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**CLASS PERIOD: 5**

**Outline Guide For TOK Oral Presentation (For One or Two People)**

This should be done prior to completing the TOK Presentation Planning Document. After completing this outline, you should be able to copy & paste and/or summarize text written here to that document.

**INTRODUCTION:**

*Our main Knowledge Question is: How does society instill cultural norms?*

*The real life situation that got us thinking about our main Knowledge Question is (make the connection between the two very clear):*

In the beginning Whittington family was expecting a little girl to come into their family, they were shocked to find out that months later their daughter would be against being labeled as a girl as opposed to wanting to be a boy. Ryland, the transgender child, had been forced to hide himself from being who he wished to be due to the cultural norms set in place by society. He was ashamed of not wanting to be feminine and not being like everyone else. Cultural norms dictate that there are that you are supposed to obey the gender you are assigned when your biological sex is revealed. Ryland’s dissatisfaction with himself lead to him even allegedly saying “‘When the family dies, I will cut off my hair so I can be a boy.’” Ryland’s story is a common one shared throughout the world and these children or teens are usually discriminated against or ridiculed for these wishes. Thankfully Ryland had a lucky case where his parents learned to accept the idea of their son feeling uncomfortable with what she’d been forced to accept and they supported him in his decisions.

**BODY:**

*Claims/Contrasting Claims/Different Perspectives on the main Knowledge Question:*

1. *FIRST Claim/Contrasting Claim/Different Perspective*

During an infant’s first months of development, they have no sense of self. Freud’s theory states that an unconscious focus that affects human conduct. This theory states that the superego, a part of Freud’s theory, which contains the social ideals (norms, values, traditions, the idea of whether an action is moral or immoral, etc) which serves as a parental authority figure to help nurture a child in its journey of determining whether the child deserves praise for doing something morally right or making the child feel guilty for committing an immoral act. In conclusion, this theory concludes that a child has no idea of what cultural norms until an unconscious focus introduces the child too it. And, the ego which subjects itself to cultural norms to not create any chaos or trouble.

*How is this claim supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion? Be sure to cite sources.*

In the chapter “The Human Sciences” from the TOK textbook, the Milgram experiment is introduced with all its gory details. In this experiment, a volunteer was given the role of the ‘teacher’ and an actor was given the role of the ‘volunteer’. The ‘teacher’ was supposed to punish the ‘volunteer’ with different levels of electricity each time that person answered a question incorrectly. The ‘teacher’ was reassured by a doctor to continue the experiment even after hearing tortured screams escape the ‘volunteer’. Showing how much people trust in doctors authority of what is right or wrong. The doctor introduced the volunteer to the ideal of how if someone else is pushing for you to continue doing something which is considered morally wrong, then you’ll continue doing it because this trust or ideal has been instilled into your superego.

*What are examples and stories that can help illustrate this claim. Be sure to cite sources and not just have personal examples/stories (though it is fine to include some personal examples).*

In the year of 2014, a transgender teen committed suicide due to the fact of being denied to right to choose which sex; she wished to be. Leelah had come out as transgender to her parents, but due to their religious upbringing they immediately disagreed with Leelah and told her that she was just confused. She’d been ostracized for going against cultural norms denoting that when a child was assigned their gender. Then, they were to submit to this choosing and not rebel against it. Leelah was being forced to accept the judgement of society that she wasn’t supposed to try to change her sex and that she was going to stay as a boy. Cultural norms in America often conflict with people’s own morals and beliefs that they have been forced to believe, since birth. Leelah had been taught since birth that she had to follow cultural norms and if she went against them. She’d be punished for her choices.

*How does learning about his claim help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?*

With the introduction of this theory and the superego, the conclusion can be made that a child lacks the cultural norms put in place by society to corral a person into identifying with a label. This show how cultural norms are instilled through the use of the superego which states that social ideals take the form of a parental figure to decide what morals or ethics a child will later develop or possess.

*How is this claim connected to your Real-Life Situation?*

From the beginning of Ryland’s life, he’d been compelled to follow what cultural norms that had been forced-fed into himself. Society played the part of the parental authority figure and punished him for wishing to go against cultural norms. He felt guilty for wishing to be a boy due to the norms that had been instilled into him through wanting to impress society of how he was a normal feminine girl who wished to live up to social ideals.

2. *SECOND Claim/Contrasting Claim/Different Perspective:*

Another method of instilling cultural norms is the ever so way of assigning gender roles on newborns introducing them to the difficulties of not being able to discover their own identity. With the assigning of these gender roles, the child is already on its way to having to accept all the cultural norms that come with a gender role such as: stereotypes concerning their attitudes, what traits they should have, or prejudice values related to sexism or transphobia. According to Boundless.com specifically the Psychology portion, they explain the dangers of assigning gender roles onto children and how these gender roles are harmful to some.

*How is this claim supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion? Be sure to cite sources.*

In the chapter ‘Perception’ from the TOK textbook, there is a section relating to labels and stereotypes which speaks of the dangers of assuming a particular trait that a group has and believing it's true. It states that labels can lead to us trapping us into one particular way of looking at things closing out mind away from a more open-minded route. As seen on the example given on page 93 from the TOK textbook where it talks about how in the 19th century, some scientists used to believe that there was an undiscovered planet between Mercury and the sun, but in reality there was nothing there. Since, they’d believed that they had seen a planet through the telescope; then that planet probably was the undiscovered planet named Vulcan.

*What are examples and stories that can help illustrate this claim. Be sure to cite sources and not just have personal examples/stories (though it is fine to include some personal examples).*

In an article from NHS talking about Transhealth, the writer spoke of a child named Nicki, who was born in a male body but identified as being female, that was discriminated against for wishing to go against society’s traditional gender roles. She was harassed and called names such as: “tranny” or “man-beast” for going against cultural norms which dictated that she was supposed to be the gender she was assigned at birth. People who’d been deluded by cultural norms were against her for rebelling against what’d been instilled in them from birth.

*How does learning about his claim help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?*

Learning of this claim introduced me to the idea of how gender roles also play a role in how cultural norms are instilled into someone. The troubles that come along with being assigned a gender role entail, the dealing of sexism or stereotypes regarding women’s supposed ‘inferiority’ to the ‘superior’ sex. And, that trying to escape this ouroboros of a situation is punished with discrimination and many other tribulations.

*How is this claim connected to your Real-Life Situation?*

In this claim, the idea of how gender roles condition how an individual responds to cultural norms with some meekly accepting their fate or others like Ryland fighting for what they believe they are. Gender roles allow cultural norms to be introduced to a person without directly being conditioned into their psyche. Ryland was being forced to accept the gender role of being a girl which went against his wishes of being able to wear masculine clothes that help accentuate their desired gender.

3. *THIRD Claim/Contrasting Claim/Different Perspective*

Furthermore the use of social conditioning is another method of how individuals are able to instill cultural norms. The prospect of conditioning an individual to have a certain perspective on an individual or group without having no actual interactions is how social conditioning works. In addition the website iameduardo.com speaks of the many negative effects of social conditioning like how our society has been conditioned to be more materialistic than other generations or how everyone is obsessed with meeting society’s standards of how everyone’s body should be.

*How is this claim supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion? Be sure to cite sources.*

In the chapter of Perception from the TOK textbook, the idea of expectations and selectivity of perception are discussed. Expectations are close-minded perspectives we’ve developed that give us the belief that an object or individual has live up to what we’ve perceived them of being. Also, selectivity of perception describes how our senses can be manipulated to pay attention to what we believe in; while, disregarding the background details related to it.

*What are examples and stories that can help illustrate this claim. Be sure to cite sources and not just have personal examples/stories (though it is fine to include some personal examples).*

In the early XX experiments from Nazi Germany, the populace was conditioned to related Jewish people as being ‘monsters’ or ‘non-humans’. This was a mass-conditioning of the German population because with the social conditioning done to dehumanize a group. It was more simple for the Nazi’s to gain supporters to their cause and purpose of eradicating a group that they considered the culprits for Germany’s demise.

*How does learning about his claim help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?*

From our early childhood, we are conditioned by our parents and teachers to respond to some object or person negatively or positively. Even though it seems hard to believe, the method of conditioning a person by ingraining norms into their heads allows these norms to be spread in a more efficient way. Knowing that social conditioning is a way to instill cultural norms saddens me because we have our free-will taken from us in this decision.

*How is this claim connected to your Real-Life Situation?*

In the story of Ryland, he has been conditioned by his parents from his early childhood that he was a girl and that girls had to like the color pink and wear feminine clothes. Those norms had been implanted into his conscience, so the thought of going against them filled him with guilt. He was thought that wanting to be different was against the cultural norms set in place by society and that going against them would lead to destruction.

1. *FIRST Counterclaim/Contrasting Claim/Different Perspective*

In the top down theory Functionalism, the idea of an individual being born into society and become who they are due to other institutions showing how society does not instill any cultural norms, but in reality it’s the individual’s responsibility and that certain institutions like family are the cause of progress. As stated on the historylearningsite.com, there are needs that the social system has and the only way for them to be met is through the creation of cultural norms which help the social system thrive showing the needs for society to instill cultural norms.

*How is this counterclaim supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion? Be sure to cite sources.*

In the section regarding Ethics from the TOK textbook, it speaks of religious ethics and how people choose to follow an authoritative rule book which states what moral principles they should follow. These people choose which parts of the text they should follow. Showing how people have the choice to pick whatever they want to believe in and aren’t forced to accept something they don’t wish to follow.

*What are examples and stories that can help illustrate this counterclaim. Be sure to cite sources and not just have personal examples/stories (though it is fine to include some personal examples).*

As seen in the religion example from the TOK textbook, the Bible has certain texts that people chose to abide by and they have the option to not follow some. A religious person could agree with the majority of what is being said, but has the option of choosing to disagree with some things. Showing how while a person might be born into a religion, they have the option of not following a few principles and that they are not forced by society to follow whatever norms.

*How does learning about his counterclaim help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?*

The concept of how people can be born into cultural norms yet still choosing to follow them has shown me how people are not forced to follow the cultural norms instilled into them. This opens the possibility to how society doesn’t instill cultural norms, but a person chooses to follow them because it’s necessary at times.

*How is this counterclaim connected to your Real-Life Situation?*

Ryland was born into a religious family where he was expected to be the norm of what a girl entails. He was able to choose what cultural norms he had to follow and how he accepted the norms.

4. *FOURTH Claim/Contrasting Claim/Different Perspective*

In addition the philosophy of ethnocentrism plays a part in inculcating these norms into a person through giving them the belief that those norms and group they believe in are superior to another’s. This belief in a group having superior beliefs gives them the reassurance that what has been taught to them is superior to another’s and what they’re doing is right.

*How is this claim supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion? Be sure to cite sources.*

In the chapter Reason from the TOK textbook, the word validity plays a part in this claim, since the argument of one’s beliefs being superior to another’s has no information to back it up and is therefore only sustained by others accounts on whether their beliefs are valid. Also, referring back to the Milgram Experiment from the Human Sciences chapter, these people believed in what they were doing due to the constant reassurance from the doctors in the room. The volunteers believe that the doctors beliefs and authority were superior to his own morality. So, they volunteer continued with the experiment regardless of the consequences.

*What are examples and stories that can help illustrate this claim. Be sure to cite sources and not just have personal examples/stories (though it is fine to include some personal examples).*

With the Europe colonizing Africa and Americas due to their inherent belief that those civilization residing there were inferior to their own. So, they sought out to colonize those civilizations and teach them their norms and beliefs. They believed that their group was superior to another leading to them implanting their norms into the civilizations mind.

*How does learning about his claim help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?*

Learning of this claim opened me to the idea that another way the cultural norms I harbor could make me believe that I was superior to another group’s. Also, that this way of gloating about my norms gives me the reassurance that what I believe in is true and that I should continue following these norms.

*How is this claim connected to your Real-Life Situation?*

This claim is connected to my real-life situation due to the fact that Ryland was an example of someone whose ideals were being criticized by others leading to him being unsure if everyone else’s ideals were superior to his. Ryland believed that society’s views were superior to his thoughts and that he should follow them, since he was just a child and didn’t know any better.

*2. SECOND Counterclaim/Contrasting Claim/Different Perspective*

In addition, the theory of Xenocentrism states that someone believes that their own ideals and things of that nature are inferior to foreign beliefs. Showing how someone voluntarily chooses another’s beliefs over their own and how society does not instill any cultural norms.

*How is this counterclaim supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion? Be sure to cite sources.*

In the section Human Sciences from the TOK textbook, there is a section regarding the action of observation. The individual observes the other group’s traditions and beliefs to come to a conclusion regarding whether their practices are right or wrong.

*What are examples and stories that can help illustrate this counterclaim. Be sure to cite sources and not just have personal examples/stories (though it is fine to include some personal examples).*

In modern society people try to change themselves because they believe that one side is superior to their own. Such as the story of Rachel Dolezal who believed that the African-American culture was superior to her own culture, so she chose to start passing off as being African-American. She chose to accept all the norms that came along with being African-American because she wanted to be.

*How does learning about his counterclaim help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?*

Knowing this other theory introduces the idea that people might not have cultural norms instilled into them, but merely want to have the other cultural norms because they believe theirs aren’t significant enough. Disagreeing with the earlier claims of how other cultures force others to accept their cultural norms.

*How is this counterclaim connected to your Real-Life Situation?*

Ryland must have felt that his views of him being labeled incorrectly were inferior to the dominant beliefs, so he just resigned himself to the faith of having to be labeled as being a ‘girl’.

**CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, society instills cultural norms through many ways that people continue to follow such as: gender roles, social conditioning, and many more. And each of these methods are negatively affecting an individual because they have no way of developing their own sense of self as opposed to gradually learning of their own self. These cultural norms are negative in nature and hurt the new generation, since they force a child to bend under its expectations.