

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In analyzing the drama series, Desperate Housewives, the writer uses the theory of identity process by Kathryn Woodward. It will be used as the core concept to figure out the identity of the suburban women in Desperate Housewives. Then, the identity is discussed deeper using the theory of Myra Macdonald about the new identity of women to see the shifting identity of Gabrielle's character as suburban women.

2.1.1 Theory Identity of Woman

According to Woodward, in Identity and Difference, "identities now have moved away from traditional, class-based loyalties towards 'lifestyle' choices where they are concerned with ethnicity and race, gender, sexuality, age, disability, social justice, and environmental concerns that produce new identifications (26)." Identity of someone today is determined through their point of view upon race, gender, age, disability, social justice and other environmental concerns. What someone says, thinks, uses, or acts symbolizes her identity since identity works through symbols and there is association between identity of the person and the things the person uses (28).

Woodward believes that identity is relational where difference is established by symbolic marking in relation with others, which show how we make sense of social relations and practices. By this, a person or group can say who is included or excluded in their identity. Identity is also maintained by social differentiation. It can say how the classification of difference is 'live' out in social relations (12). Identity gives people

location in the world and presents the link between them and the society in which they live (1). People attribute qualities to them and transfer associations; they are making it possible to see them in the image presented.

2.1.2 Theory of Shifting Identity

During years, the identity of women keeps changing, especially because of several movements that happen towards women issue, as the feminist struggle that requires betterment for woman position in the world (Brooks 189). Femininity can be defined as structural opposite of masculine or as simultaneously, gentle, and kind, but also prone to jealousy and pettiness (Macdonald 91).

Femininity is believed as value constructed by patriarchal power. While feminist here is defined as supporter of a movement to support belief in the principle that women should have the same rights and opportunities (legal, political, social, and economic) as men. And according to Macdonald, this kind of woman is allowed to be feminine and feminist at the same time. It means that the women could be defined as flirting and confrontational at the same time. This woman believes that she has to be sensual in order to gain man's attention since she needs man as part of her life. While she also believes that she is not inferior to man and has the ability to compete with man in gaining professional career, political role, et cetera (92-93).

Furthermore, that a new woman is independent for having her own career, life, money, and happiness with her friends, but she also regards man in her love life partner which they depend on each other. The traditional female pre-occupation such as man and body-care is not abandoned, but woman is still urged to travel light and indulge

themselves, not others. At the same time women is encouraged to get out of her home and develop their full potential (95).

According to Macdonald in Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media, “there are even more things around that encourage woman to leave the stereotype of being inferior in woman and man relationship (100).”

2.2 Related Studies

The writer is believed that Desperate Housewives has not been largely analyzed by other people for thesis or journal. The writer never found any sources analyzing about Suburban women topic in Desperate Housewives drama series. But, the writer ever found a book discussing about Desperate Housewives. Besides, the theory of shifting identity can be found in journals when the writer searched the related studies for her thesis. Therefore, it is important to cite the data for showing the sources of references that would be applied as the comparative and supporting source in analyzing the drama series story. It explains the position of its thesis, which is slightly different from those researches.

So far, the writer has already found out two sources related to the study. The first is Reading Desperate Housewives: beyond the White Picket Fence edited by Janet McCabe and Kim Akass, in 2006. This book explores about comment of the story itself, characters, critics, issues inside of the story, and the background emerges the story. The content of the book offers a vibrant and diverse conversation as it struggles over meaning and the complications of contradiction in a provocative series that has cleaned up in the American ratings while continuing to divide (often polemically) the audiences or viewers. Moreover, this book pursues new avenues for talking about the lived meanness of

Desperate Housewives modern sensibilities and pre-feminist nostalgia, guilty pleasures and critical distance, nuanced characters and studied stereotypes, frothy comedy and dark secrets (McCabe and Akass 14). It can help the writer explores and identifies the identity of suburban women portrayed inside the drama series from the culture, or their daily life and so on. Because this thesis discusses about the identity of suburban women which portrayed in Gabrielle's character, the book can fulfill and support the analysis.

The second is a journal of Shifting Identity: Individuals, Groups, and the Science of Society by Richard Wall. Inside of his journal, he states that the identity was traditionally a personal attribute and personality (Wall 8). He also gives an example to see the connection between the identities with the movie. Richard states movie that presents the new identity, Mission Impossible II. It presents the story that one person can be made to adopt, a plaster cast-like mask which makes that person identical to an enemy. Hence, a mask of the hero is a neat symbol for the widespread and time honored use of the tactic of deception by the secret services of every state. The shifting that happens in this journal shows the character on Mission Impossible changing his personalities and performances.

The writer's analysis is different from those sources above. It is about the identity and shifting identity towards the character of Gabrielle Solis in Desperate Housewives drama series. The identity of suburban women and the characteristics of suburban women will be explained in the next chapter using the theory of identity by Kathryn Woodward. The analysis examines the identity of women of Gabrielle's character. The aim is to see the characteristics of suburban women attached on her character. Therefore related

studies are included in this thesis to show the differences between the writer's analysis with other analysis.