

# Historical Film: Cinematic Narrative of Indonesian History – Raden Ajeng Kartini: Kartini (2017) & Surat Cinta untuk Kartini (2016)

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## ABSTRACT

Historical film often serves as a medium to the development of national historical culture narrative. Upholding the nation as ‘an imagined community’ to the locals and the global. The narratives compromises between the fact and fiction, thus fabricated a new set of historical narratives culture. Hence, historical narrative of Raden Ajeng Kartini, whom a prominent figure in Indonesia history, constructed through the historical film narrative in *Kartini* (2017) and *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016), to a certain extent, function as a mechanism of reinvention to a new set of narrative culture of her. Thus, designed two new sets of Raden Ajeng Kartini historical narrative to the locals and global. This study focuses on Indonesian contemporary historical film of Raden Ajeng Kartini produced between 2016 – 2020. The study is a textual analysis. Emphases on two Kartini’s film: *Kartini* (2017) and *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016).

**Keywords:** Indonesian cinema, Nusantara cinema, Southeast Asia cinema, Historical film, Raden Ajeng Kartini.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Raden Ajeng Kartini is an important role figure in the world of Indonesian education. She is the prominent figure to the Indonesian women's freedom and the right for education. On this note, *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016) and *Kartini* (2017) serves as to celebrate her winning fight for the Indonesian women. Centers on her significant historical struggle, these two films however demonstrate two different storytelling structure.

The focus of this paper emphasis on the concept of historical narrative that draws on the notion of compromise between historical facts of Raden Ajeng Kartini and fiction, serves as the process of reinvention and fabricated a sense of new set of Kartini’s historical narrative structure. Hence, objective of the paper is to analyse the capability of the concept of compromise between historical facts and fiction as the mechanism of reinventing a new set of historical narrative structure to Adjeng Kartini’s struggle.

## 2. RESEARCH PROBLEMS

*Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016) and *Kartini* (2017) are based on the biographical history of Raden Ajeng Kartini’s contribution in the history of Indonesian

women’s education and freedom rights. However, the genre of *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* has been acknowledge as a biographical historical romance film. Showcased the success of Raden Ayu Ajeng Kartini posthumously. The index for her achievement was elevated through the figure’s letter to a postman which she considered as her best friend.

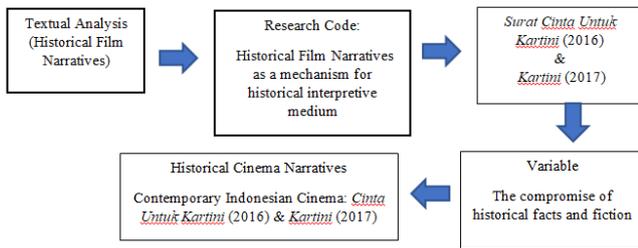
On the other hand, *Kartini* (2017) presented as a biographical historical drama, close up on Raden Ayu Ajeng Kartini’s success after her marriage to Bupati Rembang, a man who had three wives at that time. The index for the achievement is uplifted through a written statement at the credit page.

Even, both narratives of the films focused on the similar plot and historical cultural background of Raden Ajeng Kartini, yet they differe in terms of their structural narratives. Thus, the differences of the narratives left a gap in the actual historical narrative culture of the Raden Ajeng Kartini historical journey.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study draws on the historical textual analysis method. The research code focuses on historical narrative. Defined as the idea that “film works as an

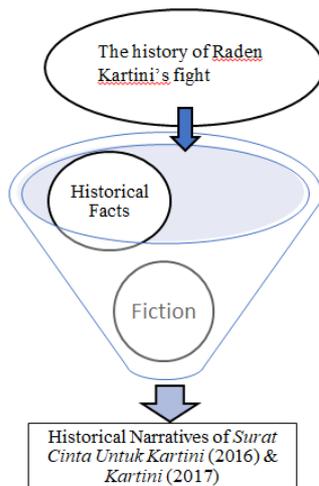
“interpreter” of history, providing “an explanation of historical development, and analysis of the process of the history itself” (Warren Susman cited in Eleftheria Thanouli, 2018: 1).



**Figure 1.** Textual Analysis Design – Historical Cinema as a Mechanism for Historical Interpreter Medium and the Formation of New Historical Narratives.

The narrative portrayed through historical cinema capable of representing the interpretation of the historical narrative to both local and global communities. Such as, historical texts referred to the fight of Raden Ajeng Kartini to uphold the rights of the women in Indonesia especially in education which had been adapted into the films *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016) and *Kartini* (2017). The research variables of this study are the elements of facts and fictions in the narratives of both films. This study would analyze the interrelationship of these two variables as the main element for the formation of a new historical narratives of Raden Ajeng Kartini.

The conceptual framework involved, deals with the interplay of facts and fiction in the historical film narrative. According to Jonathan Stubbs (2013, 2), historical films is ‘characterized by interplay of fact and fiction [...] to represent eras in which the visual record is incomplete’ and it has the element of ‘an expedient compromise between fact and fiction’. (2).



**Figure 2.** Conceptual Theoretical Framework – Historical Cinema As A Mechanism of Interpretation of History And The Formation of New Historical Narrative

## 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 4.1 Historical Films

According to Robert Burgoyne (2008), historical films could be classified into five types which are wars, biography, epic, metahistorical and topical. In this research, the type of historical films examined were the biography type. Burgoyne iterated that the concept of ‘reimagining’ history which happened in the characteristics of the formation of the narratives of the history itself and also in the style and plot development of the historical cinematic work as arranged by the directors involved, as ‘The arrays of film styles, subjects and approaches in Hollywood historical film can be understood as the syntactic register of the historical film, a syntax that is expressed is expressed in the form of war film, the epic, or the biographical film.’ (Burgoyne 2008:7)

Jonathan Stubbs (2013) stated that historical cinemas were produced based on the present perspectives even though the actual narratives took place in the past or has actually been deemed as a history. Hence, historical cinema, even if it is a form of interpretation of past historical events, it could also be viewed as an interpretation of the present. ‘[...] either intentionally in order to use the past as means to comment on the present, or unintentionally because filmmakers approach the past with present-day beliefs.’ (45)

Thus, historical films left their marks in the cultural artefacts index. This artefact index, indeed had contributed to the cultural history facts of a community, race or nation. This was due to the fact that the historical artefacts of a narrative concepts were built through actual historical facts and the culture that underwent the rationalization process with the fictitious elements was able to elevate meaningful representation of the involved historical artefacts. According to Ayu Haswida Abu Bakar (2020), histories of a culture was an archeological approach to assume that an artefact could be adapted as an interpretation medium to form generalization of the histories and cultures of a community, race and nation through the time and space that took place in the past. [Thus], culture history relies on careful excavation detailed classification of finds of all kinds, and accurate sequences of human cultures defined through time and by physical distribution.’ (Fagan and Durrani; 2016, cited in Ayu Haswida Abu Bakar, 2020: 147).

Warren Susman cited in Eleftheria Thanouli (2018:1) stated that the connection between films and histories required analysis according to four characteristics.

*‘Film can be studied as a “product” of history, comprising all technological, economic, ideological, and even moral conditions that made its creation possible. [Second], film could be approached as a*

*“reflection” of history, i.e. as an image that records and embalms, in a Brazilian sense, specific historical elements, such as human speech, movement, and behaviour, which could then be further studied for historical and sociological purpose. [Third], film works as an “interpreter” of history, providing “an explanation of historical development, and analysis of the process of the history itself” (31). Finally, films also become ‘agents’ of history, as they exert a powerful impact on people’s minds and imagination, and they shape their wider cultural experience.’*

Out of the four research areas mentioned by Susman, this study focussed only on the third research criteria – “film works as an “interpreter” of history, providing “an explanation of historical development, and analysis of the process of the history itself”. In this context, the historical film, according to Susman, acted as a historical interpreter. This is when the historical films mechanized as a clarification medium about ‘historical development, and analysis of the process of the history itself’ which directly referred to the historical narratives portrayed through the historical cinema.

The concept discussed by Susman had been widely discussed by Robert Rosenstone since the 1990s and mid-2000, up to when his research was published in mid-2010. In *Vision of the Past* (1995), Rosenstone was of the opinion that historical cinema, as a representation of history, formed a medium with radical inclination which rejected the norms of the traditional process of historical annotation. This idea referred to the formation of a new historical narratives against the pre-existing historical concept or the documented format identified as ‘the written book’.

By stating that a ‘film is not a book’ (Robert Rosenstone, 2013), he acknowledged the ability of historical films’ potential to re-structure or re-build past cultural narratives. Rosenstone, in his research, tried to present his understanding on the multitude of ways how the historical films could ‘do history’ through cinematic plot-building narratives.

*‘It is time, in short, to stop imagine expecting films [history] to do what (we imagine) books do. Stop expecting them to get the fact rights, or to present several sides of an issue, or to give a fair hearing to all the evidence on a topic, or in a particular situation, or to provide a broad and detailed historical context for event. Stop, also expecting them to be a mirror of a varnished reality that will show us the past as it really was. Dramatic films are not and will never be “accurate” in the same way as books (claim to be), no matter how academic consultants works on a project, and no matter how seriously their advice is taken. Like written histories, films are not mirrors that show same varnished reality, but construction of the past are necessarily different from those of the written history.’ (42)*

Historical cinema, as an medium representing history, functioned as a reconstruction mechanism or rebuilding of the past or histories. In actuality, historical cinemas should not be questioned by comparing them to the ‘originality’ of histories documented in books or the academic writings of researchers. This was because the process of rebuilding the historical narratives through film mediums had to take into account the concept of cinematic storytelling in visual forms which were non-existent in the textual account of the historical events. Cinematic storytelling was an effort at the creation of narratives which are free from limitations in terms of the representation of the specific cultural histories in focus.

The characteristic of being free of limitations was adopted through the concept of creativity and imagination of the script writers who would undoubtedly had carried out their own researches. These ideas were then were adapted into visual representation of the cinematic expression by every parts of the production involved, for example, artistic settings in terms of construction and architecture of settings, lighting, costume and editing. Therefore, the development of the historical narratives should not be solely developed based on the facts and academic discourse. This is reiterated clearly by Rosenstone previously that historical cinema was not a history book or a representation which mirrored the reality of the actual history.

Thus, Rosenstone’s concept was indirectly contributing to the critics that historical films narrated untruth about the histories it was presenting. Nevertheless, one had to remember that the concept and definition of history itself was based on the concept of facts being narrated by historian and documented in writings. Rosenstone’s statement on the formation of historical narratives which were free from limitations were supported by Jonathan Stubbs (2013:2) which stated that,

*‘Although it would be simplistic to accuse historical film of ‘lying’ about the past, they are characterized by interplay of fact and fiction. Although some filmmakers have gone to extreme lengths in pursuit of authenticity, historical films inevitably incorporate elements of fiction in order to represent eras in which the visual record is incomplete.’*

The concept of interplay of fact and fiction in narrative cinema, even when they are based on historical facts or historical records, the cinematic narratives in question needed to be constructed through the imaginations of cinematic storytelling. In fact, Stubbs believed that ‘historical films might be considered an expedient compromise between fact and fiction.’(2). Hence, the concept of interplay of fact and fiction put forth by Stubbs, was viewed by Robert Burgoyne (2008) as a reenactment index. According to Robert Burgoyne (2008), historical cinema was a representation of the

stories about histories or events that happened in the past through the reenactment process where ‘it is the idea of reenactment that provides its semantic ground.’ (8).

Based on the literature review presented, there was a lack of in-depth researches about historical cinema narratives which focused on a research and analysis of interplay of fact and fiction in the Archipelago cinemas which contributed towards the formation of new historical culture narratives. As a result, this study would fill the gap of the academic research related to cinematic films of the Archipelago in general and specifically in Indonesian cinemas in relation to the focus and title of the study, Cinematic Narratives of Contemporary Indonesian History – Raden Ajeng Kartini through the films *Kartini* (2017) and *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016).

## 5. DISCUSSIONS

### 5.1 Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879 – 1904)

Kartini was the fifth child from eleven siblings, born from an aristocratic family in the village of Mayong, Jawa, Indonesia. Her father, Sosroningrat, was a Javanese aristocrat, a *Bupati Jepara* under the ruling of the Dutch colonials. Kartini wedded Bupati Rembang and passed away while giving birth to her first child.

When she was twelve years old, Kartini had to experience a tradition called ‘*pingitan*’ or some kind of isolation up to her wedding day. ‘*Pingitan*’ was a tradition imposed by the Javanese onto the young girls from their community. While undergoing the ‘*pingitan*’, she was indirectly made aware of rights and freedom of women, especially education rights for the women in her community.

### 5.2 Historical Cinema Narratives: Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879 – 1904): *Kartini* (2017) and *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016)

The narratives of the historical films of Raden Ajeng Kartini which discussed in this study has been structured through two different themes. The narratives of *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016) structured through the theme and concept of the importance of education in life. On the other hand, the narratives of *Kartini* (2017) were developed through the theme and concept of the traditional culture of ‘*Pingitan*’. Which functioned as an index of hegemonic masculinity towards girls and women, practiced by the Javanese around late 1800s. Nevertheless, both viewpoints presented based on similar plot development and they were synonymic to the historical narratives of the Indonesian nationalist

figure, Raden Kartini Ajeng – the fight for women’s right in education and freedom in Indonesia around late 1800s up to 1904.

There are clear differences in terms of the story point of view of both films selected. *Surat Untuk Kartini* (2016), carries the genre of historical romance, portrayed through the perspective of the character Sarwardi (a postman or a postal person) who developed a romantic feeling towards Kartini – a girl of noble descent, a daughter of *Bupati Jepara*. Adapting the setting of *Jepara* (1901), *Semarang* (1903) and *Rembang* (1904).

On the other hand, *Kartini* (2017), categorized under the genre of historical drama, portrayed through the story perspective of the character Kartini herself. Who experiences the constraints during the confinement of the ‘*pingitan*’ culture. The film adopts the setting of *Jepara* in late 1890s. Hence, the differences in the themes, concept and viewpoint of the two narratives had undoubtedly contributed towards the development of narrative varieties. Thus, demonstrate a concept of differences.

The narrative of *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016), highlighted Raden Ajeng Kartini story through the technique of a storyteller-Pak Rangga. Kartini historical narrative develops through Pak Rangga storytelling (a schoolteacher), who teaches a class of 7-year-old students in current setting for national history subject. Hence, this concept elevated the character of Pak Rangga as the figure of a ‘*penglipur lara*’ or a storyteller, and the students in the national history class are the audiences. This concept directly contributes to the historical narratives of Raden Ajeng Kartini in the third person perspectives, that is *Pak Rangga*, who highlights on the character of a postman as the main character in his story of the Kartini the nationalist figure.

The character of the postman highlighted by Pak Rangga contributes to a new perspective in the historical narratives of Raden Ajeng Kartini. Thus, the character of Sawardi (the postman), deemed as a fictitious character where ‘film works as an “interpreter” of history, providing “an explanation of historical development, and analysis of the process of the history itself”’(Susman cited in Eleftheria Thanouli, 2018:1). As such, the narratives of Raden Ajeng Kartini in the film *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* developed through the viewpoint of a fictitious character – a postman named *Sarwardi*, interpreted by *Pak Rangga* who highlighted the ‘interplay of fact and fiction’ (Jonathan Stubbs, 2013:2).

**Table 1.** The Historical Narrative Structure of the Two Films Examined: *Kartini* (2017) and *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016)

Narrative Structure	<i>Kartini</i> (2017)	<i>Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini</i> (2016)
Narrative perspective	Raden Ajeng Karitini  The setting: Mayong, Jepara 1883 – 1903	Sarwadi – Postman / Delivery man. (Through a recount – Pak Rangga as the narrator – a school teacher)  The setting: Mayong (1901), Semarang (1903) and Rembang (1904)
<b>The Set Up</b>		
Story	Ajeng Kartini unwillingness to undergo the ‘pingitan’ process before being identified as Raden Ayu.	The first day of duty for Sarwadi as a postman in Jepara.
Plot Point 1	Kartini’s brother – Sosrokartono (who was leaving for the Kingdom of the Netherlands) gave the key to his closet containing his books to Kartini. Kartini excited and engulfed in the stories and new-found knowledge she gained from the books.	Sarwadi delivered a mail to the house of Bupati Jepara – a letter for Kartini. Love at first sight after looking at Kartini.
<b>The Conflict</b>		
Story	<p><b>To become a ‘Raden Ayu’, one has to go through the ‘pingitan’ tradition.</b></p> <p>The desire to be free of traditions with hegemonic masculinity influences.</p> <p>“</p> <p><i>“The daughter of Bupati must become Raden Ayu. As to become Raden Ayu, she must go through the Pingitan. Locked up in the house since her first menstruation. Waiting for the nobleman to come and propose. Either to be his first wife, the second [or] even the third.”</i></p> <p>(Narrator: <i>Kartini</i>, 2016)</p>	<p><b>Social status differences: Aristocrats and peasants.</b></p> <p>Sarwadi, who is born into a peasant lineage wanted to wed Kartini, a lady from aristocratic family – his desire proved to be impossible.</p> <p>“Only in your dream or to be born again as an aristocrat.” (Mujur: <i>Surat Cinta untuk Kartini</i>, 2017)</p>
<b>The Mid Part</b>		
The Rising Action	<p>The knowledge and information about women’s rights and freedom related to specifically education and life in general, the equality between a man and a woman in Europe.</p> <p>The support of Madam Marie Ovink-Soer, the wife of the Vice Resident <i>Jepara</i> for Kartini’s interests and dreams.</p>	Kartini’s ideas, fights and dreams related to women’s rights and freedom to learn and establish an educational institution for women.

Climax	<p>Kartini managed to break free from the tradition of ‘<i>pingitan</i>’ with the support of her father, <i>Bupati Jepara</i>.</p> <p>Kartini managed to become a writer for a Dutch magazine, using a pen name ‘<i>Clover Leaf</i>’ and established a school for women.</p>	Sarwadi uses his daughter, Ningrum to get close to Kartini and succeeded.
<b>The Ending</b>		
The Falling Action	<p>Kardinah weds Bupati Pemalang.</p> <p>Also, the anger and disagreement of Kartini’s father brothers. For allowing Kartini to apply for a scholarship to study in the Netherlands and to establish a school for women. To them, it is a violation of the long-held tradition custom embrace by community. Because of this, Kartini’s father suffers from a stroke attack.</p> <p>Consequently, the right to rule in the household is taken over by Kartini’s stepmother, Raden Ayu Maryoem, who is a firm believer in upholding the traditional customs.</p> <p>Thus, Kartini is confined to her room until she betrothed to Bupati Rembang who already had three wives at that time.</p>	Kartini accepts the marriage proposal from Bupati Rembang. A man who already married to three women. Sarwadi has to come to terms with the decision and realized the differences in the social status.
Resolution / How the character resolved the problem	Kartini imposes four conditions and one of the conditions is to allow her to build a school for women.	Sarwadi quits his job as the postman and moves to Semarang. He became a fisherman.
Types of Ending / Closure	<p><b>Happy Ending</b></p> <p>The success of Raden Ayu Ajeng Kartini after she is married to Bupati Rembang, a man with three wives. The success is disclosed through the explanations in writing through the credits page.</p>	<p><b>Happy Ending</b></p> <p>Sarwardi is happy and relieves as he discovers –</p> <p>The success of Raden Ayu Ajeng Kartini in her fights. The success disclosed through her letter to Sarwardi, after her death</p> <p>In the letter, Kartini disclosed the details of her fights: where and when it began, the time during ‘<i>pingitan</i>’ and the process of reading the books suggested by <i>Mama Abendanon</i>.</p>

Referring to Table 1, the dominant historical fact about Raden Ajeng Kartini- a dominant historical figure in Indonesian women rights and education, begins or starts during the process of *pingitan*- is the significant process of Kartini character building and development, she portrays through her historical film narratives. The characterization of this historical facts serves as the mechanism of narrative driven for both films. However, this narrative driven positioned at a different stage of each film narrative structure.

Such as, *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini*, this historical fact is placed at the ending of the film narrative structure. Through the letter read by Sarwardi, only we know that the prime cause of Kartini's character building and development of this dominant figure, seeded during her *pingitan* process. While in *Kartini*, this historical fact is revealed at the earlier stage through the beginning of the film narrative structure. The *pingitan* custom and belief is presented through the visual supported by the narrator's voice.

Consequently, the differences in the narratives structure, served as the characterization of the fictitious element towards the narrative concept of Raden Ajeng Kartini's story. As a result, the inclusion of exaggeration or fictitious elements contributed towards the reinvention of a new set of narrative structure of Raden Ajeng Kartini history. Hence, this process contributed towards the formation of a new historical narratives of the figure Raden Ajeng Kartini.

### **5.3 The Traditional Custom of 'Pingitan' And The Beginning of The Acceptance Towards Women's Educational Rights and Equality between Women And Men.**

The concept of the tradition '*Pingitan*' among the Javanese, according to Ratna Asmarani (2017), is the custom/tradition of Javanese for the daughters of nobles who enter the period of *akhil baligh* (first menstruation), where they are encamped or restricted in their movement space. Prohibited from being in public spaces and are prohibited from conversing with anyone. The young woman should undergo a *pingitan* period while waiting for a future husband, who could have been her parents' choice.

Consequently, the definition of '*Pingitan*' according to, the first film, *Kartini* (2017), directed by Hanung Bramantyo, 'the daughter of Bupati must become Raden Ayu. As to become Raden Ayu, she must go through the *Pingitan*. Locked up in the house since her first menstruation. Waiting for the nobleman to come and propose. Either to be his first wife, the second [or] even the third.'" (Narrator: *Kartini*, 2017).

Meanwhile, in *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini*, directed by Azhar Lubis, 'towards the wedding I faced fear, the same fear when I was undergo the *pingitan* . Wonderful

times have passed. The dark moment began from my first time of menstruation, until a man wanted to marry me. At that moment, my future shattered. Do I have to give up as a Javanese noble princess?" (Kartini: *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini*, 2016).

Accordingly, the three definitions provided above, the traditional custom of *Pingitan*, can be defined as a period of isolation that has to be experienced by a girl of the aristocracy lineage or a Javanese '*ningrat*'. Beginning at her first day of menstruation and ends only after a man wedded her. During this isolation period, the girl would undergo trainings as to prepare herself to become a *Raden Ayu*, a title awarded to the wife of a *Bupati* of a *kabupaten* in the land of Jawa. Raden Ayu referred to the status of the 'official wife' of a *Bupati*. A *Raden Ayu* should come from an aristocracy lineage or a *ningrat* who had undergone the process of *pingitan* before being courted by the *Bupati*.

Referring to Table 1, the tradition of *Pingitan* has become the primary plot to the narrative driven for both films. Hence, the tradition serves as the character journey towards her freedom. Thus, contributes to the configuration of Raden Ajeng Kartini, the prominent figure in Indonesian history.

However, the representation of Kartini's experience during *pingitan* indicate a distinguished difference. In *Surat Cinta Buat Kartini*, the experience and the emergence of Kartini new thoughts and mindset was only discovered through Kartini's letter to Sarwadi.

Kartini: If I never go through the experience of *pingitan*, I will never read a lot of books. I will not write, and exchange thought with people outside Indonesia.

The character of Mama Abendanon in this film functioned as the reason for the changes of Kartini believes in the rights for a woman. It is when this Dutch lady make her visit to Kartini's 'gloomy' room, her presence is welcomed gladly by Kartini who is twelve years old. During the visit, Mama Abendanon pity towards this young girl makes Kartini read a book as she mentioned, "use this (book) as a weapon". Thus, it is from this moment Kartini starts to read and active in letter writing –writing letters to many people as Kartini stated in her letter to Sawardi, is the only way for her to exchange opinions and thus, catalyst the changes in her believes towards the fight for the educational rights of women

Comparatively different to the concept of *pingitan* portrays in *Kartini* (2017). Sosrokartano, Kartini's brother, who is leaving for the Netherlands to continue his studies, in this film, serves as the main catalyst for the changes in Kartini's believes and mindset. Through the narrative of this film, Kartini who is in the process of '*pingitan*', is given a key to his closet that is full of books.

Sosrokartano: Enter my room. There you will find a door that will lead you out from pingitan room.

Sosrokartano: Do not let your mind be controlled and locked up. I will be waiting for in Holland.

The closet which loaded with books in Dutch language, signified Sosrokartano's ideas and mindset about women's rights and freedom. This idea is strengthened with the portrayal of the title of the first book chosen by Kartini. The novel titled *Hilda Van Suylenburg* written by Cecile de Jong (a lady writer). The novel tells a story of Suylenburg, a smart and respected lady lawyer. Married and a mother of one. She is known as a champion for the rights of the poor people and women who are subjected to discrimination.

Through Kartini choice of the novel, connotationally it signifies Kartini's mindset in the future. Coincidentally, through the narrative of *Kartini*, the film highlighted the character of Kartini as an active writer who wrote to his brother in the Netherlands, and her letters to her previous teacher, Madame Ovink-Soer (the wife of the vice residence in *Jepara*) and Stella Zehandelaar, a feminist activist in Den Haag.

Significantly, the differences identified portrayed in both films serve as the element of fiction that compromises with the historical facts of pingitan tradition embraced by Raden Ajeng Kartini, the prominent figure. These differences functioned as the 'interplay of fact and fiction' as stated by Jonathan Stubbs (2013:2). The fictitious character, Mama Abendanon, Sosrokartano, Madame Ovink-Soer and Stella Zehandelaar serve as a complement element to rationalize the story. As mentioned by Susman (cited in Eleftheria Thanouli, 2018:1), "film works as an "interpreter" of history, providing "an explanation of historical development, and analysis of the process of the history itself".

Hence, in *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini*, which uses the third first point of view - through the story of Pak Rangga, deals with the importance of going to school and getting education. On the other hand, *Kartini*, deals with the importance of appreciation and celebrates the fight of Ajeng Kartini herself for the women's right and freedom in education from a patriarchal community which exhibited the quality of hegemonic masculinity.

#### **5.4 The Conflicts and Climax of *Kartini* and *Sarwadi***

Referring to Table 1, there is a stark difference to notion of conflict between both films studied. *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* adopted a conflict revolving around Sarwadi, a postman in Jepara who fell in love with Doro Ajeng Kartini, the daughter of Bupati Jepara.

Pak Rangga: I have a story to tell

Students: Surely it is a story about Kartini again.

Pak Rangga: No. It is a story of a Postman.

The conflict identified in terms of the differences in the social status which became a hurdle for Sarwadi to approach a lady from an aristocratic lineage. Meanwhile, the conflict in the film *Kartini* identified as when Kartini in isolation in her room during 'Pingitan', who yearned for freedom and to get away from the suffocating traditional custom. To this extent, *Kartini* (2017), resonated with the original historical narrative (textual narrative) compared to the conflict presented in *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini*.

The differences in conflicts happened due to the aspect of narrative mode perspective or viewpoints chosen by the respective directors, as were discussed in the earlier parts of this study. As a result, through the different presentation of conflicts, a diversity of historical narratives about the fight of Raden Ajeng Kartini was formed. These differences functioned as a medium of interpretation as termed by the statement '[a] film is not a book' (Robert Rosenstone, 2013). This because the nature of films where 'films are not mirrors that show same varnished reality, but construction of the past [...]' (42). Thus, the 'constructive' characteristic which developed through conflict differences contributed to the process of narration which integrated the combination of fact and fiction in the storyline. As a whole, the conflict differences contributed to the formation of a new historical narrative of Raden Ajeng Kartini presented to the society, locally and globally.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the interplay of facts and fiction through the process of comprise between historical facts and fiction integrated through the film narrative, has the potential to serve as a mechanism of interpretation. Thus, functioned as the medium of circulating a particular sense of understanding, believe and influence towards historical story

Noting that, the historical narratives of Raden Ajeng Kartini in *Surat Cinta Untuk Kartini* (2016) and *Kartini* (2017), configured a different structure of narratives in terms of storyline - genre, story driven and conflicts- of the prominent figure, Raden Ajeng Kartini. To a certain extent the core historical facts - pingitan as the significant element that triggers the changes in Ajeng

Kartini characteristic and believe for the women rights dan rights for education in Indonesia.

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