

**QUEST FOR LIFE REFLECTED IN ANTOINE DE SAINT-
EXUPERY'S *THE LITTLE PRINCE* NOVEL (1943):
AN EXISTENTIALIST APPROACH**



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ABSTRACT

ARDITA KURNIA SEJATI. A 320 100 125. QUEST FOR LIFE REFLECTED IN ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY'S THE LITTLE PRINCE NOVEL (1943): AN EXISTENTIALIST APPROACH. RESEARCH PAPER. SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION. MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA. 2012.

This study is aimed to show The Little Prince quest of life in The Little Prince novel by using existentialist approach. It is done by establishing two objectives: the first is analyzing the novel based on its structural elements and the second is analyzing the novel based on the Existentialist Approach.

This research is descriptive qualitative research. Type of data of the study is text from two data sources: primary and secondary. The primary data source is the The Little Prince novel by Antoine saint de- Exupery released in 1943. While the secondary data sources are other materials taken from books, journals, and internet related to the study. Both data are collected through library research and analyzed by descriptive analysis.

The study comes to the following conclusions. First, based on the structural analysis of each elements, it shows that characters and characterization, setting (setting of place and setting of time), plot (exposition, complication, climax, resolution, causality, and plausibility), point of view, theme style (grammatical structure, sentence construction, diction) are related to each other and form a unity. Second, based on the Existentialist analysis reflected in the character and characterization in being, existence before essence, consciousness (cogito), freedom to choose, anxiety, transcendence ego, and nothingness, quest for the existence of life lead to meaningful purpose in human's life.

Keywords: Existence, The Little Prince, Existentialist Perspective.

A. Introduction

1. Background of the study

Quest is the important thing in human life. We are curious for quest of a lot of thing in every single way of our life. When we are in the school we are quest for many answers for a lot of query from our teacher. When we are in the workplace, we are quest how to be an excellent worker. And in religion we are try to quest how we can be enhanced and find a good way to meet our God. Quest is very close with every situation of human life. It is one of the best ways to find the essence of life. So we can life with our good and exact principal rules made by us because we are always tries to quest of something. Such as Little Prince, he is someone who has a big curiosity and tries to find the quest of life. He is tries to answer something interrupts on his thoughts about what is the important of life even though he is still six years old. He met some people in the different planet to help him to answer his strange question. He felt an adult has complicated thoughts to explicate something, but actually the case is not complicated as they thoughts.

The Little Prince Novel was published in New York when World War II is happened in April, 1943. *The Little Prince* Novel is about a boy who is curious about life and he act to quest what is the important thing in life. He is across the universe and arrived in six planets then he met with six different people with different background of work. He asks them about some things which interrupts on his thoughts. But at the end of his excursion he found the answer from him selves.

There are four reasons that make this novel interesting to analyze. First the novel is good, I love the plot. In other word I say the book is unique. The writer create the main character as a children 6 years old who very curious with how grows up think and he travelled around the universe to finding what is the important of life.

The second, this novel is a legendary novel from France. This novel firstly published in 1943 (in World War II). Since 1943 the novel has been translated in many languages, including in Bahasa Indonesia.

Third, this novel tells a good story. The main character met 6 people in six different planets in universe. And all of the six people are represent six characteristic of human.

The last reason this book should be read by grown up although the main character is a child six years old. Because it needs more imaginations and rationalities to understand and to know how children think. This is the best that I got from this book.

2. Literature Review

The research that relates to the writers study has been done by Eko Prasetyo (College Literature, 2008) entitled *The Indonesian Equivalence of “The Little Prince” a research paper a faculty of letter: English Department as a partial of requirement for Undergraduate in English Literature*. This research examines the way in translate this story book and solve the problem faced by the translator in carrying out this story book by Saint-Exupery.

Paulo (Multinlupa city, 2012) entitled *The Little Prince Novel Research Paper* shows that he analyze how the story transformed and touched to the readers. And it’s very little and modest way to millions of hearts all over the world. A very simple and easy way to know the readers understand the story with their own perspective.

Jaqui Godsi (New York, 2000) entitled *The Literary of The Little Prince* shows that one of the predominant themes of *The Little Prince* is the treasure found in true friendship. Connected to this is the issue of “taming” with its associated “rites” which, in the discipline and responsibility it demands, cultivates the eternal bond that is the essence of friendship.

Alyssa Rosales (England, 2013) entitled *An Analysis of the Little Prince by Antoine De Saint Exupery*. This study shows the Alyssa analyze about the little prince in different point of view. She analyzes the story in adult point of view. In her analyze about the little Prince she is interest with the straight view from adult.

The Commonweal magazines (America, 1943) write *The critical review of The Little Prince Novel* states when reading *The Little Prince*, the reader is moved to confess that here lies something so pure, so

simple, so tender, and yet so imbued with intricate significances. At least, it seems that is what should be recognized. If it touches the heart, then it has indeed reflected the very essence of what the story is telling in a gentle and subtle way.

3. Problem Statement

The major problem of this study is “How the quest of life reflected in Antoine De Saint – Exupery’s *The Little Prince* novel?

4. Research Limitation

To focus on the study, the researcher focuses on the analysis of Quest of life reflected in Antoine De Saint – Exupery’s *The Little Prince* novel (1943) especially viewed by existentialism approach.

5. Objective of Study

To analyze Quest of life reflected in Antoine De Saint – Exupery’s *The Little Prince* novel (1943) based on its structural elements by finding characters and characterizations, setting, point of view, plot and theme and on existentialism approach.

6. Benefit of the Study

There are some benefits expected from this study, First, Theoretical benefit of his study can contribute to the development of the body of knowledge about literary study especially existentialist approach in the literary studies on *The Little Prince* novel. The second, practical benefit, the writer gets some information about existentialism approach that may help to analyze students in society and to give a deeper understanding to the other researches who intend to analyze the Antoine De Saint – Exupery’s *The Little Prince* novel (1943) by existentialism approach.

7. Underlying Theory

a. Quest

Quest is the way of person to find something that important or something that they want in their life. For example they try to find their God. They search of the faith as they know. According to Paul Barrette (Barrette, 1999:01) in his journal *The Quest in Classical Literature: Structuralism and Databases*, Quest is an initiator who is need to something or someone imports. This object requires a substantial effort to obtain. The initiator calls or imposes upon someone to undertake the quest himself. A long and substantial journey follows, on which the quester may journey alone or

with companions. According to Shipley (Shipley, 2011:01) states that quest is a journey towards success. An organization used the (fictive) story or vision of being able to develop a new organization by setting out on a journey of discovery and reform. The following typologies of quest are call to adventure, the journey, and the return

B. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

The writer uses qualitative research in this research because there is no need statistic data. The data sources are library and literary data.

2. Object of the Study

The object of this study is *The Little Prince* novel by Antoine De Saint – Exupery's to discuss the quest of life and existence that reflected in the main character's personality.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

There are two types of the data namely primary data and secondary data which needed in this research, as follows first, the primary data source of the study is *The Little Prince* novel by Antoine De Saint – Exupery's. The secondary data sources are books or any information related to the practice of *The Little Prince* novel that support Existentialism Analysis.

4. Technique of the Collection

The writer uses note taking as method in collecting data. The steps are as following, reading the novel repeatedly, taking notes of important parts both primary and secondary data, arranging the data into several groups based on its theoretical category, selecting particular parts considered important and relevant of analysis, drawing conclusion and formulate its pedagogical suggestion.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the writer applies a descriptive approach. The steps taken by the writer in analyzing the data are as follows: The first is analyzing the data based on its structural elements. Focus will be paid on the structural analysis of the novel. The second step is analyzing the data based on existentialism perspective. Focus will be paid on the meaning of quest of life and existence.

C. Discussion

1. Structural elements of the novel

Characters are the participants of the story created by an author to be agents of action (Barnet, 1961: 13). In *The Little Prince* novel there are major character and minor characters. The major characters are the pilot (the narrator), the Little Prince, and the fox. The minor characters are The Turkish Astronomer, the Little Prince's Flower, The King, The Conceited Man, The Tippler, The Businessman, The Lamplighter, The Geographer, The Snake, The Dessert Flower, The Garden of Roses, The Railway switchman and The Merchant.

This novel has focused on the major character; he is the little prince who really has big curiosity with something that he never knows before. He is from an asteroid known as B-612. *Physically*, He is very small and he had an odd voice. He wears a blue coats and grey boots. His hair is blonde and he holds a sword.

The Little Prince is plotted to establish one theme: The theme of this story is the importance of looking beneath the surface to find the real truth and meaning of a thing. It is the fox who teaches the Prince to see with one's heart instead of just with one's eyes. The Theme of *The Little Prince* (1943) is "What is essential is invisible to see, And it is only the heart that one can see rightly".

Point of view in *The Little Prince*, from this perspective, the reader sees the narrator gives a first-person account, although he spends large portions of the story recounting the little prince's own story of his travels. The narrator's point of view is interring woven in the first nine chapters and changes from third – person to first person.

In *The Little Prince*, Antoine De saint – Exupery shows the complication from the two sides: The external factors and internal factors.

The first external conflict, the little prince forces the pilot to draws a sheep. The pilot felt so shocked because the one and only picture that he draws is the boa constrictors from the outside and the inside. But finally he draws a sheep inside the box and the little prince understand it. The second

external conflict, The little prince met some people from different planets. And one of them push him to be a ministry of his planet. But he don't want to be a ministry or something. The third external conflict, the little prince sits on the top of the wall. He is affraid for the snakes which wants to bites him. His face was white as snow. Lately, the pilot saved him.

The fourth internal conflicts, the pilot lived life alone, without anyone that he could really talk to, until he had an accident with my plane in the Desert of Sahara, six years ago. Something was broken in his engine. And he did not have a mechanic or any passengers; he set himself to attempt the difficult repairs all alone. It was a question of life or death for him: he had scarcely enough drinking water to last a week. The fifth internal conflict, The little prince met a fox in the one place of the world then they become a best friend. Before he mets a fox, cctually the little prince really wants a friend. The fox really impresses wih the little prince, because he is so kind and different wih other people who wants to hunt the fox.

In conclusion, after analyzing the structural elements of the novel above, the next steps to complete this study is by relating all of the elements to one another and putting them back into a unity. The little prince realizes after he met some strange people across the universe, he needs to responsible with what he has in his life. Those are the rose, baobab trees and three mountains in his planets. In his journey he learned that some people are just thinking about their self. After he met the fox, he knows about the real life, faith, responsibility and the real magnificence of something.

2. Existentialism Analysis

The Little Prince *Being* in itself is shown in the being of "leader". He is the leader of his planet and managed all the things. He knows it is hard to do all the things by him, and then he asked the pilot when he arrived in the seventh planet.

This time, once more, I had the sheep to thank for it. For the little prince asked me abruptly— as if seized by a grave doubt— "It is true, isn't it, that sheep eat little bushes?"
"Yes, that is true."
"Ah! I am glad!"
I did not understand why it was so important that sheep should eat little bushes. But the little prince added: "Then it follows that they also eat baobabs?" (The Little Prince: 15)

The Little Prince *existence before essence* here has meaning that the little prince becomes an ambassador from the king. And he ordered to go.

As the king made no answer, the little prince hesitated a moment. Then, with a sigh, he took his leave. "I made you my Ambassador," the king called out, hastily. He had a magnificent air of authority. "The grown-ups are very strange," the little prince said to himself, as he continued on his journey. (The Little Prince: 30)

The little prince *Consciousness* occurred when the little prince is conscious about the rose which is loves him.

"Goodbye," he said to the flower.
But she made no answer.
"Goodbye," he said again.
The flower coughed. But it was not because she had a cold.
"I have been silly," she said to him, at last. "I ask your forgiveness. Try to be happy..."
He was surprised by this absence of reproaches. He stood there all bewildered, the glass globe held arrested in mid-air. He did not understand this quiet sweetness.
"Of course I love you," the flower said to him. "It is my fault that you have not known it all the while. That is of no importance. But you—you have been just as foolish as I. Try to be happy... let the glass globe be. I don't want it any more."

The little prince *freedom to choose* is take a journey across the universe in the first planet he met a king who order him to be a minister of justice. But he refuses that, because he thought no one should be judge.

"Do not go," said the king, who was very proud of having a subject. "Do not go. I will make you a Minister!"
"Minister of what?"
"Minster of— of Justice!"
"But there is nobody here to judge!"
"We do not know that," the king said to him. "I have not yet made a complete tour of my kingdom. I am very old. There is no room here for a carriage. And it tires me to walk. (The Little prince: 29)

The little prince *anxiety* when the baobabs grow fast at his planet. He asks to the pilot how to solve the problem. The pilot answer wisely, it is just about responsibility and discipline.

I did not understand why it was so important that sheep should eat little bushes.
But the little prince added:
"Then it follows that they also eat baobabs?"
I pointed out to the little prince that baobabs were not little bushes, but, on the contrary, trees as big as castles; and that even if he took a whole herd of elephant away with him, the herd would not eat up one single baobab. (The little prince: 15)

The little prince *transcendence of ego* is when he wants the pilot draws a sheep to him but the pilots draws a boa constrictors.

"That doesn't matter. Draw me a sheep..."
But I had never drawn a sheep. So I drew for him one of the two pictures I had drawn so often. It was that of the boa constrictor from the outside. And I was astounded to hear the little fellow greet it with, "No, no, no! I do not want an elephant inside a boa constrictor. A boa constrictor is a very dangerous creature, and an elephant is very cumbersome. Where I live, everything is very small. What I need is a sheep. Draw me a sheep."

The little prince *Nothingness* will be analyzed through the major character; the little prince tries to kill himself with snake bites.

Another voice must have answered him, for he replied to it: "Yes, yes! It is the right day, but this is not the place." I continued my walk toward the wall. At no time did I see or hear anyone. The little prince, however, replied once again: "—Exactly. You will see where my track begins, in the sand. You have nothing to do but wait for me there. I shall be there tonight." I was only twenty metres from the wall, and I still saw nothing. After a silence the little prince spoke again: "You have good poison? You are sure that it will not make me suffer too long?"

3. Quest Analysis

The call of adventure of the little prince is reflected when the little prince want to take a journey across the universe to find what life is.

"Well, I must endure the presence of two or three caterpillars if I wish to become acquainted with the butterflies. It seems that they are very beautiful. And if not the butterflies— and the caterpillars— who will call upon me? You will be far away... as for the large animals— I am not at all afraid of any of them. I have my claws."And, naïvely, she showed her four thorns. Then she added"Don't linger like this. You have decided to go away. Now go!"For she did not want him to see her crying. She was such a proud flower... (The little prince: 26)

The journey of the little prince is reflected when the little prince meet some of grown- ups with their odd characteristic.

"Good morning," said the little prince. "That is a queer hat you are wearing."
"It is a hat for salutes," the conceited man replied.
"It is to raise in salute when people acclaim me. Unfortunately, nobody at all ever passes this way." "Yes?" said the little prince, who did not understand what the conceited man was talking about. "Clap your hands, one against the other," the conceited man now directed him.
The little prince clapped his hands. The conceited man raised his hat in a modest salute.
"This is more entertaining than the visit to the king," the little prince said to himself. And he began again to clap his hands, one

against the other. The conceited man against raised his hat in salute.
(The Little Prince: 31)

The return of The Little Prince is after the entire journey he takes across the universe,
The Little Prince back to his planet with the poison from the snake.

"Yes, yes! It is the right day, but this is not the place."
I continued my walk toward the wall. At no time did I see or hear anyone. The little prince, however, replied once again:
"—Exactly. You will see where my track begins, in the sand. You have nothing to do but wait for me there. I shall be there tonight."
I was only twenty metres from the wall, and I still saw nothing. After a silence the little prince spoke again:
"You have good poison? You are sure that it will not make me suffer too long?"
I stopped in my tracks, my heart torn asunder; but still I did not understand.
"Now go away," said the little prince. "I want to get down from the wall."
I dropped my eyes, then, to the foot of the wall— and I leaped into the air. There before me, facing the little prince, was one of those yellow snakes that take just thirty seconds to bring your life to an end.

D. Conclusion

The researcher was analyzing the data dealing with quest of life of major characters of *The Little Prince* novel and existentialism approach. Based on the analysis of quest of life reflected in *The Little Prince* novel by using existentialism approach, the researcher draws the conclusion as follows:

First, the interesting points are shows that the whole elements of the novel present a solid unity. The literary elements of *The Little Prince* novel are such as the characters, setting, plot, point of view, and themes. The major characters are The Little Prince, The Pilot (the narrator), and the Fox. The minor characters are The Turkish Astronomer, the Little Prince's Flower, The King, The Conceited Man, The Tippler, The Businessman, The Lamplighter, The Geographer, The Snake, The Dessert Flower, The Garden of Roses, The Railway switchman and The Merchant.

Second, based on Existentialism approach, the quest of life reflected in the personality of someone. Existentialism which consist of *Being, Existence before Essence, Consciousness (cogito)*,

Freedom to Choose, Anxiety, Transcendence of ego and *Nothingness*. There are seven aspects which are used to analyze the quest approach; call to adventure, the journey, and the return. By knowing the personality structure of the character, the writer tries to explore the quest and existence of major character, namely *The Little Prince*. The investigation of personality could be done through action of the character and then the writer describes it as well as classifies it. Finally the writer makes relationship between the structures of personality with the kind of anxiety and existence that occurs in the major character.

Lastly, *The little Prince* novel is the good story for adult or children to read. They will have their own opinion when read *The Little Prince* novel. Besides that, it has correlation between *The Little Prince* (1943) novel with existentialism approach.

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