

## Old Myths in a New Story: Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry's *The Little Prince*

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**Abstract.** Antoine De Saint-Éxupéry's *The Little Prince*, first published in 1943, is usually thought to be just a children's book teaching lessons of friendship and responsibility. Going beyond this first impression, this paper explores narrative elements in the plot like an individual's origin in the stars, celestial journeys, the descent to earth and a later ascent and return to one's own star. Such passages, the paper will suggest, resemble Plato's (427–348/7 BCE) view of the heavens and can therefore be understood as retelling tales about humans' relationship to the sky. Coming from a depth psychological approach, the term 'myth' will be used in the sense of an archetypal pattern describing experiences that many, if not all, humans make in life. Accordingly, some passages of the story will be related to Saint-Exupéry's personality and biography.

### **Introduction**

*The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry, was first published in 1943.<sup>1</sup> It was translated into more than 180 languages and dialects, and enchanted millions of readers. William Rees describes it as an 'autobiographical and philosophical allegory'.<sup>2</sup> Beverly A. Haley discusses it as a commentary on self-identity and writes that it 'unchains the reader's imagination to travel to unknown planets in outer space and simultaneously to perceive the follies and fallacies of earthbound man who, because he cannot see beyond his own nose, has not found his true identity'.<sup>3</sup> Haley

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<sup>1</sup> Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*. trans. T. V. F. Cuffe (London: Penguin Books, 1995 [1943]).

<sup>2</sup> Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry, *Wind, Sand and Stars*. trans. William Rees (London: Penguin, 1995 [1939]), p xviii.

<sup>3</sup> Beverly A. Haley, 'Who-Oh, Who-in the Universe Am I?', *The English Journal*, 62, no. 5 (1973): pp.795–99, p.799.

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states that the book is 'enchanting' and only 'seemingly child-like' implying that it provides valuable insights for adults as well. Whereas Haley engages with *The Little Prince* as a teacher of literature, this paper explores the plot from the viewpoint of a scholar of cultural astronomy.

Clive Ruggles and Nicholas Saunders point out that ancient people's relationship to their 'terrestrial environment' was a hands-on experience, whereas 'the celestial sphere can be regarded as an untouched, untouchable, and hence immutable part of the environment'.<sup>4</sup> Immutable was the sky, however, just in the sense that humans could not manually influence the changes they observed in the sky. Their only way of engaging with this part of environment was on a mental level like poets and writers who told stories that conveyed meaning that humans derived from the celestial spheres.

### **The meaning of myth**

In the context of this paper, the word 'myth' is used from a depth-psychological perspective. The Jungian therapist Edward Edinger (1922–1998), for example, stated that in myths 'we find particular forms and images through which we can grasp the archetypal realities that underlie all psychic experience and to a larger extent determine it'.<sup>5</sup> He thought that 'a knowledge of the mythological layers is instrumental in our becoming aware of the deep levels of the psyche'.<sup>6</sup> By reflecting on mythological images, Edinger continued, 'we are studying the facts of the psyche and trying to interpret them'.<sup>7</sup> From a depth-psychological view, he concluded, 'the gods stand for the archetypes, the basic patterns within the human psyche that exist independent of personal experience' and 'continue to exist unchanging while the momentary individual egos come and go'.<sup>8</sup> The notion that myths are not only stories of the past, but just as much of the present, is not a twentieth century invention. The Neo-Platonist Sallustius (4<sup>th</sup> century CE) stated already that mythological narratives 'never

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<sup>4</sup> Clive Ruggles and Nicholas Saunders, 'The Study of Cultural Astronomy', in Clive Ruggles and Nicholas Saunders, eds, *Astronomies and Cultures* (Colorado: University of Colorado Press, 1993), p.9.

<sup>5</sup> Edward F. Edinger, *The Eternal Drama: The Inner Meaning of Greek Mythology* (Boston, MA.: Shambhala, 1994), p.2.

<sup>6</sup> Edinger, *The Eternal Drama*, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> Edinger, *The Eternal Drama*, p.4.

<sup>8</sup> Edinger, *The Eternal Drama*, p.19 (first quote) and p.18 (second quote).

happened, but always are'.<sup>9</sup> Following Sallustius and Edinger, I use the term myth to refer to timeless and collective archetypal narratives that many humans, if not all, experience to a smaller or greater extent in their lives.

### The author

The author of *The Little Prince*, Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry (1900–1944), was a French aviator and writer, born in Lyon to a Catholic aristocratic family.<sup>10</sup> His publications comprise books like *Southern Mail* (1929), *Night Flight* (1931), *Wind, Sand and Stars* (1939) or *Flight to Arras* (1942). As most titles suggest, flying was Saint-Éxupéry's passion. Cuffe writes that '[f]lying obsessed him above everything else, because it allowed him to think *about* everything else – namely the fundamental questions which the heroic age of flight posed anew in such existentially available form'.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately Saint-Éxupéry tended to crash his planes repeatedly, probably because 'he was not a model pilot', but 'nonchalant about checks' and 'tended to lapse into reveries at the controls' as is stated in the publisher's note to an English translation of *Terres des Hommes* (*Wind, Sand and Stars*).<sup>12</sup> One accident happened in 1935 in the Libyan desert where he spent three days aimlessly wandering around and nearly died of thirst until he was finally rescued. Some of these experiences became part of the book *The Little Prince* which he wrote in New York between 1940 and 1943. On 31 July 1944, Saint-Éxupéry was on a reconnaissance flight for the French army between Europe and Africa when he was shot down by a German pilot. For decades, there was no sign of his plane and his body, the latter being an amazing but inexplicable parallel to the disappearance of the Little Prince's physical body at the end of the book. In 1998, Saint-Éxupéry's silver bracelet was found and in 2000, parts of his plane could be located in the Western Mediterranean.

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<sup>9</sup> Sallustius, *On the Gods and the World*, IV, trans Gilbert Murray, at [https://hermetic.com/texts/on\\_the\\_gods-1](https://hermetic.com/texts/on_the_gods-1) (accessed 30 May 2016); see also James Hillman *The Soul's Code* (New York: Bantam, 1997), p.46.

<sup>10</sup> The biographical details in this passage are taken from Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*. trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harcourt Inc., 2000 [1943]), last page, n.p., and from the introduction in Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*. trans. T. V. F. Cuffe, pp.vii–xxviii.

<sup>11</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p. ix.

<sup>12</sup> Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry, *Wind, Sand and Stars*, page before title page, n.p.

### **Summary of the plot**

The plot is shaped by a situation which de Saint-Éxupéry had experienced in a similar way a few years before he wrote this novella. The narrator, an aviator, is forced to land in the Sahara desert due to engine troubles. Being on his own, he has to repair the engine within a week lest he would run out of drinking water. He sleeps in the sand during the first night, at daybreak a boy with a fancy costume, the eponymous character, wakes the narrator with the request to draw a sheep.

The story describes the Little Prince's life on his planet and his journey to other planets until he comes to the earth. On earth, the title hero makes some acquaintances and learns lessons, for example about the value of friendship. When the plot returns to the narrative framework, the character's arrival on earth is one year ago and he wants to return to his star (used interchangeably with the words 'asteroid' and 'planet'). This will be established with the help of a snake's bite that will kill his physical body which he has to leave behind, because it is too heavy to take it with him. Also the narrator can go home after having successfully repaired the aircraft's engine. His last evening with the Little Prince is devoted to an emotional farewell followed by the fatal snake bite. On the next day, the narrator cannot find the Little Prince's body and concludes that, contrary to the Little Prince's own expectation, he had actually been able to take it with him up to his star. The book ends with an appeal to the children-readers to write and tell the narrator when they happen to meet a child resembling the description of the Little Prince, for then he would know that 'he has returned ...'.<sup>13</sup>

A thematic analysis of the text yielded variations of the following sky myths.

### **Myth 1: The origin in the stars / The assignment of one individual to one star**

The Little Prince's home, Saint-Éxupéry tells his readers, is a planet 'scarcely bigger than a house' or, for grown-ups who prefer numbers as proofs, 'the asteroid known as B 612'.<sup>14</sup> Saint-Éxupéry drew several pictures that show the Little Prince on his home planet or star. As stated above, the terms 'star', 'planet' and 'asteroid' are used interchangeably. Also each figure that the Little Prince meets on his celestial journey lives on his own planet – these characters are all male. The assignment of just

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<sup>13</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.93.

<sup>14</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.14.

one individual to one star is a varied retelling of an ancient sky myth described, for example, by Plato. In his *Timaeus*, Plato wrote that the Demiurge ‘assigned each star to a soul.’<sup>15</sup> In the case of *The Little Prince*, the creating god or Demiurge is Saint-Éxupéry himself, who made the assignment.

### **Myth 2: The Celestial journey**

In order to gain new experiences, the Little Prince embarks on a journey through space. A drawing by Saint-Éxupéry captures the moment when the Little Prince leaves his planet with the help of ‘migrating wild birds’.<sup>16</sup> He visits six planets where he meets their inhabitants of whom each represents a particular characteristic. The first individual that the Little Prince meets, is a king who likes to give commands, but, as he lives alone, there is nobody to carry them out.<sup>17</sup> So the king spends his time waiting for subjects and consequently thinks that the Little Prince is his subject. The topic in this passage is to exert power, to rule over others. Next, the Little Prince makes the acquaintance of a conceited man who constantly longs for admirers, for permanent applause and cheering.<sup>18</sup> The theme here can be described as an excessive need for attention that the author seems to have had himself. In his introduction, to *Wind, Sand and Stars*, William Rees states that as a child Saint-Éxupéry ‘wrote poetry, stories and plays, and his family had to listen to many hours of reading and performance; he was to make even more extreme demands on his friends as an adult writer in need of constant reassurance and encouragement’.<sup>19</sup>

Thirdly, the Little Prince meets a drinker who says he drinks to forget that he is ashamed of the fact that he is drinking.<sup>20</sup> a passage which reflects the traits of self-pity and self-indulgence. The fourth individual on the Little Prince’s journey is a businessman who adds up numbers and calls himself repeatedly a ‘serious person’.<sup>21</sup> Here, Saint-Éxupéry wrote down his childhood perception of adults as people who need proofs for everything they hear about and these proofs must be what they call serious, for example numbers that describe sizes. Adults like the businessman, so

<sup>15</sup> Plato, *Timaios Griechisch/Deutsch [Timaeus Greek/German]*. trans. Thomas Paulsen and Rudolf Rehn (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2009), 41e, p.67.

<sup>16</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, title page (drawing) and p.32 (quote).

<sup>17</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.34.

<sup>18</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.40.

<sup>19</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *Wind, Sand and Stars*, p.ix.

<sup>20</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.42.

<sup>21</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.43.

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the Little Prince thinks, expect to be taken seriously, but in turn, do not take children seriously at all. The topic here is the overestimation of one's importance. On the fifth planet that the Little Prince visits, lives a lamplighter whose work, to light up and extinguish a street lamp, has become increasingly difficult, because, as Cuffe writes, 'his planet turns more and more rapidly on its axis'.<sup>22</sup> Consequently he has to light and extinguish his streetlamp every minute and can never sleep. He fulfils his duty without ever questioning it and does not feel authorised to adapt his behaviour to the new circumstances. This passage reflects the increased speed of everyday life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries due to the inventions of vehicles like trains, cars and aeroplanes. Lastly, the Little Prince visits a planet inhabited by a geographer who does not travel himself, but waits for explorers to report about what the world looks like so that he can amend his maps.<sup>23</sup> This geographer can thus be considered an armchair-researcher who, instead of making his own experiences, relies on second-hand descriptions to make up his view of reality. It is this geographer who recommends the Earth when the Little Prince asks him where he could next travel to. Saint-Éxupéry, speaking through the Little Prince, summed up these six impressions of adults by saying that grown-ups 'are very strange' and 'decidedly very odd'.<sup>24</sup>

At this point of the story, the Little Prince's celestial journey can be understood as a preparation for his time on earth, comparable to the soul's descent to earth during its incarnation process described in ancient texts. One template for Saint-Éxupéry's plot is the myth of Er in Plato's *Republic* in which the narrative framework for the journey is a near-death/after-death experience.<sup>25</sup> In another example, the *Poimandres*, the first text in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century CE), the narrative takes place during a sleep-like state.<sup>26</sup> In Saint-Éxupéry's plot the narrator falls asleep before he makes the acquaintance of the Little Prince and, at the end of the story, when the Little Prince is gone again, he wakes up. The awakening

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<sup>22</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.48 and p.xv.

<sup>23</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.52.

<sup>24</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.39 and p.42.

<sup>25</sup> Plato, *Der Staat* [*The Republic*]. trans. Karl Vretska (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2010 [1958]), Book X, 614b-621b, pp.459-67.

<sup>26</sup> *Die Hermetischen Schriften - Corpus Hermeticum*. trans. Maria Magdalena Miller (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2009), p.117; Brian P. Copenhaver, *Hermetica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Poimandres.I, p.1.

when the Little Prince addresses the narrator, however, would then be just an apparent waking-up as part of his dream or vision.

### Myth 3a) The Descent to Earth

After having gained experiences on six other planets, ‘the seventh planet’ that the Little Prince visits, is the Earth, the sublunary sphere.<sup>27</sup> After some other adventures, he meets the narrator, a pilot whose aeroplane has crashed. Concluding from himself, the Little Prince assumes that also the narrator came from another planet and ‘fell from the sky’.<sup>28</sup>

The very first individual, however, that the Little Prince meets on Earth is a snake of the ‘colour of the moon’ (in the French text) or ‘of moonlight’ (in the English edition).<sup>29</sup> So Saint-Exupéry connected the snake to a celestial object (moon), in a wider context to the sky. The snake is a crucial figure in the plot. In spite of being bound to earth itself, literally due to the lack of feet, it is the only character who knows about the connection between humans and the stars. A hint to this knowledge is that the snake realises the Little Prince’s origin. Though ‘no thicker than a finger’, the snake is ‘more powerful than the finger of a king’, because, it claims, ‘I can transport you farther than any ship’.<sup>30</sup> ‘Whomever I touch’, the snake continues, ‘I return them to the earth from whence they came. But you are made of purer stuff, and you come from a star.’<sup>31</sup> The French original, however, does not contain the comparative that Cuffe used in his English translation; it reads ‘Mais tu es pur et tu viens d’une étoile’ (‘you are pure and you come from a star’).<sup>32</sup> So the snake’s point is not, as Cuffe suggested, that the Little Prince is purer than humans: By stating ‘you are pure’ it implies that humans are not pure at all. Thus, whereas in Gnostic literature the soul’s descent to earth is described as a process in which ‘planetary archons or potencies ... confer specific vices or sins’ as Liz Greene puts it, the planetary beings that the Little Prince met, had no such contaminating effect on him.<sup>33</sup> Each encounter bestowed the Little Prince

<sup>27</sup> de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.96.

<sup>28</sup> de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.12.

<sup>29</sup> ‘couleur de lune’, Antoine Saint-Exupéry, *Le Petit Prince* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1981), p.51; and ‘the colour of moonlight’, de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.58:

<sup>30</sup> de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*. p.58.

<sup>31</sup> de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*. p. 60.

<sup>32</sup> de Saint-Exupéry, *Le Petit Prince*, p. 52.

<sup>33</sup> Liz Greene, ‘The myth of the soul’s ascent: astral bodies, planetary sins, and Jung’s concept of ‘individuation’’, paper presented at the Myth, Literature, and the

with insights that added to his character and shaped his thinking, but his hosts' negative characteristics, for example an excessive demand for attention or self-indulgence, were not transferred onto him. A different or additional interpretation of this passage could be that the Little Prince is not fully incarnated on earth, that his body is not a physical one. As Cuffe put it, 'he is in effect the only non-human person in the humanized solar system of the story'.<sup>34</sup>

**Myth 3b) The ascent to heaven / to one's star**

Immediately after his arrival on earth and while talking to the snake, the Little Prince already thinks about his return to his star. 'I wonder', he says in this crucial scene, 'if the stars are alight (lit up) so that everyone one day can find one's own again. Look at my planet. It's right above us ... But how far away it is!'.<sup>35</sup> Cuffe's English translation does not precisely follow the French text here.<sup>36</sup> He rendered it as 'find a way back to their own', but there is no word in the French text hinting at the 'way to one's star', it is just about finding one's own star 'again', thus one had been there before. The Little Prince points out that his star is right above the snake and him, astronomically speaking, his star is on the zenith. With this description, Saint-Éxupéry expresses the importance that this star has for the Little Prince, but at the same time the Little Prince notices that it is 'so far away' which suggests an intuitive understanding that it is not time to return home yet.

This passage is also a retelling of an ancient sky myth. In *Timaeus*, for example, Plato wrote that the one 'who lived justly during the time allocated to him, shall travel to his own starry home/mansion and live a happy and pursuant life'.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, one can read in *Phaedrus* that virtuous/philosophical people go to heaven after death, 'raised up into a heavenly place by justice', while the others go to the 'places of correction under the earth'.<sup>38</sup> Marcus Manilius (1<sup>st</sup> century CE) speculated in Book I of his *Astronomica* that the souls of heroes travel to the stars and stated

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Unconscious Conference, The Centre for Myth Studies at the University of Essex, Colchester, (2-4 September 2010)..

<sup>34</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*. p.xiii.

<sup>35</sup> De Saint-Éxupéry, *Le Petit Prince*, p.52.

<sup>36</sup> De Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.58.

<sup>37</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, 42b, p.69.

<sup>38</sup> Plato, *Phaidros* [German]. trans. Kurt Hildebrandt (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2008 [1957]), 256D, p.58.

more generally in Book IV that ‘the souls originate in the heavens and return there’.<sup>39</sup>

**And the sky talks on: attaching one’s personal meaning to the stars**

The comparison of some passages in the plot with ancient texts, mainly from Plato, suggests that Saint-Éxupéry gave old sky myths a new appearance in *The Little Prince*. At the same time, he showed that humans can develop a special relationship to the stars and consequently attach a very personal meaning to them. He expressed this notion in the Little Prince’s speech towards the end of the book:

At night, you will look up at the stars. Mine is too small to point out to you. It is better that way. For you, my star will be just one of many stars. That way, you will love watching all of them ... They will all be your friends.<sup>40</sup>

The fact that the Little Prince will be on one of these stars will endear *all* stars to the narrator. Thus the meaning of one star will be expanded to all of them. The Little Prince continues:

The stars men follow have different meanings. For some people – travellers – the stars are guides. For others they are merely little lights in the sky. For others still – the scientists – they are problems to be solved. For my businessman they meant gold. But for all these people the stars are silent. For you [the narrator], the stars will be as they are for no one else.<sup>41</sup>

This is the coining of the personal meaning of the stars. As the narrator loves the Little Prince’s laughter, the Little Prince tells him:

At night, when you look up at the sky, since I shall be living on a star, and since I shall be laughing on a star, for you it will be as if all the stars are laughing. You alone will have stars that can laugh!<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Marcus Manilius, *Astronomicon Libri V. Die Astrologie des M. Manilius in 5 Büchern, Lateinisch/Deutsch [The Astrology of M. Manilius in 5 Books, Latin/German]*. trans. Wolfgang Fels (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2008), Book 1, lines 758–61, p.79; and Book IV, line 887, p.345.

<sup>40</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.65.

<sup>41</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.85.

<sup>42</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.85.

Thus Saint-Éxupéry repeated here the statement that the particular relationship to one star can be expanded and applied to all stars.

### **Connections between Saint-Éxupéry and the Little Prince**

In *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, Henri Ellenberger pointed out that '[t]he first and most immediate source of any creative thinker is his own personality'.<sup>43</sup> Several hints suggest that Saint-Éxupéry's biography and personality influenced *The Little Prince* and can therefore be found in it. Saint-Éxupéry's plane crash in 1935 in the Libyan desert, for example, seems to be reflected in the narrative framework. Furthermore, the Little Prince's suit in most of Saint-Éxupéry's illustrations resembles an aviator's suit that the author wore at the time when the book was written. Another hint in these pictures is the yellow scarf that the Little Prince wears. According to Eliot Fay, Saint-Éxupéry himself 'was fond of wearing a scarf which he allowed to stream behind him in the wind, exactly like that of the Little Prince'.<sup>44</sup>

Psychologically, these connections suggest that the character of the Little Prince represents Saint-Éxupéry as a boy and that the Little Prince's adventures reflect the author's experiences during childhood. Cuffe stated that the Little Prince is '[n]ot strictly a child at all, he is certainly very *like* a little boy'.<sup>45</sup> Saint-Éxupéry himself described the Little Prince as a 'most extraordinary little fellow'.<sup>46</sup> Following Liz Greene's view of 'the celestial ascent' as 'a symbolic narrative of "individuation", the inner process through which an individual can achieve full integration of the personality', *The Little Prince* can be interpreted as the beginning stages of the author's individuation.<sup>47</sup> C. G. Jung (1875–1961) saw the issues of the individuation process analogically expressed in alchemical symbolism.<sup>48</sup> Alchemical processes resemble, in Jung's view, those in active imagination and dreams during the individuation.<sup>49</sup> In *The Little Prince*, the narrator's (author's) forced landing in the desert can be seen as

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<sup>43</sup> Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pp.400–401.

<sup>44</sup> Eliot G. Fay, 'Saint-Éxupéry in New York' in *Modern Language Notes* 61, no. 7 (November 1946): p.461.

<sup>45</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*, p.xiii, emphasis by Cuffe.

<sup>46</sup> de Saint-Éxupéry, *The Little Prince*. p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> Greene, *The myth of the soul's ascent*.

<sup>48</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie [Psychology and Alchemy]*, GW12. third edn (Ostfildern: Patmos, 2011 [1995]), para. 40, p.51.

<sup>49</sup> Jung GW12, para. 448, p.397.

the starting point, but at the end of the book, the individuation process is not completed yet. The narrator waits for the Little Prince's return, thus for the reunion of his adult and childhood personalities. 'Individuation', Greene writes, 'is thus the psychological dimension of the archetypal narrative of the soul's journey'.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, *The Little Prince* reflects on a general basis the psychological dimension of the celestial journey that Saint-Éxupéry told in this book and on an individual level the author's quest to integrate his childhood experiences into his adult life.

### **Conclusion**

This paper was a thematic analysis of Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry's *The Little Prince* in the context of sky-myths. It was found that a seemingly simple piece of children's literature can contain a wealth of insights for a scholar of cultural astronomy. In this book, old myths, like celestial journeys, the soul's descent to earth and its ascent and return to its own star appear in a new garment. Several passages resemble narrations and statements in Plato's writings which suggest that the latter influenced Saint-Éxupéry's worldview. The congruence between the author's biography and some details in this book allows the conclusion that the story reflects the beginning stages of a psychological process that C. G. Jung called individuation. The book ends when the completion of this process was yet to come and also the author's life ended probably before he could experience the fulfilment of his individuation process, because he lived only one more year after the publication of this book. His readers can only hope that, at the latest after his physical death, Saint-Éxupéry was able to complete his individuation and that he met the Little Prince again and/or returned to his own star.

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<sup>50</sup> Greene, 'The myth of the soul's ascent'.