

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Feminism Theory

Since this thesis deals with *A Weave of Women* novel that reviews a story life of some Israeli women who quest gender equality within three main domains in Israel: in family, in religion, and in societal life. Hence, the writer applies feminism as the main theory to analyze woman issues that exposed in this novel. According to Tyson, feminism is a criticism that examines the way in which literature (And other cultural production), including *A Weave of Women* novel undermine the economic, political, social and psychological oppression of women (81).

As depicted in this novel, women are oppressed by the patriarchal culture that always places men superior to women and makes women excluded and marginalized almost in all spheres. In this case, the women issue that analyzed by using feminism is the Israeli women position that portrayed oppressed by male domination and patriarchal ideology. Moreover, this theory is also used to observe the women actions in struggling against the oppression.

In order to get a deep analysis and to map the women positions and struggles in Israeli's society, the writer adds Biale's concept:

The essence of the problem of women in Judaism is their sociologically inferior status. We are viewed in Jewish law and practice as peripheral Jews. It is peripheral status which results in

women being excluded from central activities of Jewish life and permits law which make them dependent on men and vulnerable to exploitation (qtd in Baker , 35).

The Biale's concept is used in focusing the oppression and struggle of the Jewish women. Furthermore, this concept also helps in observing how the patriarchal ideology operates in Israeli culture and society.

## **2.2 Related Study**

In this part, the writer attempts to find other sources that analyze and observe *A Weave of Women* novel. Unfortunately, the writer only found a journal article from internet by Renan Omer, an Australian-Jewish woman feminist. She wrote this journal in 2002 and titled it: *O, My Shehena, Who Shall Live in Your Tent?" Gender, Diaspora, and the Ambivalence of Return in E. M. Broner's A Weave of Women.*

In analyzing this novel, Renan Omer and the writer of this thesis have some different and similar arguments on the phenomenon or issue in this novel. The first different argument is the topic of this novel. According to the writer of this thesis, the basic issues in *A Weave of Women* are Israeli women oppression and struggle against male domination in three main domains in Israel: family, religion, and societal life. In contrast, Omer states this novel exposes the Jewish women Diaspora, dwelling, the tension between Arab and Jewish and Zionism.

Moreover, Omer compares the Broner's technique with other Jewish writers in representing Judaism through literary works. Omer states that none

other Jewish writers, including Morgan, Firestone and Freidan show their Judaism identities in their works because they only focus on the differences of the sexes, but none reflects the significance of what they learned for Judaism or the Jewish society as E.M. Broner does in her novels. In contrast, the writer of this thesis not concerns on the Broner's technique in writing this novel, but she focuses on the content of this novel.

Unlike the writer of this thesis who only concerns in observing the characters on their family life, religion and societal life, Omer argues that the major concerns of this novel is the social spheres of friendship, art, work, exchange, and various configuration of 'family' take precedence. Omer also affirms this novel exhibits an acute awareness of women's corporeal identity within Judaism mainstream tradition and suggests cultural and ideological field within which can be situated the emergences of Jewish feminism and its articulation.

For Omer, Broner's narrative is characterized by an uneasy awareness of the contradiction embodied in the security offered by 'home' and explores the unusual utopia or dystopia ambivalence of a feminist. Omer analyzes the characters in this novel exist between Zionist ideology and feminism and they find a way for survival in a new context to renegotiate gender relation in their Diaspora predicament. As in the opening page, Broner exposes the Judaism contribution to their transactional Diaspora identity by an exchange guest from India, Shlomo Sassoon, a practitioner of yoga and Halacha. Thus, by his experience in Diaspora, Sassoon inspires the women characters to be confident in

their abilities to live in strict Judaism law in Israel. In this case, since the writer of this thesis analyzes the feminism in this novel, thus she only concerns on the narratives and characters arguments that indicate woman oppression and struggle.

Finally, the last different argument between Omer and the writer of this thesis is the issue between Arabs and Jewish. According to Omer, this novel exposes the tension between Jews and Arab that revealed by the narrative of Israel characters speak of monuments to the six days war and its epic battle, while Arabs speak of their cultural and psychological losses. For the writer of this thesis, she does not put attention in this issue, rather she more concerns on the woman oppression and feminism movement.

However, Omer and the writer of this thesis have a similarity in examining this novel exposes the womanhood and woman essentialism, moreover masculine law takes a backseat, but rather reveals the female ritual, including ceremonies, demons, exorcism, transubstantiation, and reassurances.