

## **THE EXISTENCE OF THE SUKURAGA**

### **PUPPET IN SUKABUMI**

**Ashila Rahma Nabila**

English Literature Study Program, Muhammadiyah University of Sukabumi

e-mail: [ashilarnn@gmail.com](mailto:ashilarnn@gmail.com)

Corresponding author [ashilarnn@gmail.com](mailto:ashilarnn@gmail.com)

#### **ABSTRACT**

Sukuraga Puppet is a typical Sukabumi art that combines various aspects of art ranging from visual arts, music, puppet theater and literature. This Puppet Sukuraga does not refer to most puppet literacy like the Ramayana and Mahabharata traditions. Having a unique story, being a Sukuraga Puppet has its own cultural value, but unfortunately the existence of this Sukuraga Puppet is still not known by the residents, that's why research is to find out how many people do not know about Sukuraga Puppet and what causes it. This research is a research using quantitative research methods. The data collection process originates from a questionnaire addressed to thirty respondents.

**Keywords:** *Sukuraga Puppet, Existence, Modern Era*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Puppet is one of Indonesia's traditional performing arts which rich cultural and historical values. Each region in Indonesia has its own unique variety of puppet, and one of them is the Sukuraga Puppet which has rich in meaning and aesthetic value that is not inferior to other puppet and play an important part of Sukabumi's cultural heritage.

Sukabumi is a city in West Java, Indonesia, which is rich in local traditions and culture. One of the highly valued cultural heritages in Sukabumi is the Sukuraga Puppet. Sukuraga Puppet has been an integral part of the life of the Sukabumi people for many years. Sukuraga Puppet has a long history and is deeply rooted in the life of the Sukabumi people. Sukuraga Puppet Shows are often held as a means of entertainment and is usually displayed to fill official events at Sukabumi City, or community events Art and culture.

Sukuraga Puppet has characteristics that set it apart from other types of puppets. One of the most striking features is the smaller size of the puppets compared to the puppets in general. Sukuraga Puppet is made of wood and has a height of about 20 to 30 centimeters. Despite their small size, Sukuraga Puppet has very fine details and is complicated in its making.

Sukuraga Puppet Show also has a distinctive musical accompaniment. Musical instruments used include saron, demung, drums, and gender. The sound of the accompanying music gives a distinctive nuance to the Sukuraga Puppet performance and creates a magical and alluring atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the existence of Sukuraga Puppet is currently facing challenges. Technological developments and shifts in public interest have made Sukuraga Puppet less well known to the people of Sukabumi at large. The younger generation, which is supposed to be the generation that advances culture, tends to be more interested in other popular entertainments, such as television, movies and computer games.

Therefore, it is important to take appropriate steps to maintain the existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi. Preservation efforts include introduction, education, and promotion of Sukuraga Puppet to the community, especially to the younger generation. In this case, the government, the arts community, and local cultural figures can play an active role in promoting and preserving the uniqueness and beauty of Sukuraga Puppet.

With comprehensive conservation efforts, it is hoped that Sukuraga Puppet can continue to live and become an integral part of Sukabumi's cultural identity. The existence of Sukuraga Puppet will not only protect valuable cultural heritage, but also enrich the life of the Sukabumi people and become a cultural attraction for tourists who come to the area.

Based on the phenomenon that the researcher observed from the Sukabumi people regarding their knowledge of the Puppet Sukuraga, the researcher looked at this phenomenon as the source for choosing a research title because it can be a place to introduce Sukuraga Puppet to the people of Sukabumi. So that researchers are interested in conducting research on the acceptance of Sukuraga Puppet by taking the title *The Existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi*.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Sukuraga Puppet is a typical Sukabumi puppet made by Effendi in 1997. This puppet is one of the modern puppet arts. It is referred to as modern puppet because the characters and stories are no longer in accordance with Javanese puppet and Indian culture, such as the Mahabarata and Ramayana stories. The story of Sukuraga Puppet tells more about the inner conflicts between humans and human limbs. Therefore, the characters are taken from parts of the human body such as eyes, ears, feet, hands, mouth and nose (Nurzaman, 2016).

The philosophy is for humans to know themselves better so they can tap into their potential. Sukuraga Puppet also depicts the contemplation of the human person. The character of Wayang Sukuraga can lead to the perception that what other people are doing is wrong. Therefore, many moral messages are conveyed through Wayang Sukuraga performances. In particular, how does a person have to control his limbs in order to behave properly (Suardi, 2019).

Sukuraga Puppet was first released on the private television network RCTI in 1997 in the program "Buka Mata, Buka Telinga." Since then, the existence of Sukuraga Puppet has increased. The existence of Sukuraga Puppet is shown through the presence of Sukuraga Puppet performances at celebration events and also participation in National and International Puppet Festivals. Until its peak on February 12 2016, as stated in the Mayoral Regulation of Sukabumi No. 55, Sukuraga Puppet is legally a puppet art from Sukabumi (Yudono, 2016).

It can be seen from Yudono's narrative above that in 1997 Sukuraga Puppet had shown its existence on national TV, as well as in 2016 Sukuraga Puppet had been designated as original art from Sukabumi. However, the fame of Sukuraga Puppet only lasted in the past, as the era progressed, the presence of Sukuraga Puppet slowly began to be replaced by entertainment in the palm of your hand or cellphone.

However, with the development of an increasingly modern era, in which information and communication technology has progressed rapidly, it is almost certain that with the pressure of time, the role of traditional folk performing arts will soon be shifted. Cultural wealth in the form of folk performing arts will be increasingly less attractive to local communities. This phenomenon is increasingly becoming a reality, bearing in mind that one of the factors that has eroded the existence of traditional art media is increasing the use of new media in the form of the internet by the public. (Woluyo & Rosmawati, 2021)

Modern art that emerged later led traditional art increasingly being eroded by the culture of the times. Traditional art is increasingly difficult to find in cities. The crisis condition of the audience and the decrease in the frequency of performances have resulted in many art groups experiencing suspended animation or even stopping altogether. An important factor that plays a major role in the crisis is the influence of technology information.

## **RESEARCH METHODES**

In this study using descriptive qualitative techniques. According to Basrowi & Kelvin, (2008: 2), through qualitative research the researcher can identify the subject, feel what the subject experiences in everyday life. In qualitative research, the researcher is involved in the context, with the situation and setting of the natural phenomenon that is being studied. Each phenomenon is something unique, which is different from the others because of different contexts. Meanwhile, according to Bogdan and Taylor (1992:21), qualitative research is a research procedure capable of producing descriptive data in the form of speech, writing, and behavior of the people being observed. Descriptive research is used to describe how the existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi. This is because the author conducted interviews with sources, namely Mr. Efendi as the creator of the Sukuraga puppet. Then the technique for collecting data using note-taking techniques. According to Azwardi (2018) the listening and note-taking method is a way to collect data by paying attention to the use of spoken or written language in certain social contexts, through tapping or observation techniques to obtain the required data by focusing on the speech delivered. In this study interviews were conducted with informants, then recorded and recorded the things that would be studied in this study.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

This study aims to describe how the existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi. And the result show that the people of Sukabumi still didn't acknowledge about the local art Sukuraga Puppet. According to Mr. Efendi as the creator of the Sukuraga puppet, he said that Sukuraga Puppet may have exist in the past, but nowadays a lot of people are more interested in modern entertainment. But still there's also a lot of people who try to acknowledge the existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi. And one of the way is a concert even held by infosukabumi. In that event they put a big billboard with a words "Sukabumi punya Sukuraga"

### **Discussion**

This chapter contain a discussion of the answers to the formulation of the problem in the previous chapter. In this chapter, we will discuss the uniqueness of Sukuraga Puppet and how the acceptance of the Sukabumi people towards Sukuraga Puppet and the obstacles that hinder the spread of Puppet Sukuraga.

Sukuraga Puppet is a special art from Sukabumi which combines various aspects of art ranging from art, music, theater puppet and literature. Sukuraga Puppet does not refer to much Puppet literacy such as the traditional Ramayana and Mahabharata. But in accordance with the meaning of Sukuraga which comes from two Sundanese words namely Suku and Raga which means part of body. That is why the names for each character are taken from the names of the parts of the human body such as the eyes, nose, ears, mouth, hands and feet. And the setting of the story is based on the use of the body itself.

Sukuraga Puppet was created by Efendi Sukuraga who is a painting artist from Sukabumi, West Java in 1995. Starting from an exhibition of his paintings at the Mara Institute of Technology Malaysia, his painting entitled Sukuraga with the title "Peran-Peran" interpreted as an actor guiding life by appreciators there. This is what further inspired Efendi to create the Sukuraga figure into a puppet character that depicts humans. Efendi developed the basic form of puppet that has been known by many people to be more representative of human nature in life and began to be shown to the general public since 1997.

Sukuraga Puppet carries a message of goodness and basic norms in life. That is why the target audience for Sukuraga Puppet is children because the basic norms in life must be given from an early age. Because the target audience is the children, the stories presented are quite light and easy to understand. Even so, Sukuraga Puppet is still suitable for viewing by various age groups, because the message to be conveyed is not limited to children only.

The philosophy of the form of Sukuraga Puppet created by Efendi itself is a depiction as well as a contemplation of the human person through the shape of his limbs. This is a guide to life in carrying a message of goodness. In Sukuraga Puppet the names for each character are taken from the names of the parts of the human body, which means that humans act as puppeteers, which means that we have full control over our bodies, whether we are going to use them to do good or bad. Sukuraga Puppet invites us to look within ourselves. Had we put

it to good use, had we use our mouths to spread kindness, let us use our feet to step to a good place and many more.

The simplicity of the story presented by Sukuraga Puppet makes it a unique and can adapt to the times. The story is light and acceptable to various ages making Sukuraga Puppet has more value if we want to develop it. Sukuraga Puppet usually presents stories that tell about real life that is happening in the present, alluding to social problems, such as corruption, people's lifestyles and gaps that occur in society which are problems that are inherent in us and are already rooted. That is why basic education is needed from an early age that is fun and still has artistic value in it.

How is the public's acceptance of the existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi?

To discuss public acceptance of the existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi, the following aspects need to be considered:

- a. **Respect for Local Culture:** Community acceptance of Sukuraga Puppet is influenced by the extent to which they appreciate and understand local cultural values. If people are aware of the importance of preserving traditional culture, Sukuraga Puppet will have a greater chance of being accepted and appreciated.
- b. **Education and Education:** Education and introduction of Sukuraga Puppet to the younger generation is very important to ensure its continued existence. If the younger generation can understand and appreciate this art, the general public's acceptance will also increase.
- c. **The Role of Media and Technology:** The influence of the mass media and technological advances can also influence people's acceptance of Sukuraga Puppet. If Sukuraga Puppet can be promoted effectively through social media, television or other digital platforms, it can create new interest and interest in this art.
- d. **Support from the Government and Cultural Institutions:** The importance of support from the local government and cultural institutions in maintaining the existence of Sukuraga Puppet. Support in the form of coaching, training, promotion and official recognition will help increase public acceptance of this art.

Nowadays it seems that the presence of Sukuraga Puppet in Indonesia is not like that known to the younger generation in this city, and the entry of various foreign cultures through various media, especially television, have not in the least influenced interest and curiosity about traditional arts such as Sukuraga Puppet. Currently a lot of young people are less familiar with the traditional art of Puppet, whether it is Kulit Puppet, Orang Puppet and Sukuraga Puppet, the younger generation is more pleased with foreign arts and traditions that may be more interesting for them. according to Sri Handayani, S.Pd In the present or in the future responsibility to develop and preserve the ancestral heritage is no longer determined entirely by the government, but by the community, in this case the art actors, art lovers, art workers and art observers and others so that art and culture are not lost or destroyed by time.

Preservation of Sukuraga Puppet is actually not just a responsibility of the government and the artist themselves but the next generation. People who know Sukuraga Puppet are mostly ordinary people official or from the government.

What are the challenges and obstacles faced in maintaining the existence of Sukuraga Puppet in the modern era in Sukabumi?

In the modern era, the existence of Sukuraga Puppet is faced with a number of challenges and obstacles. Some of them are as follows:

- a. **Changes in Values and Lifestyles:** In the modern era, people's values and lifestyles often change. This can lead to a decrease in interest in and acceptance of traditional arts such as Sukuraga Puppet. Popular culture and modern entertainment are often more dominant in influencing people's preferences.
- b. **Disadvantages of the Next Generation:** If there are no successors who learn and continue the Sukuraga Puppet tradition, then their very existence will be threatened. This challenge can be overcome by providing education and training to the younger generation to become puppeteers or Sukuraga Puppet artists.
- c. **Globalization and Cultural Homogenization:** In the era of globalization, the massive flow of information and outside cultural influences can lead to cultural homogenization. This can threaten the diversity of local cultures including Sukuraga Puppet. Efforts to maintain the authenticity and uniqueness of Sukuraga Puppet are a significant challenge in this modern era.
- d. **Technological Developments:** Technological developments can also be an obstacle in maintaining the existence of Sukuraga Puppet. Advances in technology can influence people's interests, so that traditional performances such as Sukuraga Puppet may appear less attractive than modern, more interactive and sophisticated entertainment.

To overcome the challenges and obstacles above, it is necessary to take strategic steps such as:

- a. Realizing the importance of education and understanding of Sukuraga Puppet, especially for the younger generation.
- b. Conduct effective promotions and marketing through social media, digital platforms, and cultural events.
- c. Actively involve local government and cultural institutions in supporting and preserving Sukuraga Puppet.
- d. Collaborating with local artists and communities to increase awareness and interest in this art.
- e. Develop creative strategies in combining traditional elements with modern elements to attract wider public interest.
- f. With continuous and collaborative efforts, it is hoped that Sukuraga Puppet can continue to exist and be appreciated by society in the modern era, maintain valuable cultural heritage and enrich cultural diversity in Sukabumi.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the discussion and research on the existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi, the conclusions are as follows:

Sukuraga Puppet is a special art from Sukabumi which combines various aspects of art ranging from art, music, theater puppet and literature. Sukuraga Puppet does not refer to much Puppet literacy such as the traditional Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Sukuraga Puppet carries a message of goodness and basic norms in life. That is why the target audience for Sukuraga Puppet is children because the basic norms in life must be given from an early age. Because the target audience is the children, the stories presented are quite light and easy to understand. Even so, Sukuraga Puppet is still suitable for viewing by various age groups, because the message to be conveyed is not limited to children only.

The existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi is still relatively minimal. The presence of Sukuraga Puppet in Indonesia is not like that known to the younger generation in this city, and the entry of various foreign cultures through various media, especially television, have not in the least influenced interest and curiosity about traditional arts such as Sukuraga Puppet. There is a need for improvement in terms of promotion and maintenance because the existence of Sukuraga Puppet in Sukabumi is a cultural heritage that has high value, provides a strong local identity, and plays a role in preserving traditions and developing cultural tourism.

The responsibility to develop and preserve the ancestral heritage is no longer determined entirely by the government, but by the community, in this case the art actors, art lovers, art workers and art observers and others so that art and culture are not lost or destroyed by time.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Nurzaman, A. M. I. (2016). *Wayang Sukuraga di Kota Sukabumi: Perkembangan serta Peranannya dalam Mengembangkan Pendidikan Karakter dan Mendorong Ekonomi Kreatif Tahun 1996-2015*: Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia.
- Suardi, A. S. (2019). *Wayang Sukuraga dari bahasa rupa ke bahasa pertunjukan. PANTUN: Jurnal Ilmiah Seni Budaya*, 4(1), 1–12.
- Yudono, J. (2016). *Sukabumi jadikan Wayang Sukuraga seni budaya khas*. <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2016/02/18/10470551/Sukabumi.Jadikan.Wayang.Suku.raga.Seni.Budaya.Khas>
- Anselm Strauss dan Juliet Corbin. (2007). *Dasar-Dasar Penelitian Kualitatif*. Pustaka Pelajar: Yogyakarta
- Azwardi. (2018). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*. Banda Aceh: Syiah Kuala University Press.
- Basrowi dan Suwandi. (2009). *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif*. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipa.
- Bogdan, Robert C. & Sari Knopp Biklen. (1982). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.