



An Intrinsic and Extrinsic Analysis of Novel "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the novel *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupéry through intrinsic and extrinsic elements. This article analyzes qualitative methods with a descriptive approach. This study focuses on four aspects: theme analysis, character analysis, plot and setting analysis, and extrinsic context including the author's historical background. From the results of the analysis, 4 elements were found: (1) prominent themes in the novel *The Little Prince*, such as loneliness, friendship, love, and the search for meaning; (2) the development and nature of his unique character; (3) The author's reflection on his life, especially when he was a pilot and faced the harshness of war, greatly influenced the depth of meaning and symbols scattered throughout his narrative; and (4) moral and existential messages conveyed through the story. Through contemplative reading, the researcher found that the harmony between the intrinsic elements and the author's life background created layers of emotion and messages that transcended cultural boundaries. This study proves that qualitative literary analysis is not only a tool to appreciate the beauty of language, but also a window to understand the human values that live in it.

Keywords: *The Little Prince*, intrinsic and extrinsic-analysis, symbolism, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, human experience

INTRODUCTION

Literature is not only an aesthetic medium, but also a reflective reflection of the human existential experience. One of the literary works that highlights the relationship between artistic form and philosophical meaning is *The Little Prince* (1943) by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. This novel tells the story of a child from another planet who travels across stars, but the narrative contains profound messages about loneliness, love, loss, and the search for meaning in life. The theoretical issue underlying this research is how narrative elements and symbolism in the text play a role in conveying existential values without ignoring the historical and biographical

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context of the author.

Previous research has extensively discussed aspects of meaning in *The Little Prince*. Wang (2012), in his study in the *Canadian Social Science Journal*, explains that the novel contains four principles of existentialism: awareness of absurdity, freedom of choice, alienation, and emotional emptiness due to nihilism, which is evident in the loneliness of the main character throughout the story (Wang, 2012). Another study by Yunita (2017) found five dominant symbols desert, stars, roses, baobabs, and water that were strongly tied to themes of love, emotional growth, and self-identity (Yunita, 2017). In addition, the article Bookstr (2023) highlights the importance of the Prince's relationship with the fox reflecting the meaning of emotional attachment and the search for authentic relationships: "Meaning is not inherent; it must be actively sought and generated." (Bookstr, 2023).

Although it has been widely studied, most of these studies tend to focus the analysis on structural elements or social context separately. There have not been many studies that systematically integrate the two approaches in a single complete study. Therefore, this study raises a key question: how does the interaction between the narrative structure (theme, characters, setting, plot, symbols) and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's life experiences shape the philosophical meaning in the novel *The Little Prince*?

The main concepts used in this study refer to intrinsic and extrinsic analytical approaches. According to Nurgiyantoro (2010), intrinsic elements include aspects that are in the text itself, such as themes, characters, plots, settings, as well as language styles and symbols. On the other hand, Wellek and Warren (1956) stated that extrinsic elements include external aspects of the text, such as the author's biography, historical, socio-cultural, and psychological background, which also affect the content and meaning of the work.

As a character who lives in the midst of the turmoil of war and is known as a military pilot, Saint-Exupéry's experiences cannot be separated from the narrative of this novel. The Literariness.org site in its review explains that *The Little Prince* reflects the alienation he felt as an adult, as well as a longing for the simplicity and purity of childhood (Mambrol, 2023). By combining thematic frameworks, this analysis aims to unify the literary structure and life experiences of the author as a narrative unit that enriches meaning.

METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to explore the philosophical and symbolic meanings in the novel *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry through intrinsic and extrinsic analysis. The design of this study was chosen because it is in accordance with the main goal of literary studies, which is to interpret the meaning contained in the text through in-depth reading (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This approach allows researchers to explore the narrative structure as well as the author's background that contributes to the formation of the meaning of the story.

Research Subject

The subject of this study is the English translation of the novel *The Little Prince* published by Wordsworth Editions (2018). The novel was chosen because it is a licensed version that is widely used in academic analysis and has contextual suitability with the secondary sources analyzed.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data is collected through a close reading method or deep reading of the text, focusing on intrinsic elements such as themes, characters, settings, plots, and symbols. Extrinsic data is collected from credible secondary sources, such as author biographies, journal articles, and literature reviews. These sources include articles by Wang (2012), Yunita (2017), as well as literary criticism essays from Bookstr (2023) and Literariness.org (Mambrol, 2023).

The main instrument in this study is the analytical annotation sheet, which is used to record important quotations, repetitive symbols, and the relationship between the structure of the story and the historical context of the author. These instruments are structured based on the categories of literary analysis developed by Abrams (1999) within the classical theoretical framework: mimetic (relationship with reality), expressive (relationship with the author), objective (the text itself), and pragmatic (influence on the reader).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is carried out thematically through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. This stage refers to qualitative data analysis techniques according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). This research also uses the conceptual framework of literary symbolism as developed by Cuddon (2013), to identify the function of symbols and metaphors in constructing meaning.

The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation, which is comparing the results of text analysis with the interpretation of other researchers in previous studies, as well as member checking on annotations made consistently based on the internal and external context of the text.

With the design and procedure described above, this research can be replicated by other researchers interested in a dual approach (intrinsic and extrinsic) in the study of philosophical literature.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Theme: Loneliness, Love, and the Search for Meaning

In *The Little Prince*, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry poetically weaves together the universal themes inherent in human existence. The theme of loneliness is evident in the pilot's narrative: "So I lived my life alone, without anyone that I could really talk to" (Exupéry, 2018, p. 6). This phrase is not just a literal reflection, but a symbol of the alienation of modern man that has lost the connection of meaning.

The theme of love, on the other hand, is present through the relationship between the Little Prince and the rose on his home planet. Roses are not just flowers, but manifestations of love that require sacrifice and understanding. In dialogue with the fox, the Prince learns that "It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important" (Exupéry, 2018, p. 54). This phrase suggests that true love grows from emotional involvement and commitment.

According to Wang (2012), the relationships between characters in this novel reflect the four principles of existentialism: awareness of absurdity, freedom of choice, alienation, and emptiness that encourage the search for meaning. The Prince never stopped asking questions and searching, until he finally realized that "what is essential is invisible to the eye" (Exupéry, 2018, p. 48) a message that is full of meaning for readers across generations.

Symbolism as a Philosophical Medium

Symbolism is the backbone of the novel's narrative. Roses, deserts, foxes, and stars are not just fictional ornaments, but represent a profound idea of human beings and their existence. Yunita (2017), in her research, identified five main symbols stars as symbols of immortality, roses as love and vulnerability, and deserts as spaces for contemplation.

The desert in the story is not just a setting, but a quiet space where an existential encounter occurs. This is where the pilot and the Prince have a dialogue about the meaning of life. According to Mambrol (2023), the desert reflects Saint-Exupéry's inner state when he experienced alienation and spiritual crises during his time as a war pilot. A barren place becomes the most fertile space to find meaning.

The fox symbol also plays a crucial role. When the fox says, "One only understands the things that one tames" (Exupéry, 2018, p. 53), the reader is invited to reflect on the importance of relationships that are built with sincerity, not just functions or interests.

Character and Dialogue as a Reflection of the Author's Philosophy

The characters in *The Little Prince* are not formed for conventional plots, but as representatives of certain ideas and philosophies. The Prince symbolizes innocence and intuition, the pilot as the rational reality of adults, and planetary figures (kings, businessmen, drunkards, and etc.) represent the absurdity of social life.

Dwimuji and Maisaroh (2022) show that through these figures, Saint-Exupéry conveyed a subtle critique of modern civilization that lost its meaning because it was too obsessed with power, numbers, and pseudo-busyness. The dialogue between the Prince and the planetary figures presents an existentialist discourse: that life is only meaningful if it is lived with awareness, love, and freedom of choice.

Biographical and Historical Context of the Author

Extrinsic analysis strengthens the understanding of symbolic meaning in novels. Saint-Exupéry was not only a writer, but also a pilot, philosopher and witness to a time full of conflict. Mambrol (2023) asserts that Saint-Exupéry's experience as an aviator

during World War II brought a dimension of alienation and inner silence that was strongly recorded in the narrative. He wrote *The Little Prince* while in exile, not only physically, but also spiritually.

This personal experience is transformed into a universal narrative. In limitations, clarity appears. In the silence, the voice of the heart appears. The author uses his traumatic experiences to channel an understanding of people, life, and the importance of nurturing relationships both with oneself and others.

CONCLUSION

After an in-depth analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements in the novel *The Little Prince*, it can be concluded that Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's work is a philosophical narrative that not only touches on the literary aspect, but also voices universal human values. Themes such as loneliness, love, and the search for meaning are not only explicitly present in the narrative, but are also reinforced by rich and profound symbolism, such as roses, deserts, stars, and foxes.

On the other hand, the background of Saint-Exupéry's life as a pilot and wanderer living in wartime gives a strong personal and existential feel to the story. Her life experiences are transformed into touching symbolic elements making this novel not just a children's story, but a reflection of the inner life of an adult searching for the meaning of living in solitude and alienation.

This research shows that a combined approach between intrinsic and extrinsic analysis provides a more complete and in-depth understanding of literary texts. *The Little Prince* is not only aesthetically beautiful, but it also contains a philosophical depth that continues to be relevant today.

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