

# **Muted Group Theory**

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# What Is Muted Group Theory (MGT)

- It is when non-dominant groups are muted to their native language because their life experiences are not well served by their language system—a language system that was devised primarily by well-to-do men to represent their own experiences.

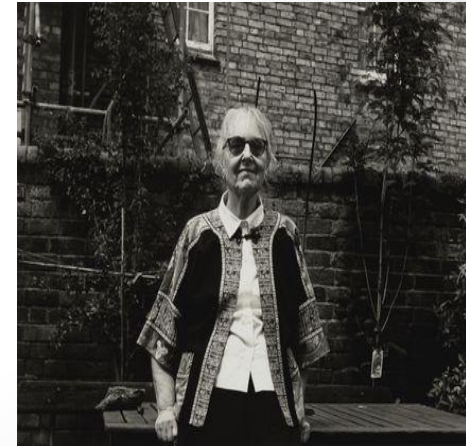


# Make up of Muted Groups

- MGT has focused on women as a muted group and men as the dominant group in our culture.
- Other non-dominant groups such as minorities, elderly, homosexuals and lower class groups are also greatly affected by MGT.
- Dominant group- the group that holds the power in a given culture.
- The dominant group in our society is a Euro-American male, heterosexual, able-bodied, youthful, middle and upper class, and Christian.

# Origin of MGT

- MGT was originated with the work of social anthropologists Edwin and Shirley Ardener.



# Assumptions of MGT

- Women perceive the world differently than men because of women and men's different experiences and activities rooted in the division of labor.
- Because of their political dominance, men's system of perception is dominant, impeding the free expression of women's alternative models of the world.
- In order to participate in society, women must transform their own models in terms of the received male system of expression.

# Gender-Based Differences in Perceptions

- Women perceive the world differently than men because of women and men's different experiences and activities rooted in the division of labor.



# Male Dominance

- Because of their political dominance, men's system of perception is dominant, impeding the free expression of women's alternative models of the world.



# Women's Translation Processes

- In order to participate in society, women must transform their own models in terms of the received male system of expression.





# The Process of Silencing

- Ridicule- Women's speech is trivialized. Men label women's talk as chattering, gossiping, nagging, whining.



- Ritual- Many social rituals have the effect of silencing women or advocating that women are subordinate to men. For ex. Wedding ceremony



- **Control-** Men control many decisions such as what is placed in mainstream media leaving womens contribution and coverage left out. They also control topic conversations when speaking to women.



- **Harassment-** Women are affected by street harassment, meaning they do not have free access to public streets because men control public spaces. Also, sexual harassment in the workplace.



# Strategies of Resistance

- Naming the strategies of silencing.
- Reclaim, elevate, and celebrate women's discourse.
- Creating new language for uniquely gendered experiences.

# MGT Video Example

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?  
v=KVBSlp3e2zc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVBSlp3e2zc)

# Questions

- Can anyone name a group that is affected by MGT?
- Can anyone describe the dominant group in our culture?
- What is one method that silences women?
- Can anyone share an experience they have had where they felt muted?

**The End**

**Thank You!**