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## Protecting my Perception

“No more cable,” my mother had said as she unplugged the cord behind our television set eight years ago.

At the time, it seemed she was simply taking away television from my four siblings and me, but now that I am older, I realize she was taking away the pain of the media from her children. Rather than let the media explain the terrorists attacks that had occurred that morning, my mother calmly alerted us, with television off, that terrorists had driven planes into buildings throughout America, even right beside my grandmother’s office. She chose to spare us from the tragic footage the news programs played over and over, because whether we were frightened by the attacks or not, it was inevitable our father would have to go to war. My mother wanted to protect us from the media, because she knew it would aggrandize any fears we already had for our father’s safety as a soldier. Friends and family called, sobbing, while watching the horrific investigations of the September 11 attack. Why was my mother able to remain strong and composed, even though her mother could have been killed and her husband, my father, would have to deploy to war? She was able to be steadfast amid the trauma because she separated herself from the media, knowing it could make her feel just as afraid as our friends and family if she allowed herself to be persuaded by the negativity of the news media. Through my mother, I have realized the affects and influences the media has over my own perception of America.

The media, coming from the Latin word “medi”, meaning “middle”, is in an organization acting as the mid-point between events of the world, and citizens of that world. This organization’s responsibility is in relaying to the public the current activities of the world.

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Perhaps this is the purpose of the media, but I find its more frequent function is to exploit the difficulties of the world in as unfeeling and invasive a way as possible. Whether reporting good news, or bad news, the media continually presents the state of the world in such a negative way that my I no longer rely on it as a trustworthy source.

My father appeared on television two years after the terrorist attack in an interview regarding the impoverished zoo that was part of the captured city, Baghdad. My grandparents taped the interview so we could see our father, alive and healthy after a separation from him of over eight months. When the journalists interviewed my father behind-the-scenes, as he later told me, they were impolite and insensitive. Though his compassionate discussion on the starving animals was broadcasted, the inability of the media to convey positive news without injury to a single party proved to me that even in good news, the media is not a faithful source of communication. If good things cannot be relayed in a positive way, how can one consider the source reliable?

Whether I listen to the radio, read a newspaper, or peruse the online news archives, I am never moved by the media to feel more satisfied, and more proud of America. I am aware that the negative distortion the media places on all reports affects my perception of my homeland. When I receive good news from the media, I feel the goodness and truth of the situation is not presented to its fullest. When I receive bad news, I am, without fail, disheartened. If the media truly intends to relay the state of the world to the citizens of that world, it must do so fairly, reporting the positive as good, and the negative as bad. Unless the media does this, every citizen's perception of their country will be altered by the negativity of the media, just as I discovered the media is capable of doing to my view of America. I am indebted to my mother for

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showing me that when the pessimistic news media is disregarded, even the most troubling times can be lived through with strength and stability. One must simply choose if they will allow the news media to damage their perception of America.