CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Some people say women are considered as inferior human being as stated by Jerry Bergman, Ph. D (1994). The cause of inferiority of women has led to debate, especially among the feminists. Feminist liberal focuses on the women's inferiority based on the system in the society. Feminist radical focuses women's inferiority which based on the sex and gender system and feminist Marxist focuses on the women's inferiority based on the economic aspects. Although there are many causes of women's inferiority, they believe that it causes an oppression to women.

One of the feminists in literature which discusses the inferiority of women is Simone de Beauvoir. In her book, she states women are the second sex. She argues that it seems like 'a man is in the right in being a man; woman who is in the wrong' (1949:16). According to this statement, Beauvoir wants to show that men get more power than women in society. She thinks that the reproductive organs of women such as ovaries, uterus and so on limit women and imprison her. As the result, women don't take big role so men become superior.

In the scarlet letter, women are also depicted as an inferior human being. Women there do not get their rights same as men. For example, before the trial of Hester, the main character in the novel begins, a group of women in the Hester's trial argue about the punishment that should Hester get. After that a man tries to

stop them arguing by threatening them. It seems that puritan women are not allowed to speak in public. This problem occurs because puritan makes a strict rule. Puritan women may be allowed to lead the community whose members are all women but when they're in public area such as in a court, they are not allowed to give comments or any opinion.

In other case, Hester Prynne, also gets the oppression. She gets oppression because she is a woman moreover, she is punished because she does the adultery which is considered as a great sin. As the punishment of doing the adultery, she has to wear the scarlet letter which is put exactly on her breast. The scarlet letter is a sign that her body is such a great sinful symbol. It is because of her scarlet letter then Hester gets different treatment from puritan people. She even does not get her right to take care of her own child because of the scarlet letter. However, the women's oppression in puritan was portrayed in the novel emerges along with their belief. The phenomenon above raises the idea to the writer to discuss the women's rights in 'The Scarlet Letter' from radical feminist point of view. The writer decides to use feminist radical approach because the data found in the novel closely relate to the phenomenon of radical feminism.

In Sastra Inggris UNIKOM, there is a student who also takes 'The Scarlet Letter' as the data source of skripsi. The Skripsi was made by Dwi Maharani in 2008 entitled 'Analysis of Alienated Character in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Novel The Scarlet Letter (A Study of Psychoanalysis). Other student also uses the Sexual Politic by Kate Millett which the writer takes as the grand theory. It is Rika Agustin in her skripsi entitled '*Belenggu-belenggu Patriarki yang Dihadapi oleh*

Tokoh Utama dalam Novel The Bell Jar karya Sylvia Plath'. The different is in the usage of the theory. Rika uses the Biological and Sociological in sexual politic, whereas the writer uses four aspects the biological, sociological, economic and education and anthropological aspects to support the analysis in this study. Through this study, it is expected that the reader will more understand the women's rights offenses in puritan society and the cause of the offense from radical feminism view. Therefore, the writer entitles this skripsi by 'Women's rights in Puritan Society as Reflected in The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne (A Study of Radical Feminism)'.

1.2 Research Question

Problems of the present study are formulated in the following questions:

1. What women's rights are portrayed in the puritan society in the novel?
2. What does the radical feminism's view through the women's rights in the novel?

1.3 Objectives

1. Describing the women's right in puritan society.
2. Describing the radical feminism's view through the women's rights

1.4 Significance to Knowledge

This study is expected to provide the clear explanation about the woman's right in puritan society occurs in the novel using the perspective of feminist

radical. Furthermore, this study is also expected to gain more knowledge for the writer and also for the reader.

1.5 Framework of Theory

In order to support the study, the writer makes the analysis using the feminist radical theory. Radical feminism focuses on the sex and gender system. Tong said in her book *'Feminist Thought',* the radical femnism insisted that 'men's control of both women's sexual and reproductive lives and women's self-identity, self-respect, and self-esteem is the most fundamental of all the oppressions human beings visit on each other.' (2009: 49).

One of the feminist radical that the writer used as the grand theory in this research is Kate Millett. Millett is known as the author of '*Sexual Politics'*. The theory put by Kate Millett is to explain the situation of women especially on their rights in patriarchal society.

Millett explains that the patriarchy occurs in society because the institution or the system constructs it. She also mentions eight aspects of patriarchal system, ideological, biological, sociological, class, economic educational, force, anthropological, and psychological. However, in this study, the writer will just use four aspects in sexual politic based on the data found in the novel. There are biological, sociological, economic educational and anthropological aspects. The writer found that those four aspects reflect the patriarchal system in the puritan society. Those four aspects will be used as the indication to limitation of the women's rights in puritan society.

In order to make the research can be more clearly understood, here is the flowchart for the framework of theory:

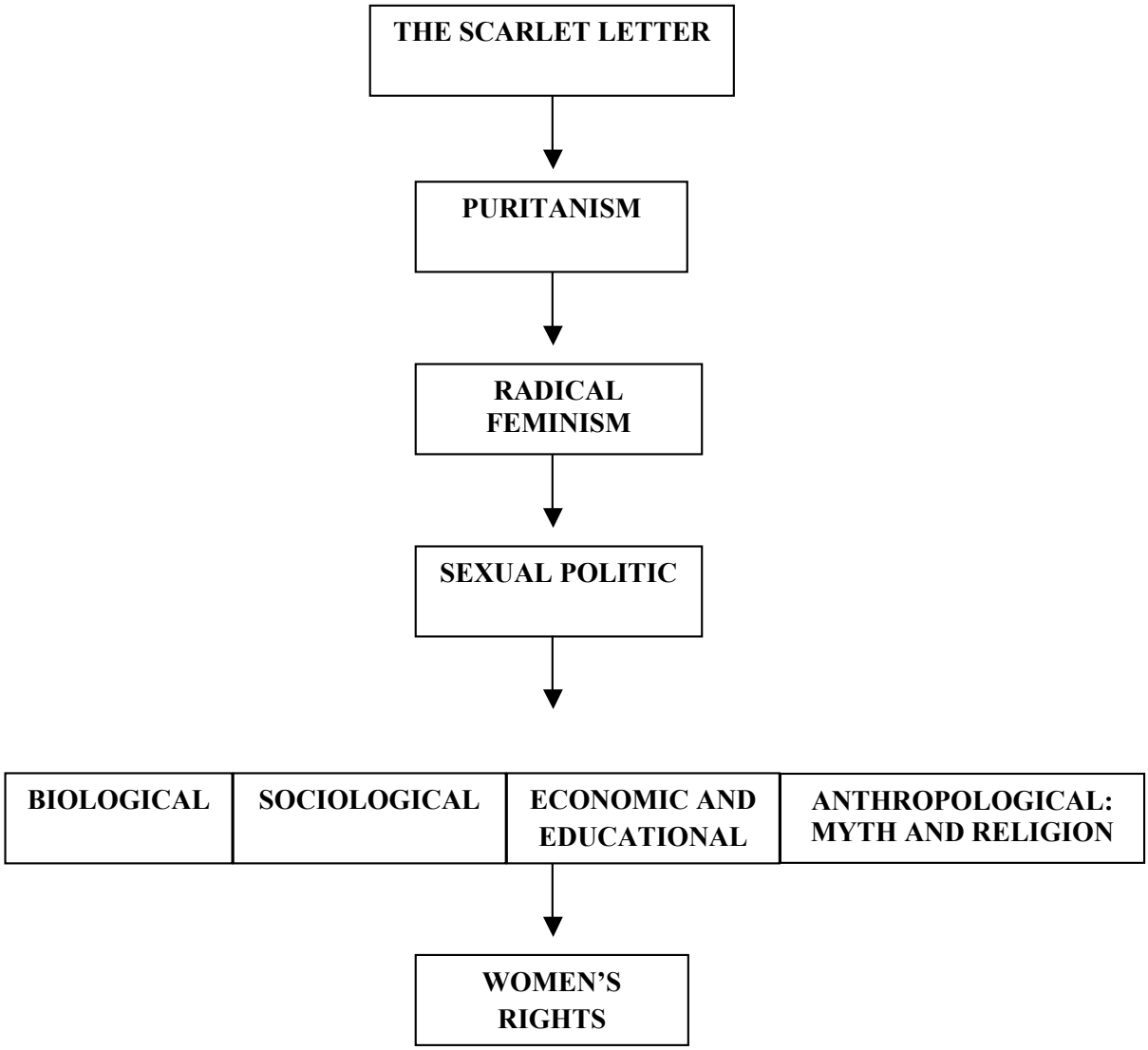


Figure 1

The Framework of Study