

EMBRACING NEW PERSPECTIVES IN HISTORY, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND EDUCATION

Edited by
Ronald Ridhoi, Arif Subekti, Francis M. Navarro
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This book provides a collection of articles resulting from the International Conference on History, Social Sciences, and Education (ICHSE), which was held on 11 September 2021. The Department of History of Malang State University choose “Embracing New Perspectives in History, Social Sciences, and Education” as the main topic, and elaborates on five subthemes: 1) new trends in historical research; 2) formulation of new perspectives in history, social sciences, and education; 3) transdisciplinary research in history, social sciences, and education; 4) innovations in historical and social science learning during pandemics; 5) New ideas in the research and practice of social sciences and education. This seminar was open to international academics.

This book presents new perspectives on methodology, methods, theory, and themes on history, social sciences, and education research from various perspectives on methodology and historiography. Now, history is not only about politics, economy and military, but also about environment, social, education, culinary, and so on. This book will be useful for students, historians, and the general public, in recording the development of Indonesian historical writing perspectives.



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Embracing New Perspectives in History, Social Sciences, and Education

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Table of contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	ix
<i>Scientific Committee</i>	xi
<i>Organizing Committee</i>	xiii
Cosmopolitanism in humanities and social sciences education and research <i>M. Baidon</i>	1
Analysis of Aristotle’s rhetoric philosophy in improving public speaking ability and its relevance to the process of learning activities <i>Yuliati & S.K.D. Agatta</i>	8
Hitu-Dutch encounter and dispute in early modern period <i>D.N. Wijaya, B. Suprpta & D.Y. Wahyudi</i>	13
Between traditional and global: Changing performance of <i>Ketoprak Rukun Karya</i> in the postmodern Era <i>J. Sayono, R. Ridhoi, N.R.P. Leksono, L. Ayundasari & A. Prasetyawan</i>	18
Teaching historical thinking in Indonesia: Can students cross the threshold portal? <i>A.N. Widiadi</i>	24
Where are the farmers in food-crop research? Decolonization, nationalism, and agricultural research <i>G. Leksana, I.W.P. Utami, A. Subekti & A. Sapto</i>	29
Patirtaan Jolotundo: Learn its history for preservation <i>W.D. Sulistyono & S.A.A. Syah</i>	34
Recent trends in the decolonization of history curriculum: A systematic review <i>A. Sapto, I.W.P. Utami, G. Leksana, L. Ayundasari & F. Ramadhan</i>	39
Natural hazard of Southern Malang: Sitiardjo flash floods, 1932–1939 <i>R. Ridhoi</i>	44
Strengthening the identity: Understanding historical collective memory through the oral traditions in Ambarawa <i>P.A. Wijayati & N.J. Utama</i>	49
Behind the cleanliness of the master’s house: Housemaids in Surabaya in the early 20th century <i>L. Ayundasari, M. Amalia & M.F. Islam</i>	54
Research urgency on Indonesia’s tourism education history in the construction of tourism as science in Indonesia <i>I.I. Pratiwi & N. Fathiraini</i>	60
Content analysis of <i>The Little Nyonya</i> for learning resources in history education <i>H. Kurniawan, N. Supriatna, A. Mulyana & L. Yulifar</i>	64

The impact of deforestation on community lives in Mojowarno, Jombang 1854–1930 <i>A.F. Darmayanti</i>	69
Research narrative directions about Islamization in Indonesia after the new order 1998–2020 <i>W.I. Fauzi, M. Winarti, W. Darmawan, A. Mulyana & M. Zulifan</i>	74
Three profiles of working women of the post-independence war in the “Suka-Duka” rubric of Sunday Morning magazine in 1945–1959 <i>A. Subekti & R.I. Asmawati</i>	79
Conception of good child in the 1950’s Indonesia: Book of ethical guidelines (<i>Ngudi Susilo</i>) as an alternative source of childhood history <i>N. Jauhari & A. Subekti</i>	83
Flood disaster in South Sidoarjo, 1910–1957 <i>N.A.D. Restanti</i>	87
Floods in Bojonegoro, 1920–1940 <i>A.G. Albar</i>	91
The utilization of the Bejagung gravesite as a source of learning history based on android mapping application <i>M.N.L. Khakim, W.D. Sulisty, Yuliati, R. Hudiyanto & R.A. Pratama</i>	95
The brown planthopper pest attacks in Lamongan 2010–2011 <i>R. Salsabila</i>	101
The new world order in the COVID-19 era: A new strategy on historical research <i>A.J.N. Mukti</i>	106
The meaning of the rock-painting “Human Face Figures” at the Mesolithic caves in the karts region of Southeast Meratus, South Kalimantan: Charles S. Peirce’s semiotic perspective <i>B. Suprpta, U. Nafiah, D.N. Wijaya & W.D. Sulisty</i>	111
Exploration of Penampihan Temple through virtual visit as an effort to strengthen students’ social attitudes <i>D. Tricahyono, A. Musadad & T. Rejekiningsih</i>	116
Pelangi Hotel of Malang: The history and its function dynamics <i>S.S.P. Jati, A. Subekti & G. Leksana</i>	120
The role of traditional villages in tourism recovery in Bali during the Covid-19 pandemic <i>D.A.G. Agung, A. Subekti, G. Leksana, B. Suprpta, M.R. Saifullah & S. Qolbiyah</i>	125
Author index	131

Preface

The International Conference on History, Social Sciences, and Education (ICHSE) 2021 is an international conference that is held regularly every two years, organized by the History Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Malang. This event aims to discuss the theoretical and practical developments of the History, Social Sciences and Education in Indonesia and other countries, to build academic networks through gathering academics from various research institutes and universities.

This year, we took “Embracing New Perspectives in History, Social Sciences, and Education” as our main topic. We try to look for new perspectives on methodology, method, theory, and themes on history, social sciences, and education research. This is because the academic trend of social science and humanities are now experiencing tremendous progress. It concerns multidisciplinary research, even transdisciplinary. Such as history that has various perspectives on methodology and historiography. Presently, history is not only about politics, economy and military, but also about environment, social, education, culinary, and so on. As well as social sciences and education which was shown by various studies.

There are several sub-themes at the ICHSE 2021. *First*, we discuss about new trends in history research. In this strand, we are inviting historians to discuss new trends and topics in historical research, which includes, but is not limited to, environmental issues, natural hazards, gender, social problems, violence, culinary, indigenous culture, heritage and so on. *Second*, we discuss about looking for new perspectives in history, social sciences, and education. We are challenging researchers, teachers, and practitioners to explore new possibilities and perspectives in history, social sciences and education, which may include, but are not limited to, decolonization, post-modernism, history of everyday life, micro history, and so on. *Third*, we discuss transdisciplinary research in history, social sciences and education. As more and more research has been moving towards narrow disciplines, we invite researchers, teachers, and practitioners to share their cutting-edge transdisciplinary research in history, social sciences, and education. *Fourth*, we discuss innovation in history and social education during the pandemic. The global pandemic has changed many things in education that push us to think outside the box. Thus, we invite researchers, teachers, and practitioners to share their ideas and practices in finding innovations to overcome the challenges of teaching and learning history and social sciences in the New Normal. Finally, we also discuss the emerging ideas on social sciences and education research and practice. We invite researchers, teachers, and practitioners to explore and share their emerging ideas and practices in social sciences and education. This topic embraces ongoing projects, experimental practices, reflections on collaborations and multidisciplinary approach, and so on.

Taking it to the next level, the results of scientific research should not only be limited to publications in the academic environment. It also needs to be accessible and understandable by those who need and are affected by the information. Through this event, we invite researchers and people from all disciplines who put interest in these issues from all around the globe to gather and discuss.



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The editors and organizers of the International Conference on History, Social Sciences, and Education (ICHSE) wish to express our thanks to the keynote speakers for their presentation on ICHSE 2021. They are Prof. Gert Oostindie (KITLV, Leiden, The Netherlands); Assoc. Prof. Mark Charles Baildon, Ph.D (United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates); Francis M. Navarro, Ph.D (Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines); and Prof. Dr. Hariyono, M.Pd (Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia).

The organizers also wish to acknowledge publicly the valuable services provided by the reviewers. On behalf of the editors, organizers, authors and readers of this conference, we wish to thank the keynote speakers and the reviewers for their time, hard work, and dedication to this conference.

The organizers wish to acknowledge Dr. Ari Sapto, M.Hum, Ulfatun Nafi'ah, M.Pd, Indah Wahyu P.U., M.Pd, Dr. Grace Leksana, M.A, and Aditya Nugroho Widiadi, Ph.D for the discussions, suggestions, and cooperation to organize and invite the keynote speakers of this conference. The organizers also wish to thank speakers and participants who attended this seminar. Many thanks is given to all persons who helped and supported this conference.

The organizers wish to apologize to the speakers who cannot publish their paper in this Conference Proceeding. Our apology is also given to all participants for possible shortcomings in this conference. We hope to see you at the next ICHSE 2023 at the Universitas Negeri Malang.

Malang, January 20, 2022

Local Organizer of ICHSE 2021
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Content analysis of *The Little Nyonya* for learning resources in history education

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the contents of the drama series *The Little Nyonya*, which can be developed into learning resources for history education. This drama series is set in a Peranakan Chinese family in the Malacca area between the 1930s and 1970s. Qualitative content analysis (QCA) is used to examine the historical information from the series, which has the potential to be studied further for history education purposes. The subjects studied were the drama series *The Little Nyonya*, which was produced in 2008 with 34 episodes. The information obtained was analyzed by utilizing various related literature. As a result, the drama series *The Little Nyonya* contains information on the life history of the Peranakan Chinese that can be developed into studies on the themes of ethnic history, cultural history, and women's history. In addition, in the context of history education, each study theme of the series explores values that can be internalized in common life. In the end, this study is also expected to contribute to the development of history education in the 21st century.

Keywords: *The Little Nyonya*, qualitative content analysis, history education.

1 INTRODUCTION

Studying history is often considered monotonous and boring even though many sources of learning history are fun and can be used for learning at school. Learning history on a recreational basis will also facilitate the internalization of values, one of which is through films. Historical films including drama series and others can be used to study history (Ashkenazi 2014; Marcus & Stoddard 2009; Stoddard 2012; Walker 2006). According to Pratista (2017, pp. 23, 29), films have two forming elements, narrative and cinematic, that interact with each other. The narrative element becomes the material or material that is processed, while the cinematic is the way or style of processing it that provides an entertainment aspect. So the content, context, and vision in the film need to be observed when applying it as a learning resource.

The drama series *The Little Nyonya* is very interesting to learn about the history of Peranakan Chinese culture in Southeast Asia. Since its first production aired on Singapore's MediaCorp TV Channel 8 in 2008, this drama series became very popular. The re-production of *The Little Nyonya* was carried out in 2020 by iQiyi China in collaboration with Changxin Pictures and Singapore-based GHY Culture & Media. Several studies on this drama series highlight cultural rituals and value preservation, especially Confucianism, in Peranakan Chinese families (Eng 2020; Lai & Khiun 2020). Also regarding the formation of national identity which is closely related to transnational phenomena and ethnicity (Chan 2012; Montsion & Parasram 2018). There has been no study on the use of this drama series as a learning resource.

The Little Nyonya features a Peranakan Chinese setting that can be found in parts of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. Peranakan Chinese are descendants of the marriage of a native Chinese man (totok) with a local woman. They are usually called Baba for men and Nyonya for women. Peranakan refers to a community formed of mixed ethnic descent, not only Chinese but also European, Indian,

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and Arab who married local women (Neo et al. 2020). The term Baba-Nyonya is more popularly used in Malaysia and Singapore than in Indonesia, which slowly disappeared, especially during the New Order era (Intisari & Indonesia 2009, p. 24). Indonesian Peranakan Chinese are usually called *Tionghoa* or sometimes just Peranakans. The term *Tionghoa* originating from the Hokkien language is also only known in Indonesia (Lembong 2011). In Malaysia and Singapore, the term China or Chinese is used.

Peranakan Chinese have a unique and distinctive culture in the form of mixing indigenous Chinese culture with local culture. So the Peranakan Chinese culture that is formed in each region has differences although there are still many similarities. The Baba-Nyonya tradition in Malaysia and Singapore is also found in Indonesia, but there are differences in the aspects of local culture that are absorbed. Indigenous Chinese culture is carried from the father's line, especially in the first generation, while from the mother's line it is inherited more of the local culture. Peranakan Chinese culture can be seen in language, literature, art, clothing, food, architecture, to household furnishings. These things can be found and learned through the drama series *The Little Nyonya*.

For this reason, this study analyzes the contents of the drama series *The Little Nyonya* to develop it into historical studies for educational purposes. Efforts to analyze the content of films can foster a scientific and critical attitude in learning history (Hamid 2014, p. 75). The findings obtained are classified into study themes that can be further developed to support history learning in schools and as history education for the community. In each study theme, values that can be internalized by the objectives of historical education are also explored. Finally, this research is expected to provide a breakthrough and contribute to the development of history education in the 21st century.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the qualitative content analysis (QCA) method. The goal is to understand the content contained in documents or media, both printed and electronic (Eriyanto 2011). The QCA describes the meaning of the material qualitatively and systematically by assigning parts of the material to the specified categories. The QCA methods can be applied to analyze various subjects, such as interview transcripts, transcripts of focus group discussions, textbooks, company brochures, contracts, diaries, websites, posts on social media, television programs, newspaper articles, magazine advertisements, and others (Schreier 2012, pp. 1, 3). In this research, the subject of analysis is the drama series *The Little Nyonya*, which was produced in 2008 with 34 episodes. This drama series is accessed via Viu's video streaming with the address www.viu.com. The object of the analysis is the historical information of Peranakan Chinese that can be developed as a learning resource. The researcher watched the drama series carefully, recorded, and marked the relevant scenes. Furthermore, the findings are identified and categorized based on the themes of historical studies and then their values are explored in the framework of historical education. Data analysis was carried out using related library sources as well as testing the validity of the data for further conclusions drawn from the research results.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Little Nyonya is a fictional film with a documentary approach. The story is fictional but uses a real setting, namely the life of a Peranakan Chinese family in the mid-20th century. The series is described as a story from the fifth generation about the life of his ancestors. The 2008 production featured a young woman in the 2000s who was enthusiastic about listening to her grandmother tell her life story. The grandmother is the main character named Yamamoto Yueniang. The story begins in the 1930s and tells the daily life of a large Peranakan Chinese family in Malacca with the surname Huang.

At the beginning of the story, the character highlighted is Huang Juxiang. She was Huang Yuan's daughter from his young wife Wang Tianlan. Juxiang at the age of 9 years tuned deaf-mute. Juxiang has a beautiful face, gentle temperament, and is skilled at cooking and embroidering. In the tradition of the time, Juxiang became an almost perfect Nyonya. On the eve of the Japanese occupation of Singapore, Juxiang is forced to become Charlie Zhang's young wife. Juxiang ran away from home and married Yamamoto Yousuke, a young Japanese photographer living in Singapore. Juxiang gave birth to a daughter named Yamamoto Yueniang. In World War II, when Singapore fell to the Japanese, Yousuke and Juxiang died and left Yueniang at the age of 8 years.

After burying her father and mother, Yueniang went to Malacca to meet his grandmother at the Huang family home. Due to the war, the house was only occupied by Tianlan, Yueniang's grandmother, and Ah Tao, her loyal servant. The entire Huang family fled to England. With her grandmother's guidance, Yueniang grew up into a beautiful, intelligent, tough, and skilled young woman like her mother. After the war ended, the Huang family returned to Malacca. Yueniang's life became like his mother who was always blamed and hurt. She survives to protect her grandmother who remains loyal to the Huang family.

Once, at the Chen family's great-grandmother's birthday, an event was conducted to find a wife for Chen Xi. Some young women were supposed to take embroidery and cooking tests. Yueniang won, but she refused to marry. Yueniang was forced to marry a pig butcher named Liu Yidao. Yueniang's determination and intelligence succeeded in convincing Liu Yidao to become her adoptive brother. They started a bird's nest business in Singapore. In the end, Yueniang and Chen Xi agreed that their true love had become a memory and cannot be continued. The series ends with the death of Yueniang in old age. Angela, her adopted granddaughter, is determined to continue the Peranakan culture and traditions in today's modern era.

The use of historical films in history education is common and not challenging anymore so its effectiveness is questioned (Peters 2020). In contrast to popular historical films, such film requires students to think critically, make connections and provides opportunities for students to develop their thinking (Walker 2006). The study themes in historical films are generally easy to identify so that they can be directly used as learning resources (Niemi 2006). Historical information in *The Little Nyonya* must be studied and developed first before being used as a learning resource. If classified, several historical studies can be developed from the contents of this drama series, namely the history of ethnicity, culture, and women.

Ethnic history

The drama series *The Little Nyonya* revolves around a family story. There are three main families discussed namely Huang, Chen, and Zhang. Almost a century of the life of five generations of families in the series is depicted. Even though they are fictional characters, they depict real Peranakan Chinese families in Malacca at that time. This general description of the emergence of children and their offspring as a result of mixed marriages can be developed as a study of ethnic history (Sjamsuddin 2007). Peranakan Chinese society is no longer the same as in China. This can also be seen from the scene where Ah Tao, a waiter who was imported from China, cannot understand the Peranakan Chinese who like to cook using sharp and spicy-smelling spices (episode 2). The characteristics of the Peranakan Chinese in Malacca or Singapore with Java, Kalimantan, and others also have differences due to local influences. So the scope of this study of ethnic history can include aspects of the background and migration process, interactions within the community, kinship systems, and social or cultural changes that occur. It is hoped that through this study, an attitude of global diversity can be grown through a greater acceptance of the Peranakan Chinese as part of the nation where they were born, descended, and walked their lives. The transnational phenomenon is a historical necessity that cannot be denied.

Cultural history

The cultural aspect is most clearly worked on in the series *The Little Nyonya*. However, regarding language, it deserves to be criticized and becomes a serious deficiency. This series is almost entirely in Mandarin, whereas the Peranakan Chinese use the local language (Malay) in their daily communication. They are mostly immigrants from Fujian so Minnan or Hokkien are often used (Gondomono 2013, p. 105). The term *Nyonya* also comes from the Hokkien language *niowa*, which means woman (Liem 2004, p. 15).

The mixing of Chinese culture with Malay is the focus seen in clothing and food. Baba of the older generation at that time was depicted wearing *tuikhim* (*tikim*) shirts and *komprang* pants, sometimes paired with typical *Malay sarongs*. This description is the same as the Baba in Java. While the younger generation wears Western-style clothes in the form of shirts, suits, and pantaloons. The older generation wears the *baju kurung* model, while the younger ones wear the *kebaya Nyonya*. Cultural mixing is found in daily meals as well as in special events such as weddings and *tokpanjang* banquets. Acculturation in food appears in ingredients, seasonings, cooking methods, and even presentation. Food is also a cultural product that contains a very strong historical memory, in this series, it is described how Chen's

great-grandmother was moved when she could enjoy *rempah udang* with the same taste when she was young (episodes 3, 6, and 21).

The architecture, furniture, and pottery also show a mixture of Chinese, Malay, European, Indian, and even Arabic cultures. *The Little Nyonya* series starts the story from Angela's friend's interest in the house, which is being prepared as a museum. Yueniang lives in the same house (episodes 1 and 34). Similarly, Yousuke was initially interested in Baba-Nyonya's everyday furniture, such as ceramic bowls, *kamcheng*, spittoons, and architectural houses. This interest brought him to visit the Huang family home and meet Juxiang (episodes 2 and 3). Libby was also present at Chen's great-grandmother's birthday due to her interest in Baba-Nyonya architecture (episode 20). Meanwhile, in this series, genuine Malay culture can only be seen in Chen Sheng's rhymes and *Dondang Sayang* (episodes 11, 14, and 29) and accompanying songs when Liu Yidao picks up Yueniang in a wedding procession (episode 24).

The Baba-Nyonya wedding tradition is shown in the *ciotao* event the night before the wedding and the installation of a white handkerchief as a base on the first night followed by the delivery of *lemang* rice (episodes 23–24). Other traditions include the use of a black *waring* (bride's face covering), eating rounds placed in *kamcheng*, and the prayer ceremony (episodes 5 and 24). The white clothes worn by the bride and groom at the wedding must be kept for life and are to be worn or carried in the coffin. This is discussed twice in the series, first when Juxiang married and second when Yueniang accompanied Liu Yidao's mother to death (episodes 5 and 25).

Through this series, traditional Peranakan Chinese values seem exotic. Interest in Peranakan Chinese clothes, embroidery, and cuisine has also increased (Chan 2012). In this study, we can find the value of multiculturalism and cultural preservation that can be internalized in everyday life. This message is very strong through the word of *Zhui Yuan*, which means remembering where you come from and your past (Knapp 2012, p. 9). In *The Little Nyonya* series, the character of *Zhui Yuan* appears repeatedly. This is installed above the entrance of the Huang family altar, written and asked by Yueniang, and used as an embroidery model by Yueniang who managed to impress the great-grandmother of the Chen family (episode 10 and 20).

Women history

At that time in the patrilineal system, the Nyonya was treated unequally, but the great control in domestic (domestic) affairs was in the hands of the Nyonya. They must master the main skills of the Nyonya such as embroidery and cooking. In matters of marriage, women are also in a disadvantaged position. They must be tested for their chastity with a white handkerchief on the first night. If it is proven that it is still pure, then the family of the man will send *lemang* rice to the family of the woman. Marriages often occur by coercion or being a young wife.

The presence of the Nyonya produces a cultural product of *baju kurung*, a mixture of Malay and Chinese, with the peculiarity of a fine handkerchief that is pinned on the left shoulder. While in Java, the Nyonya wear *kebaya nyonya* or *kebaya encim*, which is paired with a brightly colored coastal batik sarong. These clothes were then imitated by young ladies in Malacca and Singapore and even became the identity of the lady (Lee 2016). The difference is that the lady in Malacca and Singapore put her hair up with one bun in the middle or two on the right and left. Their appearance is enhanced with various jewelry and beaded or embroidered shoes. Nyonya also became an artificer in the culinary affairs of the legendary Peranakan Chinese until now.

In this series, the mother-daughter characters Juxiang and Yueniang are presented as negotiators for traditional and modern views of the Nyonya with their status and role. They still highly value and live up to the Confucian morals of traditional paternalism and filial piety. On the other hand, their maturation process is mostly shaped by mothers and grandmothers who show the magnitude of the matrilineal role. Peranakan resulted from the inter-ethnic marriage, but in this series, the view of inter-ethnic marriage is broader. Juxiang is married to Yousuke who is of Japanese descent. Yueniang eventually married an Englishman. Yueniang is also described as a lady figure who is not only skilled in domestic affairs, but is also able to trade, relates with many parties, and dares to fight for her life, and does not give up accepting fate (Eng 2020). The importance of the role of women in maintaining traditions must be accompanied by an attitude of emancipation and progress of thinking.

4 CONCLUSION

The content analysis of the drama series *The Little Nyonya* found three study themes that could be developed as learning resources, namely ethnic history, cultural history, and women's history. In the context of historical education, each theme of the study explores values that can be internalized in life. The existence and social interaction of the Peranakan Chinese community as a source of learning ethnic history can foster an attitude of global diversity. The study of cultural history includes the clothing, culinary, architecture, and arts of the Peranakan Chinese, encouraging the value of multiculturalism and cultural preservation. The life of the Nyonya as a source of learning about women's history raises awareness of emancipation and progress of thinking.

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