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Media Manipulation

Gazed deeply into television screens were a new generation of spectators who experienced gunshots in their home from the battlefield just as the soldiers did in a time-span of less than 24 hours. This is why Vietnam was considered the “first television war”. Countless witnesses experienced multiple tricks and exploits daily which influenced the members of society who view them. The effects of blood and death were amplified by the attentions which created a society filled with horror and shame for decades. This influenced public opinion at home and the morale of soldier’s on the battlefield. The repercussions of the media were so atrocious that President Nixon declared the American military’s “worst enemy seems to be the press” (Howell 1). Americans had become anti-war amid this time, which possibly created some sort of effect on the outcome. Media outlets have the ability to change public opinions with the snap of a finger. The government needs to limit the power secured by the media to ensure what is portrayed to the public is accurate. The fourth estate has the power to say anything and everything with the permission granted by the First Amendment of the Constitution. This does not mean what is in the major headlines is always true. Some of the messages are slanderous, which lead to a false reality for the viewers to believe in. Journalist have exceptional freedom; there is no certainty what is in the news, magazines, or online is remotely true. Several news programs are nationally scripted and organized to entertain viewers. Extensive conflicts in the world are portrayed to be either better or worse, whatever works to the media’s advantage, to generate a “good” story. The viewers are not the only victims of the media; various celebrities also suffer from the wrath of journalism. If that was not enough, race adds another dash of excitement into the mix. It is time to put an end to media manipulation and limit the power the media companies possess. Celebrity breakdowns have existed as long as the wheel but are now scrutinized and exposed to a needless degree. Media outlets such as USA Today make it incredibly easy, especially with the digital technical in this era, to find information about celebrities. The extent and quality of celebrity news in the media materializes especially inordinate today, multiplied and intensified at such a rate that legitimate news has fallen in precedence. Desired or not, the public knows more about Kim Kardashian and her love life than about many political issues. No matter how personal the topic is, the media will find a way to expose it. To maintain a particular image is made difficult by the media. Michael Jackson is arguable one of the most famous pop artists of all-time. However he had faced some scrutiny in his life, largely because of the media. His reputation was  
permanently tarnished, even though he was later acquitted. Artists today are terrified that this may happen to them. As stated by rapper Kendrick Lamar in the song Mortal Man, “When Shit hit the fan, is you still a fan?” (Lamar). Fans are questioned whether they would stick with him if he were to be found in a similar situation as Michael, or join in on the media turmoil. The Media has the power to turn a little hoax into a front page story. Images of many celebrities are altered by media influence. Richard Sherman has fallen victim to a false illustration created by the media. After the Seattle Seahawks defeated the San Francisco 49ers in the 2014 National Football Conference (NFC) championship game, Richard Sherman claimed the title of “best cornerback in the game”, and stated that Michael Crabtree, a Wide-Receiver for the 49ers, was a  
“sorry receiver”. This one statement engulfed a majority of sports media for the next few days. The Monday after the game, the word "thug" was used 625 times throughout discussions about Sherman's antics on local TV and radio stations (Campbell 1). Few people knew the real story of Sherman, only what they had heard from media outlets. In fact, Sherman is a walking success  
story. Born in Compton, he didn't let the violent reputation of his inner-city neighborhood gnaw him away. The Seahawks superstar managed to score an impressive 1400 on the SAT and graduated from high school as salutatorian with a 4.2 grade-point average (1). From there he continued his success and graduated from Stanford with a 3.9 grade-point average and has become one of the most dominant cornerbacks in professional football within a few years  
(Lloyd 1). As Tupac defined it, a thug is someone who is going through struggles, has gone through struggles, and continues to live day by day with nothing for them (Thyung 1). For Sherman to be defined as this by the media to make a story is outrageous and childish. The media does not just break people down however; they can also build people up to make them seem like an angel. Justin Bieber has done many outlandish actions in his past. He has been caught peeing in a mop bucket screaming “Fuck Bill Clinton” (Sieczkowski 1) and has been arrested for DUI, driving with an expired license, and resisting an arrest (Dadds 1). However, Chris Brown referred to Bieber as “a misguided kid”, and of course the media took that and ran with it (Jozsor 1). The media has lied and stretched the truth about celebrities too many times. Of course without the media, there would not be an entity of famous people. However, an individual's reputation should not be tarnished nor created by false accusations. People deserve to be treated on how they consistently act, not just how a couple of statements claim the person to be who they are not. Once a monopoly takes control of an industry, it is very hard for it to thrive naturally again. They have been around and controlled several industries in the past, including the media today. Mainstream news is owned directly by colossal multinational corporations, and through their boards of directors are connected with a plethora of other  
major global corporations and elite interests (Walsh 1). There are few media companies that secure the public's attention. However these companies have many different branches of news coverage in all different fields of the spectrum. Time Warner is an excellent example of this as it owns Time Magazine, HBO, Warner Bros., and CNN, among many others (1).  All of these companies are some way or another connected to the government. This is problematic as it  
gives the government influence over certain things that are displayed to the public. With this supremacy, the government can make certain things look better or worse, depending on what makes it and the country look better. For instance, more than 75 retired officers had been coached by government and military officials to ‘spin’ the news about Iraq, or simply lie, on countless network and cable channel news programs and talk shows (1). This is just one illustration of where the governments pull on the media is shown. With few companies producing the news, there is no variety of coverage. The spectators watch the same story multiple times, with a variety of angles. The unnerving thing is some Americans accept this and believe everything to be true. Until Americans stand together, the multimillion dollar media industry is just going to become extensively more corrupt and slanderous.

Racism in the media has been made prevalent in today’s world. The media attempts to constantly alter the viewer’s thinking behind certain things. They have the power to report whatever is pleasing to them. If they do not want the rest of the world to know about an issue, they will not  
report on it. A majority of the stereotypes that society knows of are created by the fourth estate. When people hear the word thug, a black male is often what comes to mind. Critics of Richard Sherman have called him a thug before, when in reality he is a successful athlete who graduated from Stanford with a 3.9 GPA (Lloyd 1). Another account showing racism in the media deals with fairly recent events. After number one seeded Kentucky’s loss to Wisconsin in the final  
four of the NCAA March Madness tournament, there were white kids burning cars in the streets of Lexington. Lexington Police say 31 people have been arrested near the University of Kentucky campus following the loss (Press 1). This was rarely covered in the media and hardly anyone knew about it. However as soon as black individuals start causing ruckus, it is nationally  
televised. Police spokeswoman Sherelle Roberts says police are “thankful no one was seriously injured”, which is pretty remarkable out of the 1500 who participated (1). Now media coverage is all over the kids rioting in Baltimore, making them out to be thugs, when they are really just taking action and trying to make a change. The media has a lot of power in society, and racism in the media is even more common today than in the past.

The First Amendment of the United States proclaims: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press…” (First Amendment 1). Legally, the media can say whatever their hearts desire because of their right to freedom of speech. However, there are a few exceptions to this freedom. If what is stated by the media is slanderous, untrue, or aggressive, they are not protected by this right. In 2005, The Sun Newspaper released a story about Cameron Diaz, which claimed she was having an affair with a married man named Shane Nickerson (BBC 1). This false accusation greatly affected both Cameron and Shane, which created an abiding effect on their relationships, both personal and work related. This is a perfect example of how the media portrays inaccurate and slanderous information to the public and why their power needs to be limited.

The government needs to take control and limit media to only broadcast factual information without slander. Once media outlets are forced to only tell the truth, viewers will be influenced by the right messages. Information in magazines, news, and the internet will only present the truth and not what would make a “good” story to attract the public. Celebrities will not be bashed on to make money. Once the rules and regulations of media are altered, there will no longer be false accusations with slanderous and horrible scams. The First Amendment of the Constitution may give freedom to say whatever is pleasing, but it also states it needs to be without slander.  
This will protect citizens from racist attacks and false accusations and there will no longer be victims of libel or traduce. Once the media is forced to tell the truth, the world will be a better place with greater knowledge.

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