

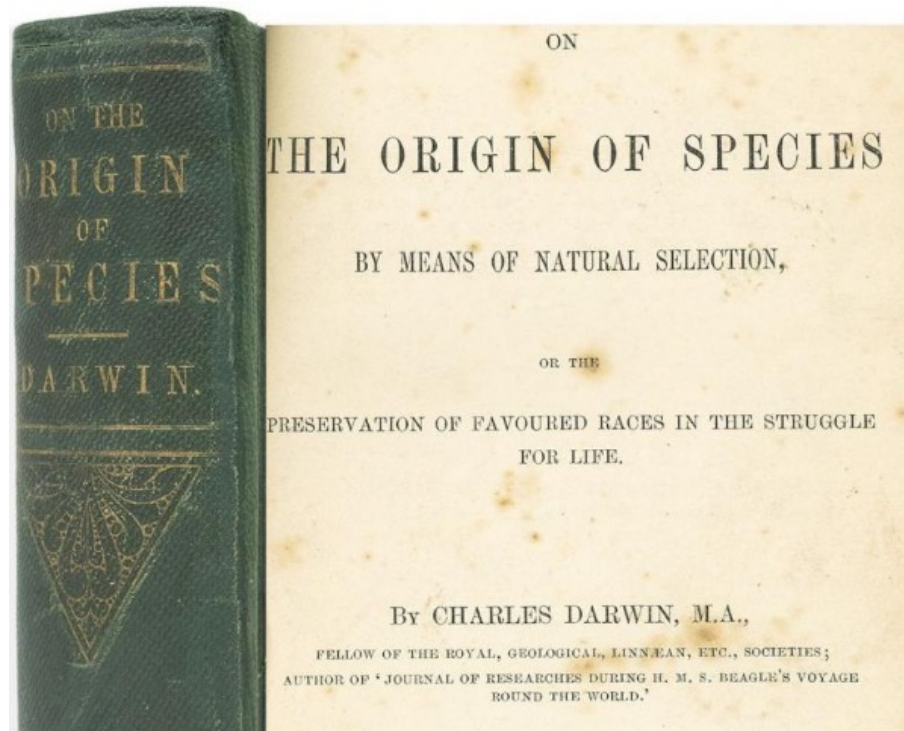
TOK EXHIBITION

IA Prompt : What are the implications of having, or not having, knowledge?

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Object 1 : The book "The Origin of Species" by Charles Darwin

The book "The Origin of Species" by Charles Darwin, first published in 1859 represents the acquisition and spread of knowledge and the implications of having that knowledge. This book proposes the theory of evolution by natural selection. At the time, the prevailing belief was that species were unchanging, but Darwin observed changes in animals during his voyage on the HMS Beagle that led him to propose populations adapt to environments over generations through natural selection.

I chose this book because Darwin's theory of evolution fundamentally changed our understanding of life and our place in nature. When first published, Darwin's ideas went against religious doctrine and were controversial. However, as evidence accumulated to support evolution, it became accepted by scientists and the public. This shows how new knowledge, even if initially controversial, can lead to progress over time when supported by fact. However, knowledge can also create implications and problems in the real world. Darwin's work was used to justify colonialism, racism, and social Darwinism. People misinterpreted his theory

of "survival of the fittest" as meaning some races or cultures were superior to others. While Darwin himself did not advocate social Darwinism, his work was exploited to advance political agendas. This example shows the potential misuse of knowledge and the challenges of implementing new concepts responsibly into society. While knowledge leads to progress, the fuller implications must also be considered to ensure progress is ethical.



Object 2 : Leaked pentagon confidential Ukraine/Russia war documents

My second object is a set of leaked classified Pentagon documents related to the Russo-Ukrainian war. The unauthorized disclosure of these confidential documents in 2023 led to a diplomatic crisis as nations scrambled to respond. While the leaker aimed to expose hidden knowledge and promote transparency, the leak also had costly implications.

Confidentiality is a way for those in power to control knowledge. Classified information is restricted to protect perceived national interests, but it can also hide government overreach or misconduct. The Pentagon papers exposed misinformation around the Vietnam War, but leaks of classified data often threaten safety and security. For example the 2023 leak revealed compromised military operations and diplomatic relationships. The leak highlights the tension between openness and secrecy in the government. Democracies require an informed public to function properly, but they also need to protect sensitive data. The balance between

transparency and confidentiality is complex with arguments on both sides. Knowledge is power, and controlling access to information is a way of exerting power over others. The 2023 leak redistributed power by releasing hidden knowledge into the public domain. However, with this power also came responsibility, and the indiscriminate nature of the leak failed to consider the nuanced implications of declassifying such a broad range of Knowledge. Though intended to counter government overreach, the unauthorized disclosure ultimately undermined systems meant to protect citizens and reflect the democratic process. There are no easy answers in the debate over government transparency versus confidentiality, but this object highlights the need to consider knowledge and its implications carefully. The leaked classified documents represent how knowledge, and lack thereof, can have real consequences depending on how it's shared and who has access to it. It reflects the nuances and complexities around knowledge and power in the modern world.



Object 3 : Map of Senegal, "Carte de l'Afrique Françoise"

My third object is a map of Senegal, located in West Africa. Maps represent knowledge,

and this map specifically represents knowledge about the geography of Senegal that has been accumulated by cartographers and explorers over centuries of travel within Senegal. Access to maps has expanded our understanding of the world and enabled both mobility and control over space.

Knowledge represented by maps had major implications for Senegal's development and self-determination. When Europeans first arrived, their maps gave them an advantage in exploring the territory and exploiting its resources. The French were able to establish colonies due to knowledge gained from these early maps. For the Senegalese people, the lack of cartographic knowledge meant an inability to resist European conquest and subjugation. The borders drawn on maps by colonial powers divided Senegalese ethnic groups and disconnected cultural regions. I chose a map of Senegal to demonstrate how knowledge acquisition can be linked to both progress and conflict. Maps were crucial in enabling European powers to explore Africa during the Age of Discovery and eventually colonize Senegal. Today, the legacy of this uneven distribution of cartographic knowledge lives on. Infrastructure projects and investments are guided by maps initially created to facilitate colonial control. Many Senegalese remain disconnected from formal educational institutions that could provide indigenous mappings of their land and history. Maps are a tool to acquire knowledge, as they provide a visual representation of geographic locations and can help us navigate the world around us. Maps also provide context and can give us a better understanding of the relationships between different places. By using a map, we can gain knowledge about different regions and cultures, and this can lead to a deeper appreciation and understanding of the world. Ultimately, maps demonstrate how knowledge - and the lack thereof - shape history and identity. As maps of Senegal become less reflective of colonial interests and more representative of indigenous knowledge and lived experiences, the Senegalese people gain a tool that can empower them and gain new found knowledge.