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The Educational and Moral Message in Antoine de Saint Exupéry's *The Little Prince*

Wychowawcze i moralne przesłanie
Małego księcia
Antoine de Saint Exupéry'ego

ABSTRACT

Stories help us to understand our own mental world and the soul of the child and its education. In stories we often find a moral message and the basis for the practical solutions to various educational problems. To understand the nature of the parable means also to find the key to open the spiritual dimension of our being. We deal just with a very small book, and allegorical story about the little prince from the planet B 612 in it, as Antoine de Saint-Exupéry described him, which carries an important message to a man at any age.

The paper analyses the moral and educational message of the work *The Little Prince* as a description of the dramatic era in which the book was written. The universality of the message of this book (which can be possibly described also as a fairy tale for adults) bases in the fact that the message goes across every period, and every age of recipients in a various environments and conditions of life. It clearly speaks not only to kids who are being educated, but also to adults and teachers, regardless of whether they are simple or highly educated people.

Artykuły i rozprawy

KEY WORDS

The Little Prince, moral education, personalism, dialogic approach, educational relationship, educational interaction

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

Mały Książę, wychowanie moralne, personalizm, podejście dialogiczne, relacja wychowawcza, interakcja wychowawcza

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The Little Prince is a guide to the inner world of each human person. From a pedagogical point of view this work deals with the application of narrative as well as educative method, which are based on dialogic paradigm of philosophy and Christian humanism, especially personalism. The outline of the article develops the following analytical sequence: the background of the creation of the book, *The Little Prince* in us—a psychological reflection, the ideas in *The Little Prince* in relation to education, focusing on the moral formation of the child and the every human person.

ABSTRAKT

Historie pomagają nam zrozumieć nasz własny świat mentalny, a także duszę dziecka i jego wychowanie. W opowieściach znajdujemy często przesłanie moralne i podstawę praktycznych rozwiązań różnych problemów wychowawczych. Zrozumienie natury przypowieści umożliwia znalezienie klucza do duchowego wymiaru naszego bytu. W tekście zajmujemy się małą książeczką, alegoryczną opowieścią o małym księciu z planety B 612, napisaną przez Antoine de Saint-Exupéry'ego, która zawiera istotny przekaz dla ludzi w każdym wieku.

Artykuł analizuje moralną i edukacyjną treść *Małego Księcia* jako opisu dramatycznej epoki, w której książka została napisana. Przesłanie książki (którą można również nazwać baśnią dla dorosłych) jest uniwersalne, ponadczasowe, trafia do odbiorców w każdym wieku, w różnych środowiskach i warunkach życia. Przemawia nie tylko do dzieci, poddawanych procesowi wychowania, ale także do dorosłych i nauczycieli, niezależnie od tego, czy są prostymi, czy wykształconymi ludźmi. *Mały Książę* jest przewodnikiem po wewnętrznym świecie każdej osoby. Z pedagogicznego punktu widzenia istotne w tej baśni jest zastosowanie narracji oraz metody edukacyjnej opartej na paradygmatach filozofii dialogu i humanizmu chrześcijańskiego, a zwłaszcza personalizmu. Plan artykułu jest następujący: tło powstania książki, *Mały Książę* w nas – refleksja psychologiczna, idee *Małego Księcia* odnoszące się do wychowania, a zwłaszcza do moralnej formacji dziecka i każdego człowieka.

Connections and contemporary context of *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was a French writer, aviator and was often considered a philosopher. He was a pilot of the French company Latécoère on the Toulouse – Casablanca – Dakar route, he was the

head of the Cap Juby airport in North Africa, as well as the director of Argentinian company Aeroposta. Later he worked in Air France, in 1937 he became a military pilot of the French Air Force, and since 1943 he was a pilot of the Liberation Army in North Africa. Despite having exceeded the permitted age for flying, he obtained a permit for further flights. From his last flight over Corsica in 1944 he did not return, he was shot down above the sea.¹

The Little Prince, a timeless French literary piece, was published in 180 languages and more than 80 million copies. This small book attracted attention remarkably quickly and was rapidly translated into several language versions.²

¹ Antoine Marie Roger de Saint-Exupéry (*29 June 1900 in Lyon – † 31 July 1944). One of his most important literary works are *Man and His World*, *The Wisdom of the Sands* and *The Little Prince*. He had a happy childhood and a very sensitive relationship with his mother. Later, he attended a Jesuit College in Fribourg. He wrote poems, liked to talk about literature, to have discussions with other artists and writers about art and literature but was also interested in aviation. He applied unsuccessfully for a university of architecture and was accepted to a naval academy where he entered military service in aviation and became a military aviator. He and Louise Vilmorin became engaged but his passion for aviation was the reason for their break-up. He started working for an airline and began flying to Africa (Dakar), Juba, Buenos Aires and from Europe to America. In this period, he began to be active in the field of literature. He survived many dangerous air accidents. His book *Man and His World* (1931) was awarded a Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie Française. He married Consuelo Suncín de Sandova, a widow, in the same year. He participated in the French liberation movement against fascism very actively during the World War II despite the fact that he should no longer have pursued the career of an aviator because of the state of his health and frequent accidents. He fought with great commitment and regardless of the risk. He glorified heroism of aviators in his books: *Flight to Arras* (1942) and *Letter to a Hostage* (1943) in which he expresses his faith in spiritual values of humanity, disapproves of judgements about people and opposes racism by respect for a person. For some time, he lived in exile in New York in the U.S. There, in 1943, his philosophical fairy tale *The Little Prince* was published which he dedicated to his friend Léon Werth. However, the rose in the tale represents their complicated relationship with his wife Consuelo. He returned to Europe and moved to Algeria where he wanted to complete his work *The Wisdom of the Sands*, a book which was supposed to summarise his moral and philosophical opinions and principles. On June 31 1944 he took off in Corsica for a flight across France, however, never returned (E. Deschodt, *Saint Exupéry*, Bratislava 1987).

² I must confess I have a little passion for collecting as well. I myself have a collection of 39 copies of the book *The Little Prince* in several languages,

In *The Little Prince* we may find an uncommon parable about childhood and adulthood, humanity and inhumanity; it is a story about friendship and love, about overcoming life-crises, about death and hope. According to Mathias Jung³, this literary narrative masterpiece is based on three kinds of fear: *a fear for a friend*, *a fear of the world* (i.e., a fear of the age in which the author lived at that moment) and *a child's fear*. In spite of this alarming statement, Eugen Drewermann, in his theological interpretation, did not hesitate to refer to the tale as to a breviary of hope and a love vademecum. We will analyse the tale based on these three criteria as well, however, with an added objective to provide the analysed facts as a pedagogical basis of the thought.

Saint-Exupéry wrote *The Little Prince* in the period of the World War II during his coerced exile in the United States. At the time, his existential anxiety, his worries, fear for his relatives, himself and a fear of a military conflict terror reached their peak. Saint-Exupéry, as a French air officer, wanted to return to the epicentre of the war in Europe. His plan was to return to the American bases on the North African battlefield and there he wanted to serve and help his country in an anti-fascist resistance movement. However, it was not possible for him to participate in the liberation movement due to the fact that he was not able to be an active aviator because of his age, health issues and several air crashes. That is why he decided to fight in a different way. He expressed his moral disgust with the inhumanity of nationalism, fascism and war in exile by writing anti-Hitler articles and books. The most impressive ones are *Flight to Arras* and of course *The Little Prince*.

Saint-Exupéry might be considered to be a typical representative of humanism the literature of the 20th century. With the growing technologisation of labour and environment, which often leads to separation in the human relationships, the reflection of Saint-Exupéry's work and his consideration on moral and ethical issues are becoming even more significant.

The tale of the little prince was published for the first time in 1943 before Christmas because the publisher thought that this "fairy

such as Latin, Hebrew, Aramaic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Swedish, Dutch, Norwegian, Spanish, Hungarian, Czech, etc.

³ M. Jung, *Malý princ v nás*, Praha 2008, p. 10.

tale” would enrich the books offer. We can see the connection of *The Little Prince* to the World War II and all the anti-Jewish campaigning in the fact that this book, a “fairy tale for adults”, is dedicated to Léon Werth. The dedication is not accidental but had exclusively political reasons. Léon, a good friend of Antoine, was, as a Jew, persecuted after Hitler’s invasion, forced to hide in a French village and live in an existential fear of his life, starving, poor and in great misery. His friend Saint-Exupéry gave him a lot of ideas and good advice in *The Little Prince*, which were supposed to comfort him and encourage him not to lose hope and to seek the meaning of life among chaos, hatred and violence in attitudes of adults. The tale of the prince has become supposedly the most famous fairy tale for adults with an everlasting message about fundamental human values and especially as a celebration of the friendly relationship.

By the process of self-identification with the main character, the author uncovers a simplicity of thinking in adults’ lives, depicts an image of an “everlasting” childhood and contempt for the adult world. This adult world of a restricted conception is portrayed in the tale by odd characters who are preoccupied with themselves (self-presentation of human personalities) and is explained by various commentaries (in prince’s reflections and dialogues with the shipwrecked aviator in the desert on Earth, with some of the animals, with the flower). It is also a depiction of a human being’s encounter with themselves, with their “alter-ego”, and of a search and a discovery an “internal child” inside us.

Travelling around the planets and searching for the truth in life is connected to parables about human lives. As if the individual experience shifted the prince from his own view, the reflection of his own planet, through discovery, or in other words travelling across other planets, to an adult view of the life and to his natural passing away (his death) which is a big unknown to everyone. To a great extent, the imaginal aspect of the plot sets out the issue of moral values and overshadows the plot line itself. The book possesses the nature of a minor philosophical work due to various legacies which are useful and current in any time.⁴

⁴ J. Orlická, J. Pekníková, “Nadčasovosť diela *Malý princ* Antoina de Saint-Exupéry v kontexte globálnej kultúry,” *Jazyk a kultúra* 2014, no. 17–18, <http://www.ff.unipo.sk/jak/17-18_2014/orlicka_pecnikova.pdf> (access: 20.08.2016).



The tale may be classified as a *fantasy literary piece* because of its numerous invented characters and creatures. The story is filled with the author's reflections, mainly about adult world and way of thinking. The tale consists of 27 chapters which expose various sides of human personality. It compares a child's and an adult world. Adults are not able to comprehend a simple childlike way of thinking. Adults see power only in "having", "possessing", preferably money and control, which wins over human sense, love and feelings. Although the author belongs to the adult world, he feels like a child.⁵ It is a story of the misunderstanding of children, ignorance, selfishness and pettiness of human nature.

The Little Prince came from Asteroid B-612 which was observed by a Turkish astronomer. At first, he was ignored because of his appearance. Apparently, this allusion reminds us of ignorance being a negative human character trait. A natural and simple child language is replaced by a more serious tone in the tale without a loss of its comprehensibility, fluency and melodic poeticity. Clear language, complemented by the author's artistic depiction of the story lets the reader persist in a level of pleasant emotions with a lot of stimuli and essential questions. Saint-Exupéry's view of life is set in an adult frame of mind who returns back to his child years and offers straightforward solutions to the little prince based on his own experience. The motive of travelling of the prince is composed of several encounters with positive and negative characters or kind animal characters who reveal themselves in dialogues with a concealed wisdom of old fables. Symbols are "interwoven" into the story of a space traveller⁶ to be comprehensible for children as well and contrasts are very often used.⁷ In the particular scenes, key essences and life wisdom statements are offered. What remains the main idea of the composite whole is that people find the answers for the key questions in life inside, in their heart, in the centre of their being and soul. Every child, even the "internal child" inside every

⁵ "All grown-ups were children once—although few of them remember it." As people get older, they gain knowledge and experience but lose imagination, real values and the meaning of life. They are always in a hurry and make simple things complicated and incomprehensible.

⁶ E.g., life—a symbol of an oasis, death—desert, heart—love, flower—friendship, snake—hatred.

⁷ E.g., life—death, oasis—desert, friendship—loneliness, love—hatred.

one of us, is able to see things clearly, directly and piercingly deep into the core if they are not buried and clogged by a drift of loads of useless rational concepts and de-contextualised content (according to Freud as well). Two types of mental approaches may be used to read the tale: *a philosophical one*—a story about searching for the truth, knowledge and meaning of life; and *an epic one*—the story line might be perceived as an enlightening tale about a little prince and his space travels.

This is the main motto of the tale: “It is only with one’s heart that one can see clearly. What is essential is invisible to the eye.” The eyes are blind; we should seek the truth about life in our hearts.

The Little Prince—Psychological reflection

In the first chapter of the book, there is an explanation of a picture drawn by the author when he was six years old. Further on, this drawing is used to test human imagination. Grownups see in this drawing something like “a hat”, but, in reality, it is a drawing of a boa constrictor digesting an elephant. This clearly shows us how ignorant and limited in terms of imagination adults can be. They are just unable to see the world through the innocent eyes of a child. The main character, the little prince, travels across the galaxy and visits various planets, where he encounters their bizarre inhabitants, who are to be the representatives of a typical adult world and an adult way of thinking. The little prince is not finding the sympathy he has been looking for. He doesn’t understand the inverted adult values and is still sadder and lonelier. During his visit on the first planet he meets a king, who says he rules over everything, but, in fact, he rules over nobody and nothing. The second planet belongs to a conceited individual who sees only himself. On the third planet, there is a drunkard and the little prince has a very interesting dialog with him. The drunkard is full of shame and has no self-respect.⁸ The fourth planet is inhabited

⁸ “What are you doing here?” he said to the drunkard whom he found sitting silently in front of a collection of bottles, some empty and some full. ‘I am drinking,’ answered the drunkard lugubriously. ‘Why are you drinking?’ the little prince asked. ‘In order to forget,’ replied the drunkard. ‘To forget what?’ enquired the little prince, who was already feeling sorry for him. ‘To forget that I am ashamed,’ the drunkard confessed, hanging his head. ‘Ashamed of what?’ asked the little prince who wanted to help him. ‘Ashamed of drink-



by a businessman who loves numbers, the fifth by a lamp man, and the sixth by a geographer. The richest for the little prince in regard to life experience is the planet Earth.

After the visit of almost every planet, the little prince says: “Grownups never understand anything by themselves and it is rather tedious for children to have to explain things to them time and again.”⁹ Thanks to the geographer, the little prince learns about the planet Earth, the seventh and last planet which he visits. The little prince confronts on the planet Earth the true worth of love and friendship.

On Earth he meets a snake which is the first and last creature he is to see there. It is thanks to the snake that the little prince returns to his own planet, to his beloved rose. The snake always speaks to him in riddles. The little prince does not understand, but he knows it is necessary for him, if he ever wants to know how the people think. The snake expresses in a short but fitting sentence a very important characteristic of human nature: “One feels rather lonely in the desert.’ ‘It is just as lonely among men,’ said the snake.”¹⁰ In this passage the snake speaks about the selfishness, inattention, and the inability of people to listen to others. Later our little hero climbs up a mountain where the echo repeats every word he says. It is just an echo but the little prince says to himself: “...the people have no imagination. They just repeat whatever one says to them...”¹¹ On Earth the little prince bumps into an actual man, a pilot of a crashed plane (an autobiographical feature of Saint-Exupéry) with whom he spends a time of his stay on Earth.¹²

ing!’ concluded the drunkard, withdrawing into total silence.” (A. de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, Hertfordshire 1995, p. 51) There is a great match in words and sentences. A reader might think consider it redundant, but that would be a wrong assumption. Reader should think a little more about this dialogue and about the book itself. What is the author trying to say? He is introducing us some kind of a cycle of life which has lost its direction and purpose to live a higher-quality life.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 11.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 68.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 72.

¹² A part of the beginning of the story is a narration of a pilot, who crashes his plane somewhere in the middle of the Sahara desert. He meets the little prince while repairing his plane: “Thus I lived alone, with no one I could

The prince's own planet has a great importance for him too, mainly for the simple and peaceful life he led there. He likes to talk about the sunsets, the baobabs, the volcanoes, which he carefully swept, and about his rose, which he's left despite of his great love for her. He describes the way he watered her, sheltered her against the cold... and, in the end, he "tamed" her; he bonded with her through responsibility and care. She became the only one for him, for love bound him to her. But the rose was proud, self-centred, and naïve. The author ascribes human qualities to the rose, but in spite of this, the rose is a beautiful flower. She only has a problem with expressing her feelings to the prince, whom she loves. This was the main reason for prince's departure from his own planet. The feeling of responsibility for the rose and the search for help guided him on his journey for the recognition of the real *worth of love and friendship*. Through experience he learned that *relationships are fragile*, and that *the words can sometimes mislead*. Who loves is rich, but, in the same time, vulnerable, too. Also the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche says: "In the innocence of creation, love is the greatest of all the sufferings. But it is the greatest of all joys, too."¹³

The Little Prince as a book about love is also understood as Saint-Exupéry's love confession to his mother—Marie de Saint-Exupéry (née de Fonscolombe), a person endowed with a literary and artistic talent. She was a perceptive woman of a noble heart, who shared her deep feelings with her five children. Especially after the sudden death of her husband, they needed her advice and support, therefore she became even more emotionally linked to them.¹⁴ She had a special relationship with Antoine. She was enthusiastic about his life and work, and he returned her love too. From the collection

really talk to," says the pilot. The little prince as if fell from the heaven. They spend only few days together, but it was enough for the little prince to turn the pilot's vague attitude to life completely upside-down. (Cf. *ibidem*, p. 12). "Please draw me a sheep!" was the first strange wish of the prince so much extraordinary in regards with the complexity of the whole situation connected with the plane's engine failure. (Cf. *ibidem*, p. 14) But for the prince this is a very important and pressing thing.

¹³ M. Jung, *Malý princ v nás*, op. cit., p. 89.

¹⁴ M.P. Nastorg, *Marie Saint Exupéry – hvězda Malého prince*, Kostelní Vydří 2004.



of ninety letters to the mother¹⁵, we can learn more details about the background of Saint-Exupéry's family environment, in which he grew up, and where he received the first lessons of the meaning of life and love reflected in *The Little Prince*.

Thanks to the words of the fox the little prince understood that what is worth the most in life are friendship and love. The fox revealed to him their true secret: friendship is true only if we gradually "tame" each other. Love must be given first, only then we can get it in a relationship. First we must get closer to each other; we must "tame" our friend, which means "to create bonds". Also other thing was made sure between the prince and the fox and it is that love is interconnected with responsibility for the person with whom we bond; whom we "tame."¹⁶ After these words the little prince finally understood what the rose means to him. She tamed him only for herself; she is the only one for him in the world. And at that moment he was very sorry for leaving her. One is responsible for what he tames, forever. Later the prince sees a garden full of roses and is very disappointed. He finds out that his rose lied to him. She told him that she is the only one of her kind in the whole universe. His disappointment is great and as he lies on the grass and he cries bitterly.

Love is without any doubts connected with responsibility and the free will in decision making. The prince's responsibility for his rose is therefore a manifestation of his adult love for her, which can give even if it doesn't get, even if it's refused, because – love is love. "Love can be a mission" (known words of St. Therese of Lisieux), a love that is a want and a decision to, without any hesitation, follow your heart, which never stops to give. Love is also mercy. It is a gift. It simply is, or isn't... that's what makes her independent, free, and, of course, "adult". The little prince is a child, but his love is adult.

It can be assumed that in the character of the little prince Saint-Exupéry sees and describes himself, and that in the rose he personifies his wife. Consuelo de Saint-Exupéry (born Consuelo Suncin de Sandoval) was from Spain and her marriage with Saint-Exupéry was her second. She became a widow in 1927 and four years after that she married

¹⁵ Cf. A. de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, op. cit.

¹⁶ "I beg you... tame me!" he said. 'One can only understand the things one tames,' said the fox. 'If you tame me we will need each other. You will be the only one in this world for me...'. Ibidem, p. 78.

again. Consuelo and Antoine were as different as water and fire. She was religious, but he wasn't very fond of piousness. She was emancipated, but he wanted his wife to be like his mother. Not many write about her as of a wife of a great writer, a well-known war hero, an author of *The Little Prince*, an honoured noble man. They consider her to be whimsical and weird; some of them call her stupid, others see her as a chatty unfaithful coquette. No literary or artistic talent can be ascribed to her, even though she used to surround herself with artists. But one should look at the matter also from the other side in order to complete a more realistic image of their strange marriage. It is a very interesting to read about her hard marriage with this great writer from her point of view. It's described in her very own book *The Tale of the Rose*.¹⁷

When the little prince meets the snake again, his journey across the universe is reaching an end. "There was nothing more than a flash of yellow close to his ankle. He stood motionless for a moment. He did not cry out. He fell as gently as a tree falls. There was not even a slightest sound, because of the sand."¹⁸ This is the end of the story of the little prince. Before he went back to his star, he said to the pilot: "Every time you look at the stars, you will see me. It will be such fun! You will have five hundred million little bells, I shall have five hundred million springs of fresh water... You, you alone, will have the stars as no one else has them..."¹⁹ The pilot perhaps still waits for the little prince to return. Who knows? Maybe, the little prince is hiding in every one of us, waiting. Will we become children again? At least for a while? Can we become as innocent as he was again?

The message of the book in the sense of humanism is connected with human values and the desires for happiness, for taking roots in "one's own" milieu, as the authors who wrote a study about the timelessness of *The Little Prince* say.²⁰ They also say that: In the description of the little prince's travels we see a whole human life. Saint-Exupéry in his work introduces the hidden truths of religiosity, which exclude the work from the solely humanistic plain. Again and again, in the

¹⁷ C. de Saint-Exupéry, *Spomienky ruže*, Bratislava 2001.

¹⁸ A. de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, op. cit., p. 104.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ J. Orlická, J. Pekníková, "Nadčasovosť diela *Malý princ* Antoina de Saint-Exupéry v kontexte globálnej kultúry," op.cit.



words of the little prince, there are religious and moral truths, which are to be read by a reader, who already has gone through all of the stages of humanism and individual rationalism. Right there he is forced to identify with the natural withdrawal from “a life here on Earth” to “another planet.” The way the author managed, with this simple choice of words, to transform a work to a philosophical-religious level is breathtaking. The author created a work which is compulsory in every stage of the life of a man. The work matures with the maturing of the reader.

A leading Slovak literary critic, Jan Števček, writes about the value of the work:

Of all his works, A. de Saint-Exupéry expressed the idea about a human most profoundly in *The Little Prince*. Through his melancholy and the boredom and the solitude, *The Little Prince* teaches us to appreciate a rose for her thorns, the sheep, grass, and the whole universe. It is a critical, sad and compassionate view of a contemplative person on the human activity. It is an attempt to step back from the adult age, and to the return to the world of a child, an attempt to step back from the era and a to return to time, from utility to the poetry of life, from privileges to selflessness, from pride to humility. *The Little Prince* invites an individual to see how much self-management he has, which is the more serious, the more innocent mouth is speaking to us... On a number of counts, the cosmic dreamer Saint-Exupéry is very close to the conscious or unconscious desire of the people.²¹

We can also express an opinion that, from a certain perspective, the character of Saint-Exupéry is controversial. His often mysterious, bohemian and in many ways “diverse and varied” life is not always worthy of following. However the message of his *The Little Prince* should be emphasized. He wrote a masterpiece, which is universally valid. Saint-Exupéry was a bearer of important news to the people. The content of this message should therefore be read independently of his personal perfection or imperfection.

Moral and educational (pedagogical) legacy of *The Little Prince*

The story of a golden-haired boy, a whimsical rose, a tamed fox and a shipwrecked aviator enchanted the world. Stories help us understand our own psychological life, the meaning of events. They help us approach the soul of children, they open up a path to their

²¹ J. Števček, in: E. Deschodt, *Saint-Exupéry*, op. cit., p. 460.

education. A moral legacy and foundation for the practical solutions of many educational problems.²² The story is so impressive due to *the narrative technique*. The narrative ability represents the usage of the whole complex of cognitive and language variables in storytelling and the presentation of tales. Furthermore, the narration is used as an *education method* especially in *preschool pedagogy*.²³

In order to summarize the contribution of the book *The Little Prince* for pedagogical science, it is necessary to mention what the tale propagates and where it may be employed in pedagogical, psychological, counselling practise and mainly in family education:

- The tale emphasizes the good and *the value of encounter* perceived as a person's view in a face-to-face encounter. It is a second-hand view—through the other person's perception and experience.
- It enables one to develop *a dimension of empathy in communication* and to strengthen relationship interaction.
- The prince's story involves narrative communication—in parts in which important content and morals are passed on via (re)telling (narration of) the story and via his communication and enables an educational influence.
- The tale propagates *a personal encounter* in a sense of a practical application of personalism in education. There is a query in the attitudes of the characters of the tale: Who is the being whom I am talking to and whom have I just met? Who are you?
- The personal *fulfilment of existential needs* of this interpersonal encounter also confirms *a basic ethical attitude*: I am unique and in the person of the other human I accept equal human *individuality*. This confirms *dignity and respect to a human being*, a person.
- The storyline in the tale *The Little Prince* refers to a correct usage of the dialogic method. It offers criteria for a two-way and balanced dialogue with a clearly determined direction, objective and, of course, “meaning” due to which it becomes a manual for *education by means of a dialog*.
- The tale propagates *a collective experience, a personal experience*, a collective search for a solution. For instance, an example of looking for

²² N. Peseschkian, *Kupec a papoušek. Využitie orientálnych príbehů v psychoterapii*, Brno 1996.

²³ N. Peseschkian, *Príbehy jako klíč k dětské duši*, Praha 1999.



a well in a desert would be: "What makes desert beautiful... is that somewhere it hides a well."²⁴ This relates to *pedagogy of experience* theoretically and practically in the story's presentation.

The usage of tales in the education is huge. The value of *The Little Prince* consists above all in providing the possibility of knowing existential truths about life, in Saint-Exupéry's perception of the man, his living space, and interpersonal relationships. *The Little Prince* can become a useful tool in the hands of a teacher in education and upbringing, in psychotherapy, on the path to maturation and to personal growth, in individuation and self-education, as well as in other unrecognized tasks, which are nearly unlimited. The human word presented in the literature and art becomes a wealth of pedagogical thinking.

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²⁴ A. de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, op. cit., p. 8.