

## Delving Into Existential Fatigue and The Search for Meaning in The Play "kapai-kapai" by Arifin C. Noer

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### ABSTRACT

**Background.** The script of the play "Kapai-Kapai" by Arifin C. Noer has long been the subject of discussion in the Indonesian theater world because of its ability to depict existential fatigue and the search for meaning in human life.

**Purpose.** This study aims to conduct a qualitative analysis of the manuscript in order to better understand the themes raised, the characters depicted, and the writing style used by Arifin C. Noer.

**Method.** Through a qualitative approach, this study uses description and interpretation methods to explore the meanings in the manuscript "Kapai-Kapai." Key themes such as existential fatigue, the search for meaning in life, and social criticism are the focus of the analysis, while the main characters such as Mr. Dullah and Mrs. Dullah are studied in depth to understand their motivations, conflicts, and developments throughout the story. An analysis was also carried out on Arifin C. Noer's writing style, including the use of dialogue, monologues, symbolism, and narrative structure.

**Results.** The results of the study show that the manuscript "Kapai-Kapai" presents a complex and in-depth picture of the human condition trapped in a routine of life without a clear direction. Arifin C. Noer manages to portray the despair and uncertainty in the search for meaning in life, while highlighting the relevant social issues in Indonesian society at the time. This manuscript also shows the author's expertise in using symbolism and writing style that invites deep reflection from readers or viewers.

**Conclusion.** The script of the play "Kapai-Kapai" by Arifin C. Noer deeply explores the theme of existential fatigue and the search for meaning in life through complex characters with reflective dialogues, in-depth monologues, and symbols of life's journey. Reflecting on the socio-cultural context of Indonesia, this manuscript also criticizes the reality of society.

### KEYWORDS

Arifin C. Noer and Symbolism, Fatigue, Socio-Cultural

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### INTRODUCTION

Literature, including drama literature, is a reflection of the relay of social life (Hafizhah et al., n.d.) So that in the world of performing arts, drama or theater has an important role in reflecting human reality and conveying profound messages about life (Suryani dkk., 2022). Literature, including drama literature, is a reflection of the relay of social life (Hafizhah et al., n.d.).

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So that in the world of performing arts, drama or theater has an important role in reflecting human reality and conveying profound messages about life. This is because every thought possessed by a writer is never spared from the stimulus given by his environment (Isnaini, 2022; Logita, 2019).

Meanwhile, Brunetire and Balthazar Verhagen (Hafizhah et al., n.d.) said that drama is an art to depict the nature and attitude of human beings who must give birth to will through action. This explanation explains that when talking about drama, we are not only talking about performance, but also talking about sociology and culture. In another sense, Luxemburg et al. mentioned that the author wrote a work in accordance with the era in which he lived (Hafizhah et al., n.d.). That is, when talking about literature or drama we are also talking about history. One of the drama scripts that has become the center of attention in Indonesian theater discussions is "Kapai-Kapai" by Arifin C. Noer. Since it was first staged, this script has invited various interpretations and reflections on the themes raised, as well as a unique writing style. This is because the thinking given by Arifin C. Noer tends to be different from most other writers, writing with a philosophical pattern gives its own color in his works.

In this context, this study aims to conduct a qualitative analysis of the manuscript "Kapai-Kapai" with a focus on an in-depth understanding of the themes raised, the characters depicted, and the writing style used by Arifin C. Noer. Through a qualitative approach, this research will use description and interpretation methods to explore and reveal the meanings contained in this manuscript.

This study will discuss the historical and cultural context in which the "Kapai-Kapai" manuscript appeared, as well as provide an overview of the themes that will be analyzed in this study. With a deeper understanding of this manuscript, it is hoped that this research will contribute to a better understanding of the literary values and messages contained in "Kapai-Kapai," as well as provide additional insights into Arifin C. Noer's works in the context of Indonesian theater.

This study aims to analyze the script of the drama "Kapai-Kapai" by Arifin C. Noer using a qualitative approach. The formulation of the problem that will be discussed in this study includes how the themes of existential fatigue and the search for meaning of life are depicted in the script, what elements reflect these themes, and how Arifin C. Noer uses characters and plots to develop these themes.

Furthermore, this study will also examine how the main characters in "Kapai-Kapai" are developed and their role in describing the central themes of the script, how the backgrounds, motivations, and internal conflicts of the characters are shown, and how the interactions between the characters help reinforce the themes raised. In addition, this study will analyze Arifin C. Noer's writing style in "Kapai-Kapai" and how the use of dialogue, monologues, and symbolism supports the depiction of themes and characters, as well as how narrative structure and other writing techniques affect the reader's or audience's experience.

Furthermore, this research will look at the social and cultural context that influenced the writing of "Kapai-Kapai" and how this context was reflected in the manuscript, as well as how social, political, and cultural issues during the writing period affected the story and theme. This study will also examine how this manuscript contributes to social and cultural discussions in Indonesia (Stavrou et al., 2021; Wijayanti & Dermawan, 2019).

Finally, this study will analyze the reception and influence of the script "Kapai-Kapai" on the development of Indonesian theater, how it was received by critics and audiences when it was first performed, and how it influenced later theater works and the world of performing arts in Indonesia. By answering these questions, the research is expected to provide an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the "Kapai-Kapai" script, as well as its contributions to Indonesian theater and culture.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a deep qualitative approach to explore the meanings contained in each kapai-kapai drama script structure (Christou, 2023; Colonna, 2023). Qualitative research methods are methods that focus more on the process and set aside results so that they are able to produce structured and systematic research results. Meanwhile, sugiyono ( The qualitative analysis method was chosen because it gave the opportunity for the author to analyze the manuscript with a broad perspective so as to produce a broad discussion. This method also gives the author the opportunity to explore themes, characters and various intrinsic elements, thus producing in-depth discussions that are not only oriented to the script but also to objects outside the script such as social life, culture and so on (Archard, 2023; Bakken, 2023).

In the design of this study, the researcher pays attention to the importance of the correlation between the context of the manuscript and the social context that occurs at this time. In this case, it is how humans experience existential fatigue that causes the mess of the community's life order. The qualitative research design provides an opportunity for the author to capture the nuances and complexities of the text and social life in Indonesia.

The use of qualitative research design is also consistent with the purpose of this research to produce a deep and contextual understanding of the relationship between the manuscript and today's social life. By exploring narratives and social life, the design of this study allows researchers to gain rich and in-depth insights into how the manuscript correlates with social life.

### Research Objectives

The target of this study is two main objects, namely the manuscript and the social reality contained in the theme of the manuscript, namely the endless fatigue of society.

The placement of the manuscript as the main target is obvious because without the manuscript, this research would never have happened. The reason why the author chose this script is not spared from the figure of Arifin C. Noer himself who is one of the most influential theater figures in Indonesian theater. In addition, the depth of the theme is also the reason for the selection of this manuscript. In addition, the compatibility between scripts and life is also very interesting to discuss. This can be a learning not only in the realm of literature, but also in sociology, culture and other domains.

In addition to the manuscript, social life is also a very important object in this research, considering that the theme raised from this manuscript is inseparable from the reality that has been, is and may happen.

Therefore, manuscripts and social life are the main goals of this study.

### Data collection

The data collection carried out is by conducting various series of research directly on the manuscript and social wisdom in the author's environment so as to find a middle point between the manuscript and real life.

The first step is to respond to the written theme in the manuscript so as to produce a concrete understanding of the actual manuscript. In addition to the theme, the author also researches other elements such as laur, characterization, characters and other elements so that they not only understand the theme, but also understand the plot, linear characterization.

Furthermore, the author analyzes the behavior of the community, especially the middle and lower society which is the object of the theme of Arifin C. Noer's naskah karaya. This analysis aims to get a real embodiment of the manuscript through the social behavior of the community. In

addition, the author also wants to prove that the validity of the meaning contained in the manuscript through.

As a result, many values are indeed very correlated between the script and social life. This proves that the thoughts expressed by Arifin C. Noer through this literary work in the drama genre are the fruit of his personal experience while living a social life.

### **Data Analysis**

The qualitative data collected will be analyzed using a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it will allow researchers to explore and understand the meanings contained in the manuscript in depth.

The analysis process begins by interpreting various elements of the drama script which include themes, characters, characterization, plot and dialogues carried out by the characters. This is done to get the surprise of the whole element with the stamp that is lifted.

After the interpretation process is complete, the author will try to rearrange all the interpretations that have been obtained to produce a discussion that is comprehensive, structured and understandable by the reader.

### **Research Ethics**

Wagel stated that research ethics is a standard that must be followed by researchers to carry out and disseminate the results of their research responsibly (Hansen, 2023)

Research ethics is a very important aspect in the scientific research process. The ethical aspects of this research are considered very carefully to ensure that the entire research process is carried out with integrity and respect the rights of the readers, painters and all contributors of research.

First, the author assures that this research is private without the slightest plagiarism from any source to respect all authors who both want the results of their research to be read and useful to the general public without any similarities that cause bias in the perspective of readers.

Furthermore, the author also provides clear information written in this research ratikel about the objectives, benefits and background that are the main basis for writing this research.

During the data collection process, researchers carefully maintain the confidentiality and privacy of participants. Participant identities and other personal information will be masked or removed from the collected data to protect their confidentiality. The data will be stored securely and only accessed by authorized researchers.

Researchers also ensure that data analysis and interpretation are carried out honestly and objectively, without any bias or manipulation of data. The findings of the study will be presented accurately and transparently in the research report, without tendentious or manipulative interpretation.

Finally, researchers are committed to reporting research results honestly and openly, without hiding or changing findings that are not in line with research expectations or hypotheses. It is important to maintain scientific integrity and ensure that this research makes a meaningful contribution to the relevant field of knowledge.

By paying attention to the ethical principles of this research, the researcher hopes to conduct high-quality research and make a meaningful contribution to the sustainability of literature, especially the drama genre which can be used as a reference for anyone who is a drama activist and also useful for people who experience similar things as the values contained in nsakkah darama kapai-kapai.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Theme of Existential Fatigue and the Search for Meaning in Life

The script "Kapai-Kapai" raises the main theme of existential fatigue and the search for meaning in life. Arifin C. Noer uses characters in the script to describe the despair and confusion experienced by individuals who feel trapped in an aimless routine.

**Existential Fatigue:** This theme is shown through the character Abu who feels tired of his monotonous life. Abu often expressed his despair towards the life he was living without a clear direction. The dialogues are full of complaints about uncertainty and boredom, reflecting feelings experienced by many individuals in modern society. This can be seen through the behavior of abu who always complains to his mother as a parent. In addition, this existential fatigue can also be seen from the dialogue between Abu and Iyem when they want to deceive their young children. Here's the dialogue;

*Abu : Kita harus tahan. Setidaknya satu hari lagi anggap saja puasa.*

*Iyem : Ini hari kelima. Lapar. Lapar. Lapar. Lapar.*

*Abu : Jangan hitung.*

*Iyem : Kita bunuh saja.*

This existential fatigue can also be seen from how Abu always gets pressure from his employer who always speaks rudely and without mercy.

*Majikan : Abu ! Abu !*

*Abu : (DIAM)*

*Majikan : Anjing !*

*Abu : (MERANGKAK) Ya, Tuan.*

*Majikan : Anjing !*

*Abu : Ya, Tuan.*

*Majikan : Anjing !*

**The Search for Meaning in Life:** Ash, on the other hand, continues to search for the meaning of life through a variety of means, including interactions with other characters and spiritual quests. His quest describes the human desire to find purpose and meaning in their lives, although it often ends in confusion and disappointment. This can be seen from his dialogue with the group leaders heading to the Sulaiman shop;

*Abu : Ke toko Nabi Sulaiman.*

*Semua : Buat apa ?*

*Abu : Untuk membebaskan kita dari kutuk ini.*

*Semua : Bahagia.*

*Abu : Ya itu nama khasiatnya.*

### Character Development

The characters in "Kapai-Kapai" are carefully developed to describe the themes raised.

**Ash:** This character is portrayed as an individual who is stuck in a daily routine with no hope for change. Ash is the personification of existential fatigue, with dialogues that show his boredom and despair towards life.

**Iyem:** Iyem is a more dynamic character and is constantly trying to find meaning in life. His internal conflicts and interactions with other characters reflect the struggle of man in finding a purpose in life in the midst of uncertainty.

This can be seen from how the plot that leads each character into the atmosphere, the plot and disposition that continues to be developed into an interesting narrative.

## Writing Style of Arifin C. Noer

Arifin C. Noer uses a strong and symbolic writing style in "Kapai-Kapai."

**Dialogue and Monologue:** The use of dialogue and monologues in this script is very effective in conveying the feelings and thoughts of the characters. The dialogues are often reflective and full of existential questions, while monologues are used to express the characters' deepest feelings.

**Symbolism:** This manuscript is loaded with symbolism, the most prominent of which is the mirror of deception in this manuscript. The mirror in this manuscript symbolizes a journey of life full of uncertainty and the search for meaning. The use of these symbols reinforces the themes raised and gives an additional layer of meaning to the story.

**Narrative Structure:** The structure of the "Kapai-Kapai" script is non-linear, reflecting the chaos and uncertainty in the search for meaning in life. The use of flashbacks and flashforwards helps to describe the complexity of the human experience and gives depth to the existing characters.

## Social and Cultural Context

The script "Kapai-Kapai" was written in the social and cultural context of Indonesia during the writing period of Arifin C. Noer.

**Social and Political Issues:** This manuscript reflects the social and political issues that existed at the time, such as economic uncertainty and social injustice. Through his characters, Arifin C. Noer criticizes the existing social conditions and describes their impact on individuals.

**Cultural Reflection:** "Kapai-Kapai" also reflects Indonesian cultural values, such as the importance of family and spirituality. However, the text also challenges some traditional values, by depicting characters who seek to find their identities and goals beyond existing norms.

## Acceptance and Influence of the Manuscript

**Reception of Critics and Audiences:** When it was first performed, "Kapai-Kapai" received mixed reactions from critics and audiences alike. Some praised its philosophical depth and use of symbolism, while others found it baffled by the unconventional narrative structure.

**Influence on Indonesian Theater:** "Kapai-Kapai" has had a significant influence on the development of Indonesian theater. This script encourages theater writers and directors to be more courageous in raising complex themes and using innovative writing styles.

## CONCLUSION

The script of the drama "Kapai-Kapai" by Arifin C. Noer deeply explores the theme of existential fatigue and the search for meaning in life through characters such as Abu who is trapped in a routine of empty meaning, and Ibu Dullah who tirelessly searches for the significance of life. Arifin develops characters in a complex manner with reflective dialogues, in-depth monologues, and symbolic imagery such as ships symbolizing life's journeys, as well as non-linear narrative structures that reinforce existential exploration. As a work that reflects the socio-cultural context of Indonesia at that time, "Kapai-Kapai" also touches on social, political, and economic issues that affect individuals with subtle criticism of the reality of society. Responses have ranged from confusion to appreciation for its philosophical depth and artistic innovation. Overall, this script full of meaning and symbolism makes an important contribution to Indonesian theater, not only depicting the human condition but also inviting the audience to reflect on the meaning of life and the existential fatigue that accompanies it.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION



Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

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