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Article: A lie told often enough becomes the truth. Is it true?

We have all had experiences where someone tells a story or we believe something that someone tells us. What if someone believes what they think is the truth, but it turns out, it is a lie? We have all experienced it along the way. Even the most believable events, or stories could be false. They could be a lie told enough for someone to believe it. The phrase, "A lie told often enough becomes the truth" was originally said by Vladimir Lenin. Vladimir was the leader of a communist experiment in the USSR. Despite his "anti-american" background, could what he said be true? I decided to interview the characters of The Crucible, The Great Gatsby, and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn to find out what they thought. It turns out that most of these characters actually have similar stories to tell.

I started by interviewing Abigail Williams and some of the other girls in Salem. "We made sure to tell lies to act like we were the 'good girls.' We wanted to save ourselves. If we didn't like someone, then we just worked against them . . . whoever we accused, we knew they were going to be hanged . . . it was as if we had all the power in Salem." She was asked how they made it work. "We just picked a story and stuck with it. Saying it over and over again. The people in town just believed us." I asked her about the murders. "We had the power to decide your fate. We wanted our way, and we didn't care who stood in the way. All we had to do is lie over and over and they believed us."

I asked her, "if she thought that the adults would catch on?"

She responded by saying, "people can be so blinded with whats in front of them that they don't see whats behind it. So, no, I thought they would continue to execute the witches."

I asked, " if she thought it worked?"

Her response, "yes, we had everyone in that town in at our mercy."

I asked Mary Warren, "What did she feel and think about the accusations?"

Warren said, " It was time to make them wake up."

I said, ". . . but you put them more in a trance. Wouldn't you agree?"

She responded by saying, "we exposed those witches for what they truly were and i'm not sad about it. Our big lie had worked. It shifted our shame on someone else."

"By telling lies?"

"The more lies we told, the more the people believed us."

"These lies killed many innocent people."

"Thats the thing about it. We were able to make them believe us so much that they hung their friends, neighbors, and family."

"So, with this power you can control people?"

Betty Parris answered: "You can tell them what you want them to hear, and make them believe it. Anyone can do it."

"What is the benefit behind it? Why didn't you stop it?"

Betty responds: "It's like mind control. Tell a lie long enough to make someone believe it. If one believes it, then two will believe it. Eventually, everyone believes it."

"How does it work?"

"Just make up your own story. Make it believable. Tell it over and over. People will believe it."

"Wouldn't someone figure it out eventually?"

"They wouldn't need to if you can shut up those who want to talk. You can manipulate evidence into your favor to make the lie bigger . . . The bigger the lie, the more lies told, and the more lies told, the more it becomes the truth."

". . . But it isn't the truth?"

"If tons of people believe it, and it is big enough, it becomes the truth." As anyone can see, Abigail and all the other girls said the same thing over and over again, so it soon became the truth to the court. One person believed it, then another believed it, and before anyone knew it, the people of Salem believed in the lie.

I then went to talk to Nick, Daisy, and Jordan of The Great Gatsby. I tried to interview Tom, but he denied my request.

"Who was Gatsby?"

Nick: "He was a good man."

Jordan: "He was a rich and famous man. He knew lots of people."

Nick: "Actually, he didn't really know anyone."

"He didn't? I thought he was a rich man? That's what everyone believed."

Nick: "It was all a lie. He was living a lie."

"What do you mean?"

Nick: "He made it all himself. He made it from nothing. He did it all for Daisy. It was all a lie"

Daisy: "Really?"

Nick: "He loved you."

"Everything about Gatsby was a lie? He was living a lie?"

Jordan: "I guess he was."

Nick: "Yes."

"... and people believed him?"

Nick: "Everyone believed what he said. Who he was. The life he led."

"Everyone believed him. They believed his lie? They took it as the truth?"

Daisy: "We all thought that he was telling the truth."

"He was telling so many lies, that you believed he was telling the truth."

Daisy, Jordan, Nick: "Ya."

"How could you describe it? Would you agree that it is easy to tell a lie and make people believe it?"

Nick: "If it is told often enough, and there is enough lies to back up that lie."

Gatsby was living a big lie. Everything he told people were lies. Just a build up of lies. Everyone believed that he was telling the truth. It turns out that he told it long enough, and had enough lies to back it up, that people took it as the truth. Therefore, it became the truth.

I then decided to go and interview Huck Finn about his adventures and the people he encountered on his trip.

"So, I hear that you faked your death and began to ride down the Mississippi River for an adventurous journey?"

Huck: "That's right."

"How did you keep people from knowing the truth about who you were?"

Huck: "I lied."

"Did people believe you?"

Huck: "Ya. They believed what I told them. The more I lied, then the more they believed what I told them."

"Who all did you lie to?"

Huck: "I lied to everyone I met along the way. I even acted as Tom when I went to the Phelps' house to rescue Jim. I completely lied, and made up more."

"What happened there?"

Huck: "I had to save Jim from the Phelps. I had told a big lie, and they believed I was Tom. The more lies I told, and the longer I told them. I started to believe myself that I was Tom. "

"Did anyone of them doubt you? Did they know you were lying?"

Huck: "They believed I was telling the truth. The more I lied to them. The more they believed that I was Tom. I do not think they ever did doubt me."

"Tell me about the King and the Duke. Didn't they lie about themselves?"

Huck: "They were fakes and frauds! They lied to everyone that they saw along the way."

"Was it the same case with them like with you?"

Huck: "Sort of, they lied about who they were. The more they lied and the longer they lied, then the more people thought that it was the truth."

"People believed that the lies were the truth?"

Huck: "They were blinded by the lies."

"Didn't you meet some a family along the line that was made up of lies, as someone could call it. They were the Grangerfords and Shepardsons."

Huck: "They had the image of being good people. They lied with their image. They acted and seemed like good people, but they killed each other over a family feud."

"So, they made people believe they were good people. They used a false image. They created a lie, so to speak?"

Huck: "Yes."

"How did they shade the truth and produce a lie which you initially believed for the truth?"

Huck: "They went to church. It was an appearance versus reality situation. They only appeared to be normal God-loving Americans. They were really murderers."

"Now, Mr. Finn, you say, 'You can't pray a lie.' What does this mean?"

Huck: "When I said that, I couldn't lie to God. I could not tell God that I wasn't going to try and help Jim, or was sorry for helping him, because I wasn't. I could not betray my best friend. I had to go help him even if it meant me going to hell."

"So, you believe that it is best to tell the truth instead of a lie?"

Huck: "I think that the truth must be told. Start telling the truth. Stop telling the lies that people begin to believe is the truth. Start with the truth." Huckleberry Finn found people that lied to him and lied to many others. These people were believed to have told the truth. Even Huck, lied about who he was, and where he came from to everyone he met along the Mississippi. It was him against society, and the people in the world.

The more someone lies, then the more it becomes the truth. It becomes the truth because so many people begin to believe it. Hitler said, "The bigger the lie, the more people will believe it."

Although Hitler is not admired very well, what he says is the truth. If you tell many lies long enough, then it begins to become believable. The lies cover up the truth and place it in the darkness. If you tell the truth, instead of covering it up, you can shed light on the darkness. When the truth is in the darkness, then no one can see it. Just imagine what could be done with lies. If you told them long enough, with more lies to support those lies, you can blind people. Someone could be controlled by lies. Just pile them up, and keep telling them. Eventually, the real truth will vanish and lies will take its place. It is up to people like Nick Caraway, Huck Finn, and John Proctor to find the real truth, and they shouldn't let it disappear in the darkness. Can we even trust what we hear anymore? The media, alone, can control how we view something. Such as, an important event. Many people in The Crucible were shielded from knowing that these people were not really witches, yet they drove to kill them. These were neighbors, friends, and family, but they believed these girls over them. The characters in The Great Gatsby thought that Jay Gatsby was a wealthy, and popular man. It turned out, his name wasn't even Jay Gatsby.

These people were fooled by lies. The lie was told over and over. It was witnessed by these people. Still, it was not the truth, yet they believed it was. King and Duke in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn were frauds, and complete hoaxes. Somehow, the lies built up, and were told so many times, that people took them as true honest people. Sometimes, it makes you wonder what is the truth and what isn't. These people can be lied to and believe it. It happens in history, it happens today, and will happen tomorrow. Only the person reading this article can believe what they hear. Even if it IS the truth. Look harder, and you might find something else. Something that you didn't see before. Something in the darkness. Maybe someday we will know the truth. We live in a world of lies, deception, corruption, and cover up. It has been proven that everyone lies.

Just think about events that people could have been lied about. The thousands of events in history that could be made up of lies. Lies that we believe is the truth, because they have been told so many times over all the years. Could our history books be wrong? Could our history be altered in someone else's favor. A way to shade the truth with lies. What if the events of World War II were lied about? How about major events such as: President Kennedy's Assassination, Robert Kennedy's, Martin Luther King's, The Vietnam War, The Bay of Pigs Invasion, or the events of September 11, 2001? How do you know that your father is your father? Because your mother says so? Did your parents tell you that your dog ran away when it died? Could it be possible that the "truth" that we know could be lies? How can we believe what we hear? We know that we can't always trust the propaganda in the news. So, why do we believe in what they say? The Swine Flu is "a serious danger" according to the news, but yet the regular flu kills more than the Swine Flu. Someone's doctor could tell them, "It's nothing," yet they believe the media versus a doctor. How come someone will believe the President over their brother? Is it authority?

We can say that "a lie told often enough becomes the truth," because people will believe the unbelievable. People still believe that a "magic bullet" hit Kennedy, and they will argue it. Even though it is impossible for a bullet to change directions in mid flight, and go into two people seven times and come out perfect. People can easily be blinded by lies. Mark Twain, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Arthur Miller all show this universal truth in their books. I think that it is time for us to wake up and realize what we have been told. It is time to question what you think could not be true. Martin Luther King said, "He who lives with untruth lives in spiritual slavery. Freedom

is still the bonus we receive for knowing the truth. Ye shall know the truth, said Jesus, and the truth shall set you free." So, what is the truth? Can you define it? It is about time we find it! STS The universal truth of a lie told often enough becomes the truth -- if someone lies, and continues to lie over a period of time, then others tend to believe them -- is presented in the following three novels: (1) The Great Gatsby, (2) The Crucible, and (3) The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

Works Cited

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