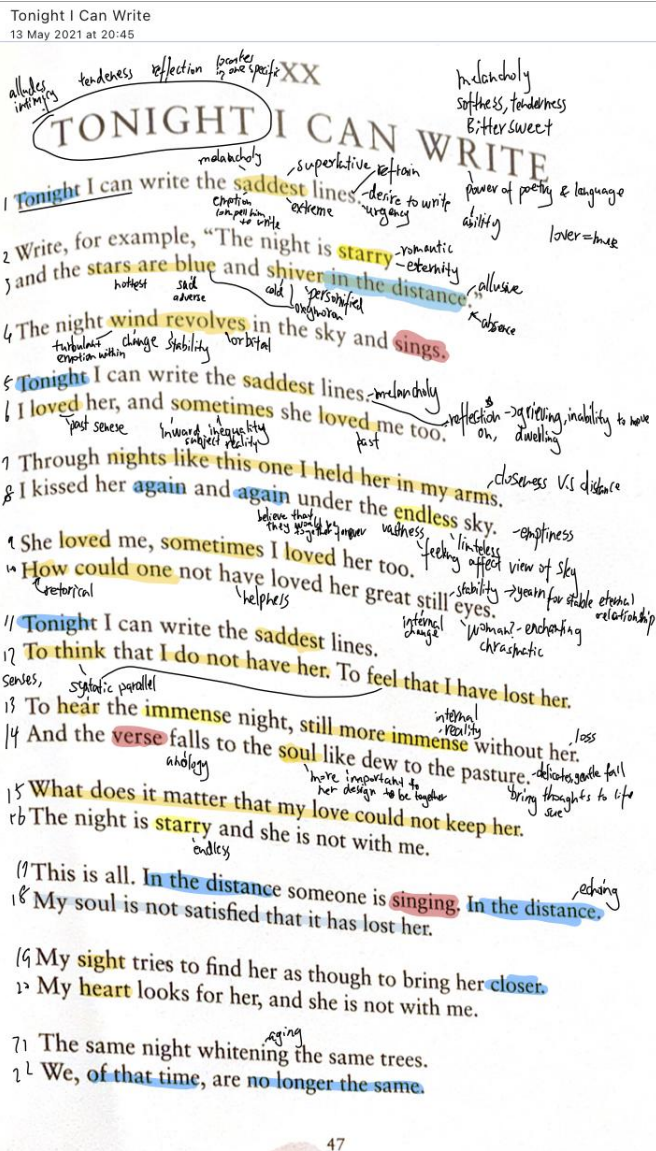


TOK Exhibition: Who owns knowledge?



This is a photo of the annotation I did on Neruda's Poem 'Tonight I can write' in my English lesson in May. It is an example of my version of the knowledge on this poem that is owned by me, as it is my understanding of it. It is also an example of how some knowledge can be owned by anyone that has a deep understanding of it and has their own version of the knowledge using their ability. The word 'owns' means belong to, therefore if I can fully understand the knowledge that isn't mine and use my own ability to convey it, the knowledge then becomes my knowledge. This means the original knowledge will never really be owned

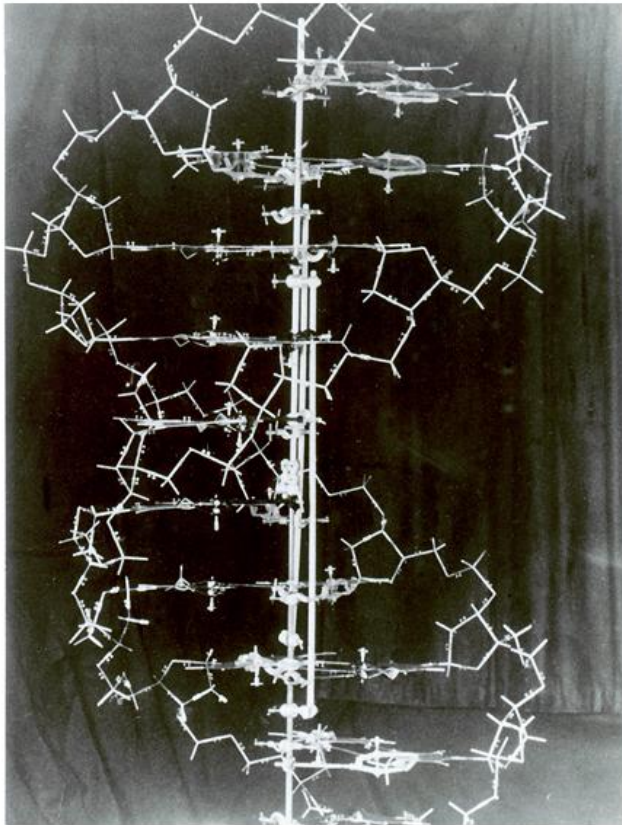
by non-creators but a version of that knowledge will belong to a person. For example, my knowledge on the Neruda's poem 'Tonight I can write' wasn't originally owned by me as I didn't understand it and couldn't explain the knowledge in my own words when I first learnt it. But through teaching, I own my version of the knowledge as shown through my annotations, due to how I can use my knowledge on Neruda in my annotation using my way. Thus, the original knowledge can only be owned by the person or community who created it and no one else other than them can claim the ownership of it, however others can own their version of that knowledge. Therefore, everyone can own knowledge if they have their own version of that knowledge. Each version will be unique as some parts of the original knowledge will be skipped or changed, and others will understand and explain it differently based on personal interest and interpretation. These versions of the knowledge will ultimately be different to the original knowledge, thus why each person that created their version owns it.



This is a photo of a thangka which is a scroll painting used for the purpose of worship in Tibetan Buddhism.¹ It contains a significant religious purpose and value to Tibetan Buddhists. This Tangka was a gift from my parent's friends in 2019 from Mongolia. This is an object that shows how knowledge can be owned by a community and the deeper knowledge will therefore be limited for others that are not in the community to access. In this

¹ "Thangka, a Unique Tibetan Culture." En.chinaculture.org, en.chinaculture.org/gb/en_artqa/2003-12/31/content_45157.htm.

scenario, the knowledge of tangka is owned by the community of Tibetan Buddhists and no one else outside the community can really own the knowledge. This is due to how the knowledge available to the public, who are not part of the community, is limited for others to claim to own the knowledge or a version of that knowledge. I will not be able to understand what each object on the painting represents without a practitioner from the community explaining and teaching me about it. The knowledge of thangka available for others will only be brief, with some of its meaning remaining hidden. This is because thangka is a really important part of Tibetan Buddhism, therefore it's a deeper knowledge that is only passed down through generations or between the Tibetan Buddhist community. A deeper knowledge will be required for ownership: a higher level of accuracy is needed in order for people to claim their own knowledge. This is due to the responsibility that comes with the ownership of religious knowledge since it will need to be passed on. The owner of cultural or religious knowledge needs to come from the community because the knowledge in those areas are created through group contribution of their understanding of the object or concept. So it can only be owned by the community that created and expanded the knowledge.



Courtesy of Cold Spring Harbor Archives. Noncommercial, educational use only.

This is a DNA model that our biology teacher had shown us a picture on during our biology lesson. It is a false stimulation of what the DNA structure would have looked like as this is the version that Watson and Crick had believed was true, but was later on proven as wrong by Franklin's X-ray diffraction pattern of the DNA. It showed Watson and Crick that the DNA isn't a triple helix but a double helix shape. However, when Watson and Crick first published their findings, Franklin's contributions were unrecognised, this remained until after her death. Therefore, everyone only knows that she had also owned a part of the original knowledge of the DNA like how Watson and Crick did after her death. This is why the DNA model is a good example of where the original knowledge is owned by the people that contributed to it, however if this is unrecognised during the official publication of the knowledge, then from other people's point of view, the ownership of this knowledge is shared by the credited contributor. Like what was mentioned in the first object, anyone that contributed in constructing the knowledge can not own the original version of the knowledge. This however raises another question which is when a group of knowers collectively comes up with the knowledge but some were not credited due to many reasons, will the knowledge still be owned by them? Theoretically, this knowledge is still owned by all the people that had paid contributions to create the knowledge, however, in real life the ownerships of the knowledge

will only be recognised by the general public if the names were credited and mentioned in the official publication or announcement. This means that unless proofs were provided about the contributions of unrecognised owners of the knowledge, they will not own the knowledge in other's views . Thus, the original version of the knowledge can only be owned from the public's eyes by those that are credited in the publication.

Word count: 949

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Photo 1 & 2 from author’s personal collection