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Term Paper Outline.

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**Topic:** How do we represent the world we live in? Does the representation is accurate?

**Thesis:** We represent the external world through language, myth, and symbol. Those three conditions are necessary but not accurate representations of the world.

1. **Language.**

* *It is necessary condition but not accurate and indeed knowledge can lead one astray.*

“The sun and the moon, has its ultimate origin in nothing more than a misinterpretation of the names which men have applied to those objects.” (Herbert Spencer, taken form The Neon Kantian reader by Luft pg. 247)

*“It does indeed reflect a reality–but a reality to which it can never measure up, and which it can never adequately portray. From this point of view all artistic creation becomes a mere imitation, which must always fall short of the original.”* (248 The Place of language and Myth)

* In other words, language is in a way necessary condition to interpret reality of this world, however the reality which language portray is not accurate representation.
* Language can be understood as suggestion of the experience.
* Language is not sufficient replication of the truth. It fails to represent things as they truly are. Although, language can represent objects through concepts.
* Definition of concept: formulation and creations of thoughts, which instead of giving us the true forms of objects, show us rather the forms of thought itself.

*“So knowledge, as well as myth, language, and art, has been reduced to a kind of fiction that recommends itself by its usefulness, but must not be measured by any strict standard of truth, if it is not to melt away into nothingness.” (249, The Place of Language and Myth.)*

* *“Schemata that classify, organize, and summarize the phenomena of the real world turn out to be nothing but arbitrary schemes because it does not express the nature of things, but the nature of mind. That can be applied to not only language but also to knowledge, art and myth.”*

1. Potential solution to the language, art and myth as not accurate representation of the world.

* **Kant’s Copernican Revolution** (249 The Place of Language and Myth)

*“Against this self-dissolution of the spirit there is only one remedy: to accept in all seriousness what Kant calls his “Copernican revolution.”*

* In other words, if we want to claim that language is indeed an adequate representation of reality (the world) we must accept the theory in which Kant will present a solution of language or myth as only a suggestion, not accurate representation of the reality.
* We must see the language as measure and criterion for their truth and intrinsic meaning. (249) In other words, we must focus on the language as something symbolic with a true meaning and significance.
* Myth, art, language is not replication, but original ways of expressing reality.
* Myth, art, language are the “organs of reality”.
* *“From this point of view, Myth, art, and language appear as symbols; not in the sense of mere figures which refer to some given reality by means of suggestions and allegorical renderings which produces and points a world of its own.”*
* *Through t*hat organs we can comprehend the objects is the world.
* Definite form is necessary for something that is visible. Definite from is some form of existence that has its source in some particular way of seeing, intellectual formulation and intuition of meaning.
* On those basis Kant says that once the myth, art, language becomes an ideational from there is no need to philosophically question them if they represent the reality of the object.
* Kant’s approach to epistemological representation of an object or the external world, and the approach to epistemological constructivism.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. **Myth is not accurate representation of the world, because it does not correspond with the world, it does not reveal the accurate reality.**

* What is Myth according to Max Muller?
* Not a transformation of history into fabulous legend.
* Not a fable accepted as history.
* Not a contemplation of the great forms powers of nature.
* Myth is something “conditioned and negotiated by the agency of language; it is, in fact the product of basic shortcoming, an inherent weakness of language.”[[2]](#footnote-2)
* In other words, myth is only a linguistic attempt to characterize the world that ultimately fails to be characterized in words. Therefore, myths do not correspond to the world it only gives the mental expression, the significance of myth.
* For example, one could say that the birth of Jesus Christ is a myth. The story of Jesus being born is only a linguistic interpretation of what actually took place, it is not accurate.

1. **Symbols**

* Symbols have a different meaning depending what they will be used for.
* Beauty as the symbol of Morality.

“Moral awareness may satisfy immediately, but satisfaction is based on the application of definite rules. Moral awareness involves the interest that moral values, action, and conditions that actually exist in the world.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

* There is a connection between what symbols represent, for example, a cross symbolizing Jesus death and resurrection, or sacrificing himself for our sins. In a culture where cross has this religious significance it would be morally wrong to get rid of that symbol because it in a way symbolize some religious significance, and it is indeed beautiful significance.

“The symbolic relationship between beauty and morality concerns parallels in the qualities of the the respective kind of judgment involved or in the subjective qualities of moral vs. reflective aesthetic awareness of beauty.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

* For example, heart can symbolize love. An action of breaking the heart can symbolize the break of hart. In that respect beauty as love, and morality as breaking a heart.

**Symbols in culture.**

* Language as symbol in different culture will be symbolized differently by giving it different name.
* Example, in Polish sun is *slonce*. In English culture, *slonce* would have no meaning what so ever. Indeed, it definitely would not be recognized as sun.
* Therefore, the language is only a symbol that give meaning to a specific object.
* Religious Symbols have different meaning.
* For example, cross in Christianity symbolizes Jesus death, his sacrificial act of dying on the cross for our sins. However, in the ancient times cross would not have the same meaning.

**Rituals as symbols.**

* “The symbol is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behavior; it is the ultimate unit of specific structure in a ritual context.” [[5]](#footnote-5)
* Symbols give meaning in different rituals.
* Ndembu of Northern Rhodesia rituals.
* “Milk-tree” ritual and its symbolic meaning.
* The girl’s puberty ritual, novice is wrapped in a blanket and laid at the foot of *mudyi.*
* *Mudyi is a name given to a tree that has white latex, which exudes in milky beads if the thin bark is scratched.*
* *It symbolizes the human breast-milk.*
* This ritual is done when girl’s breasts begin to ripen, the ritual symbolizes the milk supply in the breast.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Bibliography

Luft, *The Neo-Kantian Reader,* “The Place of Language and Myth in the Pattern of Human Culture”, “The Problem of the Symbols of Philosophy” (1927).

This is my primary source from which I derived my thesis statement. This source gives me arguments that support my thesis. Mainly, the connection between myth and language as something symbolic. That through symbols we represent world, however, the world does not correspond to the reality, it is only a linguistic interpretation, suggestion.

Robert Wicks, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kant on Judgment*, “Beauty’s confirmation of science and morality.”

I used this source because it gives me argument in which Kant claims that beauty is the symbol of morality. Therefore, it supports my thesis showing that beauty is a way of representing the world, which also has to be symbolic because symbolizes different things, and indeed can have different ways of interpretation. On the other hand, beauty can also symbolize, give significance to what is moral. Morality present the world in respect to different cultures.

Dorothy Emmet, *Sociological and Philosophical Analysis,* “Symbols in Ndembu Ritual.”

I used this source because it supports, gives evidence of different cultures where symbolism is a way to portray the significance of rituals. Again, specific rituals have meaning in a specific culture, they are not universality accepted.

Milos Rastovic, *Kant’s Copernican Revolution*, Duquesne University.

This source gives me potential solution to the language, art and myth as not accurate representation of the world, which in a way is a critique to my thesis.

1. Milos Rastovic, Kant’s Copernican Revolution, Duquesne University. Pg.23 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Place of Language and Myth. Pg 247 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Robert Wicks, Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kant on Judgment. Pg. 173 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Robert Wicks, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kant on Judgment*. pg. 174 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Dorothy Emmet, *Sociological and Philosophical Analysis,* “Symbols in Ndembu Ritual.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Dorothy Emmet, *Sociological and Philosophical Analysis,* “Symbols in Ndembu Ritual.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)