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Journal Entry 1

Keough’s article defines a teministic screen as a certain “definition of reality” (Keough, page 5) developed by Kenneth Burke. A terministic screen is language that is used to influence a new thought process or way of thinking in the minds of people and/or listeners. Keough states that a Kenneth Burke’s concept of the terministic screen is language that “directs the attention of the audience along a certain line of thought” (Keough, page 5). Terministic screens are the ways that people are influenced to do things and how to think a certain way about a certain subject.

Sexist language operates as a terministic screen in and of itself. It promotes the idea of sexism in people because sexist language is used to influence the reality of those that use it. So when someone is to use language that demonstrates a certain characteristic of a gender, they subsequently are using a terministic screen that influences and promotes the ideas of sexism in themselves and those around them. This also leads to why historically sexist language was so prevalent; since it was used as a terministic screen, people began to be more and more affected and influenced by the idea of sexist language. Terministic screens spread a certain “reality” quickly because it will often influence others close to those speaking the sexist language. Wilma Scott Heide, who was one of the first women to give a public speech on sex role stereotypes and sexist language, pointed out that historically the sexist language used toward women was used to highlight the “subservient role women played” (Keough, page 8). In light of the fact that women no longer live in a way that is subservient to either sex, the sexist language towards them has persisted due to the impact on society’s view of reality.