

**Exploring Human Natures in The Contemporary Society through the
Representation of the Characters in *The Little Prince* Novel****Satria Aji Saputra¹ ✉, Imas Istiani²**^{1,2} English Literature, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia**Article Info***Article History:*

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Keywords: Contemporary, Human Nature, Lacanian Theory, Meaning of Life, *The Little Prince***Abstract**

This study aims to examine how the various characters encountered by the protagonist in *The Little Prince* are portrayed. This is done with the aim of exploring the underlying meaning of these interactions and their reflection on Lacanian psychoanalysis. Specifically, this paper applies Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic model, comparing the characters and their actions based on his three main registers, including Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real. This research paper uses a qualitative research approach related to textual analysis. This is done through close reading, character analysis, and direct application of Lacanian theory, using excerpts from the novel as primary evidence. The results show that the characters' actions and dialogues are representative of the psychological situations and deficiencies of contemporary adult society. Furthermore, the consequences of the protagonist's interplanetary journey in *The Little Prince* demonstrate profound psychological movements, the shock of Imagination, the disintegration of the Symbolic order, and a final encounter with the existential emptiness of Reality on the planet. Ultimately, this study is a critical reflection, and encourages adults to question the values and principles accepted in society that they have adopted in contemporary life.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Mencius, human nature possesses the seeds of innate virtue, and given favorable circumstances, humans can develop into an ideal moral state (Chen, 2018). Thus, it is the human capacity and moral autonomy to actively develop their character and aim for good even in situations when they are faced with an unfavorable or hostile external world (Ivanhoe, 2002). Because these innate human characteristics holistically regulate cognitive mechanisms, behaviors, and cultural patterns, the interface of evolutionary psychology and specific socio-cultural settings can be used to understand human dynamics across historical lines (Buss, 2001). In this regard, literature is an excellent mirror of life, as it is a

medium that encapsulates various human experiences, moral issues, and emotional conflicts at various times (Oatley, 1999). More precisely, the creation of the novel as a literary genre is deeply rooted in the fundamental human desire to narrate, model, and express the extreme aspects of human emotion and sympathy (Keen, 2006).

One of the literary works that describes human nature in detail is the novel *The Little Prince* (1943) by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. In the world of literature, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's novel entitled "*The Little Prince*", has become a phenomenal thing that transcends time and culture. Although the writing style resembles children's fairy tale because it contains pictures where the main character is child-friendly, the novel is not only a children's reading, but also

✉ Corresponding author:

Email: aihisaputra217@students.unnes.ac.id

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contains meanings and moral messages that are relevant to social conditions and behavior since the novel was published until now. The novel tells the story of *The Little Prince* who tries to find his identity by visiting various planets and meeting the inhabitants of the planets he visits. From each visited planet, he learns many things about love, loneliness, friendship, and loss.

There is considerable academic research conducted on the book. For instance, in the book *The Postcolonial Little Prince: A Comparative Analysis of Saint-Exupéry's The Little Prince and Other Works* by Nabipour, examines postcolonial aspects and transformations in symbolic form related to the author's own life experience (Nabipour, 2023). Likewise, Yunita, in *Symbolism and Their Meanings in The Little Prince* considers major textual symbols like the Baobab and the Rose to demonstrate the contrast between the innocence of childhood and shallowness of adulthood (Yunita, 2017). More recently, Raihani and Sutrisno, use Baudelaire's theory of symbolism to understand the biographical depiction of adults in the book, even though their analysis is firmly rooted in historical and biographical background. From the psychological perspective (Raihani & Sutrisno, 2025). While the psychological field, Gairola notes that the text significantly defies the established construction of modern adult identity (Gairola, 2022), whereas Romila uses psychoanalysis to explain how characters' unconscious defenses operate in the cruel world of adults (Romila, 2017).

There is a significant theoretical gap exists in the current psychoanalytic and symbolic interpretations. Previous psychoanalytical approaches to the interpretation of *The Little Prince*, such as that of Romila, often view the psychic make-up of the characters either as ahistorical and universal archetypes or as an individual manifestation of ego-defence mechanisms. A distinctive academic move is to consider the role that the characters play as structural reflections of socio-cultural disorders peculiar to late capitalist societies. While most Lacanian theories of imagination tend to restrict themselves to the internal and subjective evolution of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real registers, this paper seeks to apply Lacanian registers in the critical assessment

of modern social realities like hyper-consumerism and validation culture.

Based on the previous studies, there is no article connects the character representation with contemporary social condition. Thus, this paper aimed to discuss and analyze Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's "*The Little Prince*" in an attempt to understand the work from the perspective of human nature, interpersonal relationships, and the social environment that apply in the context of writing, as well as currents society. This study addresses two main questions: 1) how do the characteristics of the planets visited by *The Little Prince* in the novel "*The Little Prince*" depict human nature in contemporary society, and 2) what are the implications of *The Little Prince's* journey through various planets.

Contemporary society is a social society that is in the same era as the development of the times, if interpreted by itself the word "contemporary" comes from a term that refers to what is in the current generation, which is in line with culture, technology, and mindset (Bungin, 2011). In accordance with the explanation, the connection of the novel *The Little Prince* to contemporary society is significant because this novel is a very profound meditation that covers the human nature and is still reflective of the current society with all the complexities it has to face and what traits are indirectly saturated through various characters in the novel. The characters we meet in this novel who are faced by *The Little Prince* which include kings, drunkards, business people, admirers are portrayed as the negative characters in the adult world and they portray areas of power, defeatism, materialism, greed and loneliness. We can also learn life through the adventure of *The Little Prince* like love, friendship, and the need to seek the meaning of life that is easily forgotten in the hustle and bustle of modern society, which are echoed in roses, foxes, and even *The Little Prince* himself. Thus, *The Little Prince* is not merely a mere children book but it has also been made a social commentary, principally to allow adults to re-evaluate what life ambitions they have thus far achieved and to reconsider the connections between individuals amidst the busyness of technological progress and rapid social change.

Therefore, the main urgency of this research is to highlight the increasing complexity of

contemporary life, where life has become much more hectic because people are now more concerned with material things for themselves than relationships with others. Therefore, when people who have high social values when facing life many of them experience the downturn and loneliness of relationships, which they have no other choice to fight side by side with these issues, then this connection becomes important to understand. this journey makes everyone question again about existence and relationships that they can re-examine what values and principles they hold in life and fight against the matrix in society. in addition, this novel also teaches us as well as makes us aware of the perspectives that are important to us. In addition, the novel also teaches us as well as makes us aware of the perspective which in the novel can be seen in two reading perspectives, seeing in the perspective of creativity that can be seen in the point of view of children and the perspective that is full of meaning in every detail shown which can be seen from a perspective that is broad Thus, this novel is not only read by children as a fairy tale but also for adults who want to understand the meaning of life and relationships.

The main problem of this study is understanding how the characters encountered by *The Little Prince* on various planets portray different aspects of adult behavior, reflecting a view of society that often exhibits apathy and affective shallowness. Every character embodies some qualities that represent complex adult behavior that is always critical of something while emphasizing the insignificance of love, friendship, and happiness. For example, the King represents power and domination, and it is an ideology of antagonism toward leadership that lacks gentleness or compassion. The businessman brings up the dangers of materialism and greed that people have when they pursue wealth, showing how this behavior results in the exclusion and abandonment of family members. The rose differs from the aforementioned symbols in that it symbolizes love and loyalty which is more valuable in adult life as it represents an emotional connection but is often overlooked in adult life.

However, even regarding “*The Little Prince*,” there is a lack of accurate material available, let alone systematic analysis of these and other

subjects of the book as they relate to modern social realities. Many works can be seen as emphasizing the ethical depiction of characters or the themes they convey without connecting these lessons further to issues of contemporary society, including mental health, loneliness, and consumerism. This work seeks to fill this research gap by exploring how these symbols are most likely understood by today’s readers and what they represent in their lives.

The research is particularly necessary today due to the mounting challenges in the lives of people as they tend to become preoccupied with money-making instead of their closest individuals. That feeling of alienation experienced by so many in a democratic society can lead us back to the emotional essence of *The Little Prince* and must make us revise our priorities and the individuals in our lives. The book also makes its readers reflect on themselves and their lives and perhaps rethink some of the self-indulging experiences that lead to loneliness or poor quality life.

This paper relies on lacanian psychoanalysis as its primary theoretical foundation in an attempt to critically examine the forms of each character life presented to *The Little Prince*. In this perspective, the paper will discuss how various planetary features in *The Little Prince* can be connected to human nature in contemporary society, and examine the deeper implications of the interplanetary journey undertaken by the main character. Therefore, this paper aims to identify the interplanetary encounter as a psychological representation of contemporary adults trapped in the symbolic order, and evaluate the journey itself as a psychological process of shifting from pure imagination to a confrontation with the real-life emptiness of reality.

METHODS

In this study, the research method employed was a qualitative approach, which utilizes literary analysis to explore the themes and characters in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* and by applying Jacques Lacan's theory of Psychoanalysis (1953). In the Lacanian concept there are three register concepts defined by Jacques Lacan. The three registers are imaginary, symbolic, and real. The following is an explanation of each:

- Imaginary: This register concerns optics and opticality, ideologies in essence concerning image and image-making, especially as regards the subject with regards to self-reflection as enacted by others. It is important during early development, most of which, according to Lacan, occurs in what he called the 'mirror stage' when the baby recognizes its reflection in the mirror as being itself.
- Symbolic: This dimension refers to language, people framework, and culture. However, paraphrastically, it symbolizes law and order, and further, the 'big Other,' which includes norms and languages of society on how to perform and what to do.
- Real: The Real in the context of this dramatic action is unrepresentable and is what lies beyond the symbolic function. Draws meaning or significance and notions that cannot be encompassed within the constructs of one's existence.

This research concentrated on exploring how the characters encountered by *The Little Prince* on each planet reflect various aspects of human life and behavior in society, both at the time of writing and in the modern context. This work aimed to analyze the nature of the characters encountered by *The Little Prince* on various planets regarding the parts of life and behavior that one would inevitably experience since the novel was written in 1943 along with the onset of World War II. his framework serves as a guide for analysis of how the characters and planets encountered by *The Little Prince* symbolize various aspects of human life and behaviour.

Antoine de saint-exupéry's *The Little Prince* (1943) serves as the primary data source for this paper. Belsey explains that as a research technique, textual analysis involves direct familiarity with the text, analysis of its specifics, and reduction of bias (Belsey, 2013). Therefore, this qualitative approach was chosen to investigate how the novel's narrative techniques are used to express more general thematic issues, such as love, hope, loss, friendship, and important life lessons. The analysis process was logically divided into five steps. First, the novel was read several times in depth to gain a deep understanding of the characters, the characteristics of each planet, and the various people *The Little Prince* encounters. Second, several

lines describing character traits and planetary elements were identified and obtained as primary data. Third, the literature on *The Little Prince* to date was examined, particularly regarding psychoanalytic and allegorical interpretations, to put the story in perspective. Fourth, data were extracted and synthesized into categories to identify overarching patterns of the novel's major themes. Finally, the results are discussed with the help of textual evidence from the novel to support the analysis and arrive at a final conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Human Nature

This study aims to establish how the novel *The Little Prince* (1943) reflects the nature of each of the planets visited by *The Little Prince*, which could mirror the nature of people in the contemporary society and what the journey of *The Little Prince* through the various planets to understanding the meaning of life, human relationships and the need to remain innocent despite the complications of the world of adults. Life, human relationships, and the importance of maintaining innocence amidst the complexities of the adult world. This novel opens with a narrative as its premise and uses *The Little Prince's* perspective, where he uses a child's creativity to convey his perspective on adults. The author examines and explores the philosophical aspects of life of each inhabitant of the planet visited by *The Little Prince*. In this context, human nature is defined as human behavior consisting of the characteristics and traits possessed by each individual, both positive and negative.

Lacanian psychoanalysis provides a solution to the study of these representations, centering on the idea that the human psyche is not simply divided into conscious and unconscious but is also defined by three primary registers: Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real. Based on this theoretical framework, the author presents an analysis of textual evidence in the novel and relates it to the research questions addressed in this study through Lacanian psychoanalytic theory.

1.1. Innocence and the search for the meaning of life

The main character, *The Little Prince*, shows his profound frustration with the unimaginative

and purely pragmatic mindsets of adults, as highlighted in his observation:

“The grown-ups needs explanations for everything... Grown-ups find it hard to understand anything on their own, and it is tiring for children to always have to explain things to them” (p.2)

As the protagonist, he learns from the diverse characters he encounters across different planets.

In the imaginary register, he describes innocence and curiosity in relation to the world. The meaning of his journey to the planets is the search for other important things about relationships, friendship, and life. He often does this, comparing himself to the adults he meets, pointing out their absurdity, and reminding the reader that their childish view of the world is similar.

In the symbolic register, as he interacts with the planets he visits, he challenges societal norms and expectations, and he often questions the logic and values held by adults because adults often can no longer see from the perspective of a child who is oriented towards creativity.

In the real register, reality and loss are the most prominent aspects in this register because when he wanders to find himself and at the same time seeks answers for validation for himself regarding growth towards adulthood.

Based on the results of the analysis using Lacanian theory, it can be concluded that what *The Little Prince* did was a direct satire of *The Little Prince* who prioritized creativity and adults who held pragmatic principles. *The Little Prince* is annoyed with adults because they always question what is being thought and what is being done, it becomes a satire of adults in contemporary society who always ask details about something while they indirectly abandon their creativity.

Another innocent character is shown by the pilot, who learns the true meaning of life through their conversation:

“People on this planet,” said The Little Prince, “grow five thousand roses in the same garden and yet do not find what they are looking for.—they don’t find it,” I replied.

“Still, what they are looking for could be found in one single rose, or in a little water.”

“That is true,” I said.

The Little Prince added, “ But he eyes are blind. One must see with the heart.”

In the imaginary register, The Pilot is portrayed from the beginning as a figure who is difficult for those around him to understand because since childhood he has felt alienated because adults do not understand the meaning of what he does. The presence of *The Little Prince* becomes a self-awareness, because the child can “see” himself in a way that adults cannot do. When the prince says “see with your heart,” he reactivates the alienated souls who seek meaning beyond adult understanding.

In the symbolic register, *The Little Prince* criticizes the pilot for his adult thinking, which only pursues quantity, possession, and rationality, rather than emotional sensitivity. This reopens the pilot's awareness to break free from adult thinking, that meaning is not determined by social rules but by affective relationships.

In the real Register, the Sahara desert becomes a real space that is described as an empty space that cannot be interpreted, which contains the collapse of social structures and humans facing their limitations. An encounter with *The Little Prince* represents the unexpected, which cannot be explained by adult logic, that what the pilot has been searching for all this time is not something that can be explained rationally, but something that lies beyond language.

The main discovery during the experience is that the Imaginary faculty of the Pilot, which was previously repressed due to the alienating pressures of being an adult, is freed to counteract his state of creative sterility. It is supported by Bowker, who believes that the novel depicts the unconscious forces against the absurd, practical constructions of adulthood (Bowker, 2021). Their journeys together depict the crucial combat of the inner child, the uncorrupted imaginary, seeking true significance outside of the emptiness and falsehood of the Symbolic order of society.

1.2. Power and Domination

The character of the King in the novel shows that he possess power and the illusion of absolute control. In the modern world, which is constantly changing its opinion about authority and its role

resulting in the ambiguity of a power authority, such a picture becomes a satire for a power without having true influence and insight, as shown in the dialogue below:

"You shall have your sunset. I shall command it. But I will await the right conditions."

"When will that be?" inquired The Little Prince.

"Hum! Hum!" replied the king; and before saying anything else he consulted a bulky almanac. "Hum! Hum! That will be about-- about-- that will be this evening about twenty minutes to eight. And you will see how well I am obeyed."

--- "Oh, but I have looked already!" said The Little Prince, turning around to give one more glance to the other side of the planet. On that side, as on this, there was nobody at all... (P. 45-46)

On asteroid 325, the first asteroid inhabited by a king. Dressed in royal purple and ermine fur, he sits on a simple and majestic throne. However, on the planet he lives alone.

In the imaginary register, as he claimed to be the king of his planet and demands that others listen and follow his orders. However, because he is utterly alone, and his every command sounds ridiculous. Such illusions of authority show how people rely on power structures to achieve their goals because they mistakenly think that authority means value.

In the symbolic register, the king is a representation of power in a twisted way. His 'need to be admired and to control' is a sign of everyone's desire to be recognized, to have a title; power and respect. What he sees himself as is a ruler, but there is no depth to his power – no one below him to command. In this case, it illustrates the social norm that every leader must have a clear reason when asking someone for what he wants, and not just arbitrarily order something.

In the real register, with the power that the king has he can have the power to order people or his people, but in that case, he is alone on his planet he who describes a power with empty content and an order without having a real purpose. In other words, the king describes an emptiness in the authority feature.

The development of symbolic authority without legitimate social validation is an assessment of how the King has been depicted in

contemporary society. In this modern era, in which shifting notions of leadership increase structural ambiguity, this representation becomes a strong critique of leadership devoid of real power and understanding. Meanwhile, as stated by Žižek, power must function within the framework of the Symbolic order, and the people must be actively recognized; as long as no one else asserts their rights, the King's authority is a meaningless and empty show (Žižek, 1989).

1.3. Validation and Solitude

The character of the Admirer illustrates a desperate need for external validation and superficial praise. In *The Little Prince*, the Admirer and the Drunkard reflect today's society with its identity crises and isolation. The Admirer represents today's shallow, validation-driven culture, and the Drunkard represents the tragic desire to escape this overwhelming social pressure through substance abuse, as shown in the dialogue below:

"--- you regard me as the handsomest, smartest, richest, and wisest man on this planet."

"But you are the only one on this planet!"

"Nevertheless, admire me so i may feel happy."
(P.50)

On planet 326, an Admirer is seen, when he first appears he immediately wants to get appreciation for what he has.

In imaginary register, the admirer seeks external validation and craves appreciation that reveals childhood programming for value. According to the quoted dialogue, the admirer continues to want people to see him as handsome, intelligent, rich, and wise even though he is alone on his planet. This need for validation negates the fact that people base their self-identity on how others relate to them, therefore, self-esteem is weakened when built on the perceptions of others.

In symbolic register, Admirers are also personifications of societal norms or expectations of success and achievement. This dimension is consistent with how culture imposes predetermined expectations and standards on people, requiring them to look a certain way, have a certain level of intelligence and status. In symbolic interaction here we study how societal

constructs get in the way of individuals constructing their identities, making it a cycle of support rather than a reciprocal relationship.

In real register, Ashamed relationships originated through admiration indicate shallowness, which is unreal. This pursuit of validation results in the creation of a magnitude of existential futility, an inability to relate meaningfully to people and things. This aspect seeks to bring to light the possibility of the world, hence dismissing real emotions and relationships in the name of an image and class.

The depiction of the admirer in the novella is apt in describing today's society that is ruled by aestheticians. With social media rampant and so much comparison going around, many individuals end up in a fierce competition for likes, followers, or material gain.

Similarity, the character of the Drunkard reveals the tragic and inescapable cycle of escapism, as seen in the following exchange:

"I drinking --- To forget --- Forget that i am
ashammed --- Ashamed of drinking."
(P. 51)

On asteroid 327, *The Little Prince* intended to stop for a while on the asteroid when he found a drunkard there.

In imaginary register, in the case of a drunkard, the function of drinking as a drunkard is for a means of escape using imagination. It is upon this reason that he consumes alcohol hence besides trying to conceal his shame he is also attempting to conceal the truth behind his life. The images of the drinking to forget existence points to the fact that people tend to build illusions to cushion them against their weakness and failure.

In symbolic register, the drunkard's behavior critiques addiction and society's attitudes toward it. His admission that he drinks to escape the reality of his life demonstrates an internal conflict shaped by societal norms that judge addiction. Therefore, it emphasizes how a culture of judgment can cause individuals to hide their struggles, perpetuating a cycle of shame and isolation.

In real Register, the drunkard's life is portrayed as meaningless and miserable as he continues to numb himself with alcohol and

shame. This dimension focuses on what is indescribable in relation to addiction; loss, regret, and the inability to change, and shows how the addictive substance or behavior changes the person.

This dual crisis can be linked to McGowan's argument that the modern Symbolic order isolates subjects by trapping them in empty imaginary satisfactions, both in the relentless search for external validation and in a vicious cycle of addiction (McGowan, 2016). Ultimately, both characters demonstrate how one's true self is lost in the process of being completely absorbed by these empty social pressures.

1.4. Materialism and Greed

The character of the Businessman illustrates a relentless, greedy obsession with material accumulation over meaningful existence. In *The Little Prince*, the Businessman and the Merchant are used to satirize the problems of modern materialism and consumerism. It is the Businessman who accumulates meaningless wealth, and the Merchant who commodifies time, as shown in the dialogue below:

"-- what will you do with five hundred million stars?" prince said.
--- "What do i do with them?" The businessman replied.
"yes" Princes answered.
"Nothing. I own them." (P. 55)

Upon his arrival at asteroid 328, *The Little Prince* found a businessman sitting there. When he approached, the businessman did not stand up to greet him.

In imaginary register, in terms of material possessions, the businessman desire to own five hundred million stars can be considered as a materialistic and greedy desire, rather than a pragmatic need. This explains how people construct their identities through the things they own, while also seeking validation for what they own.

In symbolic register, its focus on possession and accumulation aligns with social norms that equate success with wealth and material gain. This symbolic note critiques a culture that prioritizes profit and competition over collaboration and community.

In real register, the stars he possesses bring him no pleasure or satisfaction. Instead, they serve only to show the hole in his soul that should be filled by love and purpose. This emptiness is the result of a captive existence, a life dedicated to the pursuit of materialism – a success that does not answer the primal human longing for belonging and a meaningful existence. That the businessman fails to notice the stars is indicative of those who measure their existence by existential crises.

In explaining the role of the businessman in "*The Little Prince*," the author defines an important aspect to highlight the materialism and values prevailing in the contemporary world capitalist era. In today's society, people focus on consumerism and being ahead of the competition, which causes many people to become endless hoarders and feel empty throughout their lives.

The character of the Merchant critiques modern consumerism and the hollow commodification of time, as seen in this exchange:

"Why do you sell these?" asked The Little Prince.

"They help save a lot of time," said the merchant.

"The experts have calculated that you can save fifty-three minutes every week."

"And what would you do with those fifty-three minutes?" "Whatever you like."

(p. 87)

When *The Little Prince* was resting, a merchant came and offered him a pill that would have the effect of making the drinker not feel thirsty for a week.

In imaginary register, the merchant's attention to the sale of products that protect time corresponds to the rather shallow understanding of consumerist values. Bringing them to realize that these items can save them "*fifty-three minutes every week*" highlights the wasteful culture of the society that is fond of stuff that would simplify on their lives. This imaginary illustrates the phenomenon that consumerism helps people find ready-made answers to various questions of life, making people think that acquiring objects will improve their lives.

In symbolic register, suggests a culture of efficiency that pervades almost every aspect of life which discourages people from asking themselves how they would like to spend the time. This focus

on efficiency removes a person from the important aspects of his or her life and associations with others.

In real register, the question posed by *The Little Prince*--"*And what will you do with those fifty-three minutes?*"--reveals an important truth: moreover, simply saving time does not necessarily mean making meaningful use of it. When the merchant fails to answer *The Little Prince*'s question satisfactorily, it reveals the emptiness of a life dedicated solely to productivity and consumerism.

This dual critique aligns in line with Baudrillard, who stated that contemporary consumer society confines humans to an endless cycle of seeking sign-value, that is, money and time are used not because they have a practical function, but as empty markers of prestige and object effectiveness (Baudrillard, 1998). Ultimately, both characters show how a culture where people are obsessed with accumulation teaches empty souls who strive tirelessly to obtain material fantasies without focusing on the true meaning of life.

1.5. Dedication and Purpose

The character of the Lamplighter illustrates blind dedication to absurd, repetitive labor without personal purpose. Throughout the story of *The Little Prince*, the Lamplighter is a tragic commentary on how the contemporary society values meaningless work. He is a symbol of the modern worker who loses his entire life to a monotonous and systematic rhythm, as shown in the dialogue below:

"Those are my orders --- Orders are orders (put out the lamp) --- The orders have not changed --- that is the problem! The planet turns faster and faster every year but my orders remain the same --- we have been talking for a month already." --- "three minutes equals thirty days!" (p.58)

On the fifth asteroid, asteroid 359, there is a small asteroid inhabited by one person with a lamp, where he only stands in front of the lamp and is tasked with turning the lamp on and off, because the time changes on the asteroid are very fast.

In imaginary register, The Lamplighter is a man whose purpose in life is to turn on the lights and then turn them off. This imaginary depicts a

person who does repetitive things where the things he does are nothing interesting and just routine. The passion that the lamplighter has for his work is the same passion for finding meaning in one's life even when trapped in a repetitive cycle where the person who lights the lights turns on the lights.

In symbolic register, the lamplighter also represents hard work at work, which is considered a virtue in working-class societies. This symbolic register contrasts with a culture that demands productivity without regard to the cost to the well-being of workers, who are exhausted by the task.

In real register, Behind the lamplighter changing the lights and doing his job properly, there is an expression of emptiness that radiates from his face. Although he is dedicated and works hard, he suffers from social dissatisfaction due to the lack of work and lack of purposeful activities. The traditional job of a lamplighter remains meaningless even though he has a job and is in contact with people every night.

This critique is very much in line with Graeber's statement that contemporary society is full of so-called "bullshit" jobs, namely the kind of boring and repetitive work that takes up people's time and energy, but provides no meaning or purpose in their lives and brings nothing new or beneficial to society (Graeber, 2018). Ultimately, the Lamplighter illustrates the tragedy of the contemporary object: completely absorbed in the empty needs of the Symbolic order, without the possibility of happiness, rest, and living with one's soul.

1.6. Knowledge vs Experience

The character of the Geographer illustrates the severe disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical experience, in *The Little Prince* lives in the world that is a critique against a society that was infatuated with theoretical knowledge with no practical application as shown in the dialogue below:

"He said "A geographer is a scholar who know the location of the seas, rivers, towns, mountains, and deserts. --- i wouldn't know where the oceans it is --- i dont know where the rivers and the deserts --- i am a geographer, but i am No. explorer!"
(p. 63-64)

on the 6th asteroid, asteroid 330. he meets a geographer who is studying a ledger, when *The Little Prince* asks where he is he answers by looking but when the prince asks what he looks like or what he looks like the geographer is confused about it.

In imaginary register, the self-image presents the geographer as a detached scholar, who distinguishes between ideal wisdom and true understanding. He has unlimited knowledge of geographical information but no experience of the world he describes.

In symbolic register, the geographer's role also represents the intellectual power and orderly formation of knowledge and thought that characterizes the modern world order. He tells the reader that he knows where the seas, rivers, cities, mountains, and deserts are, but he has never been there. So, he uses the explorer to get information, showing how universities can ignore practice and focus on knowledge. This symbolic register criticizes a culture that values data and statistics more than personal narrative and lived experience, suggesting a gap between scientific pursuits and the richness of real-world exploration.

In real register, behind every geographer is a mask of knowledge, but the real truth is lack of experience. His failure to have knowledge of many aspects of his own planet creates an aura of ignorance; years of schooling and no realworld view. This disconnect also underscores the fact that, overemphasis on academic authority can lead to a shallow existence without a true appreciation of the fleeting beauty of life.

The Geographer is the typical representative of the modern scholar, who is ideally educated and completely lost in the confrontation with reality. This echoes Lyotard's assertion that contemporary society has reduced knowledge to mere informational data, stripping it of its narrative and experiential value (Lyotard, 1979). Ultimately, the Geographer explains how an overreliance on academic symbolic order can lead to the trapping of a theoretical vacuum by those who lack a full understanding of real-world exploration.

1.7. Love and Relationship

The character of the Rose illustrates the complexities, pride, and hidden vulnerabilities inherent in romantic infatuation, In *The Little*

Prince, Rose and Fox illustrate a stark contrast between superficial attraction and authentic connection, as shown in the dialogue below:

The Little Prince was full of admiration: "oh! How beautiful you are!"

"Am I not?" the rose responded sweetly." and I was born along with the sun." ---

"Don't linger on. You are annoying me. You have decided to leave, so leave!"

She did not wish for him to see her tears, the proud flower that she was"

(p. 31 & 40)

On his planet, *The Little Prince* found a very beautiful rose. He admired its beauty and splendor so much that he was willing to protect it from the volcano and keep the rose safe.

In imaginary register, her gentle nature and charming looks, the beauty that comes with a romantic relationship. This image illustrates how someone is infatuated with the idea of love, without understanding how complex it is. The rose's pride and desire to be admired show the fact that beauty is a double-edged sword: on the one hand people are admired, but on the other hand they make them vulnerable.

In symbolic register, the rose symbolizes the social relationship of love that defines human relationships. The prince's demands for respect and tenderness and her tears when he leaves her – these are her role in the conceptualization of romantic relationships. This symbolic account questions how the experience and expression of love is governed by cultural norms that shape the behavior and emotions of the two partners.

In real register, Behind the beautiful story of beauty and passion, there is the tragic reality of love. The drops of the rose represent passion and suffering, but more specifically, they symbolize the pain of betrayal, and the fear of loneliness that lurks behind the apparent happiness of the beloved experience. This underscores that love is not a dream, perfect and smooth, but love has its difficulties, fears, and sorrows. Because of pride, the rose holds back its feelings and shows the falsehood that often puts one's deepest emotions into conflict.

Conversely, the character of the Fox introduces the profound concept of "taming," emphasizing authentic connection and mutual

vulnerability. This highlights the modern crisis of unbalanced and one-sided relationships in which individuals seek the emotional benefits of love without offering genuine reciprocity, as seen in this exchange:

"What does 'taming' mean?" prince said.

Fox answered "It means 'to make a connection --- if you were to tame me, then we would need each other. You would be unique to me, and I to you.'"

(p. 80)

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

(p. 85)

As *The Little Prince* is about to be confused about the adult world, he encounters the Fox, who explains to him that the real relationships need to be developed in a conscious and interdependent manner.

In imaginary register, her understanding of 'taming', of getting two individuals to respond to each other in ways that create a bond, refers to the dimension of interpersonal relationships that brings beauty. The image is an expression of how people seek acceptance, and how they adapt to society as they seek acceptance. The fox's view of relationships is sensational in its sense of commitment and how love and friendship can transform lives.

In symbolic register, her argument that taming requires interdependence, "If you were tame me, then we will need each other," is at odds with today's capitalist society that glorifies independence. This symbolic plane underscores how modern culture supports barriers to intimacy and provides shallow substitutes for dependency.

In real register, the fox's confession that taming someone means creating a mutually needy bond filled with both joy and potential pain illustrates the paradox of love as good as it sounds, it leaves them vulnerable to heartbreak and loss in equal measure. This register is an affirmation that real-world relationships thrive on a spirit of openness and courage.

This dynamic is perfectly conceptualized by Bauman, who argues that contemporary society suffers from "liquid love", a condition in which individuals crave connection but aggressively avoid the vulnerability and deep commitment it

requires, resulting in fragile and easily discarded relationships (Bauman, 2003). Ultimately, the novel demonstrates that true love cannot exist within the secure and self-serving confines of the modern Symbolic order; it takes courage to embrace mutual vulnerability and the inevitable pain of Reality.

2. The Implications of *The Little Prince's* Journey Through Various Planets

The interplanetary flight of *The Little Prince* proves a dramatic transformation, in that the contemporary man is facing alienation by the contemporary society. His trip through various planets is not physical, but it is a struggle towards inner purity and the rigid structure of adulthood, which is psychological. Lacanian psychoanalysis has an impact on his journey that is difficult to ignore when viewed through the prism of the story, considering the shifts between the three psychoanalytic registers.

2.1 The Departure: The Disruption of the Imaginary

The story begins with *The Little Prince* leaving Asteroid B-612. The disruption of the first Imaginary order manifests itself in *The Little Prince* leaving Asteroid B-612, which represents a psychic breach of his perfect but complex relationship with the Rose. Recounting his choice of departure, *The Little Prince* acknowledges how emotionally immature he is:

“I should have judged her by her deeds and not by her words – maybe I wasn’t old enough to know how to love her.” (P. 36)

The Imaginary register is identified by visual perception and the illusion of wholeness. *The Little Prince* departure demonstrates that this innocence and comfortable state of childhood cannot continue indefinitely. As Romila’s assertion observes, that the isolation of the Prince from his immediate environment is an unconscious psychological defense mechanism through which the growing ego is forced to give up on the narcissistic patterns (Romila, 2017). This quest represents the psychological separation the protagonist needs, and thus he feels the need to

delve into the wider universe and rediscover himself, delving deeper into his feelings and emotions.

2.2 The Encounter: The Alienation of the Symbolic Order.

As the protagonist explores Asteroids 325 to 330, the central thrust of his adventure is immediately apparent: a complete psychological alienation from the adult world. Each planet he visits confines its inhabitants to the symbolic order—a world of language, social laws, and cultural norms. Observing this ridiculous stubbornness, *The Little Prince* repeatedly tells himself,

“The grown-ups really are peculiar,” (P.47; P.50; P.51)

The adults he encounters are utterly immersed in their positions in society. The King’s hollow authority, the Businessman’s obsessive role, the Admirer Man’s need for recognition, and the Lamplighter’s preoccupation with blindly obeying his orders demonstrate that today’s society forces people into a monotonous, meaningless rhythm. This expedition reveals that the conscious nihilism of the adult Symbolic order robs the human subject of his abilities and instead renders them subjects defined by the need for power, capital, and social pressure, rather than by genuine human relationships. This is such a method of psychological oppression is consistent with the basic understanding of Lacanian alienation according to Fink, whereby engagement within the Symbolic order of the social realm divides the subject, thus making people give up on their desires and willpower to the dictates of the Big Other (Fink, 2025).

2.3 The Arrival on Earth: Confronting the Real

The final stage of the journey occurs on the earth, in the barren Sahara Desert, and this implies that the subject has to face the reality. Lacanian Reality is a non-explainable existential blankness that cannot be controlled either by language or social conventions. At the very beginning, the empty nature of Earth makes *The Little Prince* terrified, but this is where the constant fighting

comes to a certain climax in his moment with the snake. As the prince remarks,

“It is bit lonely in the dessert.”
 “It is also lonely among men,” the snake said.
 The Little Prince gazed at him for a long time.
 (P.70)

The implication of the final destination is that the emptiness of Reality cannot be avoided even by returning to the physicality of society's Symbolic order. The desert and the sense of universal isolation the journey brings demonstrates that only through direct encounter with this existential emptiness does one become a true subject, and not by hiding behind the pretense of maturity.

This involves discussing current finding on “*The Little Prince*” in collaboration with previous research that has investigated similar themes. One notices in Nabipour’s comparative study how “*The Little Prince*” has some colonial underpinnings: the way Antoine de Saint-Exupéry expresses his own metaphorical transformation in the same way that real human relationships struggle today (Nabipour, 2023). This perspective aligns with the findings regarding the representation of human nature and how purity needs to be preserved from adult complexity.

Additionally, Yunita identifies several important symbols, such as the Baobab and the Rose, that are connected throughout the storyline, giving it thematic depth (Yunita, 2017). These symbols also relate to my findings on how each planet *The Little Prince* visits represent an aspect of humanity or social norms. Furthermore, Coats describes how children literature is usually a psychic space where childhood innocence rebels against the strictures of the adult Symbolic order (Coats, 2004), which is exactly what can be said about how the journey of *The Little Prince* criticizes the demands of the society and emphasizes the absurdity of adults. Combining these academic lenses to fit his research adds a new dimension to the insight into *The Little Prince* and establishes the connection between this narrative and larger arguments about human nature and social commentary. It underscores the fact that the novel is relevant to the modern debates about identity and meaning in life.

CONCLUSION

This study work suggests that the three registers psychoanalytic model developed by Jacques Lacan provides the means to deconstruct the complex allegory constructed by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in *The Little Prince*. Specifically, the consideration of the imaginary, symbolic, and real dimensions of the story allows making a unique contribution to scholarship in terms of character-based textual analysis that is used to assess psychological issues related to contemporary alienation. Thus, instead of reducing the story to a simplistic morality tale, one can see how socio-cultural systems make humans act in their narrow-minded and limited way because they are trapped into repetitive and meaningless validation, hierarchies, consumerism, and alienating labor. Therefore, academic value of the current research lies in demonstrating that classical literature is a rather complex psychic environment that shows the fragmented nature of the modern adult identity formed under the pressure of the established symbolic system.

Despite these positive points, there are certain limitations that stem from the selected framework of this inquiry. First, by considering only Lacanian psychoanalysis, one misses a possibility to use sociological, historical, or structuralist approaches that can help to uncover alternative views on the same text. Furthermore, the current research emphasizes character representations in order to criticize the contemporary social pathology while minor characters and the nature remain outside of the discussion. Future research can extend the current insights by employing multiple critical perspectives such as psychoanalytic along with Marxist and postcolonial approaches.

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