

**RIN'S MAIN CHARACTER STRUGGLES FOR REPRESENTATION
LIBERAL FEMINISM AS REFLECTED IN THE NOVEL 'THE POPPY
WAR'**

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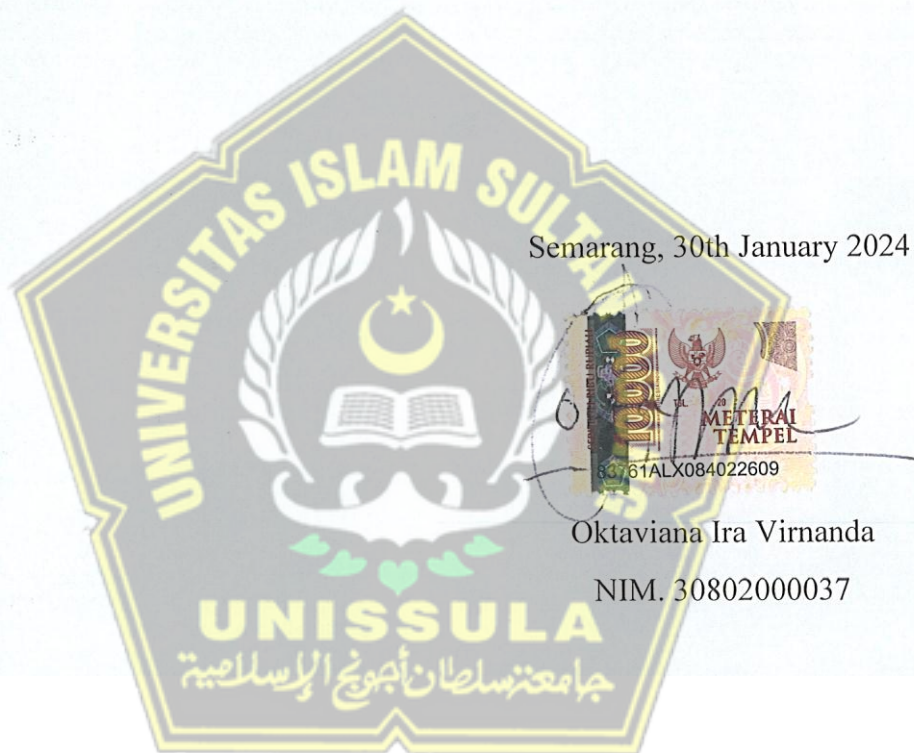
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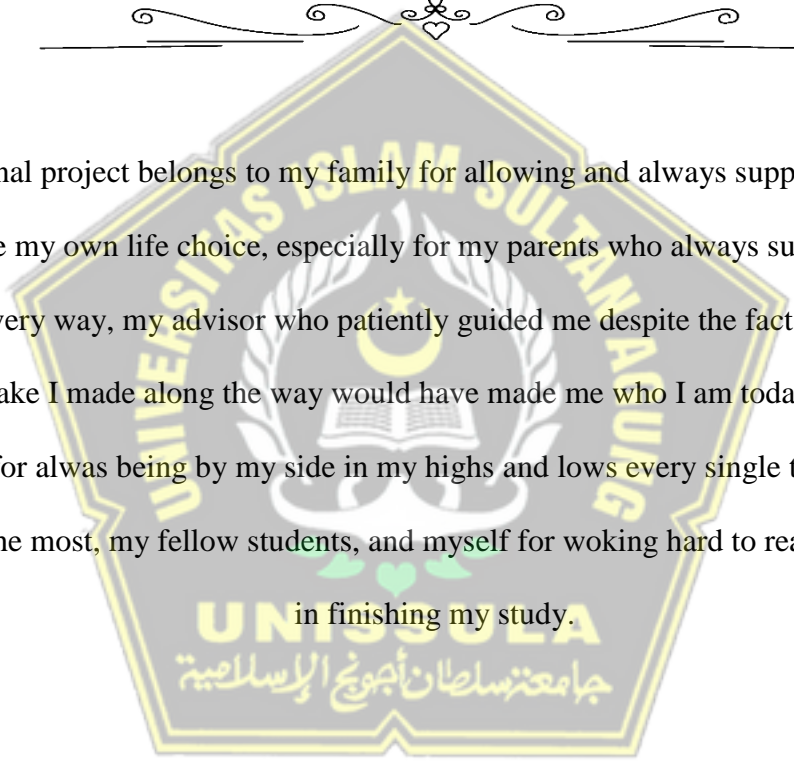
MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Fear was impossible to eradicate. But so was the will to survive”

The Poppy War



The final project belongs to my family for allowing and always supporting me to choose my own life choice, especially for my parents who always supporting me in every way, my advisor who patiently guided me despite the fact that every mistake I made along the way would have made me who I am today, my best friend for always being by my side in my highs and lows every single time I needed them the most, my fellow students, and myself for working hard to reach my goals in finishing my study.



Rin's Main Character Struggles for Representation Liberal Feminism as Reflected in the Novel 'The Poppy War'

Oktaviana Ira Virnanda

ABSTRACT

Virnanda, Oktaviana Ira. 30802000037. *Rin's Main Character Struggles for Representation Liberal Feminism as Reflected in the Novel 'The Poppy War'*. Final Project Faculty of Language and Communication Science. English Literature Study Program. Sultan Agung Islamic University Semarang. Advisor: Dr. Didik Murwantono, M.Hum.

The Poppy War was the first novel written by Rebecca F. Kuang described feminism in which women can be free in her social role, just like men do. The movement of liberal feminism still exists all over the world bringing some characteristics of liberal values. Hence this research aims to describe the characteristics of liberal feminism and to analyze the struggles of the main character in fighting against the dominance of men's roles in society. She has a dream of studying at Sinegard Academy.

This research was under qualitative descriptive research. The primary data were from the narratives and dialogues of the novel. Meanwhile the secondary data were cited from articles, books, and other online-sources. Some steps in this research were started by compiling the data, identifying, classifying, reducing and analyzing the data supported by the theory of liberal feminism. By reading the novel several times, the researcher took some key words and notes correlated with the problem formulation in the research and answered those problems by qualitative method.

The results of this research are divided into two: the characteristics of liberal feminism shown by the main character, i.e. the forms of liberal equality, rights equality, and education equality. Apart from that, this research also found that there are three struggles experienced by Rin, the main character, as follows: opportunities, recognition, and removing her feminine side. This research provides us with suggestions to keep our spirit and motivation up in order to bring about our dreams in the future.

Keywords: Liberal feminism, *The Poppy War*, Woman struggles

INTISARI

Virnanda, Oktaviana Ira. 30802000037. “*Perjuangan tokoh utama Rin Merepresentasikan Feminisme Liberal yang Tercermin dalam novel 'The Poppy War'.*”. Program Studi Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Ilmu Komunikasi. Universitas Islam Sultan Agung. Pembimbing: Dr. Didik Murwantono, M.Hum.

The Poppy War adalah novel pertama yang ditulis oleh Rebecca F. Kuang. Menggambarkan tentang feminisme dimana perempuan harus bebas menentukan peran sosialnya, sama seperti laki-laki. Pergerakan feminisme liberal selalu tetap ada di dunia ini dengan membawa ciri ciri khas liberalnya. Maka dari itu penelitian ini mempunyai tujuan untuk menunjukkan karakteristik feminisme liberal yang ada dalam novel *The Poppy War* terutama pada karakter Rin, pemeran utama dari Novel *The Poppy War* yang ingin sekolah di Sineward Academy. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk menunjukkan perjuangan yang dirasakan oleh Rin untuk bisa masuk dan melanjutkan belajar di Sineward Academy,

Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan data primer berupa naratif dan dialog dari sebuah novel, sedangkan data sekunder berasal dari artikel, buku maupun sumber online lainnya. Beberapa langkah penelitian dimulai dari pengumpulan data, mengidentifikasi, mengelompokkan, menyaring dan menganalisanya dengan menggunakan teori feminisme liberal. Dengan membaca novel beberapa kali, peneliti mencari kata kunci dan catatan yang dikaitkan dengan permasalahan penelitian dan menjawabnya secara metode kualitatif.

Hasil dari penelitian ini terbagi menjadi dua, yaitu menunjukkan bagaimana karakteristik feminisme liberal yang ditunjukkan oleh tokoh-tokoh utama, yaitu bentuk kesetaraan liberal, kesetaraan hak, dan kesetaraan pendidikan. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa ada tiga perjuangan yang dialami Rin yaitu peluang, pengakuan, dan menghilangkan sisi kewanitaannya. Penelitian ini membawa pesan bahwa usaha dan motivasi yang tinggi akan membawa kepada impian kita di masa mendatang.

Kata Kunci: *Feminisme Liberal, The Poppy War, Perjuangan Perempuan*

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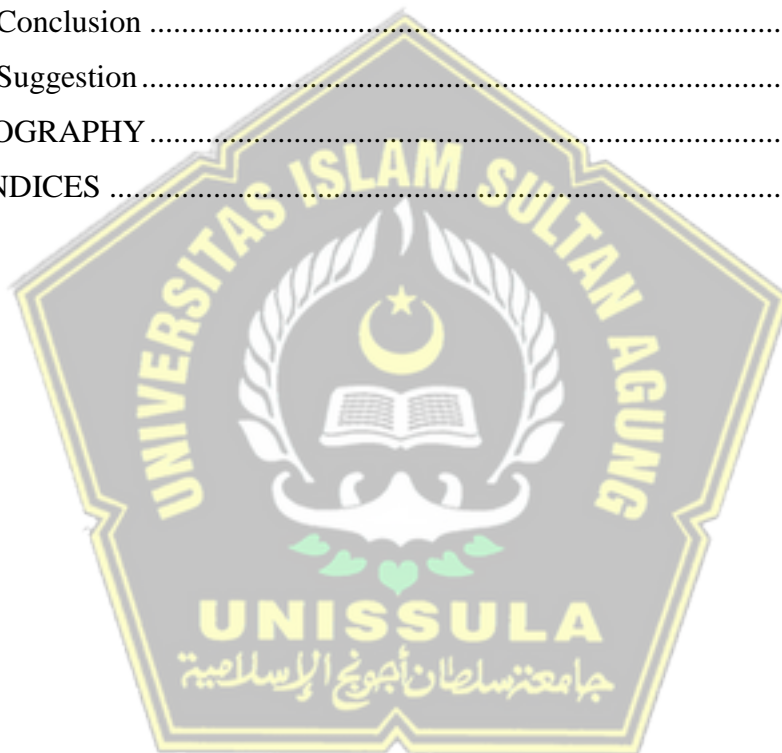
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Literary work is a work of art that is expressed in the form of language. Literary works are formed in imaginative works based on awareness and responsibility in terms of creativity as works of art (Tinnezia, 12). Therefore, the conception of this literary work is art based on the imagination or thought of an author which is then reflected in the form of language and can be accounted for.

Novels are imaginary narratives that tell complex human lives. This narrative is structured by the events being told and contains intrinsic and extrinsic elements. According to Ardiyansyah (48), in a novel, various aspects of life can be described well, such as happiness, sadness, disappointment, tragedy, and humor. Increasing and broadening readers' horizons can also occur through reading novels. It is undeniable that everyone, regardless of their profession, will definitely engage in reading activities, and maybe read novels.

Feminism according to Gamble (vii) is defined as follows "The belief that women, purely and only because they are women, are treated unfairly in a society that is regulated to prioritize the views and concerns of men". Feminism is an understanding and social movement that aims to change the subordination status of women in society that prioritizes the male perspective. In line with that, patriarchal culture is a condition where the interests and rights of men are

placed in a higher position and override the rights and interests of women (Sultana, 2).

There are differences between men and women from a biological and psychological perspective. There are two terms to explain this difference, namely between women and men, which refer to gender, feminine and masculine. Men are physically stronger than women; on the other hand, women also have physical characteristics such as reproductive organs. Meanwhile, conversely, masculine and feminine are forms of cultural construction that group traits, masculine for men and feminine for women. Apart from that, other social constructions exist, such as men considered superior to women. That is why boys are considered offspring to be proud of. (Das Gupta et al., 8).

There is a theory or movement that fights for women's rights, which is usually called feminism. This theory or movement seeks to give women the same opportunities and rights as men in various social, economic, and political fields. When related to literature, this theory is a literary study focusing on the struggle for gender equality. Research that uses this approach has the perspective of reading as a woman, so it can raise the understanding that gender differences will influence the purpose of a literary work.

In defining feminism, if anything, the basics need to be outlined. First, feminism does not mean against men, but feminism is a struggle against masculine views that have been so internalized in the minds of society that they

are considered as something that is true. Second, feminism cannot be understood monolithically.

Women's freedom has been severely restricted from the past until now, especially in a patriarchal society. A system that is structured and where social practices make men dominate, oppress, and exploit women is what Walby (416-417) calls patriarchy. Apart from that, patriarchy believes that men are superior or dominant while women are inferior and subordinate. In the 18th and 19th centuries, women were considered fragile, irrational, and dependent. Even worse, women are considered pets who must show discipline and obedience to their husbands, who are considered the owners of women (Morrissey, xiii).

This feminist movement exists by fighting for justice and freedom for all women. This movement advocates for women and men to be on the same level in the political, social, sexual, intellectual, and economic fields. Feminism includes movements, theories, philosophies, and everything related to the issue of gender equality which aims to provide justice for women. According to Diner and Toktaş (41), there are three waves or eras of feminism. First wave feminism focused on social injustice and political equality of women and men, including education and independence. This wave was marked by the presence of liberal feminism. The second wave of feminism focuses on issues such as inequality in employment, rights in sexuality, family and reproduction. This wave was marked by the emergence of radical feminists. Third wave feminism includes the globalization of gender equality, and the sexualization of women, including postmodern feminism.

The patriarchal culture inherent in Chinese society has resulted in many unequal relations between men and women in social life. The patriarchal social system makes men more special than women. The dominance of men over women covers the fields of politics, education, economics, social, law and others. This caused Chinese women to be oppressed and hated.

This topic is interesting to study because the concept of teaching focuses on freedom and women's struggles and proves that women are war heroes. Then the popularity of this novel is the reason why this novel must be analyzed. The application of learning to the main character can motivate women, especially in getting an education and determining their own life.

In this study, the writer chose one of *The Poppy War* novels. *The Poppy War* is the debut novel written by Rebecca F. Kuang, a Chinese writer living in America. The story told in the novel *The Poppy War* is a fictional story with an actual background, namely the opium war that took place between England and China in the 19th century. *The Poppy War* novel changed the name of the country involved in the original opium war to a new name. In fact, Rebecca Kuang also provides a map at the beginning of the novel to introduce the names of new countries to readers, which becomes the initial basis for understanding *The Poppy War* novel.

The Poppy War is the first novel in *The Poppy War* novel trilogy. *The Poppy War* was published in May 2018, followed by a follow-up novel, *The Dragon Republic*, published in August 2019, and the concluding novel of the

trilogy, *The Burning God*, published in November 2020. The novel *Poppy War* with a total thickness of 568 pages tells about the struggles of an orphan named Rin. Everyone was surprised when Rin made it into the elite military academy in the Nikan Kingdom, namely Sinegard. However, surprises are not always pleasant. The novel *The Poppy War* is a testament to Rebecca Kuang's imaginative talent. The reason is, *The Poppy War*, which is her first novel, presents military fantasy with epic historical precision, inspired by China's bloody history in the 19th century, and full of betrayal and miracles.

Based on the background above, the writer has a hypothesis that will be used as a thesis writing material in the study of feminist research in the novel *The Poppy War*. The purpose of the main character “Rin” in this novel is to show all Chinese people that women also have the right to lead their own lives and that women are also capable of doing what men do.

B. Problem formulation

Based on the background of the study above, this study formulates the formulation of the problem as follows:

1. What is the meaning of liberal feminism related to *The Poppy War* Novel?
2. How are the struggles of the main character in pursuing military education as part of liberal feminism in the novel *The Poppy War*?

C. Limitation of the Study

Focus of this study is the struggle of Rin, the main character of the novel *The Poppy War*, to get her rights as a woman in obtaining education and the

freedom to make her own choices. Then this study also highlights that women can also be heroes and can participate in war. Data collection in this research will only focus or be limited to novels.

D. Objectives of the Study

Looking at what has been explained above,, this study formulated the following objectives:

1. To describe the meaning of *The Poppy War* novel associated with liberal feminism.
2. To analyze the struggle of the main character in pursuing military education with liberal feminism principle in *The Poppy War* novel.

E. Significance of the Study

This study is useful to provide insight to the public about feminism. This study can also provide an understanding and example that women have the right to be free and equal to men. By using the findings presented in this research as a reference and studying the issues in *The Poppy War*, the researcher hopes that readers will be able to know the rights that all humans, especially women, have in the freedom to make choices and enjoy the same rights as men.

F. Organization of the Study

This study is divided into three chapters. Chapter I contains the introduction consisting of background of the study, problem formulation,

limitations of the study, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter II contains a review of related literature which consists of a synopsis of the novel itself and several theories related to research. Chapter III is the research method, which consists of the source of the data, data collecting method, and data analysis method.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. SYNOPSIS

The Poppy War is the debut novel written by Rebecca F. Kuang, a Chinese writer living in America. The story told in the novel *The Poppy War* is a fictional story with an actual background, namely the opium war that took place between England and China in the 19th century. *The Poppy War* novel changes the name of the country involved in the original opium war to a new name. In fact, Rebecca Kuang also provides a map at the beginning of the novel to introduce the names of new countries to readers, which becomes the initial basis for understanding *The Poppy War* novel.

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The story of *The Poppy War* tells of a female character named Rin. Rin is an orphan, due to being a victim of war. Rin works at a shop that trades opium illegally. The Feng family, who is Rin's adoptive family, then intends to set Rin up with one of the wealthy merchants there, who is three times the age of Rin and is very old. Rin of course refused to be matched. Apart from not wanting her life to be ruled by others, Rin also has other intentions for her future. Rin

is determined to take the Keju exam, hoping to win a scholarship and enter the elite military school Sinegard free of charge. However, getting into the Sinegard military school is no easy feat. For those who want to get a scholarship to enter Sinegard, they must succeed in getting the graduation title with the best grades.

Rin then successfully graduated by being ranked first in Tikanny. After all the struggles and pain that Rin felt to pass the Keju test, it turns out that Rin still has another struggle to go through. In Sinegard, Rin was re-forged in a more violent way, which caused even more pain. The reason is, Rin is the only student who comes from a poor family. Rin is looked down upon by his elite peers, he is despised, and even despised by one of his teachers there. However, it's not Rin's name if you don't fight. Rin never gives up, faces and fights all odds, with a firm determination that she does not want to return to her original place, Tikanny, so that one day she will become the bride of an old merchant. So, Rin started practicing martial arts with a teacher who was considered crazy. Guru is an eccentric person and likes to come up with weird things. However, his teacher was highly skilled in science and ethics, which were one of Sinegard's students least favorite subjects.

At that time, Rin was pressed, because he was paired with a very tough opponent. Rin then accidentally opens a connection with the fire god in that battle. Rin suddenly bursts into flames, and burns herself with an urge to kill her opponent, which she is unable to quell. In that fight, Rin nearly killed his opponent. Rin then ran, afraid of herself, afraid of his dark power. Rin is then

rescued by Jiang. Through teacher Jiang, Rin was taught and trained in the science of communicating with gods. By consuming a mild psychotropic substance, namely Poppy flower seeds, Rin is invited to penetrate the boundaries of the mortal world, and become acquainted with the world of the gods. It was at this point that Rin was finally invited to recognize his true identity. One day, the Opium War continues, when the State of Mugen makes a direct attack on the center of Sinegard. At that time, Rin saw his friends being killed one by one. Rin was very scared, but also angry. Rin's burning rage then opens up his relationship with the Phoenix God, who is a vengeful and wrathful god. In the end, Rin incinerated all of the remaining enemies without holding back, through flames radiating from all over her body. From this incident, Rin was finally assigned to become a member of the thirteenth division, where the division is a place for members who have supernatural powers like Rin. The members of this division are smart people, like the sorcerer, or sorcerer in this novel. Rin was finally assigned to become a member of the thirteenth division, where the division is a place for members who have supernatural powers like Rin. The members of this division are smart people, like the sorcerer, or sorcerer in this novel. Rin was finally assigned to become a member of the thirteenth division, where the division is a place for members who have supernatural powers like Rin. The members of this division are smart people, like the sorcerer, or sorcerer in this novel.

B. RELATED THEORY

The theoretical framework is the rationale for investigating a problem that is used to get the truth in research. The theories discussed in this chapter are theories that support the understanding of the problems that have been formulated in Chapter I. The study is presented in the subtitles. The first part discusses the main character Rin's struggle to represent liberal feminism is reflected in *The Poppy War* Novel.

Inequality in the gender relations birth movement tries feminism to fight for equality between women and men. Feminism exploration can be done through novels. The aims of this study are focused on 1) a description of women's conflict for balanced educational rights, 2) a description of women's conflict for balanced civil rights, 3) a description of women's struggle for economic equality in the novel *The Poppy War* by Rebecca F. Kuang. The main theory used is liberal feminism according to the thoughts of Rosemarie Putnam Tong. Type of Study This is a qualitative study with sociological, mimetic, and feminist approaches. This research data source is the novel *The Poppy War* by Rebecca F. Kuang. This research data collection technique is documentation. Data analysis techniques use the Miles and Huberman models, namely data reduction, presentation of data, drawing conclusions, and verification. The interpretation of the data used is analysis.

The results of the research are women's struggle figures in the novel *The Poppy War* by Rebecca F. Kuang, which includes, 1) rights in the field of education in the form of struggle to obtain higher education, struggle proceed

education World. 2) the struggle for civil rights includes the struggle for the right to vote for decisions, opinions, property rights, and the right to organize. 3) the right to obtain welfare by participating in the economy.

B.1. FEMINISM

Because the subject of the analysis is a novel that represents feminism, it is appropriate for the writer to describe the evolution or the feminist movement's role in literary works, exclusively what is contained in the novel. There is a classification between women and men in the field of Western literature. This classification is related to gender roles, where women are objects and subordinate, while men are subjects and dominant. A very popular people in the development of the feminist movement in literature is Elaine Showalter. It was he who introduced gynocriticism. The definition of gynocritic itself is a study that explains the literary works description that discusses the contrast in the writing results of men and women. In Elaine Showalter's "Towards a Feminist Poetics" (qtd. in Karmarkar, 36), she said that the study of gynocritics does offer many advantages. Gynocritic refers to the concern that women do play a role in the production of literary works. As an author as well as a reader, when a literary work is written by a woman it will create a distinct impression and show that women are indeed present in literary works. Gynocritic also describes the relationship between women and texts written by women writers, the relationship between writing and bodies of women, writing and language of women, writing and souls of women, and relationship with culture of women. When a literary work is written by a woman it will create a distinct

impression and show that women are indeed present in literary works. In the world of literature, which the feminist movement has influenced, there is a connection between the feminism that exists in the author and what is depicted in a character in the story (Tong 275). The appearance of the feminist movement in the characters in this story can be seen when the cheerful characters carry out movements that seek to change the unfair and condescending attitudes of men towards women and fight for equal rights (Tong 276).

The approach used in this research is feminist literary criticism. The reason researchers use feminist literary criticism is that through this approach researchers can find aspects of feminism in *The Poppy War* novel. Feminist literary criticism is the awareness of reading as a woman, namely the awareness of the reader that there are significant differences between the two sexes in the meaning of literary works and in the struggle for meaning. This means reading with the attention that there is gender which has a lot to do with culture, literature and life, and through literary works destroys the prejudices and ideology of male power and patriarchy. This approach is used to deconstruct forms of sexual injustice experienced by women and forms of struggle of female protagonists to break free from patriarchal domination.

Society has been through several significant changes in numerous aspects of life. Previously, there were traditions inherited by society such as norms, customs and values that did not always bring a good impact on their generations. Our previous society believed that men are the ones who have the

control of everything. They own all life sources and have power over everything while women are placed one or even a few steps behind men. Women's voices and actions are seen as not as important as men's. This is one of the ideas of patriarchy. According to Tong (2), Patriarchy is domination, power, competition, and rivalry in various structures, such as political law, family, and even religion. This principle is held by society for many centuries which leads to some issues for their next generation. Men's domination in public spheres leads to gender oppression and discrimination. Women's roles become marginalized, their voices are muted, their rights are oppressed and there comes inequality between men and women (Tong 202).

As a consequence, feminism appears to end all practices of patriarchy. For the past few years feminism has gathered some notable attention. Feminism emerges to bring equality for women so they can gain their rights. The way to end sexism, sexist oppression and exploitation can be done through the feminist movement (Hooks 8). It is an intellectual commitment, political or social movement which focuses on women's experiences in their daily life. Feminism explores justice for women and aims to achieve equality between women and men, lift up women's voices, and improve their status. The feminist movement exists to stop and eliminate patriarchy so that each gender can be equal and there is no longer any dominance of certain genders in society. (Selden et al 115). It attempts to achieve gender equality between men and women. Feminism is a collection of movements and ideologies that hope for equality in various rights, such as personal, social, economic, cultural and political.

(Suaidi 86). Rights and opportunities must be given equally to men and women, and feminism is the real action to defend women's roles and rights in society. When society gives equality for women, then women will achieve the same position in many aspects of life.

B.2. TYPE OF FEMINISM

1) Radical Feminism

Radical feminists believe that psychological gender differences between men and women. According to this school, men dominate women's reproductive abilities which lead to the oppression of women. Radical feminists argue that the oppression of women occurs because of patriarchy. The female body is the main target of oppression by male power. Therefore, issues of radical feminism include bodily and reproductive rights, sexuality, power relations between women and men, and the division between private and public. (Tong 18)

2) Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminism follows an oppositional theory based on the ideas of Karl Marx. According to Marx, the relationship shown by the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has similarities with that shown between men and women. Indeed, in the capitalist system, the oppression of women is perpetuated in various ways and for profit. A male worker working in a factory is exploited. Women who enter as

workers are seen as profitable for the capitalists. The earnings of female workers are often lower than those of male workers. The inclusion of women in this system creates unlimited labor reserves in the capitalist system. For followers of this school, the oppression of women is a continuation of a system of structural exploitation. In other words, capitalism is the cause. (Tong 18)

3) Socialist Feminism

For socialist feminists, this school is a combination of the materialist historical methods of Marx and Engels. This school argues that there is injustice to women in social construction. This includes stereotypes associated with women. Oppression of women occurs in all classes, even the socialist revolution does not automatically elevate women. According to Fakih, this school tries to combine patriarchal analysis with social analysis. Therefore, criticism of social exploitation in the capitalist system must be carried out together with criticism of gender injustice which leads to the domination, subjugation and restriction of women. This theory of socialist feminism is known as the theory of patriarchal capitalism which was first put forward by Zillah Eisenstein, which equates the dialectic between the capitalist class structure and the gender hierarchical structure. This theory views women as creatures of social class and assumes that oppression of women occurs in all social classes. This

theory argues that injustice against women is not only caused by biological differences, but also by social status. (Tong 18)

4) psychoanalytic feminism

Psychoanalytic feminism admits that basic explanations of women's attitude are entrenched in women's subconscious, categorically women's ways of thinking. Based on Freudian concepts such as the Oedipus stage and the Oedipus complex, they argue that gender inequality is not only about men who consider themselves masculine and women who perceive themselves as feminine (Tong 18).

5) postmodern feminism

This feminism is rooted in postmodern thought and examines the social construction of gender, sexuality and identity from a more complex and skeptical perspective. Postmodern feminism emphasizes the importance of seeing gender as diversity and strength in connected contexts, and recognizing the differences experienced by women from various backgrounds such as race, class, and sexual orientation. This feminism also challenges the notion of a gender binary and takes a broader perspective (Tong 18).

6) Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminists struggle to fight for women to achieve equal legal rights socially and politically. That is, this trend rejects all forms of discrimination against women. (18th century) asserted, reason is

the ability that makes humans and animals different; that's why women who have reason should not be seen as animals because both women and men have this ability. Therefore, society must provide education to women. The same applies to men, this happens because all humans have the same right to have the opportunity to improve their reasoning and moral abilities. So that they can become fully human. Wollstonecraft consistently celebrates reason, usually at the expense of emotion or feeling.

According to Tong's thought, liberal feminism developed from the 18th century. The feminist movement in this century is based on the assumption that there is no difference between men and women. Girls and boys have the same right to education. There were many liberal feminist movements in the 19th century that fought for women to have the same civil and economic rights as men. In the 20th century liberal feminism moved a lot in the formation of Women's Organizations to oppose sex discrimination in the political, social, economic and personal fields. (Tong 18).

As Tong stated in *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction Third Edition* that liberal feminism is a movement that gives women the opportunity to do whatever they want and does not emphasize that women do whatever men can do (18). Ghorfati and Medini define Liberal feminism as a special path to achieving equality between women and men. This movement primarily wants to try to

stop discrimination against women (8). Women often became objects or possessions of men. That phenomenon means women are seen as less than men. They cannot stand by themselves, not because they are unable to do so but because of the oppression from society. Women's voices are muted. Women are not given the same opportunities as men in education, economics, and other fields so they can't develop themselves. They do not get their right to choose something for themselves and decide something for their life because society does not let them. These reasons trigger liberal feminism movement. Tong explains that liberal feminism is the desire for women and men to create a new world where human life becomes more equal (33).

Liberal feminism first emerged in the 17th century with several pioneers and demanding several changes. The first one was Mary Wollstone's craft with her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* that gave significant change (Tong 15). In her book she states that women are not created to be inferior when compared to men, but it is assumed that women are inferior because of the lack of education that women receive. She suggests giving equal treatment to men and women to make them rational creatures and base a social order based on reason. Women are often given less opportunity in education, so they are less competent than men (Tong 14-15). This makes them marginalized in society. Men and women must be given the same education. For women, by getting education, they can become better

partners for their husbands, not only in the domestic sphere like household activities, but also in making income. If society gives education to women the way they give to men, then women can be as competent as men in many life matters. Previous generations had women working in the domestic sphere because society held tight to patriarchal values; keeping men take control of everything and let women follow them (Tong 13). By giving women the education means creating educated women. Women who pursue education can get a good role in society to develop themselves and the surrounding community for the better. By giving the same opportunity in education, society will achieve gender equality for men and women. In the 19th century, liberal feminism fought to get a chance in the civil service and economic field (Tong 18). Society must give political rights, economic, and education opportunities towards women to achieve gender equality. As stated by Tong that, gender justice or sexual equality can be achieved if society provides opportunities for women to take part in various decisions, such as economics, politics, and education, which previously were only controlled by men (16). Many decades ago, women were placed only in the domestic sphere such as doing household activities and not being given any opportunity to grow their competence. Men are always the ones who make money while women stay at home and take care of the children. This inequality triggers the liberal feminism movement. “In order to

be partners rather than servants of their husbands, wives must earn an income outside the home” (Tong 18). Liberal feminism intends for persons to use their competence and the democratic process in helping men and women to become equal in the aspect of law and society. It fights to release women from dictatorial gender roles. A role that is utilized as a social defense to make women inferior and don't give them opportunities in the economy, education, or other aspects.

According to Tong (2-3), liberal feminism is an equality where women and men have the same opportunities for everything they want. It underlines the freedom that women can get. It means women are free to do whatever they want, without any pressure from culture or society. Women can express themselves in society without limitation. Since women and men are equal, they must be given the same rights and opportunities. Liberal feminism seeks to eliminate hierarchy or oppressive authority (Tong 2). Women should not be controlled by men or society to act and to be something they do not want. The common goal of liberal feminism is to create a society that is proper and attentive to the freedom of self-improvement so that both women and men can make themselves better. Women and men have the same potential of rationality.

Equal opportunity is always related to liberal feminism, as stated by Tong that in liberal feminism, it is closely related to equal opportunity, which can be done by carrying out massive economic

reorganization to ensure that all people who are not differentiated get equal opportunities. (12). People have the right to choose what they want without any intervention from others. In this case, men and women as individuals are free to decide what to do with their lives without any disturbances or pressure from other people. As long as it doesn't disturb anyone, they are free to do that. It means they have the same opportunity. In other aspects of life like politics and economy, both men and women should have the same opportunity. Feminism exists to erase patriarchal values that are applied in society and oppressed women (Tong 4-5). Liberal feminism explicitly argues a statement that there is gender inequality constructed by social and culture. The main encouragement of liberal feminism is that a woman must freely be able to decide her social role, just like men do (Tong 35). Therefore, feminism is obligated to erase the historic patriarchal structure that refused women's civil rights. The fundamental emphasis is on women's equality in the aspects of law, in opportunity of education and profession, changing of marriage law, unfair divorce, property rights, and liberation from all inhuman powers. Feminism obligated erasing the historic patriarchal structure that refused women's civil rights. The fundamental emphasis is on women's equality in the aspects of law, in opportunity of education and profession, changing of marriage law, unfair divorce, property rights, and liberation from all inhuman powers (Tong 21). Feminism

obligated erasing the historic patriarchal structure that refused women's civil rights. The fundamental emphasis is on women's equality in the aspects of law, in opportunity of education and profession, changing of marriage law, unfair divorce, property rights, and liberation from all inhuman powers.

The general goal of liberal feminism is to create "a just and caring society in which freedom thrives". Only in such a society can women and men develop themselves. Liberal feminists are of the view that women must prepare themselves to be able to equalize their position with men by taking advantage of various opportunities and getting an education, bearing in mind that women are rational creatures and can think like men. (Tong 18)

Liberal feminists want freedom for women from oppression, patriarchy and sex. This school also includes two forms of political thought, namely classical liberalism and charitable liberalism; Classical liberalism believed that the state should ideally support the liberties of its people and allow individuals to decide about their property. On the other hand, social liberalism believes that the state should focus on economic justice rather than guaranteeing civil liberties. They see state programs such as social security and school freedom as a way to reduce injustice in society. Classical liberalism and social liberalism believe that government interference in their private lives is unnecessary. (Tong 18).

This liberal feminist bases her thoughts on the liberal concept which emphasizes that girls and boys are created equal and have the same rights and must get the same opportunities. Humans are different from animals because of the reason they have. So, boys, girls and boys, both rational and moral themselves can be developed with the ability of rationality. Women can become autonomous decision makers and fulfill their own needs (Tong 15).

This liberal feminism study has advantages, including aspects of this theoretical study that are more specific and aim to provide a detailed explanation based on its design. The liberal feminist educational model is based on the idea that women, like men, develop optimally when women also receive the same education as men (Tong 31). Indeed, the liberal feminist concept of equality between women and men is not enough to guarantee equal education, but it also guarantees equal opportunities in civil rights, which include the right to organize, freedom of expression, the right to vote and personal rights. Tong 23). Then came the idea that women need to act to understand their limitations and improve their condition, including bearing the burden of the family, namely the economy (Tong 18).

B.3 The Three Principles of Liberal Feminism

In summary there are three principles that underlie the concept and struggle of liberal feminism. The third principle is individualism, legal and political reform and pragmatism.

1. Individualism

Liberal feminists focus on using existing systems of power, such as the judiciary and government reform, to promote women's rights and improve their lives (Tong 12). Basically, liberal feminists depend on the state to reach an agreement, meaning that the state is seen as the protector of individual rights (Tong 231-232). Therefore, it is widely regarded as a genre of reformist feminism rather than a revolutionary genre, because the genre does not hide the system but believes that the state and capabilities of the system can be reformed.

2. Legal and political reform

The power system in liberal feminism has two main points, namely the court system and government system and these must be reformed to fight for women's rights and improve living standards (Tong 25).

Basically liberal feminists tend to rely on the state to achieve equality, from this it can be seen that the state is the protector of individual rights. As a result, this school of thought is widely considered a genre of reformist feminism, not a revolutionary genre, because in this genre it does not question the system, but believes in the state and the ability of the system to reform (Tong 24).

3. Pragmatism

Liberal feminists tend to take a pragmatic approach to reform. They are looking for the politics of a struggle that is likely to be won and the advantages they can derive from the current political and economic structure.

Liberal feminism also creates and supports laws that remove barriers for women to progress (Tong 32). This law fights for opportunities and rights for women, including easy access and equal wages received by women and men.

The development of the liberal feminism movement it self is divided into 3 stages:

1. The development of feminism in the eighteenth century. The liberal feminist movement advocates equal education for women. Since the birth of the liberal feminist movement which was based on the assumption that men and women have different capacities, liberal feminism seeks to equalize the abilities of men and women's mindsets so that they are not looked down upon and intimidated.

We introduce education as a way to equalize men and women. In addition, women's right to education is magnified by Wollstonecraft's criticism of Jean-Jacques Rosseau's novel *The Emilian*, which distinguishes between male and female education. The novel suggests that the education of men who will later become heads of families will be focused on rational matters and sciences

such as natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. while women's education will be focused on the science of emotion. Because women will be understanding, caring, and motherly wives. Here, liberal feminism represents a way out of male-centered education by teaching women rational things to enable them to become independent beings (Tong 243).

2. Liberal feminism expresses two main things, namely regarding civil rights that women must have and economic opportunities for women. According to liberal feminism, education alone is not enough to achieve equality between men and women. Because to achieve gender equality there are many aspects that must be studied. Therefore, women must be given opportunities in the economic field so that equality can be achieved. The ability to function in the economy and guarantee women's civil rights, including the rights to freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to vote and the right to private property. (Tong 18).

3. The development of liberal feminism in the 20th century. In this century, the development of liberal feminism was marked by the emergence of movements or organizations fighting for women's rights, such as the NUN (Women's National Organization). This organization also strives for women to have educational and

economic rights and opportunities so that they are equal to men.
(Tong 210).

B.4 Thought of Liberal Feminism

In Liberal Feminism theory, Tong has three main thoughts divided into three eras.

1. Equal Education

Equality of education is a thought that was present in the eighteenth century as demonstrated by Wollstonecraft in her work entitled "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman". Tong (14) there explained that liberal feminism has the belief that women should have the same educational opportunities as men. This includes access to the same quality of education and the development of rational and moral capacities, to which Tong cites the thoughts of Wollstonecraft, who became a feminist in that era, that liberal feminist thought considered it important to achieve a complete personality and contribute to the welfare of society. She emphasized the importance of education in preparing women to become rational, moral and independent individuals, capable of understanding and working together in the pursuit of knowledge and virtue (Tong 15).

2. Equal Liberty

According to Tong (16), the concept of equal liberty is to allow each individual to choose and pursue their desires as long as they do not

interfere, cause danger, or hinder each other in the process. Using Taylor's case, Tong (18) states that equal liberty assumes that all women can do anything men can do and it all depends on each individual's abilities. More than that, Tong (19) also emphasized that although most women may not be able to do things that men do, this does not necessarily mean that women are not allowed to do those things.

3. Equal Rights

Equal rights here is one where women's rights as legal participants are considered. Tong (23) explains that equal rights are the idea of equality that women are completely free and can have economic opportunities, sexual freedom, and civil liberties. Liberal feminists think that discrimination based on gender, race, skin color, religion, or national aspirations is something that should be stopped, especially by private employers, employment agencies, and labor unions (Tong 25). All of this is presented in the Amendment, which regulates all women's rights.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Chapter three is a research method that is used in collecting and analyzing the data to answer the problem formulation and there are three sub-chapters in this chapter. The first sub-chapter is the type of research, the second sub-chapter is data organizing, and the third sub-chapter is analyzing the data.

A. Types of the Research

This study used descriptive qualitative research, it means that the data collection process is carried out qualitatively and the reporting is carried out descriptively. Qualitative research is a study to investigate and understand the meaning assumed by individuals or groups as social or human problems (Jackson et al., 2007). So this type of research is not an approach that involves statistical and mathematical data related to numbers but will focus on descriptions and explanations in the form of words, sentences, and dialogues.

B. Data Organizing

In data organizing, the steps in collecting the data and the type of data were explained.

B.1 Data Collecting Method

This study had four steps in collecting the data, they were as follows:

B.1.1 Reading the Novels

The first stage in conducting research was reading the novel “*The Poppy War*” which was the first novel written by Rebecca F.

Kuang, a writer from China living in America. *The Poppy War* novel is about 568 pages and tells about the struggle of an orphan named Rin, which is able to attract the attention of many people, and achieve success as one of the best seller novels.

The novel was read several times to get general information such as characters, themes, conflicts, and plots to be analyzed.

B.1.2 Identifying the Data

After reading the novel carefully, the second step is to identify the data. This was done to find the parts of the novel to be analyzed by highlighting and underlining the novel. The data are identified in the form of monologues and dialogues on the character.

B.1.3 Classifying the Data

The next step was to classify the data. Therefore, the data in the appendix would be classified based on the problem formulation.

The data obtained from the novel would be written in a table called an appendix. The appendix consists of column numbers, the content of the novel, scenes, type of analysis, references, and comments.

Details of the attachments would be discussed in Chapter IV.

B.1.4 Reduction the Data

The last step in the data collection method was to generate data. Data reduction means a process of selecting the most important

data from the novel to be analyzed. This data would answer the problem formulation in Chapter I.

B.2 Types of Data

Two types of data were used in this study, those are primary data and secondary data. The explanation of the data is as follows :

1. Primary data

Primary data are the main source of analysis. This is taken from the novel *The Poppy War* written by Rebecca F. Kuang, a writer from China living in America. with a total of 568 pages. This novel provides data in the form of a dialogue and narrative which is used as evidence.

2. Secondary data

Secondary data were other data from this study which is supporting data for primary data. These data were taken from several data sources such as journals, articles, theses, and e-books related to the theory of this research.

C. Analyzing Data

This section consists of data analysis and reporting. The purpose of data analysis is to provide very clear information from the data. This study used descriptive qualitative analysis data as the type of data. Analyzing data in here is to describe, assess and understand all the facts using descriptions. While the findings of this study are presented in chapter IV: findings and discussion are presented in the appendix.

BAB IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will explain the findings and discussion in this research. The findings and discussions discussed here include liberal feminism shown in *The Poppy War* novel and the struggle experienced by the main character in pursuing military education as part of liberal feminism in *The Poppy War* novel. The liberal feminist approach used in this research is Tong's theory, which will help answer the above research questions. This chapter consists of sub-chapters which will answer each research question, including liberal feminism in *The Poppy War* Novel and the main character's struggle in pursuing military education as part of liberal feminism.

A. Liberal Feminism in *The Poppy War* Novel

A.1. Equal Liberty

Every human being has the same right to the freedom to make decisions. In equal liberty, no party can interfere and limit someone's decisions. This includes women having the space to make choices and opinions and act according to their beliefs without being restricted because of their gender. Liberal feminism is a form of feminist theory that has an important role in creating women's rights movements and initiatives in various fields, such as education, policy, law, and, most importantly, improving women's liberty in various contexts (Tong 20). This can be seen in *The Poppy War* story where Rin is a female soldier, but she has the same power and can make her own decisions.

“How dare he? How dare he stand there like this and accuse her of atrocities? He had not seen the inside of that laboratory, he had not known how Shiro had planned to wipe out every Nikara alive . . . he had not seen Altan walk off that dock and light up like a human torch. She had achieved revenge for her people. She had saved the Empire. Kitay would not judge her for it. She wouldn't let him.” (The Poppy War, 435)

Women's rights are proven in terms of policy. Rin managed to take revenge and save her empire. She managed to burn all the enemies through the flames that emanated from all over her body. Eventually, she was assigned to join the thirteenth division in the military field. The military field is dominated by men rather than women. This is where women's rights are equal to men's. In fact, it can be seen from this quote that Rin also shows that she has complete power over her choices and even Kitay, her best friend, does not have the right to judge herself. This is mainly because Rin, as a human whose hometown was destroyed, feels that she must choose to save his hometown, and Rin's choice cannot be interfered with by anyone.

Apart from that, at the beginning of the story, it is also shown that there is equal liberty in Rin's freedom to choose. In the view of liberal feminism, a woman has complete freedom over herself, where they can choose their way of life as long as it does not interfere with the rights of others (Tong 16). This is shown by Rin's decision to study at the military academy, and no one can interfere with the fact that she can and passes to study at Sinegard Academy.

A week later she was cleared of all charges. Officially, Tikany's magistrate announced that the scores had been a “mistake.” He did not label Rin a cheater, but neither did he validate her score. The proctors asked Rin to keep her departure under wraps, threatening clumsily to detain her in Tikany if she did not comply. Rin knew that was a bluff. Acceptance to Sinegard Academy was the

equivalent of an imperial summons, and obstruction of any kind—even by provincial authorities—was tantamount to treason. (The Poppy War, 22)

In this case, Rin was barely able to get her freedom. She, the daughter of a shop assistant, is deemed not to have the possibility and capacity to pass the Keju test. This certainly needs to meet the reference of equal liberty. However, Rin also understood that nothing could interfere with the decision of the The Keju test results. Even though Rin was accused of cheating and manipulating grades in the Keju test, Rin wasn't afraid to tell the truth. Even though they question Rin's exam results, the administrators, judges and authorities cannot easily eliminate equal liberty for Rin, where she is free to continue her studies at Sinegard. However, the supervisor tries to violate Rin's freedom, who is a woman and feels that it is taboo or impossible for her to continue her studies at Sinegard. The supervisor tried to say that Rin was a cheater and the result of Rin being able to continue to Sinegard was a "mistake". Because Rin didn't make any mistakes or cheat, what the supervisor said was useless. Rin can still do anything a man can do because Rin has the ability to enter Sinegard.

A.2. Equal Rights

A human has the same rights, where they cannot be traded (valued or equated with goods). Women have the right to be treated equally (Tong 13). Tong's liberal feminist theory also shows that women have the right to be treated equally by other people. Meanwhile, in the novel, equal rights are quite

visible where there is discrimination, but this does not mean that Rin, a character who experiences discrimination, cannot have the same rights as others.

In Tikany, an unmarried girl like Rin was worth less than a gay rooster. She could spend her life as a foot servant in some rich household—if she found the right people to bribe. Otherwise her options were some combination of prostitution and begging. (The Poppy War, 7)

The quote shows that women do not have good equality rights. Unmarried women are valued so low that they are equated with gay roosters. Even unmarried women are considered not to have a good future, where the best they can get are servants in rich families. Apart from that, they will only become prostitutes or beggars. This shows that unmarried women do not have equal rights to unmarried men. Rin also feels this when she lives with her aunt, who tries to marry her off so that she can escape from her responsibility to care for Rin. There is a gap in equal rights, especially for Rin and other unmarried girls in Tikany. They are described as having no right to be treated as human beings and are considered something inferior to the gay rooster. This quote shows that unmarried women are lowly figures, and they can only work in jobs that require them to depend on other people.

In liberal feminism, equality of rights is sought to liberate women from oppressive and coercive gender roles. In this case, women have the right to meet their own needs by working hard and having the opportunity to use their freedom to meet their needs (Tong 26). Rin, an orphan girl who lives a difficult life, can get her right to get what she wants. This is because, in equal rights,

everyone has the same opportunities as long as their efforts and abilities deserve it.

She was alone in a city without a friend, where she barely spoke the language, at a school that she now wasn't sure she wanted to attend. He leads you down the aisle. He's old and fat, and he smells like sweat. He looks at you and he licks his lips . . . She shuddered, squeezed her eyes shut, and opened them again. So Sinegard was frightening and unfamiliar. It didn't matter. She didn't have anywhere else to go. (The Poppy War, 32)

The quote above shows that Rin has two choices for her future: the first is to study at Sinegard, and the second is to marry a wealthy merchant from Tikany. Both options are equally difficult to do, but Rin prefers to study at Sinegard. The fact that Rin can have two choices and is free to choose which one she wants shows that this is equal rights where Rin has freedom, especially because Rin has made herself fit to study at the Sinegard academy.

A.3. Equal Education

This concept ensures that every gender has equal access to quality education without discrimination. Education for a child must be the same, where their education is not differentiated by social class, race, and gender. This is because education has significantly impacted children's future success (Tong 15). Rin, a girl from a poor family, also gets the same opportunity.

He sighed. "My dear girl, if your family had let you study with me when you were younger, we might have considered this . . . I told the Fangs then, I told her you might have potential. But at this stage, you're speaking of the impossible."

"But—"

He held up a hand. "More than twenty thousand students take the Keju each year, and hardly three thousand enter the academies. Of those, barely a handful test in from Tikany. You'd be competing against

wealthy children—merchants' children, nobles' children—who have been studying for this their entire lives.” (The Poppy War, 6)

In the quote above, tutor Feyrik's sadness is shown because Rin was not allowed to study when she was young. However, this did not stop Rin's enthusiasm to continue learning. Rin, who saw her future bleak, decided to improve her education. As we know, education has an important role in improving children's future, and it also becomes Rin's understanding to let go of her arranged marriage to get married. Rin here seeks the help of Tutor Feyrik to help her get the same education. Previously, Tutor Feyrik regretted that uncle and aunt Fang sent Rin to study too late. Rin's delay in learning may be because uncle and aunt Fang felt that Rin, an adopted child from the war and a woman, might not need too extensive lessons and only required to make Rin able to read. From uncle and aunt Fang's attitude, it can be seen that Rin did not get an equal education. Tutor Feyrik further reinforced that Rin would have difficulty getting an education because the Keju exam would be more profitable for "wealthy children merchants' children, nobles' children who have been studying for this their entire lives."

Every gender should have the same opportunity to pursue education. It is about equal opportunities in pursuing education and fairness in how academic performance treats each student. Equal education here does not mean it has to be the same (Tong 16), but rather according to what each gender needs.

The Poppy War also shows justice, especially in dormitory facilities.

The boys were housed in the largest building on campus, a three-story structure that looked like it had been built long after the Academy

grounds were seized from the monks. The women's quarters were tiny in contrast, a spare one-story building that used to be a single meditation room.

Rin expected the dorm to be uncomfortably cramped, but only two other bunks showed signs of habitation.

“Three girls in one year is actually a record high,” Raban said before he left them to settle in. “The masters were shocked.” (The Poppy War, 38)

In the quote above, Rin seems surprised by the differences in the dormitories lived in by male and female students. The male student building is large in size, even the largest in the Sinegard academy. Meanwhile, the women's dormitory is small, namely a one-story building which used to be a single meditation room. Even though it is different, this is fair treatment because Sinegard Academy does not have many female students, it is even explained there that three female students in one year is already the highest record. This shows that there are very few female students at Sinegard, so providing facilities that are not as large as the male dormitories is a fair decision because there are not many female students. Even though they have equal opportunities, women who study at Sinegard also experience difficult conditions, especially Rin, who is a woman from a low social class. Rin experienced struggles to study at Sinegard, such as discrimination against Rin when she had problems with Nezha which resulted in her being suspended from the Master of Combat Class. Apart from that, Rin is still experiencing other struggles which will be explained in the following sub-chapter.

B. Main Character's Struggle in Pursuing Military Education

Rin has a desire to enter military education or *The Poppy War* Novel, which is called the Sinegard academy. Rin has challenges and obstacles which are reflected in the social context in Tikany which does not allow women to be valued less and how Rin is trying to undergo military education which is dominated by men. In *The Poppy War*, Rin experiences obstacles and discriminatory practices that hinder women's access to equal opportunities and recognition. As explained in the previous chapter, Aunt Fang was the main factor that made Rin unable to study and made Rin's chances of entering the academy small. This is especially true with the fact that Rin is forced to marry a wealthy merchant to make Aunt Fang no longer responsible for Rin. From the brief explanation above, it shows that there are several struggles felt by the main character and several other struggles.

The struggles experienced by Rin in this explanation will be divided into three principles: individualism, legal and political reform and pragmatism. This approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive analysis of Rin's challenges and the various ways she navigates them within the context of the novel's setting and themes. The principle of individualism can refer to Rin's personal drive and determination to achieve her goals, even in a society that limits women's opportunities. Legal and political reforms demonstrate the need for social change to create equal opportunities for everyone, including women. Pragmatism implies the practical steps Rin

takes to overcome her obstacles, such as removing her female reproductive organs to secure her future.

B.1. Individualism

In liberal feminism, what is emphasized is the importance of equality of opportunity for all individuals, regardless of gender. In *The Poppy War*, there was the elimination of structural inequalities that hindered women's progress. They push for gender-neutral policies, ensuring women have equal opportunities in education, employment and other areas of public life. Even though all parties, regardless of gender, have the same opportunities, this is different for Rin. The principle of individualism can refer to Rin's personal drive and determination to achieve her goal, namely studying at Sinegard. Every individual has justice, protection, and no inequality based solely on social class, gender, race, religion, etc. to get the educational opportunities they want (Tong 15). Rin should also have this. However, her journey became very difficult because she was a woman from a low social class, which made her have to try harder to get what she wanted.

She had to test into Sinegard. She had to test into the highest-scoring percentage of students not just in the village, but in the entire country. Otherwise, her two years of study would be wasted.

She had to make her memory perfect. She stopped sleeping. Her eyes became bloodshot, swollen. Her head swam from days of cramming. When *she* visited Tutor Feyrik at his home one night to pick up a new set of books, her gaze was desperate, unfocused. She stared past him as he spoke. His words drifted over her head like clouds; she barely *registered* his presence. (*The Poppy War*, 16)

The struggle is in the form of an exam to enter the Sinegard Academy, where Sinegard is the most prestigious military academy, filled with people who have high status and a stable economy. The quote highlights the intense competition and limited opportunities for aspiring military students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds like Rin. Therefore, to achieve justice and equality, Rin must fight to get a high presentation score to pass the Keju test. However, this is not easy because Rin has to get the highest scoring percentage to enter Sinegard; on the other hand, she doesn't have time for that. As a woman from a lower class, Rin does not have the opportunity to study. She was only given two years to study; if she failed, Rin would no longer be able to study again. The main struggle of this equal opportunity is that Rin only has one chance, and if she fails, she will be married off to a rich merchant that aunt Fang has planned. This principle of individualism is what drives Rin to be able to get what she wants, her dream of being free from Aunt Fang and going to school at Sinegard.

At Sinegard Academy, Rin, a woman from a low class, gets bad treatment. Mainly, she found that Sinegard and the people there still questioned Rin's potential abilities and thought Rin was unfit to face the harsh life of a military academy. Women are often marginalized in important roles because they are seen as less able to face difficult things because they are emotional, hypersensitive, etc. (Tong 14).

Rin glanced around her, fighting a rising swell of panic. She had thought testing into Sinegard was a guarantee of a home for at least the next five years, if not a stable career afterward. She hadn't realized she might be sent home in months. (The Poppy War, 37)

This quote shows that there is uncertainty about the opportunities that Rin gets. Rin, who has tried very hard to get into Sinegard, feels that her decision has released her from her foster parents' desire to marry her to a wealthy merchant. However, Sinegard is not that easy, and to stick with her choice, Rin must continue to learn at Sinegard Academy. Especially in the quote above, it shows that Rin still needs to be considered worthy to study at Sinegard. Even though she has had the opportunity to study at Sinegard, she can be expelled from Sinegard. This is supported by the fact that Rin is a woman considered not to have sufficient abilities to go through military education at Sinegard, so her opportunity to study at the Sinegard Academy continues to be questioned.

After Rin had spent several days in Sinegard, it was possible that she could be expelled from Sinegard. Her inability to get Combat class lessons after fighting with Nezha supports this. These factors mean that Rin must do various things to stay in Sinegard. Forced marriage violates human rights in which women are discriminated against to marry immediately, are considered to have no future other than marriage, and violate the dignity of women as free human beings. A woman also has equal opportunities to get an education (Tong 14-15) and should not

have certain fears that would threaten other opportunities to get an education.

She had needed to be reminded that she was nothing—that she could be sent back home at a moment’s notice. That as miserable she was at Sinegard, what awaited her in Tikany was much, much worse.

He looks at you and licks his lips. He brings you to the bed. He forces a hand between your legs. You scream, but no one hears you.

She would stay. She would stay at Sinegard even if it killed her. (The Poppy War, 77)

Rin's fear becomes even more intense after learning that life in Sinegard is difficult, “Classes only escalated in difficulty as the weeks progressed. Their mornings were devoted to Combat, Medicine, History, and Strategy. On most days Rin’s head was reeling by noon, crammed with names of theorems she’d never heard and titles of books she needed to finish by the end of the week... Their homework was heavy and clearly meant to push the first-years right up against their limits.” To get through it all and believe she has the same chance as everyone else, Rin tries to remind her what scary things are waiting for her at home. Her difficult circumstances indeed put Rin in two difficult choices. Even so, Rin chose what she thought was the best option: to stay in Sinegard. Here, Rin even had to endure pain for a long time as her uterus was damaged. Rin must be able to face whatever is in Sinegard so she doesn't get sent home and has to get married. With her efforts, Rin hopes she can earn the right to continue to study at Sinegard. Struggling to endure the excruciating pain, Rin imagined the bad things

that might happen when she had to go home and marry a wealthy old merchant. This quote shows Rin's desperation that she must still get the opportunity to study at Sinegard if she doesn't want to be married off to a wealthy old merchant.

The quotes above show that Rin had to face various challenges to get this opportunity, which was very difficult for her. Rin can only get this opportunity after going through various struggles, as explained previously, Keju Test, who has spent two years studying without stopping and struggling to stay in Sinegard even though she has to endure enormous difficulties that make her full of despair.

B.2. Legal and Political Reform

Legal and political reforms demonstrate the need for social change to create equal opportunities for everyone, including women. Sinegard's life is hard training, not only physically, but the men in the academy have little respect for women. Women are considered incapable of having major responsibilities, especially in military training or important decisions. Tong (16) explains that women should have the same opportunities in every opportunity that other people have without discrimination. However, here Rin experiences discrimination due to her decision to study at Sinegard. One figure who shows an attitude that does not respect women is Nezha.

“Why would she kill herself?” Rin asked out loud. “Wouldn't she have been more useful alive to argue her case?”

Nezha shrugged. “Reasons why women shouldn’t be in charge of small islands.” (*The Poppy War*, 64)

The quote shows a class discussing the history of Speer, which was annexed under Mai'rinnen Tearza, Speer's last warrior queen. The Old Nikara Empire asks Tearza to give up her throne and pay homage to Sinegard. Tearza agrees because she is in love with the Red Emperor for some other reason, but she is opposed by the Speerly Council. Legend has it that Tearza committed suicide out of despair, and that act convinced the Speerly Council of Tearza's love for Nikan. However, here, Nezha didn't care about respecting women. In fact, this is further supported by Nezha's attitude in saying this to answer Rin, who is his enemy at Sinegard Academy. Apart from that, Nezha also looked down on women by saying that a woman should not be responsible, even if it was just a small island. This quote shows that Nezha not only demeans women but also insinuates Rin to stop acting so great. In this quote, it can be seen that Rin as an individual and a woman is still considered undervalued and is not given the same opportunities as men. In fact, Rin continues to be discriminated against by Nezha, who always considers Rin trivial and unworthy of being in Sinegard.

Still in Strategy class at a different time, Nezha again condescended to Rin by calling her an idiot. Education should be given equally for every individual without judgment based on a student's background. However, the educational working class has failed, and children from the working class often experience judgment and

discrimination by academic administration servants, mentors, and peers (Tong 14). Rin is a woman from a poor family and is different from her other friends who have received education since they were small. Rin ultimately has to try harder than the other children in Sinegard, even though Nezha still thinks Rin is someone who doesn't belong in Sinegard.

Rin raised her hand. "Cut around the second army and get onto the dam. Break the dam. Flood the valley. Let everyone inside drown."

Her classmates turned to stare at her in horror.

"Leave the children," she added. "There's no way to save them." Nezha laughed out loud. "We're trying to win this simulation, idiot."

Irjah motioned for Nezha to be silent. "Runin. Please elaborate."

"It's not a victory either way," said Rin. "But if the costs are so high, I would throw all my tiles in. This way they die, and we lose half our troops but no more..."

In this quote, it can be seen that they are in a class taught by Master Irjah, Sinegard's strategy class. This class asked them about their strategy in a particular case. Irjah gave this case by imagining his students being in a certain condition. The context of the possibility that Irjah asked was what their strategy would be if they were trapped in a valley in the Wudang mountain region, which was surrounded by Nikara soldiers from both ends of the valley. Most of the population has been evacuated, but the Federation General is holding a school full of children hostage. The Federation general says he will free the children if their battalion surrenders. When asked this question, even Kitay, considered a strategist, was confused. Here, Rin shows her abilities.

Even though it sounds scary and doesn't think about the captives who are still children, Rin's strategy is not a strategy that has not been thought through carefully. However, here, Nezha immediately called out Rin. Nezha does hate Rin, but Irjah ignores this. Even though Nezha ridiculed Rin, Rin was ready for the challenges she faced when she had to pass through Sinegard. Rin gave the strategy she had thought of by providing the references she found. Tong (19) stated that if a woman has sufficient ability to do something then women have the same opportunities as men. However, even though Rin has the ability to be in Sinegard, and his strategic abilities have been recognized by Irjah, Nezha still discriminates and makes hate speech by calling Rin "Idiot". Nezha's attitude shows that there is still a need for social change for opportunities for everyone.

Unlike the Strategy class, which Rin was still willing to accept, in the Combat class, Rin could no longer attend. This is because in the early Combat class, Rin fought with Nezha, but she received bad treatment from Jun Loran as the Master in the Combat class. In education, every student should receive the same treatment regardless of their gender (Tong 15), and this is different from what Jun does. This quote also really emphasizes how legal reform in Sinegard needs to be carried out.

“Every year we get someone like you, some country bumpkin who thinks that just because they were good at taking some test, they deserve my time and attention. Understand this, southerner. The exam proves nothing. Discipline and competence—those

are the only things that matter at this school. That boy”—Jun jerked his thumb in the direction Nezha had gone—“may be an ass, but he has the makings of a commander in him. You, on the other hand, are just peasant trash.” (*The Poppy War*, 69)

When Nezha and Rin fight, Jun, as Master of Combat Class, separates them. However, they received two different treatments. Nezha was suspended for a week while Rin was not allowed to do many things, such as enter the training room, touch the weapons rack, practice, ask older students to teach him, and was not allowed to enter Combat Class. Before giving the ban, Jun showed a dismissive attitude and showed that Rin’s decision to take the Keju test was only something Rin could do, but actually, Rin was not capable of that. Even there, Jun uses several disparaging words such as “country bumpkin” and “southerner.” In Jun’s other dialogue, many people belittle Rin, such as comparing her to a “paraplegic.” There, Jun underestimated Rin, who came from the village and was considered not to have the potential to become a war commander.

From the quotes above, the parties who strongly opposed and treated Rin badly were Nezha and Jun. They do not respect Rin’s decision and admit that Rin can be in Sineward. Apart from the tough military academy life, these two parties also made it even more difficult for Rin to face it. Jun's decision to give different punishments to Rin and Nezha shows that legal reform is still invisible here. Jun punished Nezha with a week's suspension, while to Rin, Jun gave a very burdensome punishment to Rin's position, namely forbidding Rin was

not allowed to do many things, such as enter the training room, touch the weapons rack, practice, ask older students to teach him, and was not allowed to enter Combat Class. Jun's punishment shows that he made Rin's study period at Sinegard even more difficult, especially because she was supposed to be able to train to fight, but this was immediately prohibited by Jun.

B.3. Pragmatism

The principle of pragmatic time is the concept where individuals make decisions based on what they believe to be the most suitable, given their personal needs or desires. In the context of liberal feminism, this principle is reflected in how a woman's decisions advocate for equality and can give women the opportunity to make choices that may be considered unconventional or controversial in order to achieve gender equality. This is where pragmatism comes into play, as each individual can decide something according to their needs or desires (Tong 239). In the case of Rin's decision to study at Sinegard, which is an unconventional decision because she is a woman, war orphan, has no standing, no connections, and is not pretty, it can be seen as an example of pragmatic time, where Rin is making a decision that aligns with her personal needs and desires to achieve her goal of representation and autonomy.

“Let me at least try,” Rin begged. “It can’t hurt you to let me study. If I pass, then you’ll at least be rid of me—and if I fail, you still have a bride.”

Auntie Fang grabbed at the wok. Rin tensed instinctively, but Auntie Fang only resumed scrubbing it with a vengeance. (*The Poppy War*, 12)

The quote above shows that Rin still makes the choice to continue trying Cheese, which can free her from other life choices that she has to go through. Rin only has two choices in her life, to become a woman who is married to an old man who has been determined by Auntie Fang or to follow Keju to escape from the Fang family. Rin did this to break the restraints of the Fang family, especially because she was a girl and could be married to a rich man to help the Fang family's economy. Rin felt that this was not the best choice so she decided to join Keju test and escape the restraints of the Fang family and no longer depend on them.

Another decision by Rin that shows pragmatism is Jun's discrimination when she fights with Nezha. Jun forbade Rin from entering the training room and using weapons, this made Rin have to make a decision to continue studying and not give up the opportunity to still win the practical Combat exam. In pragmatism, equality is something that must be fought for and this takes time (Tong 239). This is what Rin shows, even though she experiences struggles by not having the opportunity and support to learn what she wants, Rin continues to work on it.

Rin alone continued to frequent the Lore garden, but only because it was a convenient place to train. Now that first-years avoided the garden out of spite, it was the one place where she was guaranteed to be alone. (*The Poppy War*, 88)

Here Rin decided to continue studying independently. This decision was to fulfill Rin's needs and desires. She chose not to stop and showed that she was someone who had the ability to fight or at least he would try. Rin's decision was to stop people from discriminating against her. A person has freedom in determining his life goals, and no one can interfere with these goals as long as those goals do not disturb or harm other people. The freedom meant by liberals here is where a person is free in life choices (Tong 34). When Rin's opportunity to learn combat was stopped by Jun, Rin didn't stop and looked for a location where no one would see her, and that place was Lore Garden or the place where Jiang taught. This place is rarely visited by people because it is considered too strange and there are poppy plants which they avoid.

These findings show that even though Rin was forbidden to study at Sinegard by Aunt Fang and even Master Jun, Rin did not stop and continued to work on her goals and dreams. This shows that the struggle experienced by Rin does not change her principle of wanting to escape discrimination due to gender and social class.

BAB V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Based on the related analysis of liberal feminism in the novel *The Poppy War*, it was found that there are three thoughts of liberal feminism and there are several struggles felt by the main character. The three thoughts of liberal feminism found in the novel *The Poppy War* include equal liberty, equal rights, and equal education. Meanwhile, the several struggles experienced by the main character, Rin, this explanation will be divided into three principles: individualism, legal and political reform, and pragmatism. This approach was chosen to comprehensively analyze Rin's challenges and the various ways she navigates them within the context of the novel's setting and themes.

From the analysis above, it was found that the novel *The Poppy War* shows three liberal feminist concepts, equality in liberty, rights, and education. In equal liberty, every human being has the same right to make decisions and no party can interfere with and limit someone's decision making. In the novel, it is shown that the character Rin has the same power and freedom to make her own decisions even though she is a woman. In equal rights, women have the right to be treated equally. In the novel, even though Rin is discriminated against because she is a woman and comes from a poor family, Rin still has the same rights to be able to choose the future she wants. In *The Poppy War*, Rin has two choices for her future, namely studying in Sinegard or marrying a rich merchant

from Tikany. These two choices and the freedom to choose what Rin wants to show that she has the same right to choose her future. The final concept is equal education which is also found in the novel *The Poppy War*. This concept ensures that each gender has equal access to quality education without discrimination. In the novel, Rin is a woman from a poor family who comes from an area that is not considered to be able to get the same opportunities as those who come from rich families and come from the capital. This shows that everyone has equal opportunities in education and does not matter about social class, race, and gender. Overall, the analysis above shows that the concept of justice exists in the novel *The Poppy War*.

Rin, the main character in the novel *Poppy War*, is an important character because she faces the challenges that exist so that she can achieve his goal, namely getting a military education in Sinegard. Sinegard is the highest military academy and is dominated by men. Her struggle has been reflected in the social context in Tikany, which does not value women attending military education in Sinegard. The struggles that Rin feels in this research, it is divided into three principles, namely individualism, legal and political reform, and pragmatism. The first principal described is Individualism. Individualism in liberal feminism is allowing each individual to choose what they think is good. However, Rin faces difficulties in getting what he thinks is good for his future. Rin still faces difficulties in entering Sinegard Academy. She has to struggle to get the highest score in the Keju exam and on the other hand, she is made difficult by not being allowed to study. There is a very small chance of

getting into Sinegard Academy. The second principal adalah legal and political reform. Even though she could have entered Sinegard Academy with her abilities, she masih mendapatkan diskriminasi. This happened because Rin was a woman from a low class and is considered to have no abilities and does not deserve to be in Sinegard. Even though she has fought hard to enter Sinegard, she still has to fight to have the opportunity to study at Sinegard without discrimination. The final challenge is the condition of her body, as she is a woman. This final challenge is a struggle that falls under the principle of pragmatism where Rin has to do various things to overcome obstacles. Here, Rin, who experienced discrimination and unpleasant treatment, chose to continue trying and struggling in her own way. Rin continues to study and train to the death to be able to achieve the goals she wants. From this analysis, it can be concluded that Rin struggled through various challenges to achieve her goals at Sinegard Academy. Rin shows that even though she is a woman, she can also be successful and have the same opportunities as men. Apart from that, each of these struggles also shows the three principles of liberal feminism according to Tong.

B. Suggestion

This research on the novel *The Poppy War* is analyzed using liberal feminism theory with the main focus on analyzing the concept of liberal feminism in the novel and the main character's struggle to get to school at Sinegard Academy. Furthermore, this research provides an offer for further

research, especially on how the culture and society in the novel *The Poppy War* can influence Rin's character and how the concept of liberal feminism is applied in this context. This research also recommends further research to explore various social issues that are present and significant in the novel.



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