

Theory of Knowledge Exhibition

The TOK prompt I have selected is: **How might the context in which knowledge is presented influence whether it is accepted or rejected?** I have decided to focus on this because information is constantly being gathered from a variety of sources to increase our knowledge and understanding, about the past, present and future, but only sometimes do people check whether the source, the information has been gathered from, is credible. The TOK prompt is relevant because it helps establish how credibility of information is different depending on the context it is presented in.

1. The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas – Movie

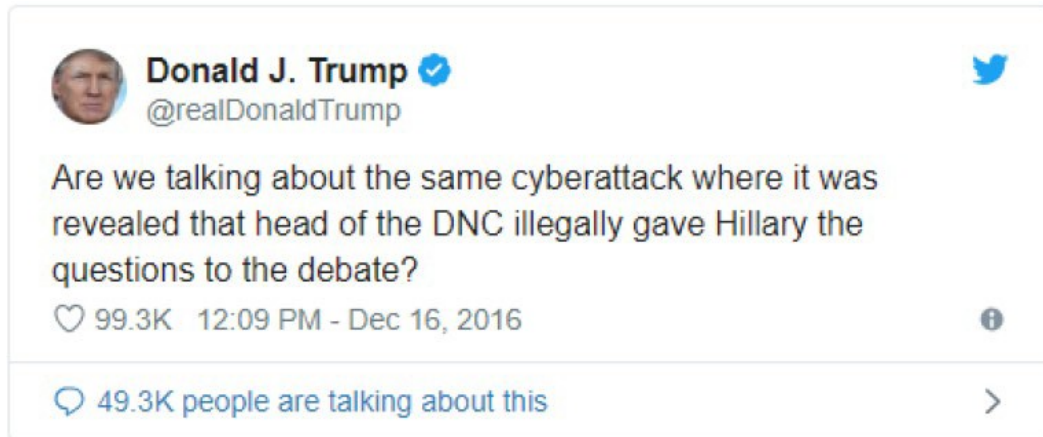


This object is a movie called “The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas” originally from the book of the same title written by John Boyne. It focuses on a boy living near a concentration camp and how he befriends a Jew in the camp. The movie shows what life was like during WW2 in the perspective of children with two different experiences as seen in the image above where the two children are being separated by a barbed wire.

In this movie, one can’t believe that everything that occurred is true since it wasn’t based on a true story and the main purpose of a film is to entertain an audience. So the producers would create it to attract the audience’s attention, hence it wouldn’t necessarily be factual. So even though certain aspects of it may be true, the entire movie cannot be taken as knowledge of an incident that occurred during WW2. When the purpose of a source is to entertain as it is with this movie, it doesn’t necessarily have to be true but could have been made up in order to attract the audience’s attention. However, if the movie claimed to be based on a true story then you would expect it to be more accurate. So the context is important.

However, what is interesting about this movie is that it got a lot of criticism for not being historically accurate even though it never claimed to be a true story. The historian Michael Gray said that in Britain the movie is often shown to children in school history lessons, and this is making them think that it is historically accurate and is what really happened. So the context that the school children were watching the movie in school makes them think that it is a historical source, not an entertainment movie.

2. A Tweet from Donald Trump



This object is a tweet from Donald Trump, posted in 2016 almost a month before he received his presidency. In the tweet he is accusing the head of DNC of passing Hillary Clinton questions to a debate.

This tweet is interesting because the information was given out by a major authority figure, which usually leads the viewer to the idea that sources may be trusted more if authority figures are the ones giving information, since they are believed to be more knowledgeable. However, the context is important because Trump and Clinton were rivals in the run for presidency, which could make people doubt the credibility of the source as the information given may have been biased.

The information came from Twitter, a social media network, where people have the freedom to tweet anything within the limits of 280 characters. Donald Trump uses Twitter a lot to communicate with the people who vote for him. Some people think that this is one of the things that his supporters like about him, because he communicates with them using a social media network that they also use and this makes it seem as if he understands them and is similar to them. So by putting things on Twitter, that context makes his supporters more likely to accept them.

However other people think that the president of America should not be putting things such as this on Twitter because it is not appropriate to talk about serious things in politics in that context of a social media network. The text-type itself isn't trustworthy since it is a social media network in which mainly subjective/ non-factual comments are tweeted instead of objective/ factual ones.

3.A Propaganda Poster from World War 1



This object is a propaganda poster from WW1. Propaganda is generally used to persuade and influence individuals' attitudes and beliefs. The purpose of this poster is to persuade men to join the army and fight in the war. Since it says, "Women of Britain say 'Go!'" it makes the viewer believe that the women want men to fight in the war and that the message is coming from them, the women, not from other figures e.g. soldiers already in the war or authorities in the war.

This poster shows that a persuasive piece can't completely be trusted since information may be hidden (not based on all the facts), to convince the reader into following or believing what the author wants them to, hence not being fully credible. For example, this poster could be interpreted as showing that fighting in the war is a positive thing. This could be seen as a source hiding certain information to persuade an audience into making a choice, or to manipulate them into making a decision.

In history we are encouraged to consider the origins, purpose, content, value and limitations of different sources such as this poster. This exhibition has helped me broaden this to knowledge in general by leading me to think about the link between the idea of how the credibility of the source of where knowledge comes from affects the acceptance and rejection of knowledge. It has become clear that not all information can be trusted but it depends on what the context is and what the purpose is, and what the individual is trying to obtain from the source. So, I believe that the context of knowledge is extremely important in the acceptance/rejection of knowledge, because if one doesn't think of the context as being based off credible information, then the knowledge is generally going to be rejected.

Works Cited

- "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas." *Miramax*, www.miramax.com/movie/the-boy-in-the-striped-pajamas/. Accessed 23 Nov. 2018.
- "1915 Women of Britain, Say Go!" *Wikipedia*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1915_Women_of_Britain,_say_Go!.jpg. 1915. Accessed 23 Nov. 2018.
- "Donald Trump Tweet." *Twitter*. 16 Dec. 2016, www.twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/809717035353722880?lang=en. Accessed 23 Nov. 2018.