Chapter 2

Theoretical Bases

This chapter presents all the theories that I use in analyzing the data. It explores the concept of gender and gender roles, the types of gender roles, the history of gender roles in the United States of America, the previous study that have been conducted by other researchers and a brief sketch of A Raisin in the Sun.

The Concept of Gender

The concepts of gender are presented from some ideas of experts. Firstly, Coltrane (2000, p. 7) said “gender describes how, in a particular culture, the typical man is supposed to present himself (as masculine) and how the typical woman is supposed to present herself (as feminine)”. This first theory clarified that gender explains the way how the man and woman should show themselves.

In addition Connell (2009, p. 11) designated “gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes”. This theory explained that gender is the arrangement of the relationship of the society which is focused on the reproductive field; it also leads the practices which brings reproductive division within the social processes.

Moreover BaKTINews (2008, p. 10) stated that, “gender is division of social categories such as attributes, roles, activities and responsibilities between men and women in a specific society”. It describes that gender is the separation of social categories between men and women in a particular society.
As cited from WHO (2001, p. 1) “gender, in its narrowest sense, means socially constructed sex, be it female or male”. It means that gender in a small width definition, means sex that is being female or male.

According to Wolfreys at all (2002, p. 45), “gender is a term denoting the cultural constitution of notions concerning femininity or masculinity and the ways in which these serve ideologically to maintain gendered identities”.

From some concepts above, it can be concluded that gender is not only the statement of being male or female socially and culturally or the physical or social condition of being male or female, but also it is a division of social categories between men and women in a particular society.

Theories by the experts which have been stated above clearly explains about the concept of gender; however I tend to refer to the concept by Coltrane, who said that gender describes how the typical man is supposed to present himself and the typical woman is supposed to present herself. It clarified that gender is about the way how man and woman are supposed to show themselves.

**The Concept of Gender Roles**

There are some concepts of gender roles that are presented in this part. Firstly, Lewis (2013, p. 1) said that “a gender role is the place you hold in a family, relationship or society as a whole because you are male or female”. He added, “Typically, your gender role is action-oriented and focused on whether you work outside the home or play a nurturing role within the family”. In his first statement, Lewis explained us that gender roles are the position of man or woman hold in a family for the reason that someone is male or female. He added, characteristically gender role is action-oriented or
in this case the way someone acts and it is concerning on the place where someone works.

In addition, ILO SEAPAT (1998, p.1) designated that “gender roles are learned behaviors in a given society/community or other social group that condition which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as male or female”. It clarified that gender roles are the attitudes which have been copied from a generation to generation in a particular society that rule the activities, tasks and responsibilities of male and female.

Moreover, Kidder (2002) in Williams at all (2009, p. 702) denoted that “gender roles are shared cultural expectations that are placed on individuals on the basis of their socially defined gender”. Here in his theory, Kidder clarified that gender roles are the shared cultural hopes which are positioned on persons based on their gender.

Boon at all (2012, p. 3) designated that “gender role is a number of hopes which determines the way how males or females are supposed to think, act or feel”. It means that the society where the people (males or females) live has set the roles which obligate the people in that society to think, act and feel based on the roles.

Furthermore, Blackstone (2003, p.335) wrote that “gender roles are based on the different expectations that individuals, groups, and societies have of individuals based on their sex and based on each society's values and beliefs about gender”. She also said that “gender roles are the product of the interactions between individuals and their environments, and they give individuals cues about what sort of behavior is believed to be appropriate for what sex”. This point clearly described that gender roles are in accordance with the sexual category that are male or female and the principles and the viewpoint of a society regarding gender. Additionally, gender roles are the result of
communications between the people and their environments. They determine the kind of attitude which is supposed to be acted by males or females.

According to the concept of gender roles above, I can take a conclusion that gender roles are roles that have been set out in a particular society. They are the results of interactions between the people and their environment. They determine how the people, whether male or female should think, act, and feel. They are also about the position and responsibility of men or women in the family or society.

From all the concept of gender roles which have been designated by the experts, I tend to refer to the theory of Blackstone and Boon. In this case, I combine the concept of them both. I choose these two concepts as the references, since they cover the complete definition of gender roles. The combination of the two concepts is: the number of expectation which decides the way how males or females should think, act or feel based on each society's values and beliefs about gender.

**The Types of Gender Roles**

Here, the types of gender roles are provided based on the types of the family. There are three types of gender roles based on the types of the family which are developed by Green (1995) in Boon at all (2012, p. 3). He categorizes roles based on gender in the family into the following types:

1. **Traditional home-maker/breadwinner type**: in this type, the husband is the only one who makes a living and his wife runs the home. A traditional home-maker type can be defined as one in which the husband is the sole financial provider, and can sustain enough income to allow the wife to stay
at home and provide the domestic needs of the family, such as housework, and raising children.

2. The **mixed type**: it is a little bit different from traditional home-maker type. In the mixed type, the wife works outside or inside the house (helping the husband to make a living), yet she is less absorbing than the husband, and therefore, she takes on more of the household tasks and looks after the children.

3. The **egalitarian type**: this type of gender role is totally different from the previous types of gender roles. In egalitarian type, both male and female partners have equally absorbing work; household tasks and looking after the children are shared equally.

These three types of gender roles which are designated by Green are used in categorizing the utterances’ data which portray the gender roles in the conversations of the main characters in the film.

**The History of Gender Roles in the United States of America**

The history of gender roles of the United State’s families kept on changing throughout the time. It is noted in the history that the change was influenced by the social and politic condition of the States. Before the civil war explodes, the idea of separation emerged. It was basically a very conventional style of families. The family formation was not a sole component working collectively in an agrarian society for survival any longer, as a substitute the men went to work and the women stayed home to take care of the children and worked on domestic tasks.
The notions of the women are supposed to be home and the veneration of a very conventional role for women becoming known in this period. The roles of women were being pure and submissive to the husband, while the roles of men were more aggressive, greedy, competitive one. It was known in the whole world that the idea of separations were not ideal for everyone, however it was a familiar belief throughout this period.

In contrast to the years before civil war, in the 1920’s there was a change in the roles of women. This period was marked as the first sexual revolution. The women became more concerned with individuality and the amount of women who went to the workplace increased. It was well known that in the 1920’s, there was the emergence of fashionable young women who showed independent behavior and flouted conventional standards of behavior. These types of women were called “the flappers”. They were the symbol of women’s movement and for that reason; they became so popular in this period. Another important gain for the women’s rights movement in this period was the women gained the right to vote in election.

However, after the Great Depression and World War II, the gender roles in the US families moved back to the usual standards and very conventional dynamics. It was in the decade of the 1950’s, where the economic climate of the country enabled the women to work at home and did the domestic tasks. In the 1950’s, the roles which the women worked at home and did domestic tasks were common for the white people, while for the black women, they were expected to do domestic work as well as work outside or inside the home to complement their husband's income and effectively do double duties. Actually the mood of the country was a special thing for the citizen and a big hope after wars; nevertheless it was also one of conformity during the Cold War.
Conversely, in the 1960’s and 1970’s women had desires to struggle for individualism and women’s right. The 1970 was another period of women movement which was really extreme throughout the history. Even in the current decades, we have not seen an extreme gain in desires for egalitarian marriages compared to the 1970’s. Nevertheless, the age of marriage has been rising. Therefore, there is a big chance for education and a career from women especially. (Adapted from: Boon, at all (2012, p. 5-6)).

Previous Study

There are some previous studies that have been conducted in the different study of gender roles analysis. Here I provide two previous studies which are related to gender roles.

Heidi Boon, at all in her study entitled *Gender Roles in Marriage*. This research is designed to see how college age people in today’s society view gender roles in marriage and then to compare those views to their background, to see if they were raised with these values or acquired them later on. It is also aimed to see how these varying gender roles affect what the individual person believes their marriage will be like. It was found in this research that most of the marriage style choices were due to experience instead of selection. It was also found that people that leaned towards a traditional marriage were in general more religious and wanted to get married at a younger age and stick to traditional gender roles.

Herien Puspitawati and Sri Andriani Fahmi, in their study entitled *Gender Roles Analysis on Farmer Families*. This research was designated to analyze the gender roles within families, both domestic and farming system activities. It was found in this
research that the numbers of family members, frequencies of family planning, and family problems could affect the better gender partnerships between husband and wife in family fanning system activities.

The similarity of these studies and my research is the field of study, which are gender roles. Meanwhile, the differences are Boon’s study researched about the perspective of the college age people on gender roles while my research is focused on the analysis of gender roles on the characters of the film and the object of this research is student of college, while mine is a film. Moreover, Herien Puspitawati and Sri Andriani Fahmi’s concentrated on the analysis of gender roles in farmer families. Meanwhile, my research is to analyze and describe the gender roles on the characters of a film.

**A Brief Sketch of a Raisin in the Sun**

*A Raisin in the Sun* is a play by Lorraine Hansberry which is adapted into some versions. One of the versions is television film directed by Kenny Leon in 2008. As stated by Hales (2009, p. 3), it is a film which shows the struggle of its main characters who struggle to find out their identity, mainly in their gender roles.

The play was inspired by Hansberry’s own experience with racism and gender discrimination. *A Raisin in the Sun* is a portrait of an African-American family living on the South Side of Chicago in the 1950s. This family is a working class family, namely the Youngers. They struggle with poverty, gender roles, and inner problems as they strive for a better way of life. The main plot of this film concerns on how the Youngers spend $10,000 from the deceased Mr. Younger’s life insurance policy. Every member of this family has an idea of how to spend money.
The matriarch of the family, Lena Younger, wants to purchase a house to accomplish a dream she shared with her husband. This house is in Clybourne Park, an entirely white neighborhood. Lena’s son, Walter Lee, prefers to use money to invest in a liquor store with his friends. He believes that the investment will resolve the family’s financial problem forever. In addition, he wants to prove his family that as the only one man in the family; he can raise the economy of his family he also has a desire to provide a good life for his family. Walter’s wife, Ruth, agrees with Lena Younger’s idea, she also hopes that she and Walter can provide more space and opportunity for their son, Travis. Ruth is an ordinary wife who works as a laundry-woman in order to help the economy of her family. Lastly, Beneatha, Walter’s sister and Lena’s daughter, wishes to use money for her medical school tuition. She intends to be a doctor and in reaching her dream, she breaks the norms in her society which rules her steps.

When the Youngers’ future neighbors find out that the Youngers are moving in to their place, they send Mr. Lindner, from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, to offer the Youngers money in return for staying away. The Youngers refuse the deal, even after Walter loses the rest of money ($6,500) to his friend Willy Harris, who persuades Walter to invest in the liquor store and then runs off with his cash.

The Youngers eventually move out of the apartment, fulfilling the family’s long-held dream. Their future seems uncertain and slightly dangerous, but they are optimistic and determined to live a better life. They believe that they can succeed if they stick together as a family and resolve to defer their dreams no longer. (Adapted from gradesaver.com, 2013)