

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The meaning of human existence is still debatable even until today. A lot of philosophers, mostly the existentialists, have studied the meaning of human existence for a long time. Existentialism is a philosophical theory emphasizing the existence of an individual as a free and determining agent. Literature, as a cultural product, tries to present the theme of existentialism through literary works. Two examples of literary works which contain the idea of existentialism are The Little Prince and The Solitaire Mystery, two novels which have a unique way to convey the idea of existentialism. Each of them appears as a children story, but when analyzed more deeply, both have some profound meaning about human existence. In other words, both works have employed allegory.

Allegory is a narrative that serves as an extended metaphor. Allegorical narratives are written in the form of fables, parables, poems, stories, and almost any other style or genre. The main purpose of an allegory is to tell a story or describe an event with literary elements that have both literal and figurative meanings.

By using the existentialism theory developed by Jean Paul Sartre, one of the most prominent existentialists, I try to examine the idea of existentialism in both works. Jean Paul Sartre is a leading figure of Existentialism in France that became internationally influential after World War II. Wyatt (2005) argues that Sartre's philosophy is explicitly atheistic. Moreover, he says, the basic principle of Sartre's theory is that one is born without any purpose; therefore, one can only exist by making a definite choice of what he/she wants to be.

I choose the two novels because in both of them their authors have a unique way of telling a story that shows existentialism. Before writing The Little Prince, Antoine De-Saint Exupery had never written any children story. The other author, Jostein Gaardner, is famous for his philosophical works, including the Solitaire Mystery. The similarity of both novels is described through the protagonists, namely the Prince in The Little Prince and the Joker in The Solitaire Mystery. Both protagonists are facing oppression within the society where they live. They then have to struggle against the oppression to be able to establish their own existence. In other words, in order to exist, they need freedom. They can only be happy and will exist if they are free. However, the protagonist in each story does different things to achieve their freedom. Considering that both novels succeed in presenting a unique way of conveying existentialism, I regard them as valuable literary works.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems are stated as follows:

1. What are the themes of the two novels?
2. How do the figurative characters in each novel help reveal the theme?

IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the statement of the problem above, this thesis proposes

1. to show the themes of the two novels;
2. to reveal the use of figurative characters in revealing the theme of each novel.

VI. METHOD OF RESEARCH

I choose the philosophical approach, specifically using Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism theory, as the method to analyze the two novels. I use the approach of existentialism to help me reveal the themes of the novels. Allegory is also used to support the analysis.

I use the library research as the type of research in writing this thesis. Besides reading The Solitaire Mystery and The Little Prince as the primary text, I read some sources –from both books and the Internet– which are related to the topic of my thesis.

VII. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of five chapters, which are preceded by the Preface. The first chapter is the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problems, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two discusses the theoretical background. Chapter Three presents the analysis of existentialism theme of The Little Prince, while Chapter Four the analysis of existentialism theme of The Solitaire Mystery. The last chapter is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contain the synopses of the two novels and biographies of the authors.