

## THE LITTLE PRINCE FOR STRESSED ADULTS: A LITERARY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

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**Abstract:** The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is categorized as a children novella, but its subject matter of meaning, emotional genuineness as well as human connection reveals a lot to be taken by stressed adults. The current paper has examined the novel in various scholarly perspectives such as Symbolic Interactionism, intrinsic and extrinsic literary analysis and psychoanalysis interpretation. It looks at how the Aviator and the Little Prince create and re-create meaning, the pressures of adult societies with emotional and relationship satisfaction. The main themes of loneliness, love, friendship, and meaning seeking are brought in connection with stress in adulthood and how false priorities among people may add to the psychological pressure. Also, the psychoanalytic approach focuses on the necessity to re-establish the emotional balance by re-connecting with the inner child. Through the synthesis of literary and psychological interpretations, the paper proves that The Little Prince provides a model of how stressed-out adults can re-examine their priorities and build meaningful relationships, as well as to experience emotional health. This multidisciplinary strategy makes it clear how timeless the work of Saint-Exupéry is in the face of cross-cultural and time-related contexts.

**Keywords:** The Little Prince, stress, adult psychology, Symbolic Interactionism, literary analysis, emotional well-being.

**Annotatsiya:** Antuan de Sent-Ekzyuperining "Kichik shahzoda" romani bolalar romani sifatida tasniflanadi, ammo uning mazmuni, hissiy haqiqiyliги va insoniy aloqasi stressli kattalar tomonidan qabul qilinishi kerak bo'lgan ko'p narsalarni ochib beradi. Ushbu maqolada roman turli xil ilmiy nuqtai nazardan ko'rib chiqilgan, masalan, ramziy interaksionizm, ichki va tashqi adabiy tahlil va psixoanaliz talqini. U Aviator va Kichkina shahzoda qanday qilib ma'no yaratishi va qayta yaratishi, hissiy va munosabatlardan qoniqish bilan kattalar jamiyatining bosimiga qaraydi. Yolg'izlik, sevgi, do'stlik va ma'no izlashning asosiy mavzulari kattalardagi stress va odamlar orasidagi yolg'on ustuvorliklar psixologik bosimni qanday oshirishi bilan bog'liq. Shuningdek, psixoanalitik yondashuv ichki bola bilan qayta aloqa qilish orqali hissiy muvozanatni tiklash zarurligiga qaratilgan. Maqolada adabiy va psixologik talqinlarning sintezi orqali "Kichik shahzoda" stressga uchragan kattalar o'z ustuvorliklarini qayta ko'rib chiqishlari va mazmunli munosabatlar o'rnatishlari hamda hissiy salomatlikni his qilishlari modelini taqdim etishini isbotlaydi. Ushbu ko'p tarmoqli strategiya Sent-Ekzyuperining ishi madaniyatlararo va vaqt bilan bog'liq kontekstlarda qanchalik abadiy ekanligini aniq ko'rsatib beradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Kichkina shahzoda, stress, kattalar psixologiyasi, ramziy interaksionizm, adabiy tahlil, hissiy farovonlik.

**Аннотация:** Роман Антуана де Сент-Экзюпери «Маленький принц» классифицируется как детская повесть, но его содержание, эмоциональная достоверность и человеческие взаимоотношения раскрывают многое, что

приходится осмысливать взрослым, испытывающим стресс. В этой статье роман рассматривается с различных научных точек зрения, включая символический интеракционизм, внутренний и внешний литературный анализ и психоаналитическую интерпретацию. Исследуется, как Авиатор и Маленький принц создают и воссоздают смысл, эмоциональное и межличностное удовлетворение, а также давление взрослого общества. Центральные темы одиночества, любви, дружбы и поиска смысла переплетаются с тем, как стресс во взрослой жизни и ложные приоритеты между людьми усиливают психологическое напряжение. Психоаналитический подход также фокусируется на необходимости восстановления эмоционального равновесия путем воссоединения с внутренним ребенком. В статье утверждается, что, посредством синтеза литературных и психологических интерпретаций, «Маленький принц» предлагает модель для взрослых, испытывающих стресс, позволяющую пересмотреть свои приоритеты, установить значимые отношения и достичь эмоционального благополучия. Эта междисциплинарная стратегия наглядно демонстрирует, как творчество Сент-Экзюпери остается актуальным в межкультурном и временном контексте.

**Ключевые слова:** Маленький принц, стресс, психология взрослых, символический интеракционизм, литературный анализ, эмоциональное благополучие.

The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is presented as a mere children story, although, a wide layer of literary, sociological, and psychological studies demonstrate that it is a complicated philosophical work. Its discussion on meaning-making, emotional disconnection, and the existential reflection makes it extremely relevant to adults who are stressed in modern culture. This article provides an argument that the Little Prince can be proposed as a multidimensional structure within the framework of which stressed adults can review their views of reality, rebuild a sense of meaning, and reestablish psychological balance (Symbolic Interactionism, Sugandi, 2025), intrinsic and extrinsic literary analysis (Pratama and Sugandi, 2025), and psychoanalytic interpretations (Raza, 2023; Tomassoni et al., 2022). Contemporary adulthood is being linked to continuous stress, which can be caused by the institutional pressures, economic needs, and internalization of socially constructed ideals of success. Such ideals are usually focused on productivity, efficiency and quantifiable success. In this context, emotional well-being is often overlooked. Considering the theory of Symbolic Interactionism formulated by Herbert Blumer, Susilo (2025) stresses that people are not naturally predisposed to get to know what is considered to be essential in life; the meanings are created during repeated social interactions. This is a theoretical point that is essential in examining the personality of the Aviator. Adult world he lives in defines his perception of reality by being logical and utilitarian, and he needs to suppress imagination and emotional manifestation. Consequently, his existence turns out being monotonous, alienated and his soul was slightly and constantly psychologically dissatisfied. The

Little Prince, in its turn, embraces a different perception approaching the emotional authenticity and relational meaning. The ideas of the world do not pass through the societal expectations but through the direct emotional experience. This opposition shows a basic conflict between two meaning systems, one imposed by outside and one

created in inside. This is especially important to stressed adults. It indicates that stress can be caused both by external requirements and internalization of value systems which do not fit personal emotional needs. The novel thus serves as a criticism of the rationality of adults, and how too much logic and materialism can be used to the detriment of existence. These themes intrinsic to the story also support this argument. Pratama and Sugandi (2025) indicate that *The Little Prince* is organized around such central themes of loneliness, love, friendship, and the quest of meaning. These concepts are not discussed in an abstract form, and they are incorporated into the process when the Prince is traveling to various planets. Every event is metaphorical in its depiction of a specific adult psyche. To illustrate this point the fact that the businessman is obsessed with counting stars demonstrates his obsessive nature when it comes to ownership and acquisition, whereas the illusion of power shown by the king is an expression of human need to control. These characters are not only plot devices but they serve as a reflections of flawed systems of values that are more abstract than lived-in. Analytically, it is possible to think of such encounters as products of maladaptive coping strategies to existential anxiety. In the face of ambiguity or affective distress, adults need to feel in control and therefore, may use tight-knit systems like routine, hierarchy, or quantification. As it is shown in the novel, however, these strategies tend to increase the sense of isolation instead of reducing them. The fact that the Little Prince cannot establish any meaningful relationships with these characters highlights the limitations of such methods. This analysis can be helpful to stress-prone individuals in reconsidering the coping strategies that might seem to be effective but in the end, are the source of psychological distress.

A better model of constructing meaning is the relationship between the Little Prince and his rose. This relationship is based on emotional investment, responsibility and vulnerability as opposed to the abstract nature of the adult characters. The understanding of the Prince that his rose is special not due to its objective properties, but due to the time and effort that he had put into it exemplifies one of the main philosophical tenets: value is not innate but rather made through the process of relational activity. This conforms to the idea behind the concept of Symbolic Interactionism, which holds that meaning is created in the process of interacting and interpreting. In the context of adults who are stressed, it is an indication that meaningful relationships are likely to bring fulfillment rather than external accomplishments.

This interpretation is enhanced by the psychoanalysis aspect of the novel. According to Raza (2023) and Tomassoni et al. (2022), the Little Prince can be interpreted as a symbolic image of the unconscious or a child of the mind. This is a facet of psyche that is related to creativity, emotional openness and authenticity. During the process of socialization, adults tend to repress such qualities so as to fit into the social norms. Nevertheless, such subjugation may lead to the fragmentation of the sense of self in which the rational, which is socially acceptable, self-prevails in lieu of emotional integrity. In this regard, stress may be viewed as the manifestation of this internal imbalance.

The story can then be interpreted as a form of psycho psychological re-integration. The Aviator starts to feel the things that he had lost in himself during his interaction with the Little Prince. This change is slow and comes about through conversation, introspection and experience. According to Susilo (2025) this is what is termed as the construction of a common sense of perceived meaning, whereby interacting with others,

results in the reinterpretation of basic beliefs. Change in cognition and emotion was demonstrated in the transformation of the Aviator who initially had a utilitarian perspective on the world but later developed emotional sensitivity. Notably, this change does not need a shift in the external situation, but it is a result of redefining the old experiences.

The motif of loneliness also strengthens the topicality of the novel to the stressed adult. Although the world is becoming more connected and technologically advanced, most people complain of loneliness and disconnectiveness. This state is preempted in the novel through the characters that are physically secluded but psychologically in their own inflexible systems. The experience of *The Little Prince* shows that being lonely does not simply mean being alone but being unconnected. This difference is essential in knowing the connection between stress and social interaction. The superficial interactions are just a temporary distraction that does not help solve the problem of genuine relationships.

The contextual aspect of the novel, which is extrinsic to the novel also adds to possibility of interpretation. To some extent, extreme isolation and existential doubt were revealed to Saint-Exupéry who worked as a pilot in a time of universal conflict. These experiences are indicated by the fact that the focus of the narrative is on the theme of fragility, impermanence, and quest meaning. Pratama and Sugandi (2025) state that the combination of the historical context of the author and the symbolic structure of the narrative is a multi-layered text that appeals to intercultural and intertemporal levels. To modern readers, this setting brings out the universality of the themes of the novel and that they can be applied to contemporary manifestations of stress. Moreover, the stylistic simplicity of the narrative makes it have more philosophic effect. Complex ideas can be delivered in a way that is easy to understand but deep with the use of childlike perspective. This stylistic device supports the main statement that the ability to see clearly can be easily lost when one grows up. The novel helps the reader take off the non-essential complexity to challenge the assumptions that have been common place through social conditioning. In the case of stressed adults, such simplification process may prove especially useful, as it can offer a way of decreasing the cognitive load and re-centering oneself on what matters in the real world.

When considering the overall importance of *The Little Prince*, it is clear that the text is not merely a critique of the adult world, but it does offer a positive guideline on the psychological endurance. The novel offers other ways of dealing with stress by placing important emphasis on emotional sincerity, significant relationships, and contemplation. Such strategies are not prescriptive but they are inherent to the storyline such that readers derive insights by interpreting them and not being instructed.

To sum up, *The Little Prince* is a very fruitful interdisciplinary work that incorporates literary, sociological, and psychological approaches. With the use of the Symbolic Interactionism theory, the intrinsic thematic analysis theory, and the psychoanalytic theory, the novel demonstrates the connection between stress and the making of meaning and the repression of emotional needs. The Aviator/the Little Prince dichotomy depicts the effects of following the set of values imposed by the external world and their interaction proves the potential of change through a redefinition and affiliation. To the stressed adult, the novel provides a rather interesting point that it is not possible to find well-being through external success but by aligning perception, emotion, and relational experience. Therefore, *The Little Prince* is a classic and

scholarly important source to learn and deal with the difficulties of life in the world of adults.

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