

### A Half Empty Glass

“The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar” (Adichie, 13:51). Ngozi Adichie states in a Ted Talk titled “The Danger of a Single Story”. She explains in depth how important it is to hear a variety of different perspectives in order to avoid believing in stereotypes. As these only represent one tenth of an entire story. It wasn't until I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade when learning turned into empty mourning on a September 11 morning. All I ever got from these presentations then on was that people from the Middle East attacked America. and that they would do it again.

I had never heard this 9/11 story from my parents. I had only tasted these samples in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond. They never were full on explanations of why this devoted group of 20 hijackers did the deed. It created an innate stereotype that all Muslims practiced the act of terrorism. Not only is this completely wrong but this is the world that some of my Muslim friends live in to this day. A Hijab to some Americans is automatically tied with the racist instilled fear of terrorism. Although I never gave into this stereotype. I have heard it from friends coming along as a ‘joke’. Yet, no one manages to tell me why this stereotype about terrorists came to be. When I would ask my parents why they, referring to the actual 20 hijackers who carried out the attacks behind 9/11, did what they did. They would simply state they're just crazy. Since I never doubted their word I just went on believing that until my first year of college.

If it weren't for my fresh selection of terrorism and the media, I would have gone on naïve for a while. One of the first things of many that I learned in my Political Science class that terrorists aren't crazy at all. This makes sense when you actually think about it. If terrorists were crazy they wouldn't have gained a group of 20 highly intelligent and devoted individuals. In

FYEP 190\_Morales\_Single Story

addition to this, when exploring reasons why terrorist groups jump over that last hurdle, we learn that it isn't for money. In fact, the group ISIS had profited 3 million dollars alone in 2015. Yet, if this is so simply smack in the face obvious how come I couldn't just figure this out on my own? It came to me as the same conclusion again, schools never bothered to explain the reasons why terrorists didn't attack America. Was it because we were too young to care? Yet, we were still able to understand the tragic events that happened. And If they didn't include the entire picture, why only include Americas good side? If it were as taboo to show a terrorists point of view, then why bother show 9/11 at all. There are two sides to every story and yet we students only conformed to what our teachers spewed at us. In a film Traitor, an Muslim terrorist states, "It was America who invaded our land first, they often forget". This as he motivates young Muslims to convert themselves as martyrs for their state. And it's partly true. We see that with the limited information in those 9/11 assemblies. It's extremely crucial for America to shed light on their faults too. No nation is perfect.

It's time for America to stop concealing its blemishes and move on with the truth. The complete truth behind the inspiration of the 9/11 attacks. To fill the glass up with its stained water. This is where the racist Muslim idea of them being a terrorist begins. With 9/11. Every time I used to think about the Middle East I thought it meant poverty, camels, and the only place where terrorism has sprung from. These people have been robbed of their dignity. America's fear has only enlarged this robbery. We see it with the unapologetic Muslim Travel ban started on January 2017. Hearing these stories on repeat in the news could bring about the increasing potential of anxiety and pride to those in the far right. Almost everyone knows at least what 9/11 is and who caused it but no one actually knows why these Hijackers committed suicide. We must

FYEP 190\_Morales\_Single Story

educate people properly on what terrorism is to eliminate America's single story on terrorism and race.

\*I wasn't sure how to make my FYEP description in the header go away.