

## **Gender Equality in R.A. Kartini (2017) Movie: Laura Mulvey's Persepective**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes gender equality in R.A Kartini (2017) movie. Laura Mulvey's feminist perspective was used to frame the analysis, examining key themes such as patriarchal control, arranged marriage, women's empowerment, and the representation of education. The study highlights how the film presents Kartini's resistance to societal expectations and her determination to uplift women through knowledge and self-reliance. Using feminist theories, this research explores the broader implications of Kartini's struggle in colonial Indonesia. The findings emphasize the film's role in promoting feminist ideals and inspiring discussions on gender equality in contemporary society. Reflecting back to its goal, this study aims to interpret the message conveyed in a film by analyzing the content of the qualitative content analysis in the presentation of the story of the film *Kehidupan Bunda Kartini* (1982) which is a gender equality genre that depicts the struggle of R.A. Kartini in fighting for the rights of Indonesian women who at that time were still not equal to the rights of men in terms of getting education and so on (women's emancipation).

**Keywords:** Kartini, Empowerment, Gender Equality, Feminism, Film

### **INTRODUCTION**

Perhaps the most well-known female national hero in Indonesia is R.A. Kartini, also known as Kartini. Presidential Decree No. 108/1964 declared her a national hero under Sukarno, Indonesia's first president. Every year, April 21 marks "Kartini Day," prompting younger generations to acknowledge her significance and role, albeit with differing levels of familiarity. Most of the nation's educational institutions, from kindergartens to universities, display nationalist symbols on Kartini Day, such as ethnic costumes, fashion displays, cultural festivals, and women dressed in traditional kebayas. R.A. Kartini's picture is also on the former 10,000 Indonesian rupiah note from 1985, along with an image of a lady dressed in academic attire on the other side. Indonesia still reveres Kartini as a historical figure associated with gender equality and women's empowerment in the classroom. She was a writer, and others have been able to read and benefit from her written legacy of thoughts and experiences. In her letters to her Dutch friends or in her notes from interviews with persons who knew her, Kartini disclosed information about the Netherlands East Indies and herself during the time when Indonesia was still a Dutch colony. Along with being the inspiration for numerous fictional works, such as novels and movies, Kartini has also been the subject of in-depth research by academics from a variety of fields (Coté, 1992; Pane, 1987; Rutherford, 1993; Schultz, 2017; Soebagio et al, 1990; Taylor, 1989).

The films representing Kartini during these ages are biopics of *Love Letter for Kartini* (2016) by Azhar Koini Lubis, *Kartini* (2017) by Hanung Bramantyo, and *R.A. Kartini* (1982) by Sjumandjaya. In the historical drama *Love Letter for Kartini*, a postman falls in love with a woman named Kartini, who shares traits with R.A. Kartini, even though the title mentions Kartini. In Indonesian films, there are plenty of strong, empowered, and actively involved female lead characters who strive to strengthen their country. *Phaesorts Git* (1951) by Dr. Huyung is among the earliest, while *Marlina the Killer in Four Acts* (2017) and *Susi Susanti: Love All* (2019) by Sim F. are the most recent. But there aren't many biopics that include female national heroes. Apart from Kartini's life, there was only one other well-known movie, *Tjoet Nja Dhien* (1986) by Eros Djarot, which was a biographical portrayal of the life of Cut Nyak Dhien, an Acehnese widow warrior who fought the Dutch colonialists. The Directors' Fortnight portion of the 1989 Cannes Film Festival made *Tjoet Nja Dhien* famous.

The proposed study, aimed at filling the research gap on gender equality in ancient cinema, focuses on the film *Life of R.A. Kartini*. The film's intriguing portrayal of a woman's aspiration for independence from patriarchal and Hanung traditions immerses the audience in Kartini's complex and human emotions, serving as a support system for the realization of women's dreams of equal education and serving as an inspiration for the ongoing struggle for women's independence. Using Mulvey's original feminist movie perspective (1975) and the more evolved (2001) theory, the *Kartini* movie (2017) uses the figure as the main visual for the movie while trying to shed a light into the gender inequality issues. The goal is to shed light on the complexities and sacrifices that come from pursuing artistic genius within the family environment, drawing connections to broader, more complex ideas of gender equality as discussed in classical literature.

This study aims to support the assertions made by R.A. Kartini and Sjumandjaya. The captivating portrayal of a woman's aspiration for independence from patriarchal and Hanung traditions immerses the audience in Kartini's multifaceted emotions, serving as a catalyst for the realization of women's aspirations for equal education and serving as an inspiration for the ongoing struggle for women's independence. The leading portrayal of Kartini in the movie, supported by Mulvey's (1975) feminist film theory, brings forward the ideals of feminism using Kartini as the lead character both as the subject and the object of the movie.

## METHOD

The main data source used in this research is the *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie where deep content analysis is conducted. Scenes containing the themes being investigated in this research are separated and compiled into distinctive analysis. Moreover, intrinsic elements of each scene are also used as evidence of content analysis.

The data collecting method that the researcher integrated was obtained not from conducting surveys or proposing to the public, but researchers tried to understand and understand the conflicts that exist in the movie by watching and observing what will be raised in this study also from electronic media that could support and strengthen this research.

After that, data analysis is conducted using deep qualitative content analysis of feminism through Laura Mulvey's perspective towards the intrinsic elements of the movie, and continuing to present the results of the understanding that has been studied previously. Qualitative methods help to provide a broad description of phenomena. The results of the qualitative method are concerned with meaning rather than reasoning to draw conclusions.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### KARTINI'S CHARACTER

The film *R.A Kartini* (2017) portrays Kartini as a strong, autonomous woman challenging traditional gender roles in Javanese aristocratic society, resisting arranged marriage, and advocating for women's education. This depiction aligns Kartini with modern feminist ideals by presenting her as a symbol of emancipation, actively shaping her destiny and confronting patriarchal structures (Hooks, 2016; Smith, 2019). Susanti (2019) highlights the film's portrayal of Kartini as both a historical figure and a symbol of contemporary feminism, emphasizing her internal conflict between familial obligations and personal freedom. Ratnasari (2018) adds that the film integrates historical authenticity with modern feminist values, portraying Kartini as a visionary whose efforts laid the foundation for future feminist movements in Indonesia.

### KARTINI AS A REBEL AGAINST TRADITION

A scene early in the *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie provides an early foundation of Kartini's rebellious nature towards societal structure. In the scene, it is depicted that young Kartini protested the Javanese nobles for calling her mother as a maid. This act marks as Kartini's beginning of fight towards issues of inequalities revolving around Indonesian women.



Figure 1. Kartini rebelled because her real mother was called a maid (03:36)

**R. M. Slamet:** "Call her maid!"

**Kartini:** "She is not a maid! She is our mother!"

In *R.A Kartini* (2017), Kartini's mother, Ngasirah, is portrayed as a concubine or secondary wife to Kartini's father, Raden Mas Adipati Sosroningrat, a Javanese noble. Since Ngasirah is from a commoner background, her position in the household is significantly lower than that of Sosroningrat's primary, noble-born wife. This social difference causes her to be treated more like a servant than an equal partner in the family.

In traditional Javanese aristocratic society, class and lineage determined one's status, with noble women holding more respect and influence than those of commoner origins (Mohanty, 1988; Blackburn, 2004). This structure limits Ngasirah's role and exposes her to unfair treatment, which deeply affects Kartini. Witnessing her mother's subordinate position

makes Kartini aware of the gender and class-based inequalities in her society. This experience motivates Kartini to advocate for women's rights and equality, aiming to improve the status and opportunities for all women, regardless of social class.

Moving on to the next scene, the *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie shows Kartini's coming-of-age. Through the exchange with her brother, R.M. Sosrokartono, she revealed her rejection of traditional social structure of Indonesian women that bears with the "Raden Ayu" title.



Figure 2. Kartini refuses to become Raden Ayu (12:10)

***RM. Sosrokartono:*** "I have a gift for you."

***Kartini:*** "If you can prevent me to be Raden Ayu."

In the *Kartini* (2017) film, Kartini refuses the title "Raden Ayu" because it represents the strict traditional roles for noblewomen, which she opposes. The title would have required her to conform to societal expectations, focusing only on family duties rather than pursuing her dreams of education and change for women.

By rejecting the title, Kartini asserts her independence and her commitment to challenging restrictive norms. It's her way of resisting a life defined by limitations and shows her dedication to creating a more equal and empowered future for all women.

Towards the end of the *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie, the scene below provides further depiction of Kartini's rebellious personality for traditional customs. This scene marks her determination of refusal in conforming to the existing restrictive norm, even within the familial context. Kartini is shown to be unwavering of losing her grip of her freedom as a woman.



Figure 3. Kartini's requirements for agreeing to the regent's marriage proposal (01:40:30)

***Kartini:*** "To follow the complicated rules of etiquette as a Regent's wife."

As the wife of a regent in Javanese society, a woman was expected to follow strict rules of etiquette to honor her husband's role and uphold social harmony. These customs, rooted in tradition, aimed to maintain respect and unity within the community. However, for women like Kartini, these rules also placed limits on their freedom and individuality, often requiring them to prioritize family and societal expectations over their personal aspirations.

Kartini's resistance to these customs reflects her longing for a more humane and inclusive role for women one where they are valued as individuals and allowed to pursue their own dreams. Her reluctance to follow these restrictive norms highlights her desire for a society where women are respected for who they are, not just for the roles they fulfill.

#### **KARTINI AS A SYMBOL OF INTELLECTUALISM AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION**

In this scene from *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie, Kartini's impact for her role in women education and intellectualism is highlighted. The scene shows a Dutch academia, close to Kartini's family, expresses his amazement towards Kartini and her sisters. This exchange is marked after Kartini wrote letters emphasizing societal issues relating her tradition.



Figure 4. Dutch people thinking that Kartini can be a symbol of intellectuals (01:17:19)

***Dutch Official:*** "Your daughters will change the world."

The Dutch saw Kartini as someone who could change the world because of her progressive vision for social justice, especially regarding women's rights and education. Through her letters to Dutch friends, Kartini shared bold ideas about the need for equality and education, criticizing the oppressive customs and colonial structures that limited Indonesian women's freedoms. Her commitment to advancing women's education was particularly inspiring, as she argued that educated women could lift their families and communities, ultimately leading to a more equitable society.

Kartini's ability to bridge cultural divides and articulate her vision in a way that resonated with Dutch intellectuals made her stand out. Her ideas about individual freedom, dignity, and women's empowerment aligned with global movements for progress, making the Dutch believe that her influence could inspire broader social change. They saw Kartini as a symbol of Indonesia's potential for growth and modernization, envisioning her as a catalyst for change who could inspire others to work toward a more just and educated society.

The scene from *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie below illustrates Kartini's internal motivation of reaching higher bounds of her self-development, especially in education. Her determination of attaining proficient skills of an educated woman, inspired by her Dutch friends and mentors, provides an image of her role in the struggle of gender equality.



Figure 5. Kartini wanted to be a writer (00:29:59)

***Kartini:*** “*Mam, please teach me how to be a writer like you.*”

Kartini became a symbol of intellectualism because of her dedication to learning, her progressive ideas, and her advocacy for women's rights and education. Through her letters to Dutch friends, she expressed her thoughts on equality, freedom, and the need for education, especially for women. Her ability to think critically about social issues and her desire for reform impressed many Dutch intellectuals, who saw her as a bridge between cultures.

Kartini wanted to be a writer like the Dutch because she saw writing as a way to express her ideas, connect with others, and inspire change. Through writing, she could share her thoughts on women's rights and education, and reach a wider audience outside her limited world. Kartini admired how Dutch writers used their words to question unfair norms and promote reform, and she hoped to do the same for Indonesian women. Writing allowed her to voice her dreams for a better future and break free from the restrictions of her society.

### THE ISSUE OF ARRANGED MARRIAGE

The *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie brings upon one common traditional Javanese custom that challenge ideas of feminism, which is arranged marriage. The scene below shows Kartini's sister, R.A. Kardinah, who got her marriage arranged with the regent of Pematang. The dialogue reveals Kardinah's arranged partner already having a wife prior to her marriage, indicating a clash between norms and political importance.



Figure 6. R.A. Kardinah is matched with the regent of Pematang (01:08:23)

***R.A. Kardinah:*** “*But he already has a wife, Father*”

R.A. Kardinah's match with the regent of Pematang reflects the issue of arranged marriage, which was common in Javanese society at the time. In arranged marriages, personal choice was often not considered, and the focus was on family alliances and social standing. For R.A. Kardinah, marrying the regent would have been a way to strengthen her family's position, but it also meant giving up her personal desires. In this system, women had little say in who they married, and their roles were usually limited to being wives and mothers, following traditional gender expectations.

Arranged marriages like this one were a way to control women, limiting their freedom and choices. It showed how women's lives were shaped by family and social pressures, with their personal wishes often ignored in favor of maintaining family honor and power. The regent of Pematang already had a wife when he was matched with R.A. Kardinah. This situation shows the practice of polygamy, where a man could have more than one wife, often for social or political reasons.

For R.A. Kardinah, being matched with a man who already had a wife meant she had little choice in the matter. It highlights the patriarchal system of the time, where women were seen more as tools to strengthen family ties than as individuals with their own desires. This practice shows how women's lives were controlled by society, and their personal wishes often didn't matter in such arrangements.

The depiction of women empowerment within the issue of relationship and marriage in the *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie is further shown through the exchange of Kartini with her father. In the scene below, Kartini is shown to willingly accept the marriage proposal of the regent of

Rembang. Her approval is followed by conditions that should allow her to continue on fighting for women's equal rights both locally and globally.



Figure 7. R.A. Kartini accepted the marriage proposal of Rembang's Regent (01:39:27)

**R.A. Kartini:** *"I accept the marriage proposal of Rembang's Regent."*

Kartini accepted the marriage proposal from the Regent of Rembang, but she set a condition for it. She agreed to marry him on the condition that she would be allowed to continue her education, keep her independence, and have the freedom to work for women's rights. This was her way of ensuring that, even in an arranged marriage, she would not be trapped in traditional gender roles and would still have the opportunity to pursue her dreams.

In an arranged marriage, especially during that time, personal choice often played a small role. Families made the decisions, and women had little say. However, Kartini used her condition as a way to challenge the expectations placed on women and create space for herself to continue her activism, even within the confines of marriage. Her condition reflected her desire to change the norms and show that women could be both wives and active members of society, fighting for equality.

#### **KARTINI'S PERSONAL PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE**

In the context of Kartini's role in knowledge and women education, the *R. A. Kartini* (2017) movie demonstrates her perseverance through her personal attainments following her journey. The scene analyzed below is one of the key points of the movie where Kartini strives further than the traditional boundaries of Javenese women through proposing a scholarship to Netherlands. This scene creates a strong sense of personality that goes beyond existing limitations of customs.

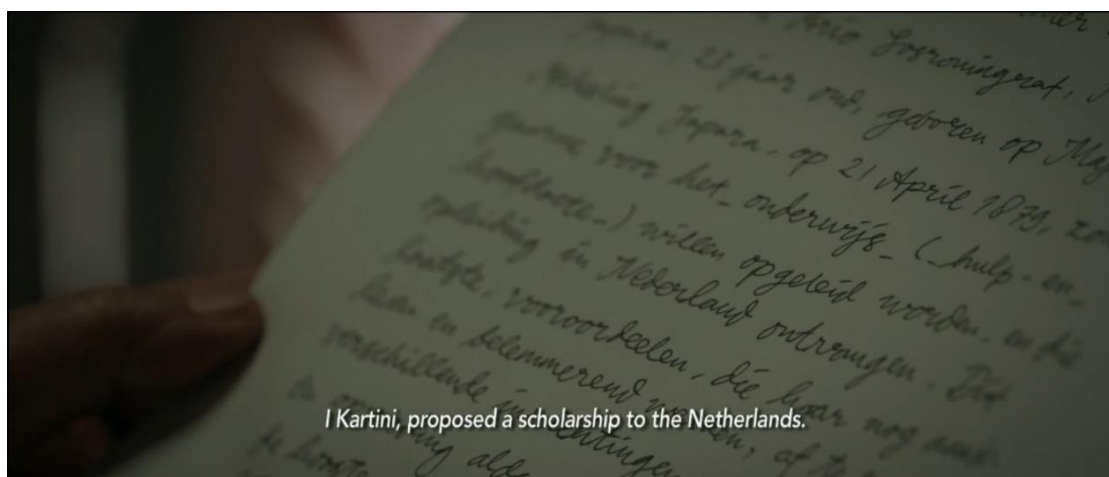


Figure 7. R.A. Kartini accepted the marriage proposal of Rembang's Regent (01:18:58)

**R.A. Kartini:** “I, Kartini, proposed a scholarship to the Netherlands.”

RA. Kartini's proposal for a scholarship was part of her personal pursuit of knowledge and her deep belief in the transformative power of education. Kartini was determined to provide young women with the opportunities she herself had fought so hard to obtain. She recognized that education was key to breaking free from the limitations imposed on women by society, and she wanted to create pathways for other women to gain the knowledge and independence they needed to improve their lives.

Kartini's pursuit of knowledge was not just about personal growth but also about creating a better future for women. She was largely self-taught, learning through books and correspondence with Dutch intellectuals, which shaped her views on gender equality, education, and social reform. By proposing a scholarship, she sought to help young women receive an education that would allow them to think critically, make their own decisions, and contribute to society in meaningful ways.

Her scholarship proposal was a reflection of her commitment to creating educational opportunities for women, as she understood that knowledge could empower them to challenge societal norms, gain independence, and achieve equality with men. It was a significant part of her broader vision to improve the lives of Indonesian women through education and to break the cycle of gender-based oppression.

The *R. A. Kartini* (2017) movie also highlights Kartini's significance in upholding women's values and their rights of attaining education through religious scope. The scene below marks her entry towards the religious education through understanding more of Islamic holy scripture, Al-Quran. This demonstrates Kartini's importance in the education field through various aspects.



Figure 8. R.A. Kartini wants to learn Al-Quran (01:07:30)

**R.A. Kartini:** *“I want to learn the true meaning of Al-Quran.”*

Kartini’s desire to learn the meaning of the Al-Quran was an important aspect of her personal pursuit of knowledge. While she was deeply committed to advancing women’s education and fighting for gender equality, Kartini was also a devout Muslim. She recognized that understanding the teachings of the Al-Quran could provide deeper insights into spiritual, moral, and social principles, which she believed were essential in shaping a just and equal society.

Kartini’s pursuit of the Al-Quran’s meaning was not just about religious devotion; it was also about personal empowerment. By understanding the Al-Quran, she aimed to reconcile her spiritual beliefs with her intellectual and social ideals. Kartini wanted to show that a woman’s intellectual capacity could extend to religious knowledge, and that women should have access to the same level of education in both secular and religious subjects as men.

Her determination to learn the meaning of the Al-Quran reflected her broader commitment to self-improvement and knowledge. It was part of her belief that education, whether in religion, literature, or social issues, was key to challenging the traditional norms that kept women in subservient roles. For Kartini, gaining knowledge from every possible source was essential to her mission of empowering women and fighting for their rights.

#### **KARTINI’S ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN’S EDUCATION**

The *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie further emphasizes Kartini’s pivotal role in empowering fellow Javanese women’s rights in many aspects. The scene analyzed below shows her being a ‘beacon of light’, impacting her sisters to be inspired of attaining equal levels of education. Through the exchange later on in this scene, it can also be learned that Kartini is determined to fight for these rights, starting from them.



Figure 9. RA. Roekmini wanted to get education like Kartini (01:18:00)

***RA. Roekmini:*** “*I want to get education too.*”

Roekmini, Kartini’s younger sister, wanted to get an education like Kartini because she shared her sister’s passion for learning and empowering women. Roekmini recognized the importance of education as a means to improve one’s life, break free from traditional gender roles, and gain independence. Inspired by Kartini’s example, she believed that education could open doors to a brighter future and help women challenge the social norms that limited their potential.

Kartini’s efforts to teach herself and fight for women’s education deeply influenced Roekmini, who saw education as a key to social change. Roekmini wanted to follow in Kartini’s footsteps, not just for personal growth, but to help create a society where women had more opportunities and could stand up for their rights.

### **EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION**

The importance of education brought upon by Kartini to the local Javenese women community in the *R. A. Kartini* (2017) movie is strongly depicted through the scene below. It is shown that a discussion being led by Kartini demonstrates her empowering presence in the context of improving self-values of women around her. The topic of marriage chosen by Kartini in the scene also reflects the on-going custom that challenges feminism ideals.



Figure 10. Kartini asked about marriage to women around (59:04)

Kartini's question to the women around her about marriage reflects her belief in the importance of education as a tool for empowerment. In her time, marriage was often seen as a woman's ultimate goal, and many women accepted this without question, as it was the societal norm. However, Kartini was deeply concerned with how marriage often limited women's choices and opportunities.

By asking women about marriage, Kartini was not just seeking answers for herself, but also encouraging other women to reflect on their own situations. She wanted women to understand that they had the right to make choices about their lives and their futures, not just accept their roles within the traditional system. Kartini believed that education was essential for empowering women to think critically about their lives, their rights, and their place in society.

Through education, women could gain the knowledge and confidence to challenge the restrictive norms of marriage and family life. Kartini saw that when women were educated, they could make informed decisions, contribute to society, and assert their independence. Her conversations with women about marriage were part of her larger goal to promote education as a means of empowerment, enabling women to break free from oppressive gender roles and create their own paths in life.

The *R. A. Kartini* (2017) movie then strengthens Kartini's role in the scene later on where she gathers women around her Javanese community to hold a class. This scene strongly highlights Kartini's action as a figure of feminism in her community. The important aspect of education demonstrated in the scene also supports the idea of empowerment and encouragement.



Figure 11. Kartini holding a study session with Javanese women in her community (01:07:04)

***R.A. Kartini:*** “*We’re going to study.*”

Kartini’s invitation to people around her to learn reflects her strong belief in the transformative power of education. She recognized that education was not just for personal growth but also a means of social change and empowerment. Kartini saw that women, in particular, were often denied access to education, which limited their opportunities and ability to shape their own futures. By inviting others, especially women, to learn, Kartini was challenging the societal norms that kept women in subservient roles and encouraging them to break free from the restrictions of traditional gender roles.

Kartini’s call to learn was about more than just acquiring knowledge it was a call to empower individuals to think critically, make informed decisions, and change their lives. She believed that when people, especially women, were educated, they gained the tools to challenge the norms that oppressed them. Education provided the opportunity for women to understand their rights, fight for equality, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Through her own example and her encouragement to others, Kartini worked to show that education was the key to unlocking a person’s potential. By inviting people to learn, she was not just promoting knowledge for the sake of learning, but using education as a tool for social empowerment. Kartini’s belief was that once women were educated, they could gain the confidence and ability to shape their own destinies and challenge the structures of power that kept them oppressed.

#### **KARTINI AS A ROLE MODEL FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

The *R.A. Kartini* (2017) movie closes the story with a reiteration of Kartini’s impactful role towards gender equality and women empowerment in various societal issues that has existed for many years. The scene below marks Kartini’s continuous support towards the feminism ideals and equality goals. With the arrangement of the scene, the message is aimed to create an impact beyond the movie context.

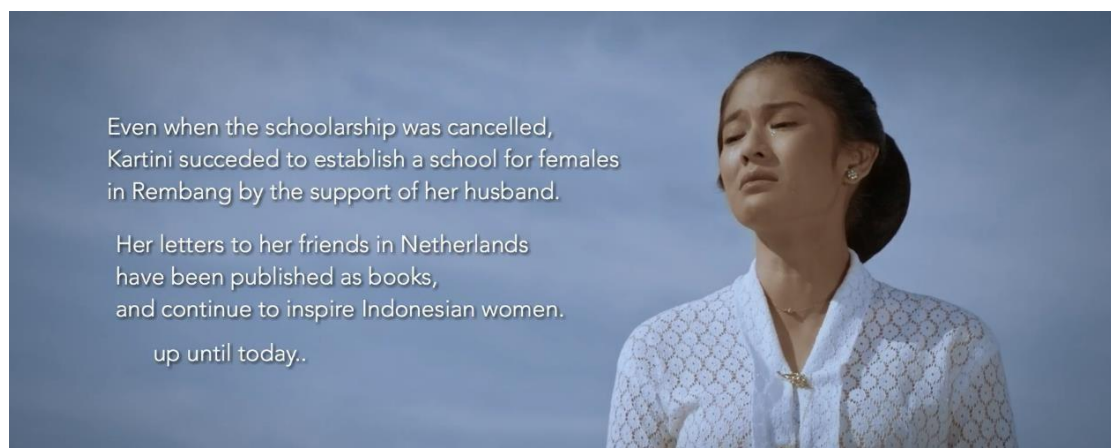


Figure 12. R. A. Kartini succeeded in establishing a school for women in Rembang and inspired many Indonesian women (01:54:17)

Kartini succeeded in establishing a school for women in Rembang, which became a groundbreaking achievement in her advocacy for women's education. In 1903, with the support of her husband, Kartini founded the first formal school for girls in her region, giving young women the opportunity to learn and gain knowledge that was previously denied to them by traditional gender roles.

This school was not only a place of learning but also a symbol of Kartini's broader vision for women's empowerment. She believed that education was the key to breaking the chains of societal restrictions and enabling women to stand up for their rights and improve their lives. Through her efforts, Kartini inspired many Indonesian women to pursue education and challenge the oppressive norms of their time. Her legacy continues to resonate, as she remains a symbol of the fight for gender equality and women's empowerment in Indonesia.

Her letters, in which she expressed ideas about women's rights, education, and social reform, were not only a reflection of her intelligence but also a call to action. Kartini's thoughts on gender equality, empowerment, and social justice positioned her as an intellectual leader, making her a symbol of the potential for change through education and thoughtful discourse. She demonstrated that intellectual growth and the pursuit of knowledge could drive social transformation, inspiring generations of women to follow her example and challenge the limitations imposed by their societies.

## CONCLUSION

The film *R.A Kartini* (2017), directed by Hanung Bramantyo, powerfully illustrates the life and struggle of R.A. Kartini, one of Indonesia's most influential figures in the fight for women's rights. Through its narrative and character portrayal, the film highlights key feminist issues, particularly those aligned with liberal feminism such as equal access to education, personal freedom, and the push for gradual social reform within a patriarchal structure.

Kartini is portrayed as a courageous and intelligent woman who challenges the limitations placed on women by feudal Javanese traditions. Her refusal to accept arranged marriage without conditions, her insistence on continuing her education, and her effort to establish a school for women in Rembang all reflect her commitment to women's empowerment. She does not seek to dismantle the system violently but instead works within

the boundaries of her cultural and social environment to create meaningful change. This approach mirrors the values of liberal feminism, which emphasize reform, equality, and the expansion of rights through education and advocacy (Krajewski et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the film shows how Kartini inspired not only the women around her, including her sisters Roekmini and Kardinah, but also future generations of Indonesian women. Her legacy as a symbol of women's empowerment and intellectual freedom continues to influence discussions on gender equality today (Wijaya, 2020).

Kartini is portrayed as a figure who opposed the Javanese feudal traditions that restricted women's lives, such as the prohibition of pursuing education, restrictions on work, and pressure to marry at a young age without the opportunity for higher education. Kartini strongly fought for women's right to education, with the hope that women could gain access to knowledge, which at the time was considered only suitable for men. This is one of the foundations of feminism the right to equal education (Custen, 1992; Lestari, 2020).

In conclusion, the *R. A. Kartini* (2017) movie excellently represents Kartini's character and her significant role in both women education and empowerment as aimed with the research questions in this current study. While Kartini has strong portrayals of personalities and values herself, it must be noted that her actions to fight for gender equality remain an unforgettable movement (Hapsari, 2020; Pratidina & Pasaribu, 2023). Through the Laura Mulvey's feminism perspective, the movie puts Kartini as not only the 'object', but she becomes the 'subject' of empowerment herself. This research brings upon the importance of movies within the topic of feminism to hold the collaborative values for gender equality and women rights.

This research has several important implications. Academically, it contributes to feminist film analysis and gender studies by applying liberal feminist theory to an Indonesian film, offering insights into how cinema reflects and critiques gender norms. Socially and educationally, it raises awareness about the importance of women's rights and education, using *R.A. Kartini* (2017) as a tool to promote gender equality among audiences, especially the younger generation. It also highlights the value of positive female representation in media, showing how strong role models like Kartini can inspire and empower women.

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