

## TOK EXHIBITION

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### IA Prompt: What is the relationship between personal experience and knowledge?

#### 1. "The Silent Child" Short Film

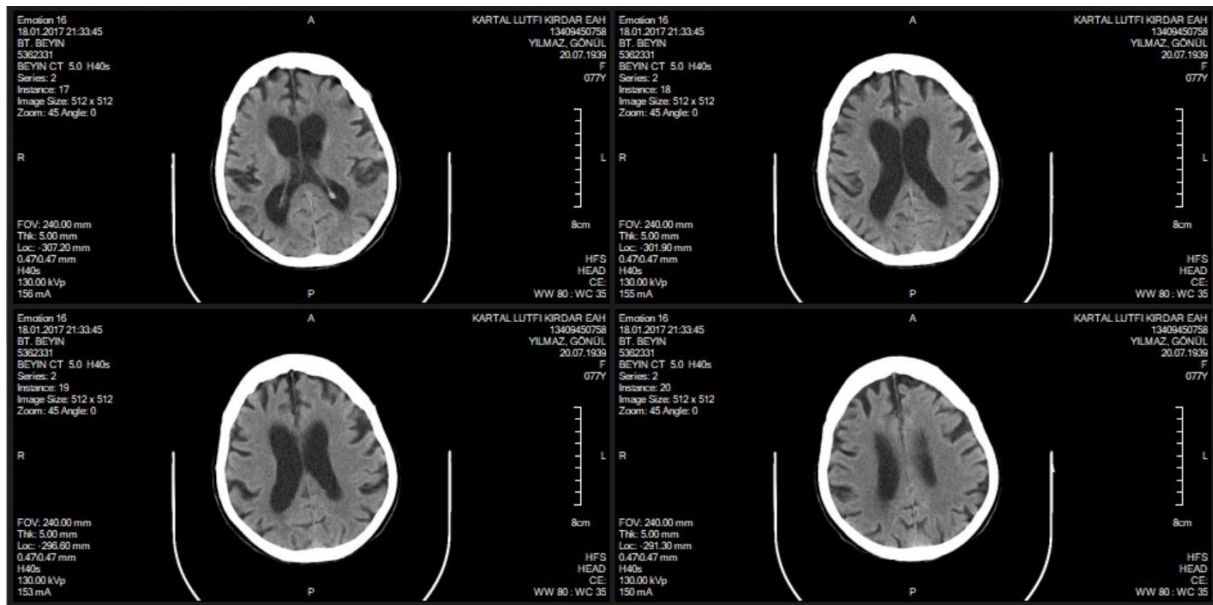


My first object is this short film called "The Silent Child" (2017), which focuses on a four-year-old deaf girl named Libby. At the beginning of the story, Libby is growing up in a very ignorant family. Because of this, she lives an isolated life from the outer world: She wasn't even taught how to communicate. However, Libby's life completely changes after she meets with a social worker named Joanne, who teaches her British Sign Language and helps her connect to the world. And yet, her family ends up making her attend a mainstream school without any extra help because they want Libby to be "normal".

In this short film, we can see how Libby's environment and her experiences with different people affect how she perceives the world and produces knowledge. As she is raised by such a family and knows no way to communicate, Libby is left without "language" as a way of knowing. This prevents Libby from obtaining knowledge from many communities of knowers, including her own family. However; her experiences with Joanne, the social worker, and being taught a communication way help her understand the world better. As she starts school without anyone knowing how to communicate with her, she falls back into her lonely and isolated life. Her family and the school similarly prevent Libby's knowledge production process.

Although it is evident that this story is made up, what makes it suitable for the exhibition is its real-life connection which is stated at the end of the short film: "Over 78% of deaf children attend mainstream school with no special support in place." Although I used Libby's story in the short film to connect to the IA prompt, some deaf children actually go through this. Not being in a suitable environment and not being exposed to communication via their "personal experiences" prevent these children from learning/using many forms of knowledge.

## 2. CT Scan Showing the Alzheimer's Disease



My second object is the CT (Computed Tomography) scan of my grandmother, who had Alzheimer's disease. This object highlights the symptoms of this disease which affects memory, and shows how "personal experience" doesn't always result in knowledge production.

To give brief information, Alzheimer's disease is a neurological disease that leads to the loss of brain function due to the death of brain cells. This disease has many symptoms that affect thinking and social skills; however, the way the memory gets affected is especially crucial for this exhibition. Patients suffer from short-term memory disorders even at the first stages of the disease: They have difficulties remembering information they just learned ("Know the 10 Signs of Alzheimer's Disease"). This means that their experiences cannot contribute to their knowledge to some extent, depending on the course of the disease. Although personal experiences are essential sources of knowledge for healthy humans, Alzheimer's disease limits this vastly.

The progression of the disease not only prevents the production of knowledge but also results in constant confusion. People who don't have this disease utilize their personal experiences in order to make sense of the world; however, patients with Alzheimer's disease get confused about the environment because they have already forgotten their experiences.

This object lets us question the IA prompt from a different perspective. Patients with Alzheimer's disease, including my grandmother, struggle with the processes of making meaning from experiences, transforming them into knowledge, and using the knowledge unlike other healthy humans: They tend to forget. The importance of this object in my exhibition is how it states the apparent dissociation between the two concepts I focus on.

### 3. Spacewalk Game on my VR Glasses



My last object is the spacewalk game that I play via my VR (virtual reality) glasses. VR, which became prevalent especially recently, refers to a computer-generated environment open to exploration/interaction by the viewers. Although there are many applications of this technology, I chose this object in order to give examples from my own experiences. While playing this game with my VR glasses, the viewer can experience the sensation of being in the environment shown in the game and taking a spacewalk for the first time.

What I want to focus on about this object is how it can simulate a real spacewalk. Its connection to the prompt will be how it can lead to knowledge production with only the "simulation" of personal experience. So, the main idea here is how developing technologies create a connection between "artificial" personal experience and knowledge.

Virtual reality imitating the "personal experience" presents valid information to some extent, because it is pretty similar to what the viewer could experience in real life. For example, no matter the fact that I cannot physically go to space and experience a "real" spacewalk, this game inspired by NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) training program helps me experience a simulated environment that is similar to reality. I acknowledge that the information I can get is quite limited with such simple VR glasses; however, it is worth mentioning how scientists use advanced versions of these glasses and the game to produce "scientific knowledge". NASA's space simulation that helped scientists to categorize stars can be given as an example of this statement (Hille).

I chose to use this object and the idea of virtual reality because it makes us question the concept of "personal experience". The development in technologies let us present the knowledge via simulations. Hence; virtual reality, imitating the "personal experience" and still leading to "knowledge", is worth including in this exhibition.

## **References**

"The Silent Child Movie Trailer." *The Silent Child Movie*, [www.thesilentchildmovie.com/trailer](http://www.thesilentchildmovie.com/trailer). Accessed 27 May 2021.

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Hille, Karl. "Scientists Tap Virtual Reality to Make Discoveries." NASA, 29 Jan. 2020, [www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2020/scientists-tap-virtual-reality-for-discovery](http://www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2020/scientists-tap-virtual-reality-for-discovery).