

# Reformatting the Performing Arts: Wayang Climen

*as a Tradition-Based Entertainment Solution for Urban Audiences in Yogyakarta*

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## Abstract

The reformulation of Wayang performances into Wayang Climen has provided a fresh avenue for urban audiences to access tradition-based entertainment, which plays a crucial role in the transmission of cultural knowledge and values. After limited performance opportunities due to COVID-19 restrictions, puppeteers are now vying to put on elaborate performances. However, such performances are often expensive, space-intensive, and lengthy, making them inaccessible for urban communities with restricted resources. This study explores how puppeteers have reimagined performances by streamlining their duration, reducing venue requirements, and narrowing thematic focus to retain the essence of traditional Wayang while making it accessible to urban audiences. Employing a qualitative case study approach, this research examined "Wargo Laras," group in Yogyakarta. Data collection methods included observations of performances and in-depth interviews. The findings indicate that Wayang Climen have successfully redefined traditional Wayang by adopting a more flexible structure and maximizing available performance elements within compact settings.

**Keywords:** *Reformatting Performing Arts, Traditional Base, Wayang Climen, Urban Society, Shadow Puppets, Indonesia*

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## Introduction

Urban communities, often lacking access to tradition-based entertainment that fosters the transmission of cultural knowledge and values, are gaining new opportunities through efforts to reformat Wayang or shadow puppet performances. This research highlights the significant work of various dalangs or puppeteers who have innovatively adapted the traditional Wayang format without sacrificing its cultural essence. Originally, Wayang performances were lengthy, requiring substantial venues and incurring high organizational costs; however, these have been transformed into shorter, more accessible versions with reduced costs, which can appeal to urban audiences. Various artists have attempted to make Wayang more relatable to urban settings, such as Nanang HP's Wayang Urban (Kompas.com) and Jliteng Suparman's Wayang Kampung Sebelah (WKS, 2024). Yet, these adaptations have yet to achieve broad popularity among urban audiences. A promising alternative is Wayang Climen (climen literary means brief or what is necessary), which brings renewed hope for urban engagement with tradition-rooted entertainment. This phenomenon merits deeper exploration, as Wayang Climen aligns well with urban lifestyles entertainment while preserving essential cultural elements rooted in traditions.

To date, few comprehensive studies focus on shadow puppet or Wayang performances specifically designed for urban communities. Existing research typically centers on other forms of wayang, such as Wayang Orang, Wayang Beber, and Wayang Kampung Sebelah. For instance, Ashari (2015) examined the resilience of Wayang Orang in Solo, especially within the Sriwedari performance group, amidst modern communication technological advances. Murni (2014) explored the creative process and visual characteristics of Wayang Beber Kota in Surakarta, while Haryadi (2018) addressed the urban narratives embedded in Wayang Beber Metropolitan. Studies like Purwasito and Pitono's (2017) work on Wayang Kampung Sebelah analyzed its adaptation within modern Javanese society. Seminal works, such as *The Dalang Behind the Wayang* (1985) and *Phenomenology of Puppet Theater* (2005), offer anthropological perspectives on Wayang but primarily address traditional rural settings rather than the urban context. Moreover, these studies do not delve into strategies employed by puppeteers to engage urban audiences or attract sponsors—both critical aspects for the art's sustainability in cities. Given the untapped potential of urban sponsorship and audience engagement, research focused on reformatting Wayang for urban audiences remains a relevant area of study.

The purpose of this research is to complement the shortcomings of previous studies that have not paid attention to wayang performances for urban communities. Previous studies have focused more on pop wayang shows or spectacular wayang shows. To bridge this gap, this paper addresses three issues related to (1) the shortening of performance duration, which provides more open access to the wayang audience; (2) simplification of the performance space/venue, which has implications for reducing the financial burden of organizing wayang performances; and (3) simplification of story themes that are contextual to urban society, which can attract urban audiences who lack knowledge about the world of wayang. The discussion of these three matters provides knowledge about the Wayang Climen performance which is an alternative tradition-based entertainment for urban people who do not have much time, place, and money. These three things will be described sequentially in the subsections of this article.

The central argument of this article is that wayang performances should be redefined for urban audiences. Traditional wayang, a product of the palace culture of the keraton era, maintains an aesthetic, thematic, and stylistic structure that reflects royal court or keraton

traditions. However, as society evolves, so too must the structure of wayang to align with the aesthetics, ethics, realities, and tastes of contemporary urban culture. Reducing the performance duration from an all-night event to 2-3 hours enables urban audiences, who often prioritize time and efficiency, to enjoy wayang without compromising their next-day commitments. Simplifying the performance space addresses the reality of limited urban spaces and minimizes production costs, making wayang performances more affordable and feasible for city communities to host. Additionally, simplifying Wayang Climen story-lines offers a refreshing, accessible format that retains the depth of its messages, inviting audiences with minimal background in traditional wayang to enjoy the performances.

## Literature Review

### Reformatting as a Means of Adaptation in Performing Arts

Reformatting is the process of adapting or rearranging artworks to suit new mediums and audiences without altering their core essence (Baera et al., 2023). In this regard, Lischer-Katz (2022) suggests that reformatting requires artists to bring innovation and creativity, enabling the artwork to not only adapt to the new medium but also meet the evolving needs of audiences. In performing arts, reformatting typically involves transforming a performance from a large stage and lengthy duration to a more concise and accessible format (Dalila & Hidajad, 2022; Li et al., 2021). The transformation process, as noted by Putra & Soewarlan (2022), became especially relevant when artists faced restrictions on live performances during events like the Covid-19 pandemic. To fill the creative void, artists turned to digital platforms as an alternative means of producing and presenting performing arts. This shift aimed to preserve the interactive, dynamic exchange between artists and audiences despite physical limitations (Hartini & Haryati, 2023; Putra & Soewarlan, 2022).

In recent years, reformatting in performing arts has seen considerable advancements, particularly in the simplification and shortening of content (Serdaroglu, 2020). Traditional art forms like theater, dance, and music, often performed live over extended durations, are now being adapted into more compact formats for platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube (Baldin et al., 2024; Christensen, 2022). Gono & Rakhmad (2021) found that social media requires artists to present works in shorter durations—often in minutes or even seconds. A common reformatting approach is the conversion of performances into streaming videos, which allows audiences to access these art forms at their convenience, as seen in the adaptation of wayang performances (Escobar Varela, 2019; Jufry et al., 2024). Thus, reformatting serves not only as a method for updating traditional works but also as a tool for expanding their cultural relevance and audience reach in the modern era (Liu et al., 2022). Embracing the concept of reformatting is essential for sustaining and innovating within the performing arts, allowing them to resonate with contemporary audiences while maintaining their traditional essence.

### Traditional Base

Tradition, or the "traditional base," encompasses a set of values, norms, practices, and customs passed down across generations within a community (Anoegrajekti et al., 2018; Asavei, 2021; Elfondri et al., 2021). This broad concept of tradition includes cultural activities such as art, rituals, language, and value systems that provide a foundational frame-

work for strengthening communal bonds (Pekka Korhonen & Adam Cathcart, 2017; Shevko, 2020; Smorchkov, 2021). According to Bisyarda (2016), tradition serves not only as cultural heritage but also as a means of sustaining values and practices rooted in historical and collective experience. In the realm of art, tradition plays a critical role in creating works that mirror social realities, often acting as a medium for expressing cultural identity (Hudayana, 2021; Kalista et al., 2024). Artistic creations grounded in tradition frequently embody symbolic meanings that connect individuals to their community, reinforcing a sense of belonging to their cultural heritage.

Tradition impacts multiple aspects of human life for several reasons. Firstly, it represents a community's identity, serving as a defining characteristic of its distinct cultural traits (Kistanto, 2016). Secondly, tradition functions as a societal regulator, offering guidelines that shape interpersonal behavior and community interaction (Alavi & Azizi, 2021; Limbu, 2020; Vaško et al., 2020). Thirdly, tradition acts as a platform for social interaction, facilitating communal bonds (Montasir et al., 2023; Yohana, 2023; Zhakaeva, 2021). Moreover, tradition provides a basis for community policy, passing down a set of norms and values across generations (Adom, 2019; Fernando & Larasati, 2024; Imamah et al., 2024). In this regard, tradition plays a crucial role in shaping collective awareness, beliefs, and norms within society (Cislaghi & Heise, 2020; Steffensen & Havgaard, 2020; Idrus, 2014). As Nurhadi et al. (2018) suggest, tradition manifests in symbols, music, art performances, and traditional rituals within daily life, thereby legitimizing societal worldviews, beliefs, and norms.

### Urban Society

The term "urban" is an adjective describing anything associated with cities or urbanized areas. When applied to people, "urban" often refers to individuals or communities who have migrated from rural villages to cities. Jean Paul (n.d.) observed that urban society tends to prioritize knowledge, and he noted that it is characterized by high levels of mobilization and centralization. In terms of urban management, cities are often structured with advanced layouts and a strong emphasis on knowledge and innovation (Addie, 2017). Research by Fuller and Stevens (2019) highlights how urban societies are closely linked to domestic spaces, which urban residents utilize in various ways to promote their social and economic development. They argue that urban communities face a wide range of domestic challenges, leading them to creatively adapt their environments to address these needs.

Other studies address the political complexities within urban communities. According to Smiechowski (2021), urban societies are deeply intertwined with political dynamics, often exhibiting intense political competition and varying degrees of politicization. Modern urban communities can be categorized by specific criteria related to their ways of life and knowledge advancement. Mamichev and Dergacheva (2021) distinguish between two types of urban societies: "biosphere urban communities" and "technosphere urban communities." Biosphere urban communities depend on natural resources and maintain a close relationship with nature, both individually and collectively. Technosphere urban communities, on the other hand, rely on artificial technology, with a lifestyle dominated by manufactured and controlled technological systems. The reliance on technology in technosphere urban societies reflects the broader trend of urban environments where controlled, human-made advancements support daily life. The lifestyle of urban society is also closely associated with work and the bustling activities of city life (González, 2021). Based on the findings of

several studies, modern urban communities are heavily influenced by technological advancements, which shape their lifestyles and interactions. Consequently, traditional rituals and symbolic practices within urban communities are often infused with or modified by modern, knowledge-driven perspectives.

### Methodology

This study was conducted in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a city renowned for its rich cultural heritage, particularly its traditional arts like wayang (shadow puppet) performances. Despite Yogyakarta's cultural vibrancy, the frequency of wayang performances has been declining. This trend is largely due to the conventional wayang formats that require large venues and considerable funding, making them inaccessible to a broader audience. With the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, public activities have resumed, including wayang performances. However, many dalangs (puppet masters) have gravitated towards staging conventional, large-scale performances that entail high costs. This model restricts wayang's accessibility for the majority of the population, especially those without access to large spaces or the means to fund such events. Typically, only wealthy individuals or organizations with access to significant resources can afford to host these elaborate performances.

This qualitative research employs a case study approach to explore and understand Wayang Climen, an alternative, condensed format of wayang performance that is more accessible for urban audiences. Observational data was collected through live performances and recorded shows available on YouTube, with particular focus on wayang performances by the Wargo Laras group. The group was selected based on two criteria: (1) its high frequency of performances, and (2) the group was the first to adopt the Wayang Climen format during the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, Wargo Laras, under the leadership of renowned dalang Seno Nugroho (SN), was among the most active wayang groups in Yogyakarta, performing almost daily across various regions in Indonesia. With a large fanbase throughout the country, their shows consistently attracted significant audiences.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, restrictions on public gatherings forced Wargo Laras to halt their live performances temporarily. In response, the group innovated by creating Wayang Climen, a shorter, two-hour wayang performance streamed live and subsequently uploaded to YouTube. This adaptation was met with an overwhelmingly positive response, garnering thousands of online viewers (Merdeka.com). For each show of Wayang Climen led to a surge in requests from individuals, companies, and agencies for live-streamed studio performances, underscoring a growing demand for tradition-based entertainment that is accessible in format and scope.

The informants for this study include leaders and members of the Wargo Laras group, performance sponsors, and audience members. Members of the Wargo Laras group consist of the dalang (puppeteer), pengrawit (gamelan musicians), and sinden (female vocalists). Interviews were conducted with sponsors who organize Wayang Climen performances and with active audience members who engage with the performance.

Data collection began with a review of secondary sources, including Jliteng Suparman's blog and performance recordings available on YouTube. This was followed by in-depth interviews with key informants, such as the leader of the Wargo Laras group, performing puppeteers (dalangs), vocalists (sindens), sponsors, and audience members. Data analysis was performed following the methodology outlined by Miles and Huberman (2014). During data reduction, data were organized based on themes and objectives, and displayed through tables, illustrations, images, and quotations. Verification involved linking data points to establish internal coherence, followed by situating the data within its socio-cultural context to ensure further validation.

**Results**

Wayang Climen is a wayang performance that has been restructured to align with contemporary trends and meet the needs of modern audiences. The reformatting of Wayang Climen is evident in three key findings from this study.

**Shortening the Duration of the Performance**

The duration of the Wayang Climen performance was reduced by simplifying scenes and focusing on the main characters. This reformatting reduced the traditional all-night puppet show, typically lasting around 7 hours, to a shorter, more accessible format. Figure 1 and 2 provide further details on this context.

No	Story /Play	Show duration	Source
1	Semar Mbangun Kayangan (Semar Build Heaven)	2:16:39	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/kaBLbBFC3Og?si=juunKn5srQVcDIAH">https://www.youtube.com/live/kaBLbBFC3Og?si=juunKn5srQVcDIAH</a>
2	Semar Mantu (Semar Wedding)	2:17:35	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/N5QuGBsvmYY?si=o4eRqMq-VBjTt0-4">https://www.youtube.com/live/N5QuGBsvmYY?si=o4eRqMq-VBjTt0-4</a>
3	Petruk Dadi Ratu (Petruk Become King)	3:07:30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/W41VrkvGE5M?si=eeNFURv4iR7C0Byc">https://www.youtube.com/live/W41VrkvGE5M?si=eeNFURv4iR7C0Byc</a>
4	Catur Sagotra	2:34:51	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/KgWYy1mIyPI?si=cbHe7_0vSw2L-8Vj">https://www.youtube.com/live/KgWYy1mIyPI?si=cbHe7_0vSw2L-8Vj</a>
5	Kresna Duta (Kresna as Envoy)	3:17:46	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/0lz6G9hJibw?si=M2ZBuN_cm8yaEn0i">https://www.youtube.com/live/0lz6G9hJibw?si=M2ZBuN_cm8yaEn0i</a>
6	Bima Sakti	2:16:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/vPQuLxuxZhA?si=pyH31uDz5tIyR7JU">https://www.youtube.com/live/vPQuLxuxZhA?si=pyH31uDz5tIyR7JU</a>
7	Bima Labuh (Bima Bumbu)	3:40:47	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/NTZyjp1fyil?si=WMhDjUbSa2nFU31z">https://www.youtube.com/live/NTZyjp1fyil?si=WMhDjUbSa2nFU31z</a>
8	Bima Bungkus (Bima Born)	2:38:30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/67PBVmrAtpc?si=0nEF0KplYPRSyumN">https://www.youtube.com/live/67PBVmrAtpc?si=0nEF0KplYPRSyumN</a>
9	Pandhawa Nawur Kawula	2:54:18	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/Z0h0j2vEKc4?si=yTIvwlxjRna7kthA">https://www.youtube.com/live/Z0h0j2vEKc4?si=yTIvwlxjRna7kthA</a>
10	Pandhawa Makarti (Pandawa Working)	2:22:50	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/hh191ddS0Aw?si=IN3jW_EIVddguTyP">https://www.youtube.com/live/hh191ddS0Aw?si=IN3jW_EIVddguTyP</a>

Figure 1. Duration of Wayang Climen performance by Wargo Laras.

Patet	Scene	Country/setting (12)	Figure (30)
Nem 21.00 - 00.30	I	Amarta (1)	Puntadewa (1), Bima (2), Arjuna (3), Nakula (4), Sadewa (5), Krisna (6), Petruk (7)
	II Limbukan	Keputren (2)	Limbuk (8), Cangik (9)
	III	Paseban Jawi (3)	Petruk, Antasena (10), Gatutkaca (11), Setyaki (12)
	IV	Suralaya (4)	Guru (13), Narada (14), Krisna, Arjuna, Pasukan Bajobarat (15)
	V	Kendalisada (5)	Anoman (16), Malingraga (17), Malingsuksma (18)
Sanga 00.30- 03.00	VI Gara-gara	Araaramba (6)	Gareng (19), Petruk, Bagong (21), Semar (22)
	VII	Karangkadempel (7)	Semar, Anoman (23), Abimanyu (24), Puntadewa, Bima, Nakula, Sadewa, Anoman, Antareja (25)
	VIII	Alang-Alangkumitir (8)	Semar, Wenang (26)
	IX	Pacrabakan (9)	Abimanyu, Anoman, Gatutkaca, Antareja, Malingsuksma, Abimanyu, Malingsuksma
	X	Krendayana (10)	Malingsuksma, Durga (27)
Manyura 03.30- 04.30	XI	Perut Semar (11)	Wenang, Puntadewa, Bima, Nakula, Sadewa, Nurcahya (28),
	XII	Karangkadempel (12)	Jajalwreka (29), Semar, Bagong, Krisna, Harimau (30), Pasukan Bajobarat

Figure 2. Table division of scene elements of conventional wayang performance Semar Mbangun Kayangan (Semar Builds Heaven) play by Hadi Sugito (<https://id.video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=semar+mbangun+kayangan+ki+hadi+sugito&type=E210ID739G0#id=1&vid=1bec6d73fb517145dc241abd3ed1a39e&action=click>).

Patet	Scene	Country/setting (4)	Figure (12)
Nem 20.00- 21.30	I	Amarta (1)	Puntadewa(1), Bima (2), Arjuna (3), Nakula (4), Sadewa (5), Krisna (6), Bagong (7)
	II	Boundary of Amarta (2)	Krisna, Durga, Raksasa (8), Jajalwreka (9)
Sanga 21.30- 22.00	III	Karangkadempel (3)	Gareng (10), Petruk (11), Bagong
	IV	Karangkadempel	Semar (12), Puntadewa, Arjuna, Bima, Antasena
Manyura 22.00- 22.30	V	Batas Karangkadempel (4)	Semar, Jajalwreka, Krisna
	VI	Karangkadempel	Semar, Krisna, Puntadewa, Petruk, Bagong

Figure 3. Table division of scene elements of Wayang Climen performance Semar Mbangun Kayangan (Semar Builds Heaven) play by Seno Nugroho (<https://www.youtube.com/live/kaBLbBFC3Og?si=juunKn5srQVcDJAH>).

Figure 3 shows that the duration of Wayang Climen performances ranges from 2 to 3 hours, typically starting at 8 p.m. and finishing between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. This is a significant reduction compared to traditional wayang performances, which generally run from 9 p.m. until 4 a.m., lasting around 7 – 8 hours. This reduction in duration is achieved through a simplified performance structure. By comparing the structure of the play Semar Bangun Kayangan in both the conventional and Wayang Climen formats, one can observe the shifts, reductions, and modifications made in the performance. In the Wayang Climen format, the play lasts approximately 2 hours, compared to 7,5 hours in the traditional format (Figure 2 and 3).

The conventional wayang performance structure comprises IX court scenes divided across three segments, or *patet*: *Patet Nem* (scenes I - IV), *Patet Sanga* (scenes V and VII), and *Patet Manyura* (scenes VIII and IX). In *Wayang Climen*, the duration is shortened by reducing the number of scenes, focusing only on the essential parts of the story. This creates a streamlined narrative with a simplified conflict. Such adjustments were confirmed by the following informant:

The short duration requires the dismantling of the performance structure so that the short duration does not reduce the quality of the all-night performance, and that the audience still gets a complete presentation of the play. To maintain the quality of the performance in a shorter time frame, the structural adjustments involve modifications in plot, language, and characterization. These adjustments include: *Plot reorganization*: Crafting an effective scene layout that flows continuously, with reduced pauses between scenes. *Language simplification*: Making the language more communicative and accessible for modern audiences. *Characterization enhancement*: Strengthening character portrayals and behaviors to make the characters more vibrant. For example, scenes involving *Limbukan* and *Gara-gara* are omitted, while *Panakawan* and *Limbuk-Cangik* are reinterpreted as main characters integrated into the primary storyline rather than appearing as side characters.

Efforts to reduce the duration of wayang performances have been ongoing since the 1980s. The Department of Puppetry at the Karawitan Academy of Surakarta developed *Wayang Padat*, while Indonesia Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta introduced *Komposisi Pakeliran* in 1989. Artistically, *Jliteng Suparman* pioneered *Wayang Climen* in 2010, but these early attempts did not achieve sustained popularity. The turning point came during the COVID-19 pandemic, when social restrictions (PSBB) prevented gatherings. In response, *Seno Nugroho* (SN) and the *Wargo Laras* group began performing *Wayang Climen*, broadcasting live from the *Wargo Laras* studio and uploading performances to YouTube, which drew widespread sponsor interest. This success led other puppeteers to adapt, with *Manteb Sudarsono* launching *Wayang Online* and *Purbo Asmoro* introducing *Wayang Virtual* (figure 4). These performances were streamed from homes or studios via YouTube channels (figure 5, left). During the PSBB and subsequent *Community Activity Restrictions* (PPKM) phases, *Wayang Climen* performances were held at the homes of viewers or sponsors, allowing public access while following health protocols (figure 5, right). However, as the pandemic subsided, many puppeteers returned to conventional formats, despite the significant market potential *Wayang Climen* offers for urban audiences.

No	Puppeteer	Show name	Source
1	Seno Nugroho	Wayang Climen	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/laexx3SoFqA?si=yY0Ojb0yvsvEaRrx">https://www.youtube.com/live/laexx3SoFqA?si=yY0Ojb0yvsvEaRrx</a>
2	Jliteng Suparman	Wayang Climen	<a href="https://youtu.be/V1UnVmcX7Es?si=PJKXiX6lTPBjGq1Y">https://youtu.be/V1UnVmcX7Es?si=PJKXiX6lTPBjGq1Y</a>
3	Manteb Sudharsono	Wayang Online	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/ljECrImW4TQ?si=MJI5DVsk0o56EIPh">https://www.youtube.com/live/ljECrImW4TQ?si=MJI5DVsk0o56EIPh</a>
4	Purbo Asmoro	Wayang Virtual	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/j3MVB9S_W7U?si=nNYU98oyMjqcIEFe">https://www.youtube.com/live/j3MVB9S_W7U?si=nNYU98oyMjqcIEFe</a>
5	Cahyo Kuntadi	Wayang Elektrik	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/H2ixUblDh-0?si=vUtxy4eNLGd2Kh-w">https://www.youtube.com/live/H2ixUblDh-0?si=vUtxy4eNLGd2Kh-w</a>
6	Sigid Aryanto	Wayang Online	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/rYsdRVEJO6c?si=30UAOcmUVBq3bqCL">https://www.youtube.com/live/rYsdRVEJO6c?si=30UAOcmUVBq3bqCL</a>

Figure 4. Shows various terms used by the puppeters to name their versions of *Wayang Climen* .





Figure 5. Wayang Climen performances schedule in 2020 during PSBB (left) and 2021 during PPKM (right).

### Simplification of Performance Space

Wayang Climen performances require only a modest physical space, which is considerably smaller than that needed for conventional wayang. The setup involves a simplified 3-meter screen and a limited set of gamelan instruments. A single set of Slendro gamelan, typically played by five or six musicians, suffices for the performance. In contrast, traditional wayang performances generally demand a stage at least 8 x 10 square meters in size, 2 sets of gamelan instruments, (Pelog and Slendro), and 14 musicians. This reduction in space requirements allows Wayang Lunur Climen to be performed in more accessible urban venues, such as a village hall measuring 4 x 6 square meters—an ideal setting for these compact, adaptable performances.



Figure 6. Wayang Climen stage (left) and conventional performance (right).

Wayang Climen performances play a vital role in restoring the habitat of wayang performances, as emphasized by following informant:

Historically, Wayang performances were hosted in the open yards of homes, making them accessible as a community-centered art form. However, with living spaces becoming increasingly limited, especially in urban areas, it is often impractical to set up the large 8 x 10 square meter stage typically required for traditional wayang. This spatial limitation has led to the need for a reimagined, compact format that can fit more easily within contemporary living conditions.

The simplified space requirements of Wayang Climen have significant financial implications, making it a more affordable option for organizing wayang performances. Traditional wayang involves considerable costs, including honoraria for the dalang (puppeteer) and crew, as well as rental fees for a full set of gamelan instruments and a comprehensive sound system. In contrast, Wayang Climen's minimalistic setup, with a smaller screen and reduced gamelan ensemble, lowers both the spatial and equipment demands. The performance typically involves a smaller team: five musicians (pengrawit), two sindens (female singers), one live streaming operator, and one sound system operator. This format keeps the costs manageable, with typical expenses ranging between IDR 5,000,000 and IDR 10,000,000, making it affordable for many families or urban communities in Yogyakarta, as expressed by the following informant:

By reducing the equipment and spatial requirements, Wayang Climen creates a financially accessible option for those interested in preserving and enjoying Wayang performances. Traditional Wayang shows can be prohibitively expensive, limiting their reach to wealthier audiences. Wayang Climen offers an economically viable alternative, thereby broadening access to this cultural art form and ensuring its sustainability in modern urban environments.

### **Simplification of the Story Theme (Wayang Scripts)**

The themes or storylines in Wayang Climen performances are light-hearted, contextual, and highly entertaining. Unlike traditional wayang, which often centers on epic heroes like Arjuna, Bima, and Krishna, Wayang Climen focuses on more relatable, humorous characters—particularly the punakawan figures: Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong. Notably, the character Bagong frequently appears as the lead in various stories (see Table 6), which is an uncommon practice in conventional Wayang performances. Traditional Wayang typically emphasizes characters from the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics, where the punakawan only feature in specific comedic or interlude scenes, such as the Limbukan and Gara-gara scenes. In Wayang Climen, however, the punakawan are interwoven throughout the main scenes alongside the story's central characters. In fact those characters are transformed into main characters by the dalang.

This approach, with its accessible and contextually relevant themes, allows audiences – particularly those less familiar with traditional Wayang – to engage with the performance and follow the story more easily. By blending humor and familiar, everyday character interactions, Wayang Climen creates an inclusive storytelling experience that broadens its appeal and preserves the essence of Wayang within a modern framework.

No.	Wayang Climen Play	Source
1	Bagong Lara (Bagong Sick)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/0bjpQsBReKk?si=47EjDFfVWys2fb-K">https://www.youtube.com/live/0bjpQsBReKk?si=47EjDFfVWys2fb-K</a>
2	Bagong Rabi (Bagong Married)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/ljuInctF1B4?si=R_MYs9ONjLex4-x1">https://www.youtube.com/live/ljuInctF1B4?si=R_MYs9ONjLex4-x1</a>
3	Bagong Ruwat (Bagong do Purification Ceremony)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/hWkJZhqycNQ?si=nPA2pPlmUKnhOhF">https://www.youtube.com/live/hWkJZhqycNQ?si=nPA2pPlmUKnhOhF</a>
4	Bagong Pandhita (Bagong becomes a Shaman)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/Iq1U0pHMMRs?si=zJ6KgVDoApjk17Xj">https://www.youtube.com/live/Iq1U0pHMMRs?si=zJ6KgVDoApjk17Xj</a>
5	Bagong Krida (Bagong Works Hard)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/JZ0UfUYyWDM?si=4MdrZjeAgGbGdaOD">https://www.youtube.com/live/JZ0UfUYyWDM?si=4MdrZjeAgGbGdaOD</a>
7	Bagong Kembar 3 (Triplets Bagong)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/zeUNaC69mfM?si=YToomzKsv8-i7kx0">https://www.youtube.com/live/zeUNaC69mfM?si=YToomzKsv8-i7kx0</a>
8	Bagong merantau (Bagong Goes Away)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/5S74hYiLmyE?si=Jl2w15C-RBzz1N3u">https://www.youtube.com/live/5S74hYiLmyE?si=Jl2w15C-RBzz1N3u</a>
9	Bagong Kuliah-Bagong Mbangun Kampus (Bagong Lecture)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/u29t0g-wCRE?si=5WkX7O609pjOlkUP">https://www.youtube.com/live/u29t0g-wCRE?si=5WkX7O609pjOlkUP</a>
10	Bagong Ratu (Bagong becomes King)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/7TMSDgflJw?si=tSjJwkExXg2pxc-hn">https://www.youtube.com/live/7TMSDgflJw?si=tSjJwkExXg2pxc-hn</a>
11	Bagong Duta (Bagong becomes an Envoy)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/6NBANKzQgSI?si=bzNbrS_6-BQFC7ih">https://www.youtube.com/live/6NBANKzQgSI?si=bzNbrS_6-BQFC7ih</a>
12	Bagong Mbangun Pabrik (Bagong Builds a Factory)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/EkqLCqiGtLc?si=6Fm5iNOjbelIVaeVc">https://www.youtube.com/live/EkqLCqiGtLc?si=6Fm5iNOjbelIVaeVc</a>
13	Bagong Mbangun SPBU (Bagong builds a gas station)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/9_RWp7LSctf?si=zVcWN8UyCR4ApOE">https://www.youtube.com/live/9_RWp7LSctf?si=zVcWN8UyCR4ApOE</a>
14	Bagong Convicted	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/l3Fy4izM7hY?si=IYCI_YgIca0lhhyl">https://www.youtube.com/live/l3Fy4izM7hY?si=IYCI_YgIca0lhhyl</a>
15	Bagong Mbagun Pawiyatan (Bagong Builds University)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/Csln1c-UsVQ?si=xj9r6Co18y5g_xCe">https://www.youtube.com/live/Csln1c-UsVQ?si=xj9r6Co18y5g_xCe</a>
16	Bagong Mbangun Padepokan (Bagong Builds a Padepokan)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/C2C2RZ2X0nU?si=357Glz--a9ljmcT9">https://www.youtube.com/live/C2C2RZ2X0nU?si=357Glz--a9ljmcT9</a>
17	Bagong Mbangun Desa (Bagong Builds the Village)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/QzR383x-Zzg?si=nF96fgov3hPaQPGQ">https://www.youtube.com/live/QzR383x-Zzg?si=nF96fgov3hPaQPGQ</a>
18	Bagong Mbrantas Korupsi (Bagong Eradicates Corruption)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/cULCS119wXs?si=YWUOqBvNjce22K8y">https://www.youtube.com/live/cULCS119wXs?si=YWUOqBvNjce22K8y</a>
19	Bagong Njaga Kahyangan (Bagong Guards Heaven)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/KL3LIwP0U3w?si=eAHQWvNrW9qAJcA5">https://www.youtube.com/live/KL3LIwP0U3w?si=eAHQWvNrW9qAJcA5</a>

Figure 7. Wayang Climen scripts with Bagong as the main character.

The simplification of story themes in Wayang Climen enables audiences with limited familiarity with Wayang traditions to easily follow and appreciate the performance. By addressing relatable, everyday issues, the narrative becomes accessible and engaging, as conveyed by the following informant:

Entertainment remains central to the performance's structure, where Wayang Climen seamlessly blends spectacle with guidance, rather than treating them as separate elements. This approach to "entertaining storytelling" allows the characters to be dynamic and engaging, inviting the audience to enjoy a lively presentation without detracting from the performance's underlying messages. In Wayang Climen, humor is skillfully woven into the storytelling, not by putting comedians on stage but through the expressive speech and vocal skills of the dalang.

The dalang's interaction with the musicians (pengrawit) and singers (pesinden), who respond to the story's unfolding events, further enhances the comedic and interactive aspects of the performance. This collaborative dynamic creates a form of humor that is both spontaneous and deeply rooted in the characters, making Wayang Climen an engaging and meaningful experience.






No.	Image	Event	Source
1		Auction of a painting	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/WIL9bPMXcho?si=p84Sp6OoshmAMEu3">https://www.youtube.com/live/WIL9bPMXcho?si=p84Sp6OoshmAMEu3</a>
2		Election socialization	<a href="https://youtu.be/7SZIOPE_uSo?si=0JwxZtix21hB70m">https://youtu.be/7SZIOPE_uSo?si=0JwxZtix21hB70m</a>
3		Company anniversary	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/syqjsz4TvEw?si=feZYpmU0Uy4SZG3M">https://www.youtube.com/live/syqjsz4TvEw?si=feZYpmU0Uy4SZG3M</a>
4		School birthday	<a href="https://youtu.be/2V9vmaiQRyc?si=S3PgSjU6G1HzjK">https://youtu.be/2V9vmaiQRyc?si=S3PgSjU6G1HzjK</a>
5		Birthday	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/y0hKyeELXUM?si=WSSwQQMjngsMSmnv">https://www.youtube.com/live/y0hKyeELXUM?si=WSSwQQMjngsMSmnv</a>

Figure 8. Wayang Climen performance posters, part 1.





No.	Image	Event	Source
6		Wedding Anniversary	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/Pj_X9KljLyY?s_i=6M4G2TUaQpMTnzLc">https://www.youtube.com/live/Pj_X9KljLyY?s_i=6M4G2TUaQpMTnzLc</a>
7		Church Anniversary	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/M5y5fTsRh90?s_i=xYm8xh7BHceH56GN">https://www.youtube.com/live/M5y5fTsRh90?s_i=xYm8xh7BHceH56GN</a>
8		Thanksgiving	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/I2vOdCKOkL8?si=NGQBoWVYcrELJrZX">https://www.youtube.com/live/I2vOdCKOkL8?si=NGQBoWVYcrELJrZX</a>
9		Commemoration of the Isra Miraj of the Prophet Muhammad	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/YaZK99R2514?si=KHOuc0kXoZPuY-8B">https://www.youtube.com/live/YaZK99R2514?si=KHOuc0kXoZPuY-8B</a>
10		100th anniversary of death	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/hpg6qYr5uVI?si=7xZ4r2ibSGGJV65x">https://www.youtube.com/live/hpg6qYr5uVI?si=7xZ4r2ibSGGJV65x</a>

Figure 8. Wayang Climen performance posters, part 2.

The posters for Wayang Climen performances (see figure 8) suggest that this art form enjoys a broad appeal across various audiences and community contexts. These performances have been showcased at a range of events, from personal celebrations like wed-

ding anniversaries and thanksgiving ceremonies to institutional gatherings such as school, university, and corporate anniversaries. The narratives presented are highly relevant to everyday life, often functioning as symbolic expressions of social critique or protest. Consequently, the characters portrayed frequently include more relatable, everyday figures—individuals who are seldom, if ever, featured in traditional Wayang performances.

### Discussion

Research analyzing the adaptation of performances into Wayang Climen reveals that simplifying various aspects of traditional Wayang effectively caters to urban audiences constrained by limited public space, time, and familiarity with the art form. This study identifies three key strategies for this reformatting. First, the duration of performances is significantly shortened. Second, the spatial requirements for staging are minimized. Third, themes are simplified to enhance accessibility. Collectively, these adaptations render Wayang Climen an appealing alternative for urban communities seeking tradition-based entertainment without the need for large venues or disruption to daily routines.

Wayang Climen has found particular success in Yogyakarta, a city with deep cultural ties to Wayang. Although previous attempts to simplify wayang faced resistance due to concerns that such changes would undermine traditional rules (*pakem*) and dilute the art's essence, the COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a shift in community acceptance. With restrictions on large gatherings and increased time spent at home, Wayang Climen emerged as a safe, home-based entertainment option for biosphere society like Yogyakarta people (Mamichev & Dergacheva, 2021). Its simplified themes allowed even those unfamiliar with Wayang to engage with the performances. During the pandemic, these shows were streamed live from studios or the homes of puppeteers. This approach has continued to resonate post-pandemic, as Wayang Climen performances are now well-suited for urban public spaces, while retaining live-streaming options to reach a broader audience (Baldin, 2024).

The success of Wayang Climen during the pandemic can also be viewed as a form of resistance by puppeteers against government-imposed restrictions on socio-economic and cultural activities, particularly the arts. Throughout this period, the public was bombarded with alarming statistics related to COVID-19, often overshadowing discussions about resuming economic activities. Puppeteers utilized Wayang idioms and symbolic language as tools of subtle resistance, articulating their dissent through live performances aimed at challenging the dominant narrative. In this context, the puppeteers exemplify Scott's (1990) concept of employing both hidden transcripts and public transcripts simultaneously. Such strategies of blending hidden and public transcripts are commonly practiced by artists (Hariyanto, 2018).

This research demonstrates that the acceptance of Wayang Climen by urban communities is closely linked to the efforts of Seno Nugroho (SN) in challenging the traditional dominance of Wayang performance stages. SN, often referred to as the "King of Live Streaming" (Kompas.com, 2020), successfully dismantled longstanding myths regarding the popularity of Wayang performances, which were previously dominated by renowned puppeteers. By breaking down these myths, SN has become a prominent public figure. Leveraging his popularity, SN constructs narratives through playful use of idioms and language as forms of resistance. This is realized by reducing performance duration, simplifying musical in-

strumentation, and altering performance venues. He emphasizes the entertainment aspect while selecting "new" plays that resonate with the context of the pandemic (Alavi & Azizi, 2021). Notably, the punakawan character Bagong has emerged as a central hero figure in this adaptation. Bagong is closely associated with SN and reflects the imagination of the "common people," who are often stigmatized as foolish yet are portrayed as brave and critical. In this way, Bagong serves as SN's alter ego, embodying the essence of the commoners despite their lowly stigmas (Prasetya et al., 2024). Through this character, SN articulates a discourse of community resistance that was difficult to express during the pandemic. The high levels of stress experienced by people during this time highlighted the need for entertainment to strengthen social connections and provide motivation to navigate challenging circumstances (Phongnil, 2024). Wayang Climen, presented via live streaming as if it were coming directly to the audience, served not only as a source of entertainment but also as a means of reinforcing community resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings of this study indicate that Wayang Climen, a reformatting of traditional all-night performances, achieves brevity by omitting certain parts of the narrative, resulting in a more compact presentation. This compactness contrasts with the concept of pakeliran, which is tailored for a limited audience with a deep and rigid understanding of Wayang (Sudarko, 2002). In contrast, Wayang Climen targets a broader audience, offering concise durations and straightforward narratives that are simple, fluid, and easily accessible to those with limited familiarity with Wayang. This significant reduction in performance time allows urban dwellers to enjoy the show without it interfering with their schedules or raising concerns about the following day's activities (Fuller & Stevens, 2019). Moreover, Wayang Climen performances are frequently delivered through online media, with YouTube being the most commonly utilized platform. This study supports the findings of Simatupang & Sampurno (2014), which emphasized that YouTube is widely favored for its familiarity and accessibility, facilitating engagement with a diverse audience.

In the post-COVID-19 landscape, puppeteers are once again competing within the entertainment industry, often resorting to grand, spectacular stage performances that cater to popular culture. Many puppeteers invite famous guest comedians or viral *sinden* from social media, presenting repetitive content that exploits themes of body shaming, verbal sexual violence, and the marginalization of people with disabilities for comedic effect (Multimedia, 2024). This contest for spectacular Wayang performances is particularly prevalent in urban areas. However, the dynamic nature of these spaces has rendered such grand productions increasingly impractical due to high costs and limited venues. In this context, reviving Wayang Climen – which gained significant popularity during the pandemic – is especially relevant. This revival should be driven by a reactualization program organized by community-based social movements. It is anticipated that these communities will help reshape perceptions and conceptualize urban spaces beyond the frameworks established by the state and urban planners, fostering collaborative living environments (Larasati et al., 2022). Thus, the reactualization and reformatting of Wayang performances into Wayang Climen for urban communities become vital for producing spaces that fulfill the right to the city. This approach alleviates the burden of traditional *pakem*, creating a communicative space where artists and audiences can engage in dialogue and reflect on urban issues in a more open and humane manner.

## Conclusion

This study reveals that concerns regarding Wayang Climen performances diminishing the value of traditional Wayang are unfounded. Instead, the research shows that Wayang Climen has emerged as an alternative form of entertainment for urban communities. Despite being shorter and simplified, the performances retain the essence of traditional Wayang, rich in cultural and philosophical values. The public has received the show positively, as it offers a more accessible format that aligns with the needs of modern audiences. This context illustrates that the adaptation of traditional art forms like Wayang Climen demonstrates tradition's capacity to transform in response to societal needs while preserving its cultural meaning and value. Thus, Wayang Climen not only serves to preserve cultural heritage but also ensures its relevance in contemporary changing times.

Furthermore, this research contributes significantly to the development of Wayang performance art. The performance model presented can serve as a valuable learning tool for aspiring dalangs or puppeteers. Traditional methods of Wayang education often require extensive time and involve complex techniques, while the Wayang Climen model offers a simplified format that still maintains the core essence of the art form. This approach opens up opportunities to accelerate the learning process without sacrificing the depth of the craft. Additionally, this research introduces a new perspective on how traditional arts education can adapt to the demands of a modern society that values time efficiency and accessibility. In this regard, Wayang Climen not only represents an adaptive performance form but also functions as an innovative pedagogical medium.

Despite its significant contributions, this study has limitations regarding the sample, which focused on a single case. The analysis centers on a Wayang Climen performance by one puppetry group, serving as the primary reference for data collection and analysis. Consequently, the findings cannot provide a comprehensive overview that could inform policy decisions. Therefore, further research needs to include a broader range of cases from diverse contexts, enabling comparative analysis and offering a more thorough understanding of Wayang Climen performances.

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