that 30 out of the 84 people killed were French Muslim.[[2]](#footnote-1) The French Muslims are just as much the victims of these attacks as the rest of the country and France should monitor everyone in the country instead of listening to previous stereotypes that are not always accurate and cause racial divide.

 Lens #1, Social/Class: The perceived enemy and minority in France, the French Muslims, are denied safety and time to grieve along with the rest of France. There is no proof that any of the French Muslims participated in the terrorist attack and it is not fair to call them all out without legitimate proof. At this age and stage, anyone could be a terrorist, therefore, there is a big of a chance that someone in the majority could be dangerous as well. For safety and fairness, no one should be deemed dangerous without evidence. Instead, people should all keep a lookout for any one dangerous and this does not have to be based on race or ethnicity. While France thinks they are narrowing down the possible suspects, in reality, they are making a bigger problem. In order to get to the root of the terrorism problem, everyone needs to be cautious and aware, but not racist.

 Lens #2, Gender: In this article, it mainly talks about men being the suspects and women being the victims. What if the roles were reversed? Would people see this terrorist attack as less dangerous if it was a woman performing the attack? It seems as though it would make a difference because there has never been terrorism story that involved a woman who was not victim. In the same way, men are never seen as victims either. Although gender roles have evolved over the years, to a certain extent, people are still stuck in their ways of the past. Men are never depicted as weak or vulnerable, the same way women can rarely be seen as strong and powerful. Is this something that will never change? What does this say about society? The two distinct roles of victim and perpetrator are very important in society but it is also vital that they be interchangeable between men and women. As many people are aware of, men can vulnerable and women can be strong and brave. In this modern day, it is important that everyone see these roles as fluid rather than concrete so that these assigned roles can slowly start to evaporate over time.

Kose, Ozan. *Nothing Will Change*. Photograph. Yahoo. July 1, 2016. Accessed September 19, 2016. https://www.yahoo.com/news/nothing-change-post-attack-selfies-istanbul-airport-030652148.html.

This photograph was taken of a grieving woman after the Istanbul airport attack. The women in the image appears to have a reader-response (or viewer-response) lens. She is taking in the environment around her and grieving after the traumatic and heart breaking attack. As she stares at her country’s flag, she is filled with remorse and realizes that it is time for Turkey to make a change to make a safer environment. She wonders how one person has the audacity to cause so much pain amongst a group of tight knit people. She secretly wants revenge and wants the attacker to feel her pain, but she knows this is not a productive way to handle the issue. In my interpretation, this photo depicts a woman promising herself that she will do everything in her ability to make sure she never feels this way again.

 Lens #1, Social/Class: The woman in this image appears as though she is a middle class citizen who just lost a family member. I assume that she is slightly worried for her future because her husband was the primary bread winner. It appears this way because in the photo she is looking off into the distance as if she is thinking about her future. It also seems that her gaze is slightly downwards as if she is looking at the photographs of the victims, which makes me think that she lost a family member. While of this information is assumed and in no way factual, it is clear that this woman was very affected by the attack. Does this have to do with her role in society or her social class? If she were a high class citizen, would she be effected the same way? The way this woman is portrayed in this photograph, it appears as though she has hit rock bottom. Yet, some how, there is hidden amount of strength that will propel her forward through this traumatic event.

 Lens #2, Gender: The woman in this photograph appears to be grieving after the Istanbul attack. How would the viewer’s opinion change in the person in this image was a man? Why didn’t this photo include a man grieving? It is still assumed that men are tougher and braver than women. They cannot even show the fact that they too are grieving in a time of terrible pain and trauma. Who established the belief that standing strong is always better? In fact, crying is a sign of strength because a person has kept their emotions in so long. Why all the pictures of soldiers of men? Women can fight just easily, but they are expected to stay home, helpless and unable to help their country. This photo shows a woman in a time of weakness and tragedy but she could easily be replaced with a man.

Nissenbaum, Dion. “Turkish President Appears on State Television amid Coup Attempt.” Interview by Ari Shapiro. New England Public Radio. Last modified July 15, 2016. Accessed September 19, 2016. http://www.npr.org/2016/07/15/486248803/turkish-president-appears-on-state-television-amid-coup-attempt.

This source is an interview from NPR between reporter Ari Shapiro of NPR and Wall Street Journal reporter, Dion Nissenbaum. Dion Nissenbaum views the terrorism in Turkey through a new-historicism lens. While he is close in proximity to the attack, not being a Turkish citizen he is not as affected. In the interview, he calls the facts exactly as they are, with little of his opinion. He mainly explains how the president is instructing the military. Nissenbaum comments that while the Turkish military is holding strong, the coup attempt is “definitely not over”.[[3]](#footnote-2)

 Lens #1, Reader Response Lens: This interview was difficult to understand from an outsider’s perspective. I am have trouble understanding why the information in this article is helpful in understanding the attack. Are the Turkish people trying to fight back against the people who attacked them? This interview seems to lead to the Kurds as possible suspects. The president seems to think that they are the enemy and as a result the Turkish military is seeking revenge on them. Is this best way to handle what just happened? Shouldn’t the Turkish government hold back and set up safety parameters instead of charging forward and putting themselves in further danger? Since I have no control over what happens in Turkey, I feel that this interview has no relevance to my life because it provides no basic information from the attack.

Lens #2, Post Colonialist Lens: From a post colonialist lens, are the voices of the minority being sufficiently heard in making the post-attack decisions? In my opinion, it seems like no voices are being heard besides the President’s. In this post-attack situation, people should be working together to try to make Turkey a safer country, not causing more danger and war. Safety should come first in this situation and the President needs to prioritize this. Is the President listening to the concerns of his constituents? It is his job to handle the concerns of his constituents in the manner he sees fit, but it seems he is prioritizing his own concerns. Everyone who is not the president is becoming a minority now. Turkey’s once democratic government is now becoming more authoritarian and the safety of the Turkish citizens is no longer being considered by the president.[[4]](#footnote-3)

Rubin, Alissa J., Lilia Blaise, Adam Nossiter, and Aurelien Breeden. “France Says Truck Attacker Was Tunisia Native With Record of Petty Crime.” *New York Times*, July 15, 2016. Accessed September 19, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/16/world/europe/attack-nice-bastille-day.html?\_r=0.

This source is an article from the New York Times. The information in the article is reliable and the author writes with little bias, describing the events as she saw it and commenting on others’ interpretation of the attack. The lens that the author uses in this article is the Psychological Lens. The author reflects on her own interpretation of the attack in France as well the effects the attack had on the community in Nice. A community member reflects that the death of countless innocently happy children were killed “merely to satisfy the cruelty of an individual - and maybe of a group”.[[5]](#footnote-4) This article accurately sums up the effects the attack had on the French population.

 Lens #1, New Historicism Lens: The author writes the article as if she has no direct connection to the attack in France but is still sympathetic for the victims. Due the interviewee’s proximity to the attack, it is clear that he was very affected by what took place and is still grieving and processing. Since I, being the reader, have grown up in the security of a small suburban town, I am not as directly affected. However, if I or the author lived closer to the attack, we both would have a very different perspective on what just like the interviewee would if he lived further away. As the New Historicism lens conveys, everybody’s perspective fluctuates depending on their location and proximity to any attack.

 Lens #2, Reader Response: This article is depressing to read but also frustrating because I feel powerless and unable to make a change. The fact that people are constantly fearing the safety of themselves and their families while I sit here enjoying my much less complicated life is just unfair. Why am I safe while they barely get to live their lives because they are so scared. Life can be so unfair. The attack in Nice, France killed almost 1,000 people yet I am living in an area where people practically oblivious of what goes on around them because their own lives are too perfect. Meanwhile there are probably millions of billions of people around the world wishing they had the exact life I am living. Why pick me to the live this life, what was the story behind this?

1. Ramzi Kassem, "France’s Real State of Emergency," *New York Times*, August 4, 2016, accessed September 19, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/05/opinion/frances-real-state-of-emergency.html?\_r=0. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Kassem, "France’s Real,". [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Dion Nissenbaum, "Turkish President Appears on State Television amid Coup Attempt," interview by Ari Shapiro, New England Public Radio, last modified July 15, 2016, accessed September 19, 2016, http://www.npr.org/2016/07/15/486248803/turkish-president-appears-on-state-television-amid-coup-attempt. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Nissenbaum, "Turkish President," interview, New England Public Radio. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Alissa J. Rubin et al., "France Says Truck Attacker Was Tunisia Native With Record of Petty Crime," *New York Times*, July 15, 2016, accessed September 19, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/16/world/europe/attack-nice-bastille-day.html?\_r=0. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)