

9. Are some types of knowledge less open to interpretation than others?

(Knowledge and Indigenous societies)

Word count: 915

Object 1: My jewelry box.



This is a jewelry box that was given to me by my mother who used it when she was the same age as me or a teenager. She used to keep her rings and earrings in this little box in the 1980s when my grandmother gifted it for her as a present. Now, I use this box to keep all of my jewelry. When I leave the house I cannot leave without checking the box for my accessories because they are the most important attributes of my looks and outfits.

The box has a family significance as it is a family transmission because in the future I can gift this box to my child and they can use it as a jewelry box, too, as their mother and grandmother. I see it differently because its value is greater than others could have as it might look like a cheap box or not something significant but it was carefully kept by my mother for years and now

by me. Also, in Kazakh culture women would have a lot of accessories like “shashbau”- an accessory that binds hair and creates a weight at the bottom which was useful from the stoop, or big earrings and rings. So, they would keep them in a box or a chest so their accessories would not lose. Therefore, we still hold this tradition because before accessories of women were considered as a beauty standard, and girls at a certain age would pierce their ears. In addition, these chests would have traditional ornaments as this box has beautiful lines and prints on it. Therefore, the box is less open for interpretation for others that do not have this knowledge about the significance of this jewelry box for me and my culture.

Object 2: Painting called ‘Mushroom’ of Khaidarov A. A. in National Museum in Nur-Sultan.



When I visited our National Museum in Nur-Sultan, I was stunned to see paintings about USSR and its totalitarian policy, or countries that have suffered from nuclear bombs. The exhibition was about how war is not an answer and all cultures are together. So, this painting was significant for this exhibition because it is about nuclear testing that was made for Cold War and their military purposes from 1949 till 1991 by USSR in Kazakh fields or big territories like Semipalatinsk where I and my father were born next. My father was very young when those tests took place and their city was far away but still felt ground vibrations and had to take gas masks with them every day until Kazakh citizens rose against this horrible policy by the Soviet Union.

This painting is less open for interpretation because the author uses specific symbols that represent nuclear tests in Semei and our folklore. Firstly, the statue of the classic poet, composer and the main philosopher of our folklore represents the Semei region because he was born in the Karauyl village of Semipalatinsk looking towards the “mushroom” that symbolizes nuclear bomb explosion. Also, the field has “zhusan” which is a symbol of the motherland in our folklore and a swallow bird is a symbol of honesty. As the bird has died it shows that the policy is not honest towards the civilians who live next to the polygon. Finally, there is a mutated child and a broken doll that symbolizes how it affected the social and economical life of citizens of Semipalatinsk as it affected newborn children who were born defected and a broken childhood of kids like my father who thought that the earth vibrations were earthquakes where there are no mountains.

Object 3: My national vest called “kamzol”



This is a vest that I wore last year in march for our traditional celebration called “Nauryz”. On the Gregorian calendar, the celebration is between March 21 and March 23. These dates are celebrated by various cultures like Uzbeks, Iranian, as well as Kazakhstan. Nauryz is a New Year celebration that begins on the spring equinox or the moment when the sun crosses the celestial equator when day and night are almost equal in length. This time in our culture represents the same values as the modern New Year because people ask for forgiveness from those people whom they offended and forgive others who offended them. During these dates, people wear our national clothes as well as kamzol which is a vest worn on a dress with beautiful national ornaments and make national food like beshbarmak, boursak, or the most important Nauryz kozhe. Nauryz kozhe is made out of 7 main ingredients like water, meat, salt,

milk or yogurt, one type of grains, chosen from rice, corn or wheat, and others and put for a day for sourness but cooked differently in different families and regions. It is celebrated by going to each other's house and trying out each other's Nauryz kozhe. Therefore, my vest is less open for interpretation because of the cultural differences and significance for our country as a national celebration. Our culture was kept by our ancestors and it is important to celebrate these dates because it is time to remember our cultural heritage, values, and traditions. Our country is heavily affected by Russian culture or is westernized but during Nauryz it is not weird to wear our traditional clothes like this vest to public or meetings with relatives.