INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or “target” for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is “Missing Page(s)”. If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in “sectioning” the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from “photographs” if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of “photographs” may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106
SMALL, Daniel Gene, 1944-
SAINT-EXUPERY AND THE FAILURE OF LANGUAGE: A
STUDY OF THE THEME OF COMMUNICATION IN HIS
LITERARY WORK. [Portions of Text in French]
(VOLUMES I AND II)

Rice University, Ph.D., 1974
Language and Literature, modern

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

© Copyright
Daniel Gene Small
1974

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED.
RICE UNIVERSITY

SAINT-EXUPÉRY AND THE FAILURE OF LANGUAGE:
A STUDY OF THE THEME OF COMMUNICATION
IN HIS LITERARY WORK
VOLUME I

by

DANIEL GENE SMALL

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Thesis Director's Signature:

Houston, Texas

May, 1974
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>THE EXISTENTIAL PERSPECTIVE</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONE</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Point of Departure for an Existential Perspective: The Return to Concrete Reality</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The World in Itself: The Absurd</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subjectivity: Man's Consciousness of the World</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Existential Legacy: Freedom, Responsibility, Anguish</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Basis of an Existential Ethic: L'Engagement, or authentic action</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO</td>
<td>SAINT-EXUPÉRY SEEN AS AN EXISTENTIAL THINKER</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Return to the Concrete: Phenomenological Nature of the Writing of Saint-Exupéry</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discovery of the Absurd</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subjectivity in Action: L'Individu En Devenir</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ONE</strong></td>
<td><strong>MAN'S SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE.</strong></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The Life of the Spirit</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>L'Homme</strong></td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Dieu</strong></td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Death.</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>L'Archange: Man's Spiritual Goal.</strong></td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Conclusion.</strong></td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TWO</strong></td>
<td><strong>SAINT-EXUPÉRY'S BELIEF IN COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Introduction: Solitude and Communication</strong></td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The Experience of Solitude</strong></td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Créer Des Liens.</strong></td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Conclusion: The Levels of Communication in the Works</strong></td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# PART III

THE THEME OF COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKS OF SAINT-EXUPÉRY

## Introduction to Part III: Courrier Sud and the Theme of Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN COURRIER SUD, VOL DE NUIT, TERRE DES HOMMES AND PILOTE DE GUERRE</strong></td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Communication in Courrier Sud</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Exchanges of Men at Work and at War in Vol De Nuit, Terre Des Hommes and Pilote De Guerre</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and the Community of Man</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication by Radio</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN COURRIER SUD, VOL DE NUIT, TERRE DES HOMMES AND PILOTE DE GUERRE</strong></td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with the Airplane and with Other Objects</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITADELLE AND THE FAILURE OF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter ONE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITADELLE AND THE FAILURE OF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Exupéry and the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer's Art</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION
The writings of Saint-Exupéry manifest his great interest in all aspects of communication. Communication is the subject of two of his works (Courrier Sud and Le Petit Prince) and is the substance of a theme which pervades his other writings as well, particularly Vol de nuit, Terre des Hommes, Pilote de guerre and Citadelle. The theme reappears in his secondary writings, collected in the posthumous Un Sens à la vie, and many notes in Carnets concern either the need to communicate or the primary means of communication—language.

Saint-Exupéry was aware of the obvious role played by language in the realm of human communications. He saw the value of language as a unifying vehicle between men, but he also very acutely perceived the limitations which language imposes on human communication: man can express verbally only that which he has words for, and in order for this expression to become communication, his listener or reader must share not only the same vocabulary, but the same referents—the same set of keys for the understanding of that vocabulary. This awareness was especially clear for Saint-Exupéry the writer who found the language his culture had given him to be grossly inadequate to convey his vision of man and his message to men. His awareness of the inadequacy of language was as
agonizing as it was clear because his message deals with communication and how to achieve it. His dual purpose in the incomplete Citadelle, a work which occupies a special role with respect to communication, was to instill in man a belief that spiritual communication and unity of purpose are a real possibility and to give man the clues as to how to achieve this enlightened state.

My purpose in this study is to examine the theme of communication in the published works of Saint-Exupéry in order to determine its extent and significance. I also intend to show the importance of communication to Saint-Exupéry—as a literary subject and as a personal goal—manifested not only in the major works published during his lifetime, but also in Citadelle and in other, minor writings, some of which were never meant for publication. I believe that the literary theme can be shown to echo a deep personal need which becomes more evident in the incompletely and more casual writings.

In order to achieve my primary purpose, I have found it necessary to investigate the various interpretations of Saint-Exupéry's thought to determine his point of departure and his ideological affiliation, if any. Although his thought and message have inspired many different readings, in recent years there have been two interpretations both of which seem valid to a great extent. These two viewpoints are almost polar in their opposition: one is existential, the other
based on traditional humanism. Neither one, however, succeeds in explaining the complexities of Saint-Exupéry's thought.

Both these viewpoints agree that Saint-Exupéry sought to define man and to find a meaning for human existence at a time when traditional values were crumbling and new values were at best tentative. Those who see Saint-Exupéry's outlook as existential, however, tend to overlook or underplay his insistence on man's spiritual relationship to his fellows and to the world. On the other hand, those critics who emphasize Saint-Exupéry's mystical preoccupations are unable to describe the basic structure of his thought without relying on the language of traditional humanism. Their interpretation of such basic exupéryan terms as "l'Homme," "Dieu" and "Fraternité" leads one to believe that Saint-Exupéry is a proponent of traditional humanist thought. The sense of these terms as Saint-Exupéry uses them is vague when given a traditional interpretation. They remain unexplained and are taken as labels for values that Saint-Exupéry clearly does not hold.

My secondary goal, then, is to reconcile the notion of Saint-Exupéry as an existential thinker with that of Saint-Exupéry the mystic, by showing that these two viewpoints are both correct as far as they go, but that neither alone encompasses the wide scope of his thought. Saint-Exupéry the existential thinker and Saint-Exupéry the mystic need not
be seen as mutually exclusive portraits. His thought exceeds the boundaries of both definitions and can best be described as the combination of an existential approach and a mystical answer to man's purpose.

One cannot appreciate the role of the theme of communication in the works or the process upon which Saint-Exupéry relied to establish lines of communication without a basic understanding of his thought. For this reason, I shall proceed first to analyze the existential and spiritual facets of his thought in order to show their interrelationship. Part I of my dissertation deals with Saint-Exupéry's existential perspective, and Part II with his belief in man's spiritual existence and in the possibility of communication.

Saint-Exupéry's point of departure is similar to that of Camus, Sartre, Malraux and other twentieth century writers in that he rejects the idea of a preconceived definition of man and of his role in the universe, but prefers rather to see man as the creator of his own destiny through self-motivated interaction with the world and with other men. For such writers, the world has no sense except that which man gives it, and man himself is contingent—lacking absolute values—and solely responsible for his actions and perceptions. For the purposes of this study I shall refer to such an outlook as described above as "existential." An existential perspective, then, is one
which accepts these beliefs as a basis for considering man and his place in the world.

From this common point of departure, the writers mentioned all follow diverging paths in their analysis of human reality. I do not pretend that they share the same conclusions, nor that they espouse a common philosophy, and I certainly do not support the argument that all are "existentialists." All can be shown to have made statements, at one time or another, which coincide with beliefs generally accepted as basic to existentialist philosophy. Sartre, however, is alone among them to call himself an existentialist and is the only one to have developed a viable philosophy from the common ground I have called the existential perspective.

In Chapter One of Part I, I shall define broadly the existential perspective, drawing specific explanations primarily from the existentialist philosophy of Sartre, where all the major aspects of this perspective are treated in depth. Chapter Two of Part I will emphasize these common points shared by Saint-Exupéry and Sartre: the rejection of absolutes and embracing of concrete reality as man's field of action, the uniqueness of each subjective consciousness, man's unlimited freedom and responsibility to act and to create his own ethic as he does so. The paired principles of freedom and responsibility are fundamental in Saint-Exupéry's orientation, for he believes that responsible action in the present is
man's only hope for and influence on the future. He sees man in a state of flux, ever becoming other than he is through his own self-directed acts. This is basically Saint-Exupéry's existential perspective, but this orientation does not fully explain his thought for he sees the personal goal of each individual as part of a greater, collective goal for the entire species.

Part II deals with this collective goal which for Saint-Exupéry is spiritual in nature. Sartre's conception of consciousness as "nothingness" is clearly a spiritual (in the sense of incorporeal) phenomenon, but he sees each consciousness as being isolated from all others. For Sartre there can be no spiritual communication between individuals, whereas for Saint-Exupéry "la vie de l'esprit" implies communication with others on a higher-than-physical level. This emphasis on man's collective spiritual life separates Saint-Exupéry from Sartre and constitutes Saint-Exupéry's uniqueness with respect to those writers sharing an existential perspective.

In Chapter One of Part II, I shall examine Saint-Exupéry's belief in man's spiritual possibilities, to show that he saw another dimension to existential responsibility: the individual is responsible for contributing toward the spiritual evolution of the species to some higher level of being. Here also I shall study several terms which Saint-Exupéry uses to symbolize stages of man's individual and collective evolution ("l'Homme," "Dieu," "l'archange"). Man's
spiritual future represents Saint-Exupéry's answer to the absurdity of the world and his way of going one step beyond the existential reality which he accepts as man's current state.

Saint-Exupéry believed that the spiritual ties between men exist whenever men create them, either through common action or by establishing genuine communication. He felt, however, that such communication is a relatively rare occurrence because few people are awakened to its possibilities and rewards. In Chapter Two of Part II, I shall explore his belief in present and future human communication and his reasons for this belief. Saint-Exupéry's need for communication derived from his personal experience of existential solitude, and he felt this to be true for others as well. His profound interest in communication runs contrary to the existentialist notion that man is isolated and unable to communicate. He sees the world as a "réseau de liens" which man discovers or creates through action. I shall study here the relationship between solitude and communion, the nature of the experience of solitude, and the ways in which man establishes ties with the world and with his fellow man. Although Saint-Exupéry's goal marks a departure from a strictly existential perspective, the freely-acting individual consciousness is the instrument which creates the ties he writes of, and the existence of such subjective entities precedes that of the spiritual unity for which they are responsible.
In the final section of this chapter I shall outline the modes of communication acknowledged by Saint-Exupéry. These are verbal and non-verbal communication between men, and communion both with men and as a sort of cosmic participation in the workings of the universe. These three levels of communication find extensive expression throughout the works of Saint-Exupéry, primarily as elements of the central theme of the "novels": **Courrier Sud, Vol de nuit, Terre des Hommes, Pilote de guerre**. This theme acts as a framework around which the narrative of each work is woven and as the unifying leitmotif of all four works.

In Part III, I shall examine in depth the theme of communication, whose major aspects I shall have outlined in Chapter Two of Part II. By tracing the various manifestations of this theme in the novels, I intend to show that communication is indeed the author's prime concern and the base upon which each work is constructed. The form of this theme in the novels can best be described as an organic structure which does not evolve from one work to the next, but rather develops through the later works from its original manifestations in **Courrier Sud**. For this reason, I shall use a synchronic approach in Part III in order to gain an overview of the entire work and of the theme I am studying.

In my introduction to Part III, I shall establish the relationship of **Courrier Sud** to the rest of the works and show
that *Courrier Sud* manifests the global theme of communication, most of whose aspects will be more fully developed in the later works.

In Chapter One of Part III, I shall trace all the manifestations of verbal communication, first in *Courrier Sud* where the theme first appears, and then in the later works. In the next to last section of this chapter I shall examine the relationship of language to the spiritual community which Saint-Exupéry sees as a possible future creation of man. Saint-Exupéry sees verbal communication as being generally superficial, and he feels that present-day language cannot express the spiritual community he is seeking to establish. A new "language" is needed to make this community sensible to man, but the community's origins must be non-verbal, otherwise men may deceive themselves into believing that the rhetoric of communication means that communication is taking place.

In Chapter Two of Part III, I shall concentrate on the non-verbal means of communication found in the works. Certain objects appear as both symbols and means of communication. Saint-Exupéry considers gestures and body language to be significant forms of both voluntary and involuntary communication. A number of his characters are able to interpret signs and "messages" from the natural world, thus experiencing still another sort of non-verbal communication. These various means and symbols of communication are found throughout *Courrier Sud*, *Vol de nuit*, *Terre des Hommes*, and *Pilote de guerre*, and can
be seen to act as a unifying element in these works. The portrayal of communication in *Pilote de guerre* is unique: Saint-Exupéry depicts the French defeat of 1940 in terms of a communications breakdown. Army units can no longer contact each other, refugees find themselves separated from the home and village where their lives had meaning, and generally the ties which held a country together dissolve, leaving scattered and disconnected elements of what was once the French nation. The portrayal of defeat and disintegration in terms of communication adds one more dimension to the global theme which is central to all four works.

The highest level of communication found in the works of Saint-Exupéry is a form of spiritual communion among men or between man and the world. In Chapter Three of Part III, I shall study these two categories of communion manifested in the four novels. In *Courrier Sud*, man's communion with the world prevails, while in *Vol de nuit* the communion of men participating in the same métier is more prominent. In *Terre des Hommes*, Saint-Exupéry presents an expanded view of both types of communion, describing his personal experiences of communion with others and with the world. Inherent in the passages of *Terre des Hommes* which deal with communion is Saint-Exupéry's belief that others can attain this state of spiritual participation. In *Pilote de guerre*, Saint-Exupéry continues to express this same belief, describing how the
disintegrating effects of the war caused him to lose sight of his spiritual goal and how, through total participation in a futile but symbolic resistance effort, he suddenly regained awareness of his communal relationship with all other Frenchmen and through them with all men. A product of human activity, communion is a condition of harmony which often requires no acknowledgment by those who share it, but which increases the significance of their individual existences by joining them together in a spiritual dimension.

Saint-Exupéry's ultimate goal as a writer was to share with others his vision of man's spiritual community. He envisioned Citadelle as the vehicle for sharing his vision, and he considered this to be his most important work. For this reason, I shall study Citadelle apart from the other works. Saint-Exupéry died before completing Citadelle, and he often said he still had ten years' work to do before reaching the stage where he could begin to condense his material into its final form. Thus, as far as Citadelle is concerned, we are dealing with a rough-draft manuscript containing certainly many of the themes and exhibiting the style, but lacking the coherence and form of the projected work. Part IV of my dissertation shall deal with Citadelle and the relationship of this work to the global theme of communication and to Saint-Exupéry's goal of sharing his message.

Saint-Exupéry strongly believed in the power of poetic imagery to convey a writer's message to his readers, and he
compared a well-constructed image to a cathedral which "envoûte" or to a net which captures the reader.\(^1\) He admired the effective images of other writers and himself chose to use a metaphorical style rather than a more direct, prose narrative style to express his vision. His most prevalent images all reflect one aspect or another of communication, thereby creating an underlying continuity ("continuité souterraine" [SV, p. 251]) throughout the works. Not only does each image attempt to "envoûter" the reader, but also each one reinforces the others, thus creating the vast network of the global theme of communication. Saint-Exupéry wanted to maintain this network of images in *Citadelle* and further refine their combined powers to "envoûter" the reader. He hoped in this way to be able to restore in man a sense of spiritual continuity which he had come to recognize because of his ability to perceive the ties between man and the world. Since each individual must create or discover for himself the extent of his spiritual participation, Saint-Exupéry sought to share the process of his discovery rather than its fruits which, being the product of the encounter between one subjective consciousness and the world, might not have personal meaning for another individual. The "Caïd," the narrator of *Citadelle*'s first person monologue, is a symbolic figure. He is the spiritual leader whose goal is to develop his people's awareness of the ties which exist and which they can create.
His role and activity vis-à-vis his people represent allegorically Saint-Exupéry and his own attempt to express his vision of unity.

This, then, is Saint-Exupéry's basic orientation in *Citadelle*: to share his intuition. To achieve his goal, he greatly expanded certain concepts and images in an attempt to express the total picture of man's spiritual involvement in the world: "liens," "le sens des choses," "l'arbre," and many more all convey the notion that the meaning of anything depends solely on its relationships with other things. He apparently hoped to elaborate these images into a "language" or code of expression which might be readable by all. He was keenly aware of the difficulty of this undertaking, however, and knew that he was still far from the "language" he was seeking.

In the final section of Part IV, I shall focus on Saint-Exupéry's struggle with the language handed him by his civilization and on his attempts to formulate a new mode of expression which might be free of the pitfalls inherent in an established language and in the cultural values it conveys.

Saint-Exupéry knew that groups with different languages (and thus cultural values) often fail to communicate with each other and thus fail to recognize much that they may have in common despite their superficial differences. He hoped to be able to provide that unifying language—the comprehensive world-view—which would erase human differences
and emphasize man's potential unity, but his thoughts on this subject are expressed in scattered passages through *Citadelle* which show that he was unable to answer the question of how to express what he perceived. He never resolved the paradox that words which grasp only a portion of a relationship are inadequate to express the whole, but that on the other hand there must be some way to verbalize the vision of unity which he intuitively perceived. For Saint-Exupéry, language was both his downfall and his only hope: he saw poetic images which express relationships in figurative terms as the writer's best tool for externalizing his *attitude intérieure*, and he felt that the apparent obscurities of his style resulted strictly from imperfect workmanship in the construction of images.

A final irony concerning the failure of Saint-Exupéry to convey his message by means of even the most carefully construed network of images is suggested by his evaluation of language as a means of communication in the earlier works. There, he portrays verbal communication as possible only where some other form of communication has already been established (through participation in a common endeavor, for example). Expressing this same idea in *Citadelle*, Saint-Exupéry himself explains why he failed: the reader must already have experienced the vision of unity to which Saint-Exupéry's images allude in order to understand the perceptions which they evoke.
In my conclusion, I shall explain that Saint-Exupéry's failure to communicate his vision to every reader is technically the result of his inability to free his poetic language from its traditional meanings, but that his relative success or failure depends just as greatly on the reader's personal experience (or lack of same) of spiritual participation in the world.
PART I

SAINT-EXUPÉRY AND THE EXISTENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

"Mais il n'est point d'explication et le monde n'a point de sens."

--Citadelle

Page

CHAPTER ONE: THE EXISTENTIAL PERSPECTIVE......... 18

CHAPTER TWO: SAINT-EXUPÉRY SEEN AS AN EXISTENTIAL THINKER................. 46
CHAPTER ONE

THE EXISTENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

The existentialist movement has had a noticeable influence on Western Culture, and is to a great extent responsible for the extremes of hope and despair that characterize the thought and literature of the twentieth century. Whereas philosophy has always tried to make life conform to one pattern of thought or another, existentialism does just the opposite: thought is made to conform to life. Existentialism and existential thought in general begin by accepting the existence of the world, and proceed from this return to the concrete to consider man's relationship to the world of things and to other men.

The dilemma of modern man begins with his questioning or rejection of absolute values. Philosophies in the platonic tradition are all based on the existence somewhere of an ideal or perfect reality, of which the physical world is but a suggestion or an imperfect copy. The general takes precedence over and even defines the particular, by providing a perfect model or idea of a given object or quality which is reflected, always to a lesser degree, in particular
manifestations of that object or quality. Such philosophies have come to be called "essentialist" because of their belief in "essences" or absolute values which pre-exist and determine the nature of all individual phenomena. And so according to essentialist philosophies there exists a human nature, or the "essence of man" from which derive all our individual natures. The object of these philosophies is to define the essence which determines man's character and thus explain the individual by his adherence to or deviation from "essential man."

Existentialism does not seek to dispute the conclusions of classical philosophy, but rather denies its very premises. Husserl was perhaps the first to consider the particular as an object of philosophical speculation. Sartre's entire philosophy is based on the uniqueness of the particular and the invalidity of the general, but he is not alone among twentieth-century French thinkers to consider the supremacy of the particular. His philosophy is the most coherent, and perhaps the only one that merits that title, but other writers—notably Gide, Malraux and Saint-Exupéry—share certain aspects of his world-view, as well as some ethical concepts and conclusions, although none adheres to every dimension of his thought.

The rejection of absolutes and of an essentialist analysis of the universe is often characterized by profound
disillusionment which can lead to the depths of despair unless there is an issue to the metaphysical predicament of man without absolute values. Those for whom existentialism is a philosophy of despair fail to see that despair is the beginning point, and not the conclusion of an existentialist ethic. Despair at the failure of traditional values to provide man with motivation and a definition of himself does not imply complete renunciation of the search for such values. Sartre's importance with respect to this problem is that of "providing a new metaphysics" (Knight, p. 185)\textsuperscript{4} for the contemporary quest for a definition of man. Gide, Malraux and Saint-Exupéry are three writers who have faced with lucidity the uncertainty resulting from the crumbling of old values, and with determination struck out from there to continue the age-old search for man, guided by the fresh insights afforded by an existential perspective.

An existential perspective is one which begins with the denial of absolute values and the affirmation of individual, concrete experience as a point of departure for thinking about the world and considering man's place in it. It is not a question here of the "influence" of one writer on another, often difficult to prove, nor of a "school" of thought adhered to, however tenuously, by several contemporaries. Rather, the perspective outlined above and to be described at length below is shared by a number of twentieth-
century writers as a common experience. The literary manifestations of this shared experience are quite varied and often so different as to seem antithetical, yet the point of departure remains strikingly the same: rejection of absolutes, reliance on the individual to create his own values. In the pages that follow, I propose to describe some basic existentialist concepts, illustrated primarily by the philosophy of Sartre, and then in Chapter Two to show how, by sharing these concepts, Saint-Exupéry's world-view is existential, as defined above.

Point of Departure for an Existential Perspective: The Return to Concrete Reality

To define the existentialist viewpoint, one must start with the concrete existence of the world. The discovery of the concrete world comes as a logical consequence of the rejection of absolutes; indeed, it is all that remains when absolutes and ideals no longer exist:

Le monde "en soi" est ce qui est et c'est tout: il n'a ni raison d'être ni signification. Il ne renvoie à rien d'autre qui serait sa cause ou sa fin ou le plan qu'il réaliserait."

Sartre begins by accepting brute, physical reality which has no sense or meaning a priori, but just is. This concrete reality is all there is, and he calls it "l'Etre" in L'Etre
et le Néant. "Le Néant" is his conception of human consciousness, which has no existence in itself, but is only a direction towards some physical object. Consciousness is always consciousness of something. With these two simple notions of "Being" (all that which is) and "Nothingness" (consciousness of some part of Being), he is able to explain to an amazing degree of completeness human motivation and behavior, thought and action.

A characteristic of French writers sharing an existential perspective is that instead of the systematic exposition of philosophical thought, they choose an indirect expression: "Journaux intimes," fiction or (in the case of Saint-Exupéry) a fiction-like mode of writing which "conservent un écho de la vie personnelle." (Foulquie, p. 33) With the exception of that of Sartre, there is no coherent philosophy of the existential perspective in twentieth-century French literature. Perhaps this is because the existential viewpoint is less a philosophy offering itself for contemplation than a method or an attitude suggesting a new way of looking at the world. For Sartre, there is never the question of discovering Truth, because there is no Truth. Instead, philosophy is "a choice; in other words an ethic." (Knight, p. 198)

In his book Literature Considered as Philosophy, Everett Knight presents the existential perspective as the
modern way of looking at the world. He finds this attitude expressed in painting (Cézanne) as well as literature, and suggests that it is even more pervasive. In a very general sense, existentialism is replacing nineteenth-century rationalism as the current mode of thought. The existential attitude, seen as a return to the concrete, is such a vast phenomenon that it is difficult to speak of its origin and development, but it is easy to recognize its manifestations. As a widespread phenomenon characterizing the thought of an era, Knight reasons, the existential perspective ought to be quite evident in artistic creation.

Indeed, this perspective can be seen in the works of many writers, and is more a mutual discovery or awareness of concrete reality than anything else. Knight observes two phases of the return to the concrete which characterize the artist's attitude. The first of these is an "interest in the exterior world in and for itself" (Knight, p. 45), and the second is the artist's engagement in the exterior world which counterbalances the renunciation of absolutes. (Knight, p. 35) Both these phases are present in the writings of Sartre, Malraux and Saint-Exupéry, but they do not have a simultaneous origin. The fact that the "discovery of the world" phase appears first lends credence to Knight's belief that the existential perspective spread (and is still spreading) itself gradually over Western Culture to become eventually
infused into our way of thinking.

Knight discovers the first of these phases in Rimbaud, Gide and Valéry. He contrasts the sense of immediacy that they perceive through contact with things and which they convey in their writing, with Proust's use of objects to evoke past experiences and to "shield from us things more real than themselves." (Knight, p. 34)

For Valéry, as for Sartre, the immensity of non-human existence is inescapable. There are things, and then there is consciousness which cannot exist without things. For Sartre, the "pour-soi" or consciousness is nothingness, existing only when it "intends" a real object, when it becomes consciousness of that object. Valéry cannot give a separate existence to consciousness either:

The whole drama of his thought, the intellectual tension which gives substance to his poetry, is the tragic awareness that consciousness, that "flaw" in the fullness of Being, is all that matters; and yet all attempts to draw closer to this divine flaw are thwarted by the interference of what is foreign to it, the exterior world. (Knight, p. 41)

This awareness leads to the feeling of the absurd, which "goes hand in hand with the rediscovery of the concrete." (Knight, p. 42) The world around us is overwhelming and absurd, and consciousness can be only of the world around us: "Subjectivity is nothing but the manner in which objects
exist; we are 'in the world' and '...we must try to live!' (Le cimetière marin)" (Knight, p. 42).

The engagement phase of the return to the concrete is secondary to the "interest in the exterior world" phase, and is lacking in Rimbaud and Valéry. Knight sees engagement as a natural development in the serious writer, and an attitude which has, in a broad sense, always characterized creative writing. The engagement of the writer implies his attempt to make his art useful. (Knight, p. 52) What is useful has naturally changed as society has changed. Literature draws its strength from involvement "with what is of deepest concern for the Age that produces it." (Knight, p. 58) So it is of "la littérature engagée" of which Sartre writes in Qu'est-ce que la littérature? And so, as Sartre says, speaking for the writer who is "engagé" and writing during the Existential Age: "Il ne s'agit pour nous ni de nous évader dans l'éternel ni d'abdiquer devant ... le 'processus historique'."7 By this, Sartre means the writer should be primarily concerned with the contemporary scene and that he should be attuned to the immediacy of his times, changing when change is dictated by a turn of events. This demands a total rejection of absolutes, for the nature of an absolute is to be inflexible, to be "a resting place which helps us to forget that man, since he has no 'essence', has to be reinvented each day. (see Situations II, p. 313)" (Knight, p. 60)
The nature of "la littérature engagée," then, is phenomenological, its purpose being to describe the world as it is immediately perceived by the writer, as he "intends" it with his individual consciousness. Since all reality is subject to individual consciousness, each person's subjective reality is universally valid, and "I can therefore question myself, and on the basis of this interrogation, successfully carry out an analysis of 'human reality!' (see Sartre, Esquisse d'une Théorie des Emotions, p. 9)" (Knight, p. 73)

Bearing in mind that engagement signifies usefulness to a given age, and that the contemporary metaphysical dilemma is a direct result of the discovery of the absurd and of the loss of an absolute definition or justification for man: "The task of phenomenology and of existentialism is to reconcile the absurd with the fact that human life is possible." (Knight, p. 79) The only reconciliation possible here is in the attitude that man adopts toward the absurd. This is the task taken up deliberately by Sartre, and in spite of themselves by other writers who share the existential perspective. This is in essence what Malraux and Saint-Exupéry have done by their insistence on human values as the only valid basis for human life.

The return to the concrete, then, is the point of departure for existentialism and for those writers who share the existential perspective. From the standpoint of artistic
creation, adopting this perspective means not only that the artist now concerns himself primarily if not uniquely with the physical world, whose existence is undeniable and the only thing that he can affirm, but also that he provides a model that can serve to enlighten others and to guide them in their actions. The innovation of the existential perspective is that it does not attempt to lead men to an arbitrary end or for an arbitrary cause, but that it gives them a means to their own individual ends by providing an ethic for self-directed action: "Truth is not the object, but the condition of thought." (Knight, p. 200)

The World in Itself: The Absurd

In Sartre's *La Nausée*, Roquentin discovers the existence of matter ("la matière brute"). or things, in a passage often quoted to show what Sartre means by the absurd. His experience is almost primordial—there are no words adequate to describe what he discovers there before him as he sits on a park bench in Bouville. His discovery is twofold: there exists a world of things which have no meaning in themselves, but which simply are; and a human attempt to describe, define or categorize these things is completely arbitrary—language has no power over things:

Donc j'étais tout à l'heure au Jardin public. La racine du marronnier s'enfonçait dans la terre, juste au-
dessous de mon banc. Je ne me rappelais plus que c'était une racine. Les mots s'étaient évanouis et, avec eux, la signification des choses, leurs modes d'emploi, les faibles repères que les hommes ont tracés à leur surface. J'étais assis, un peu voûte, la tête basse, seul en face de cette masse noire et noueuse, entièrement brute et qui me faisait peur. Et puis j'ai eu cette illumination.

... A l'ordinaire l'existence se cache. Elle est là, autour de nous, en nous, elle est nous, on ne peut pas dire deux mots sans parler d'elle et, finalement, on ne la touche pas. ... Même quand je regardais les choses, j'étais à cent lieues de songer qu'elles existaient: elles m'apparaissaient comme un décor. ... Si l'on m'avait demandé ce que c'était que l'existence, j'aurais répondu de bonne foi que ça n'était rien, tout juste une forme vide qui venait s'ajouter aux choses du dehors, sans rien changer à leur nature. Et puis voilà: tout d'un coup, c'était là, c'était clair comme le jour: l'existence s'était soudain dévoilée.

Not only does brute reality simply exist, but it exists in a form which precedes all definition. Brute reality is one amorphous mass which in itself has no delineation, no boundaries, and which includes everything that exists physically, even man. There is a basic unity in this world of things—colors, objects, phenomena all run together and shade off into each other to the point where they are inseparable and where no natural necessity makes any sense of them:
Elle [l'existence] avait perdu son allure inoffensive de catégorie abstraite: c'était la pâte même des choses, cette racine était pétrie dans l'existence. Ou plutôt la racine, les grilles du jardin, le banc, le gazon rare de la pelouse, tout ça s'était évanoui; la diversité des choses, leur individualité n'était qu'une apparence, un vernis. Ce vernis avait fondu, il restait des masses monstrueuses et molles, en désordre--nues, d'une effrayante et obscène nudité.
(Sartre, La Nausée, p. 180)

Sartre takes up brute reality again in L'Étre et le Néant where he explains man and the world by use of the duality of things which exist, and consciousness. "Being" is all that which exists, the "in-itself" ("en-soi"). There is no motion, no time, no separation into parts of Being. Being simply exists. "Nothingness," on the other hand, is consciousness: this is a void which allows the definition of Being by means of giving parts of it mobility. When some part of Being moves into the "vacuum" of an individual consciousness, it is said to exist, and the consciousness becomes (consciousness of) that thing. Without Nothingness, or a void to move into, Being would not have any meaning because there would be no consciousness of it.

Thus, for Sartre, there are only: 1) things and 2) nothing (consciousness). As things move into the realm of consciousness, they obtain definition and meaningful existence. Nothing else exists except that part of Being
of which an individual consciousness is conscious: there is, thus, absolute identity of appearance and reality.

The sentiment of the absurd is the discovery of the purposelessness of things, the discovery that they have no sense until man is conscious of them and gives them a meaning. From this concept, Sartre derives man's freedom from determination and thus his ultimate responsibility for all that he does. The importance of subjectivity is also derived from the absurd: the meaning of the world is what we make of it, and each of us is free to perceive the world in his own fashion. The absurdity of the world is a derisive or negative conception only for those who see definite answers to human questions. For the existentialist, however, the absurdity of the world is the condition of man's freedom to act. Camus, who saw absurdity as the clash between man's desire to know and the inexplicability of the world, chose to rebel against the absurd and found that the more man struggles to make sense of the world, the more absurd his attempts become: because in the end, the individual dies without having solved anything definitively. And so the moral of Le Mythe de Sisyphe: we must imagine that Sisyphus is "heureux" in performing his senseless task, and we must try to be happy ourselves in the knowledge of the overwhelming senselessness of our actions in the long run.

Sartre, on the other hand, offers man the freedom to
create his own meaning in the world, rather than complain that none is given to him. And so the existentialist tries to see things as they are and to describe what exists according to his perception, not to analyse its parts or deduce its origin: his "method" is lucidity; his object is not the why or how of things, but the what.

Subjectivity: Man's Consciousness of the World

If the world has no sense a priori, but only that which man gives it, and if consciousness is nothing other than the void which is filled by some part of the world, then all that can be known by each individual consciousness is that part of the world which it "intends." Each consciousness is situated in a given time and space, and thus each has its own individual viewpoint. Since, for Sartre, there is no absolute or objective reality and no point outside the world from which one can observe all that which is, each subjectivity has its own perceptions and thus its own version of reality. Subjective reality is the only reality for Sartre, and each subjective reality is different from all others.

Not only do different subjectivities find different meaning in the world of things, but they also see the world differently—they see a different world:

Le monde n'est donc pas cette réalité rigide et valable pour tous que croit le
vulgaire. Il varie avec les individus, avec les peuples et avec les époques. En effet, il y a bien des façons de percevoir et de comprendre l'existant brut. La psychologie classique nous l'a déjà appris: du même donné extérieur nous nous faisons des représentations bien différentes.*

(note: Foulquié, p. 70)

The meaning of the world, then, is ultimately subjective. I can know only what I myself perceive, and thus each individual's perception of reality is the only reality for him.

For Sartre, man does not depend on the world for his existence, but rather the existence of the world depends on man's consciousness of it. The world means nothing until it means something pour moi because I see it in such a way. This evidence of subjectivity can be expressed in another way: we know the world through our contact with it, and this contact is perceived and interpreted through sensation. Immediate sensation of the world gives a feeling of knowing which is stronger by far than the knowledge obtained through rational processes. Systems invented by the mind are not provable, but are in the realm of ideas or ideals: the result of reasoning is contestable, whereas the result of sensation is not.

Things are such as they seem. Gide recognizes the disparity between learning through experience or contact with reality, and "book learning":

I spent three years of travel forgetting
...what I had learned with my head.
(Les Nourritures terrestres,
NRF 1944, p. 19)

All knowledge not preceded by
sensation is useless to me. (Ibid.,
p. 35. Both quoted by Knight, p. 98)

As we shall see below, Saint-Exupéry obeys the same intuition
by continually contesting the validity of intelligence and
reason, and by rejecting all intellectual systems as being
equally valueless since reason can prove anything it wants
to.

Likewise, Sartre rejects abstract intellectual
systems because they are meaningless, having no ground in
reality. In their place, he proposes an attitude toward the
reality that each consciousness can perceive. Each attitude
is unique and consists of a choice or series of choices pre-
ented by the confrontation of consciousness and reality.
Undetermined by outside sources, and lacking an interior
which could serve as a guide for behavior (since conscious-
ness is nothing in itself, but always consciousness of some-
thing), man is nothing until he chooses to act, and he is free
to choose to act in any manner whatsoever.

Existence is entirely subjective and is essentially
act. Man's existence consists entirely of his point of view
or situation, and the choices he makes from this point of
view as he acts on the exterior world:
All action is directed outward to the world since it originates as a choice of consciousness which is nothing, and each action contributes to defining what man is. This is what Sartre means by "existence precedes essence": I am first—that is I am a consciousness situated somewhere in time and space—and then I am something only after I choose to act. The person I create and become by my actions is my "essence." I choose my own essence. Man is thus constantly becoming what he is, and he is nothing until he makes himself something by acting.

**The Existential Legacy: Freedom, Responsibility, Anguish**

The meaninglessness of the world is the condition for man's freedom, but it is also the cause of his anguish ("angoisse"). The evidence of subjectivity and the autonomy of choice afforded by the uniqueness of each individual consciousness create the inseparable conditions of freedom, responsibility and anguish. Man's freedom to act is so total that he alone is responsible for what he does, and he can never shake off this responsibility because the world offers
no solutions. He experiences anguish, not only at the loss of absolute values which gave him a sort of spiritual comfort, but also at the limitlessness of his freedom and the vastness of the choices that lie before him after he has renounced or lost his dependence on absolutes. A philosophy of action that is also a philosophy of the absurd is only logical, since only in a world free from scientific and religious determination can man be free to act and to "select his own goals depending upon the exigencies of a given historical context." (Knight, p. xiii)

When Sartre says that "l'essence de l'être humain est en suspens dans sa liberté" (L'Être et le Néant, p. 61), he is talking about individual essence. The question is not am I a man or not, but what man will I be? Human freedom means the freedom to create one's own concrete, individual essence. Man is free, but not "absolutely free": we cannot do anything about our situation at this moment (our physical condition, history, intelligence, etc.), but we must adopt an attitude toward these données. By so doing, we accord them the significance of our choice: we don't choose our données, but we choose our manner of seeing them; we "assume" them:

D'ailleurs la seule façon que j'aie de me choisir est de prendre une attitude déterminée au lieu d'une autre: la conscience n'y ayant pas de contenu, toute sa réalité étant mouvement vers autre chose, c'est dans ce mouvement,
Human freedom includes the possibility to reaffirm or to change former attitudes. Thus, we are free from our past in that we are free to reject it, repeat it or adopt any other pose in regard to it. Likewise, we are free from future determination because we are free to create our own future.

Freedom is unavoidable, and is the cause for l'angoisse existentielle: man is condemned to be free, and is ultimately responsible for his acts and attitudes, and for the effect that these acts and attitudes have on the world. In Les Mouches, Oreste expresses this condemnation to freedom:

Il n'y a plus rien eu au ciel, ni Bien, ni Mal, ni personne pour me donner des ordres [...]. Je ne reviendrai pas sous ta loi: je suis condamné à n'avoir d'autre loi que la mienne [...]. Car je suis un homme, Jupiter, et chaque homme doit inventer son chemin.  

Freedom means having no authority imposing a conduct or an attitude upon man. It is this lack of absolutes or norms which leads to the feeling of anguish by confronting man with his freedom to act. Man must choose without any principles on which to base his choice, without any moral reason for so doing. And he experiences a "vif sentiment d'avoir été jeté là sans l'avoir voulu." (Foulquié, p. 49)
As well as feeling anguish at the infinite possibilities of choice facing him, existential man feels ultimately responsible for the choices he will make. Each act, since it is not based on any pre-existing morality, founds a new morality and is responsible for itself and any further action it causes or provokes. We are responsible for our acts regardless of our intentions prior to acting: "On ne fait pas ce qu'on veut et cependant on est responsable de ce qu'on est: voilà le fait." (Sartre, Situations II, pp. 26-27) But our responsibility extends farther still. Sartre defines responsibility as "conscience d'être l'auteur incontestable d'un événement ou d'un objet." (L'Etre et le Néant, p. 639) Since reality is only subjective, and each "pour-soi" gives existence to the world ("est celui par qui il se fait qu'il y ait un monde" [L'Etre et le Néant, p. 639]), each "pour-soi" or consciousness must assume the entire responsibility of his perception and creation of the world: "Dès l'instant de mon surgissement à l'être, je porte le poids du monde à moi tout seul, sans que rien ni personne puisse l'alléger." (L'Etre et le Néant, p. 641)

Another way of looking at existential responsibility is to consider it as a form of relativity: all that which exists is related in such a way that every object and event ultimately affects—to however minute a degree—every other object and event. Sartre believes that each man creates the
world by his unique perception of it and thus is alone responsible for the world as he perceives it, and as his conduct and attitudes cause it to change.

The following passage, taken from an article by Sartre in *Action* and quoted by Foulquïé, summarizes the relationship of freedom to responsibility and to anguish:

> Si l'homme *n'est pas mais se fait* et si en se faisant il assume la responsabilité de l'espèce entière, s'il n'y a pas de valeur ni de morale qui soient données *a priori*, mais si, en chaque cas, nous devons décider seuls, sans points d'appui, sans guides et cependant *pour tous*, comment pourrions-nous ne pas nous sentir anxieux lorsqu'il nous faut agir? Chacun de nos actes met en jeu le sens du monde et la place de l'homme dans l'univers; par chacun d'eux, quand bien même nous ne le voudrions pas, nous constituons une échelle de valeurs universelles et l'on voudrait que nous ne soyons pas saisis de crainte devant une responsabilité si entière?

(Sartre, article dans *Action*, 27 déc., 1944.) (Foulquïé, p. 66)

**The Basis of an Existentialist Ethic:**

*L'Engagement*, or Authentic Action

In basic opposition to traditional "essentialist" philosophical inquiry into the nature of man, Sartre does not consider man as approachable "in a vacuum," or apart from his individual existence in the world. Man is essentially act, and since subjective reality is the only reality, every
human existence is unique. This is another way of saying that man is situated in time and space and that the perspective of each individual situated in a unique combination of physical and temporal données is different from all others. Man can thus be considered only in relation to his surroundings, and each man must be considered separately. The notion of a human nature is replaced by the absolute reality of all human experience.

The moral conclusion to be drawn from this relativity is the existentialist concept of responsibility. Through individual free action, each of us finds his own morality, and thus each is ultimately responsible for the cause as well as the effects of his actions. But, as we saw above, existential responsibility goes beyond the individual. Every human act is a model or "recommendation" for further human conduct; we create good and evil by acting in one way or another. Our actions and attitudes create not only the world, but man as well:

Each of us is a legislator, and therefore our responsibility is limitless. "...In choosing what I shall be, I choose what man shall be." (Sartre, L'Existentialisme est un humanisme, p. 27) If existence precedes essence, then it is through existence that man comes into being, and since there is no "absolute" existence, but only individual ones, every existence is responsible for what man is. (Knight, p. 68).
The question that presents itself is, what is a moral act in the existential perspective? Since there is no external determination of conduct, every action is free, or self-determined: "Si la liberté est le bien suprême, il faut poser des actes libres, et, en ce sens, plus on s'engagera à fond et plus on aura fait acte moral." (Foulquié, p. 86)

To act morally in an existential perspective is to act independently of any morality or justification imaginable, and in response to an immediate, concrete thing or situation.

If free action in response to a given situation is the only authentic action, and if man is only what he does, it follows that rather than a clearly defined Self determining an action, it is the action which determines the Self. You will find out what you are only after having done something: "Être se réduit à faire." (L'Être et le Néant, p. 555)

Authentic action is, in a sense, the answer to the existential dilemma of freedom--responsibility--anguish. We are condemned to freedom and the resulting responsibility, but we have two options: we can accept our situation or reject it. Rejecting one's existential responsibility and seeking other sources for conduct than the confrontation of consciousness and reality is called "bad faith" by Sartre. This is the easy way out, the unauthentic reaction to the anguish of free choice, and the way most people choose: "La plupart du temps, nous fuyons l'angoisse dans la mauvaise foi." (L'Être et le
Néant, p. 642) Authentic action is the second option, and the only acceptable one for Sartre. It is the natural culmination of the discovery of the absurd and subsequent discovery of freedom, which is the autonomy of choice in a given situation:

Celui qui réalise dans l'angoisse sa condition d'être jeté dans une responsabilité qui se retourne jusque sur son délaissement, n'a plus ni remords, ni regret, ni excuse; il n'est plus qu'une liberté qui se découvre parfaitement elle-même et dont l'être réside en cette découverte même. (L'Être et le Néant, p. 642)

"Une liberté qui se découvre parfaitement elle-même" indicates the satisfaction or feeling of full self-accomplishment that can come only as the result of acting authentically.

Once having experienced the "vif sentiment de se faire lui-même et de faire le monde" (Foulquié, p. 45), the true existential thinker cannot remain at the level of pre-existence that is uninvolved speculation: he must live his thought. And to think effectively necessitates first of all to act effectively. Gide's "gratuitous act" is of the same nature as Sartre's authentic action, in that it is not based on the notion of some absolute, but is the genuine response to a particular situation: creating value through action is the only response to the absurd. To show the nature of authentic action, Knight quotes passages from Gide's Journal which describe the feeling of authenticity Gide derived from
spontaneous, gratuitous acts:

Thenceforward the promptest, the suddenest, action seemed to me to be preferable. My action appeared to me the more sincere in so far as I swept before it all the preliminary arguments with which I tried to justify it to myself beforehand. (Journal, 1889-1939, La Pléiade, 1948, p. 776) (Knight, p. 116)

To do each thing for itself is the only way to establish its value. (Journal, 1948, p. 46) (Knight, p. 120)

The difference between Gide's gratuitous act and free action of the same nature for Sartre, is that Sartre demands that acts be directed outward toward the achievement of social aims, and not inward toward the achievement of individual ones. Man's situation, his "historical context" does not allow the luxury of totally gratuitous acts. Free acts are gratuitous as far as permanent solutions are concerned, because these solutions are impossible, but are directed toward specific events or objects and (since man is in situation) must serve an immediate social need. (Knight, pp. 125-126)

Authentic action as defined above is what Sartre means by "engagement": it is action considered as provoked by and as a response directed toward the immediate. There are actually two kinds of "engagement": by our presence in the world we are passively "engagé"; and by choosing our essence through action we become actively "engagé." (Fouquïé, p. 47) In the Sartrian sense, active "engagement" has the
additional meaning of a social commitment in order to bring about change. Sartre develops the notion of "engagement" and specifically of "la littérature engagée" in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (*Situations II*), where he is concerned primarily with the writer's usefulness to his time. But in a larger sense, "l'engagement" can be taken to mean the effective putting into practice of the existentialist ethic of free action and responsibility, in other words living authentically.

Human dignity, for Sartre, derives from "l'engagement," or more precisely it exists to the degree to which an individual consciousness fulfills the existentialist ethic:

L'homme est essentiellement projet, avait dit L'Étre et le Néant. Or un projet s'explique par la considération des fins, et non en invoquant des causes, et la fin se saisit, non par les méthodes objectives du physicien, mais par la compréhension, qui est une expérience vécue. (Foulquié, p. 42)

Man is thus perpetual becoming, and he understands what he is, not by knowing ahead of time what he will be, but only after having experienced what he has become. Knowledge is synonymous with experience, and knowledge, like consciousness, can be only of something external—in this case experience.

In order to exist authentically, man must continually re-create himself; he must go beyond what he already is. "Dépassement," then, is an imperative to existence:
"L'existence est constante transcendance, c'est-à-dire dépassement, de ce qu'on est; on n'existe que par la libre réalisation d'un plus-être." (Foulquié, p. 42) This notion is found in Gide ("We must surpass ourselves" [Knight, p. 125]), and in Saint-Exupéry, as we shall see below. For them, as for Sartre, man is most human when he strives to bring to its fullest fruition that which is unique to him, which can only be the limitless possibilities that present themselves as choices of conduct and attitudes as his individual consciousness confronts brute reality. Similarly, for Gabriel Marcel, it is what we are going to become that counts:

C'est notre être lui-même qui, par son dynamisme interne, se porte vers un mieux dont nous n'avons une connaissance explicite qu'après l'avoir atteint; nous nous portons vers lui par des démarches vitales, et non par des démarches intellectuelles. (Foulquié, p. 109)

Man is what he will become: this is the basis of existentialism and also the basis of the existentialist ethic, which is an ethic of action:

Existentialism does not propose itself to our "appreciation," it suggests the possibility of an action for the first time authentic in that it refuses to be deflected from its immediate purpose by consideration for a non-existent Absolute. (Knight, p. xiii)

There are two choices which arise from the discovery of the
absurd: one is a refusal to accept the absolute freedom resulting from a world without meaning; the other is an authentic existentialist attitude which accepts free choice and chooses to act, not against the absurd, but for itself by giving meaning to the absurd.

The terrorist is he who obscurely suspects the fundamental premise of contemporary philosophy, that it is to existence and not essence, to the particular and not the general, to life itself and not "what lies behind it" that we should devote our energies. (Knight, p. 82)

This is Saint-Exupéry's intuition, and one which he followed in both his life and his writings. Although his ideas are dispersed throughout the works and he makes no attempt to gather them into a coherent philosophy, he shares the basic existential perspective as later developed by Sartre and knew that only by choosing freely his actions does man exist authentically: human existence means creating what man will be.
CHAPTER TWO

SAINT-EXUPÉRY SEEN AS AN EXISTENTIAL THINKER

Introduction

As we have seen, the existential perspective not only rejects the conclusions of classical thought, but also denies the validity of its premises. (Knight, p. xi) At the same time, existentialism reconciles man with his environment, in the sense that reality is now taken for what it appears to be. Thus, modern thinkers' "return to things" marks a complete turnabout from the traditional position of looking for an aspect of the general in the particular. Existence is made up of particular things: our experience is always an individual experience, just as consciousness is always consciousness of something. For the existential thinker subjective reality is the only reality.

Particularly because the existential world-view is so radically opposed to the traditional essentialist conception of reality from Plato to the present, anyone today coming to grips with the question of the nature of his own existence must necessarily be forced to opt either for a pre-determined (essentialist), or a self-determined (existentialist) answer. Existentialism, being a movement rather than an idea, manifests
itself in more domains than strictly that of philosophical
thought. The current shift from abstract to concrete values
is felt as a culture-wide phenomenon, and as such it colors
to some extent the creative as well as the philosophical
thought of our age:

If this movement, both of reconciliation
and of renunciation, has the importance we
attribute to it, it cannot be restricted to
philosophy. Every historical period has its
own "personality" which none of its products
or activities fails in retrospect to
impress upon us. We feel the Middle Ages
as much in an illuminated manuscript as we
do at Chartres. The contemporary rediscovery
of the concrete is as notable in literature
and art as it is in philosophy. (Knight,
p. 33)

This is Knight's main premise and one which enables him to
"consider literature as philosophy." He finds in chosen
literary works the same concerns and attitudes, expressed to
a great extent indirectly and not collected into a system of
thought, which can be shown to be the basis of existential
thought, and which are most fully and coherently developed in
the philosophy of Sartre.

It would be a mistake to try to find a "system" of
thought in the works of Saint-Exupéry, as some have attempted.11
His thought does not approach even the coherence of a method
which is the nature of Sartre's thought. Saint-Exupéry is no
philosopher, but merely a man sensitive to the metaphysical
re-orientation of twentieth century thought and moved by his
own search for meaning and expression to record his im-
pressions of the world seen in a new light. Therefore I shall
make no attempt to argue that those parallels which can be
detected in the writings of Saint-Exupéry and of Sartre
represent in any way a collaboration between them or the in-
fluence of one upon the other. Rather, I shall point out cer-
tain tendences existentielles of Saint-Exupéry while recog-
nizing the many differences which exist between the
existentialist philosophy of Sartre and the thought of Saint-
Exupéry.

Saint-Exupéry's existential perspective does not
constitute a conclusion or a stage in the evolution of his
thought, it is rather his point of departure or more precisely,
his vantage point for considering the world and man's place
in it: he is the world, and concrete reality is his first
concern. It is from this perspective, once established, that
I shall consider the global theme of communication which I
feel is the basic structure of his work. I am concerned with
structure rather than evolution because this approach gives
a better understanding of certain concepts which recur through-
out the works. This is the "méthode synchronique" employed
by J. L. Major in his study of Saint-Exupéry, the choice of
which he justifies with

une remarque que Sartre formulait à
propos de la vie psychique en général:
"Les déterminations ultérieures se retournent sur les déterminations antérieures, les enveloppent et leur confèrent un sens nouveau." (Sartre, Saint Genet, comédien et martyr, Paris, Gallimard 1952, p. 80)\textsuperscript{12}

In view of Sartre's remark it seems that an "overview" approach, one which attempts to grasp the entire structure of the work is the most appropriate for a study of Saint-Exupéry, both because of the recurrence of themes and because the later works overlap in time making it difficult to establish their chronology (this is especially true for Citadelle, whose composition dates from 1936--before Terre des Hommes--to the writer's death in 1944).

The "méthode synchronique," as used by Major and as I shall use in this study, consists of attempting to see the entirety of the work being studied, from a point of view situated within the work itself. It is in a sense a dialogue between the critic and the work whose purpose is more a "recherche de l'architecture"\textsuperscript{13} than an analysis or interpretation of meaning:

Exposer à l'oeil l'armature de son oeuvre ... . Logique et sensible, [ce sont] les deux pôles de notre recherche. Ils nous permettront d'entrer avec sécurité dans cette oeuvre difficile, en y dégageant d'un même mouvement une sensibilité de sa logique et une logique de sa sensibilité. (Richard, p. 38)

This approach is descriptive rather than analytical and its
purpose clarification rather than interpretation, in the belief that: "Toute compréhension est nécessairement subjective et qu'un texte, pour être assimilé, doit toujours se lire du dedans" (Richard, p. 36). This, then, will be my approach in this initial chapter in order to bring to light Saint-Exupéry's existential orientation, and later in Part III in order to understand the unifying structure of his concern for communication.

(Return to the Concrete: Phenomenological Nature of the Writing of Saint-Exupéry)

It is an intriguing paradox that a writer whose subject is often flight and man's experience of leaving the earth should be so ultimately concerned with returning to it, with understanding it, with feeling and expressing his ties with the natural world. In the works of Saint-Exupéry there is a constant echo of his contact with the world: "De l'existence concrète individuelle naîtront les problèmes et leur solution pour ensuite inspirer le domaine littéraire et se proposer en enseignement" (Major, p. 9). Saint-Exupéry's contact with things, his "existence concrète individuelle" is the first step in his perception and description of the world. The nature of his writing corresponds to what Merleau-Ponty sees as the task of applied phenomenology: he describes what exists, what he sees, and in so doing, he discovers its significance.\textsuperscript{14}
Phenomenology is concerned with experiences and their structure, and it proposes to study experiences in order to bring out their underlying meaning. Phenomenology "makes no presuppositions that have to be justified elsewhere." (Pivcevic, p. 13) A phenomenological approach is one which tries to grasp the meaning of an object or experience before analysis or intellectual intervention can change it or start to break it down. The immediacy of consciousness, or the immediate object of consciousness, is the phenomenologist's main concern: he tries to see the world "in its immanent reality to consciousness." If the phenomenological method deals with concrete, apparent objects and experience, it is because phenomenologists believe that the concrete and immediate alone are meaningful, and that appearance is reality: "to assume that there is a reality which is never disclosed in experience is phenomenologically inadmissible." (Pivcevic, p. 17) Phenomenology is a method for detecting meaning in concrete situations, for it believes that matter is what it appears to be:

Le sens profond de la phénoménologie n'est pas d'être une description réaliste du monde réel, mais bien plutôt d'être une logique, une science des significations, qui n'a pas de rapport immédiat avec le monde réel du sens commun, mais qui explicite la structure de la constitution de son sens pour nous.
The domain of phenomenology is thus that of "the consciousness of meaning (which is necessarily consciousness giving meaning)." (Thevenaz, p. 51) In our discussion of existentialism, we saw that "consciousness is less a type of 'seeing' than of 'acting'"\(^{18}\); this notion of consciousness—consciousness seen as intentionality—is at the basis of phenomenology. Phenomenology turns away from the question of objective reality in order to "turn its attention solely and simply on the reality in consciousness, on the objects insofar as they are intended by and in consciousness." (Thevenaz, p. 43) In the sense used here, intentionality means the direction of consciousness to something in some way or another. It describes intellectual or emotional experiences in which we stand in relation to an object. (Pivcevic, p. 45) Thus, intentionality is aiming towards an object from a particular viewpoint or situation. To summarize, then, phenomenology is an approach to concrete experience involving a suspension of judgment which aims at describing the structure and understanding the meaning of the experience. According to Merleau-Ponty, we should not ask whether we perceive a world, but rather affirm that the world is what we perceive. (Phénoménologie de la perception, p. xi)

Although Saint-Exupéry gives no indication that he is aware of the origins of phenomenology and the intentionality of consciousness, his approach to man's consciousness of the
world parallels the phenomenological approach. His descriptions of the physical world are an interesting combination of poetry and phenomenology: the time elapsed between the experience and the written account of it and his predilection for metaphor as his medium distort somewhat an otherwise phenomenological observation of an object or experience grasped in its immediacy to consciousness. I shall study Saint-Exupéry's use of metaphor in a later chapter and shall concentrate now on several aspects of the phenomenological nature of his return to the concrete, as manifested by his description of objects and events, his conception of consciousness, and his presentation of personal experience.

Saint-Exupéry is quite conscious of his return to concrete reality, and often expresses this consciousness. His interest in the real is not arbitrary, but rather because he has learned that contact with reality is a means to self-knowledge:

> La terre nous en apprend plus long sur nous que tous les livres. Parce qu'elle nous résiste. *(TH, p. 139)*

This is so, as we shall see later, because man discovers himself as he creates his essence by acting on or in reality. The world is the field of man's action and self-creation. In this sense, for Saint-Exupéry, "resistance (of the earth)
precedes essence" (of man who forges his essence in struggling with the earth).

Saint-Exupéry's return to things is in no way intellectual, in fact he deeply distrusts reason and its faculties of analysis. He repeatedly opposes "l'intelligence" which represents the rational faculties of the mind, and "l'Esprit" which represents "une raison élargie" (Major, pp. 63-105) and effects a more personal, more phenomenological perception of the world. Taking the same real object, one can arrive at different conclusions as to its significance depending on one's means of approaching the object. Analysis gives an abstract description, or a fragmented (partial), non-essential description of the object, whereas direct contact reveals the meaning and thus shows the object in its most real sense: "Et moi je dénonce réalité non ce qui est mesurable dans une balance ... , mais ce qui pèse sur moi.* (C, pp. 756-757) Objective reality ("mesurable dans une balance") is not real for Saint-Exupéry; but subjective reality ("Ce qui pèse sur moi"), which has sense for him, is what counts. The above passage is followed by examples of "real" things which have meaning for him:

Et pèse sur moi ce visage triste ou cette cantate ou cette ferveur dans l'empire ou cette pitié pour les hommes ou cette qualité de la démarche ou ce goût de vivre ou cette injure ou ce regret ou cette séparation ou cette communion dans la vendange (bien plus
In the above passage and elsewhere Saint-Exupéry shows his concern for reality. Things in themselves are not real, only their signification to a given person in a given situation: "To make the world appear as phenomenon is to understand that the being of the world is no longer its existence or its objective reality, but its meaning." (Thevenaz, p. 47) By its very nature, this "being in the world"--this "réel"--defies second-hand knowledge. Saint-Exupéry, like Gide, discovers that true knowledge is synonymous with experience: "Terre des Hommes revient fréquemment là-dessus: on n'enseigne pas le réel, on ne peut que le rencontrer." (Major, p. 36) And so when he tells how Guillaumet first showed him how to read a map of Spain, locating "ce ruisseau caché sous les herbes à l'ouest de Motril ... qui gâte le champ ... [cel] serpent de Motril," "ces trente moutons de combat [...] qui te dévalent sous les roues," this farm couple who "étaient prêts, sous leurs étoiles, à porter secours à des hommes," he says, "Guillaumet ne m'enseignait pas l'Espagne; il me faisait de l'Espagne une amie." (TH, p. 144) Spain--formerly only a representation on a piece of paper with mountains, rivers, boundaries, now becomes as familiar as a well-known face, because the details of its landscape now have meaning for him. As Merleau-Ponty so well puts it: "Mon engagement dans la
nature et dans l'histoire est à la fois une limitation de mes vues sur le monde et ma seule manière d'accéder, de connaître et de faire quelque chose.\textsuperscript{19} Saint-Exupéry's criticism of "scientism" or false science, an attitude shared by many phenomenologists and Merleau-Ponty in particular (Major, p. 43), is based on the conviction that the only vantage point from which to understand the world is inside it, and that the scientist must be actively "engagé" in the world. Saint-Exupéry resents that the mission of science, which is to understand the world, has been betrayed by so-called scientists who, in the pursuit of truth, have retreated farther and farther from concrete reality into abstractions. Science that is not in contact with existence is not valid. This is precisely the position of "géographe" in Le Petit Prince\textsuperscript{*} (pp. 455–459); he is too specialized and "too important" to go out into the world and seek his own information. Instead, he relies on explorers to supply him with locations and descriptions of mountains, rivers and other natural phenomena. He demands proof of all discoveries before noting them in ink, and must investigate the morality of the explorer before he believes him. It seems that at all cost, actual contact with the phenomenon discovered is avoided. When he talks of obtaining proof of a mountain or river, the little prince asks: "On va voir?" To which he replies, "Non, c'est trop compliqué." (PP, p. 457) To this type of
circuitous and abstract approach to reality, Saint-Exupéry replies:

Ainsi parlent les professeurs qui vont de conséquence en conséquence. Mais la vie est. Comme est l'arbre. Et la tige n'est pas le moyen qu'a trouvé le germe pour devenir branche. Tige, germe et branche ne sont qu'un même épanouissement.* (C, p. 568)

In contrast to the analytical approach which seeks the parts or the reasons for a phenomenon, Saint-Exupéry insists on seeing the whole picture. The concrete, subjective approach, then, becomes the most valid way of considering the world and is not so much an adopted method as the integral style characteristic of the phenomenological perspective:

La phénoménologie se laisse pratiquer et reconnaitre comme manière ou comme style, elle existe comme mouvement, avant d'être parvenue à une entière conscience philosophique. (Merleau-Ponty, Phénoménologie de la perception, p. ii)

This is essentially Saint-Exupéry's attitude: he looks at the world from within the world, specifically from some definite point of view within the world, and he describes what he sees. When his point of view—his "situation"—changes, the world changes as well. This phenomenon is clearly evident in his descriptions of the world seen from an airplane. The world begins to change even as the pilot is leaving it, as we
see in this description of Bernis' take-off:

Ayant roulé, lentement, vent debout, il [Bernis] tire à lui la manette des gaz. L'avion, happé par l'hélice, fonce. Les premiers bonds sur l'air élastique s'amortissent et le sol enfin paraît se tendre, luire sous les roues comme une courroie. Ayant jugé l'air, d'abord impalpable puis fluide, devenu maintenant solide, le pilote s'y appuie et monte. (CS, p. 6) (italics mine)

Described as phenomenon, the air becomes gradually more solid as the plane picks up speed on the ground, to the point where the pilot can lean on it and climb up. There are aerodynamic explanations of this same event which involve the principles of "airfoil" and "lift," but from a phenomenological point of view Saint-Exupéry describes precisely what happens when an airplane takes off.

Once in the air the pilot discovers that the world continues to change in function of his altitude. The world is nothing more than the way he sees it from different heights:

A deux cent mètres on se penche encore sur une bergerie d'enfant, aux arbres posés droits, aux maisons peintes, et les forêts gardent leur épaisseur de fourrure: terre habité... (CS, p. 6)

From a higher altitude, man's domain appears like a neatly arranged miniature. At 3000 meters, the insignificance of man's cares and activities is emphasized by the fact that man cannot be seen from this height:

At this point Bernis feels divorced from human contact. He is alone in the world which has become a cold mineral; all life has disappeared:

Il s'agit qu'il est seul. Sur le cadran de l'altimètre le soleil miroite. Un soleil lumineux et glacé. Un coup de palonnier: le paysage entier dérive. Cette lumière est minérale, ce sol apparaît minéral: ce qui fait la douceur, le parfum, la faiblesse de choses vivantes est aboli. (CS, p. 7)

While flying a war reconnaissance mission in 1940, Saint-Exupéry sees the world as devoid of life, just as Bernis does:

La terre est vide. 
Il n'est plus d'homme quand on observe de dix kilomètres de distance. Les démarches de l'homme ne se lisent plus à cette échelle. (PG, p. 297)

But the war pilot's long-range cameras reconstruct man's presence on earth:

les routes, les canaux, les convois, les chalands. L'homme enseemne une lamelle de microscope. Je suis un
savant glacial, et leur guerre n'est
plus, pour moi, qu'une étude de
laboratoire. (FG, p. 297)

And Saint-Exupéry's high-altitude perspective makes him ob-
serve man's activities--here the war--like a "savant glacial."

For Bernis, too, a change in perspective changes the
character of the earth itself. From high enough, the earth
is naked, lifeless; at a lower altitude the earth takes on
personality:

La terre, de là-haut, paraissait nue
et morte; l'avion descend: elle
s'habille. Les bois de nouveau la
capitonnent, les vallées, les côtoaux
impriment en elle une houle: elle
respire. (CS, p. 12)

Just as a change in altitude makes the pilot see the world
differently, so does a horizontal change in perspective. When
flying over cities, the earth looks inhabited or clothed;
when flying over the desert, the earth looks naked. Saint-
Exupéry does not say that one part of the earth is inhabited
and the other not, but that the earth changes its appearance
to become other than it was. Flying from Spain to Africa,
Bernis will see:

Encore quelques villes nourries de
terre brune puis l'Afrique. Encore
quelques villes nourries de pâte noire
puis le Sahara. Bernis assistera ce
soir au déshabillé de la terre. (CS,
p. 14)
Fabien, pilot of *Vol de nuit*, whose decision to climb above a storm condemns him because he does not have fuel enough to fly out of it, views the surrounding stars as a vast treasure which he possesses, but which is useless because he will soon die:

"Trop beau," pensait Fabien. Il errait parmi des étoiles accumulées avec la densité d'un trésor, dans un monde où rien d'autre, absolument rien d'autre que lui, Fabien, et son camarade, n'était vivant. ... ils errerent, infiniment riches, mais condamnés. (VN, p. 125)

Just before the above passage, Fabien discovers that he is completely hemmed in by darkness and the storm, and that, cut off from the rest of the world, he "knows" (he is experiencing) only the immediate situation: "Que savait-il, lui, hors des remous et de la nuit qui poussait contre lui, à la vitesse d'un éboulement, son torrent noir?" (VN, p. 122)

Saint-Exupéry's answer is, of course, nothing: Fabien knows only what he is in immediate contact with. In a phenomenological sense, an immediate experience is all we can ever know.

Saint-Exupéry often writes of the power of children to understand things which are incomprehensible to adults. (See especially PP, pp. 407, 412, 413, 416, 421-423) Several studies have shown the importance of the world of childhood in *Le Petit Prince* and *Courrier Sud*. Saint-Exupéry does not
glance backward with the purpose of reliving a happy past, but rather he tries to recapture the child's way of seeing things, or more specifically: the way he saw the world as a child. As he presents it, his childhood vision is unmistakably phenomenological. In the following passage, he describes how, at the age of five, one day without being noticed, he happened to observe his two uncles talking, and how he made sense out of his perception:

Or, voici qu'ils déambulaient, sans m'apercevoir, de long en large, le long de ce vestibule glacial et interminable. Je les suivais des yeux et des oreilles, retenant mon souffle, pris de vertige. "L'époque présente," disaient-ils... Et ils s'éloignaient, avec leur secret pour grandes personnes, et je me répétais: "L'époque présente..." Puis ils revenaient comme une marée qui eût, de nouveau, roulé vers moi ses indéchiffrables trésors. "C'est insensé, disait l'un à l'autre, c'est positivement insensé..." Je ramassais la phrase comme un objet extraordinaire. Et je le répétais lentement, pour essayer le pouvoir de ces mots sur ma conscience de cinq ans: "C'est insensé, c'est positivement insensé...". Donc, la marée éloignait les oncles. La marée les ramenait. Ce phénomène, qui m'ouvrirait sur la vie des perspectives encore mal éclairées, se reproduisait avec une régularité stellaire, comme un phénomène de gravitation. (PG, pp. 312-313)

When he is forced to fly through heavy enemy fire on his way to Arras, Saint-Exupéry tries to regain this childlike way of seeing the world. He does not escape to the past, but tries
to experience the child's ability to imagine himself invulnerable under the protection of his governess:

Je remontais dans ma mémoire jusqu’à l'enfance, pour retrouver le sentiment d'une protection souveraine. Il n'est point de protection pour les hommes. (PG, p. 340)

With the child's confidence of success, he can be like the "chevalier" accomplishing his mission effortlessly against seemingly unsurmountable odds, who "se croyait déjà vainqueur...Ah! Paula, on ne trompe pas une vieille expérience des contes de fées!" (PG, p. 339) The child's perception of the world, like the adult's, is governed by his point of view. It is this point of view that Saint-Exupéry tries to recapture.

We have seen that for Saint-Exupéry the world changes as the perspective of the viewer changes, and that he is interested in the changes in meaning given the world by the various perspectives adopted by himself or his characters. If his description of reality is phenomenological, so too is his way of establishing conscious contact with reality. We have noted that on the very first page of Terre des Hommes Saint-Exupéry expresses the importance of contact with reality as a means of self-discovery. He also gives here the only effective means of establishing this contact and thus gaining the knowledge one seeks—through the use of a tool:
L'homme se découvre quand il se mesure avec l'obstacle. Mais, pour l'atteindre, il lui faut un outil. Il lui faut un rabot, une charrue. Le paysan, dans son labour, arrache peu à peu quelques secrets à la nature, et la vérité qu'il dégage est universelle. De même, l'avion, l'outil des lignes aériennes, mène l'homme à tous les vieux problèmes. (TH, p. 139) (Italics mine)

The airplane, then, for Saint-Exupéry, is the liaison between him and the earth. As we have seen in the last few pages, the airplane, by taking him above the earth, affords the pilot many new perspectives and with each one a "new" world. The pilot is not a passive passenger in his airplane—he actually assimilates the plane and its controls as an extension of his body ("Je suis un organisme étendu à l'avion." [PG, p. 282]) as a tennis player "incorporates" his racket. Merleau-Ponty explains consciousness of the world as being effected through the body: my body is my being-in-the-world and my liaison with objects. (Phenomenologie de la perception, p. 97) He sees our habitual manipulation of objects (driving a nail with a hammer, playing at sports, driving a car) also in terms of consciousness: consciousness of the object means "being in" the object through the mediation of the body. In this same manner, Saint-Exupéry talks of the pilot's body as the mediator between him and his plane:

L'un après l'autre le pilote vérifia les chiffres et fut content. Il se découvrait solidement assis dans ce ciel.
He has effectively "become" the plane when he can feel through the plane the effect of the storm as if it is touching him directly: "Une sorte de houle puissante pénétra son corps: les remous le soulevaient, dans ses cinq tonnes de métal, et le bousculaient." (VN, p. 122) Speaking of his own experience, Saint-Exupéry describes his relationship with his plane as symbiotic. He controls the plane's direction, but the plane's accessories sustain his life:

The plane must become literally a part of him if he is to survive at high altitudes. The high altitude photographic apparatus becomes the pilot's way of "seeing" the earth from 10 kilometers in the air.

Commenting on the significance of Saint-Exupéry's
phenomenological treatment of flight, and speaking for existentialists, Sartre says: "Saint-Exupéry nous a ouvert le chemin, il a montré que l'avion est un organe de perception." (Situations II, p. 264) (Italics mine) Sartre credits Saint-Exupéry with showing that the action of man struggling with the earth gives meaning both to man and to the earth: "Ainsi le monde et l'homme se révèlent par les entreprises."
(Situations II, p. 265)

Thus far I have shown that both Saint-Exupéry's way of making contact with the world and his perception of the world are phenomenological in nature, and that both are affected by the intervention of the airplane which functions as a tool. I shall now consider the likewise phenomenological nature of his rendering of personal experiences. Many studies of Saint-Exupéry have pointed out the relationship of his writing to his active life, and most agree that

Saint-Exupéry, seul de son espèce ou peu s'en faut, n'écrit que pour établir les résultats de son action. Ses œuvres sont des rapports. Ceux-ci s'avèrent de plus en plus proches des faits constatés et des événements vécus.21

This is particularly true in Terre des Hommes and Pilote de guerre, and also to a great degree in the autobiographical fiction of Courrier Sud and Vol de nuit.22 Saint-Exupéry's moral experience no doubt played an important role in the writing of Le Petit Prince and Citadelle, but here his
writing reflects his experience in such a way that specific events and incidents cannot be identified as inspiring certain passages. And so from a phenomenological standpoint we are more interested in the earlier works:

Les romans de Saint-Exupéry ont d'abord et surtout exploré les rapports concrets avec le monde qu'exigeait son propre métier. C'est l'aspect spécifiquement phénoménologique. (Major, p. 243)

The relationship between Saint-Exupéry's métier as a flier and his writing can be clearly shown to be phenomenological. For example, the opening lines of *Pilote de guerre*:


Saint-Exupéry is describing here the preparations for a reconnaissance mission during the war; but to him it feels like he is back at school doing a homework assignment. The atmosphere of comradeship, tranquillity, "studying" creates this feeling, and so this is the way he describes it. The illusion continues for another page:
Only when Saint-Exupéry himself is "convoqué" do we learn that "le collège" consists of calculations for the preparation of war missions, and that "la vie" is the war that they are fighting! The trick played by Saint-Exupéry on the reader was simply to describe the scene as he perceived it at the time, with the result that the reader experiences the situation the same way the writer does.

Saint-Exupéry gives only the immediate sense when he describes an experience; a fragmented experience is reported as such, a seemingly frivolous detail in the face of the greater event which it serves is reported as the only important consideration of the moment:


This phenomenological view of a departure shows the pilot concerned not with the importance of the overall struggle, but
rather with his own tiny part in it, with his subjective view of what he is doing at this very moment.

The primacy of the immediate experience appears throughout the entire mission. At one point, when flying over heavy enemy ground fire, Saint-Exupéry sees not the imminent danger of the situation, but the strange beauty of the enemy tracer shells as they rise from below!

Chaque rafale de mitrailleuse ou de canon à tir rapide débite, par centaines, obus ou balles phosphorescentes, qui se succèdent comme les perles d'un chapelet. Mille chapelets élastiques s'allongent vers nous, s'étirent à rompre, et craquent à notre hauteur.... Ah! Quand je me penche vers la terre je découvre ces étages de bulles lumineuses qui montent avec la lenteur de voiles de brouillard. Je découvre ce lent tourbillon de semences: ainsi s'envole l'écorce du blé que l'on bat! Mais si je regarde à l'horizontale, il n'est plus que gerbes de lances! Du tir? Mais non! Je suis attaqué à l'arme blanche! Je ne vois qu'épées de lumière! Je me sens...Il n'est pas question de danger! M'éblouit le luxe où je trempe (PG, p. 343) (Italics mine)

The perspective of the viewer here determines the nature of the spectacle he sees. Looking downward, he sees "bulles lumineuses," or "ce lent tourbillon de semences," but from the side, the same phenomenon becomes "gerbes de lances!" Saint-Exupéry's penchant for metaphor lends a poetic quality to his description of this experience. The time elapsed
between the experience itself and the written account of it allows the reader to question the immediacy of the images chosen, but the author's intent seems clearly to be to present the situation as it appeared to him. And so, if this passage—and those others like it whose elaborate images suggest the recherche of poetic technique—cannot be considered in the strictest sense as an immediate phenomenological description, it can be argued that the author has intervened between his subject and the reader in order to give the reader an approximation of the situation as he experienced it. He manipulates the various elements of this experience so that the reader may observe the same phenomenon from as nearly as possible the original point of view of the author at the time of the experience.

But Saint-Exupéry sees more than an ever-changing light show in this combat mission. We mentioned above that phenomenological contact with reality can result in knowledge of self and of purpose, and that this is in fact Saint-Exupéry's goal in struggling with obstacles. Saint-Exupéry experiences a discovery of purpose in the war mission he describes in *Pilote de guerre*. If, while dressing for the mission, he feels the absurdity and the immediacy of his actions, after his return he feels differently:

Il se peut qu'Alias [his commander], demain, me désigne pour une autre mission. Je me suis
His experience has taught him the meaning of his struggle. Just what this meaning is, I shall attempt to define in a later chapter. For now, the importance of this passage lies in the expression, "Le tir d'Arras a brisé l'écorce et j'ai vu." Saint-Exupéry's active experience has led to a greater understanding of himself: he learns why he is fighting as a result of his contact with the real and phenomenological view of the experience.

We also find phenomenological accounts of personal experience in Terre des Hommes. The episode entitled "Au centre du désert" tells the story of Saint-Exupéry's crash in the Sahara and his miraculous rescue by nomads. Throughout the entire episode, Saint-Exupéry describes his immediate experience in a successful attempt to convey what it was like for him to crash, to walk for miles in the desert, to slowly feel himself drying up in the sun, to wait for death as the seemingly inevitable outcome, yet to fight to survive with every possible means. Here, he describes the crash:

Je crois bien n'avoir rien ressenti d'autre qu'un formidable craquement qui ébranla notre monde sur ses bases. A
deux cent soixante-dix kilomètres-heure
nous avons embouti le sol.

Je crois bien ne rien avoir attendu
d'autre, pour la centième de seconde qui
suivait, que la grande étoile pourpre
de l'explosion où nous allions tous les
deux nous confondre. Ni Prévot [his
mechanic] ni moi n'avons ressenti la
moindre émotion. Je n'observais en moi
qu'une attente démesurée, l'attente de
Cette étoile resplendissante où nous
devions, dans la seconde même, nous
évanouir. Mais il n'y eut point d'étoile
pourpre. ... Une seconde, deux secondes...
L'avion tremblait toujours et j'attendais
avec une impatience monstrueuse que ses
provisions d'énergie le fissent éclater
comme une grenade. Mais les secousses
souterraines se prolongeaient sans aboutir
à l'éruption définitive. Et je ne
comprenais rien à cet invisible travail.
Je ne comprenais ni ce tremblement, ni
Cette colère, ni ce délai interminable...
cinq secondes, six secondes... Et,
brusquement, nous éprouvâmes une sensation
de rotation, un choc qui projeta encore
par la fenêtre nos cigarettes, pulvérisant
l'aile droite, puis rien. Rien qu'une
immobilité glacée. (TH, p. 217)

There is no time for fear or other emotional reaction. In-
stead, Saint-Exupéry registers his attempt to understand what
he is experiencing—what the plane is doing—and the expec-
tation of the explosion that will abruptly end all experience.

In another striking passage, Saint-Exupéry again
goes beyond the objectivity of realism to tell exactly what
it is like to be dying of thirst:

Je n'éprouve aucune faim, je n'éprouve
que la soif. Et il me semble que
désormais, plus que la soif, j'éprouve
les effets de la soif. Cette gorge dure. Cette langue de plâtre. Ce râclement et cet affreux goût dans la bouche. Ces sensations-là sont nouvelles pour moi. Sans doute l'eau les guérirait-elle, mais je n'ai point de souvenirs pour leur associer ce remède. La soif devient de plus en plus une maladie et de moins en moins un désir. (TH, p. 239)

At the moment he is suffering from thirst, Saint-Exupéry tries to identify the sensations and know what he is experiencing.

We have seen objects take on new significance in a new perspective. Such is the case when Saint-Exupéry and Prévot share an orange found in the wreckage of their plane. Next to the amount of water they would need to stay alive, an orange is nothing. Yet Saint-Exupéry experiences this orange as he never has another:

Couchés près de notre feu nocturne je regarde ce fruit lumineux et je me dis: "Les hommes ne savent pas ce qu'est une orange..." Je me dis aussi: "Nous sommes condamnés et encore une fois cette certitude ne me frustrer pas de mon plaisir. Cette demi-orange que je serre dans la main m'apporte une des plus grandes joies de ma vie..." Je m'allonge sur le dos, je suce mon fruit, je compte les étoiles filantes. Me voici, pour une minute, infiniment heureux. (TH, p. 231)

"Pour une minute, infiniment heureux": again the immediate experience outweighs all others, if only for a short time.
The perspective of a man likely to die of thirst gives a unique meaning to the pleasure obtained from eating half an orange.

These few passages, as well as others, show Saint-Exupéry in a phenomenological relationship with the world of things and events. His profession as a flier provided him with the tools to make contact with the world and on many occasions put him in direct confrontation with new situations that demanded a new perspective. He replied by adapting his point of view to the specific event, and his writing shows an awareness of the structure and meaning of each event and an attention to the immediacy of the experience (although it is not always able to express this faithfully) which characterizes a phenomenological approach to reality. (This is essentially the same position expressed by Sartre in the term "l'homme en situation.") The importance of his métier in developing this approach cannot be overstressed, but Saint-Exupéry himself said that if he had been a miner, he would have written just the same of the enlightenments afforded him by this other métier. Some have concluded from this statement that Saint-Exupéry was a writer first, then a man of action. I do not see the necessity of the polarity of these two functions. Primarily, Saint-Exupéry was a man who dealt with concrete reality and saw his participation in the world as the best way to discover himself and affirm his
discovery, to give meaning to his life. The significance of his activity as a writer and of the specific métier he chose depends on his fundamentally phenomenological orientation. Without this perspective he would not have been the writer or the man of action he was, and the primacy of either of these activities would not be of concern.

**Discovery of the Absurd**

We have seen that, for Sartre, the discovery of the absurdity of things accompanies the discovery of their existence. The absurd is synonymous with things in themselves and includes all that which is physically real. By his phenomenological orientation, Saint-Exupéry approaches concrete reality in the same manner as Sartre does, finding sense in the world only where the efforts of human consciousness create sense. Saint-Exupéry does not formulate a definition of "the absurd," but he seems to approach Sartrian terminology when he says in *Citadelle*:

> Mais il n'est point d'explication et le monde n'a point de sens. (C, p. 707)

> Car rien n'a de sens en soi, mais, de toute chose, le sens véritable est structure. (C, p. 660)

Saint-Exupéry's attack on logic (which can "prove anything it wants to") parallels Sartre's insistence on the unjustifiability of things in themselves. With no possibility of an
absolute logical explanation of a phenomenon, the phenomenon must thus remain unexplained or must obtain a meaning elsewhere. For Sartre, supplying this meaning is the role of consciousness. The same is true for Saint-Exupéry, as we shall see below. If we do not insist upon the Sartrian term "l'absurde," we will still be able to see how Saint-Exupéry's conception of the world of things is similar to that of Sartre:

The sentiment of the absurd, which may take several forms, is essentially a recognition of the absolute uniqueness of things, of their existence in and for themselves, of their uselessness; they are, as Sartre says, "de trop"; they serve no purpose. (Knight, p. 103)

Thinking in terms of an enlarged definition of the absurd, Knight offers as an example this phrase from Gide's Journal: "The SUPERFLUOUS, that is what disconcerts, but that is what we must admit. (Journal, 1889-1939, p. 808)" (Knight, p. 103). In this same light we can consider certain of Saint-Exupéry's descriptions of physical reality.

Saint-Exupéry occasionally describes a struggle between man and the natural elements in a manner similar to such descriptions found in the novels of Malraux. For Malraux, nature is absolutely indifferent to man, and a struggle with nature is a struggle with an absurd force which is not directed against man but which simply happens to present
an obstacle to some human enterprise. Malraux often qualifies nature with expressions like "indifférence géologique," "sérénité géologique," "ennui préhistorique" to show the "attitude" of the cosmos toward conscious man:

L'avion qui tournait, comme une minuscule planète, perdu dans l'indifférente gravitation des mondes, attendait que passât sous lui Tolède, son Alcazar rebelle et ses assiégeants, entraînés dans le rythme absurde des choses terrestres.

Le principal ennemi de l'homme, messieurs, c'est la forêt. Elle est plus forte que nous, plus forte que la République, plus forte que la révolution, plus forte que la guerre... Si l'homme cessait de lutter, en moins de soixante ans la forêt recouvrirait l'Europe. (L'Espoir, p. 494)

As Saint-Exupéry tells of Guillaumet's crash landing and eventual rescue in the Andes during a winter storm, he describes the helplessness of a man caught in a phenomenon that is unaware of his existence:

C'est le ciel entier qui semble descendre. On se sent pris, alors, dans une sorte d'accident cosmique. Il n'est plus de refuge. ... Tout se décompose, et l'on glisse dans un délirement universel vers le nuage qui monte mollement, se hausse jusqu'à vous, et vous absorbe. (TH, p. 162)

The indifference of the natural world can be likened to the absurd: there is no sense or logic to it, its events take
place without consideration for man, and nature acts as if man were not even there.

There is no order, no inherent demarcation between objects in Sartre's absurd; any sense or meaning must be furnished by man. The image of "des pierres en vrac" occurs repeatedly throughout Citadelle (pp. 688, 709-710, 780-781), and Saint-Exupéry makes the same observation: only man can make a cathedral out of a pile of stones, which by themselves have no meaning whatsoever. Sartre insists on the absurdity of the world, whereas Saint-Exupéry seems to draw the same conclusions without formally declaring the autonomy of "things-in-themselves" seen as one mass of brute matter. For both Sartre and Saint-Exupéry, man makes sense out of matter, creates order where there is chaos, and draws lines and boundaries in an arbitrary fashion which give meaning in human terms to that which has none a priori.

Saint-Exupéry knows another kind of absurdity which is not altogether different from the Sartrian conception of l'absurde. Rooted in chaos, the absurdity that Saint-Exupéry recognizes appears whenever the acts of men no longer have any sense. Whereas for Sartre, the absurd is all that exists and out of which man makes order and sense by free action, for Saint-Exupéry the absurd is never evident until man fails to maintain the order he has been forging since the beginnings of civilization. As long as man acts in a positive
manner, creating meaning where there was relatively little, the absurd does not present a problem. Perhaps absurdity is always present in the form of "l'obstacle" against which man struggles to define himself (TH, p. 139), but Saint-Exupéry sees such resistance as an opportunity to create meaning and does not seem to be as struck as is Sartre by the meaninglessness that exists before human intervention. He acknowledges this meaninglessness, but then immediately sets out to conquer it by acting. He is not concerned with the absurd because he is constantly working to prevent its appearance.

In Vol de nuit, Rivière has a glimpse of the Exupéryan conception of absurdity when he loses a pilot (Fabien) in one of the early attempts to establish night-time airmail flights. Fabien's death threatens to end the pioneer flights, and another set of values confronts Rivière when Fabien's wife comes to him for some hope of her husband's rescue:

Cette femme parlait elle aussi au nom
d'un monde absolument de ses devoirs et
de ses droits. Celui d'une clarté de
lampe sur la table du soir, d'une chair qui réclamait sa chair, d'une patrie
d'espoirs, de tendresses, de souvenirs.
(VN, p. 120) (Italics mine)

Rivière reacts by reaffirming his decision to continue night flights; he refuses to allow disorder to creep into his office and by his will alone restores meaning to the acts of
his subordinates. He does not deny Simone Fabien's reality, but reasserts his own in order to fend off the chaos ready to take over where man cannot continue:

Nous ne demandons pas à être éternels, mais à ne pas voir les actes et les choses tout à coup perdre leur sens. Le vide qui nous entoure se montre alors...
(VN, p. 129)

He directs his efforts to maintain the order he has created, but he speaks here for Simone Fabien as much as for himself. He understands that her actions no longer have the sense they did when Fabien's return was assured. She too is fighting the absurdity that appears whenever our reasons for acting no longer correspond to the reality of our situation.

In the final episode of Terre des Hommes, Saint-Exupéry describes a trainload of Polish workers who had come to France, but who are now being shipped back to Poland because of a shortage of work. They had settled in France, but are now being uprooted and forced to leave behind their homes and the life they had created:

Tout un peuple enfoncé dans les mauvais songes et qui regagnait sa misère. Des grosses têtes rasées roulaient sur le bois des banquettes. Hommes, femmes, enfants, tous se retournaient de droite à gauche, comme attaqués par tous ces bruits, toutes ces secousses qui les menaçient dans leur oubli. ...
Et voici qu'ils me semblaient avoir à demi perdu qualité humaine, ballottés
They have been reduced to an almost sub-human, absurd level of existence. While in France, they had succeeded in creating some order and making sense of their life, but now with that order destroyed, they are confronted by an absurd existence and must return to their original homeland to reconstruct there what they lost elsewhere. If they succeed, they will have defeated the absurd and restored meaning to (their) life. But even so, their life will be one of relative misery.

In Pilote de guerre, the war brings on the feeling of absurdity. From the standpoint of Saint-Exupéry's personal involvement, the war is absurd because his reconnaissance group is so small as to be effectively powerless against the enemy:

"--Vous n'avez tout de même pas la prétention, mon Capitaine, d'être vivant après la guerre? Gavoille ne plaisantait pas. Nous savons bien que l'on ne peut faire
autrement que de nous jeter dans le brasier, si même le geste est inutile. Nous sommes cinquante, pour toute la France. Sur nos épaules repose toute la stratégie de l'armée française! Il est une immense forêt qui brûle, et quelques verres d'eau à sacrifier pour l'éteindre: on les sacrifiera.

... Mais il est une impression qui domine toutes les autres au cours de cette fin de guerre. C'est celle de l'absurde. Tout craque autour de nous. Tout s'écoule. C'est si total que la mort elle-même paraît absurde. Elle manque de sérieux, la mort, dans cette pagaille... (PG, p. 267)

Saint-Exupéry expresses repeatedly this feeling of the absurdity of his acts and of the absurdity of such a small group of fliers even attempting to resist the German advancement. His acts have no sense because they are based on the resistance of an army that has fallen apart. Acts that would once have been meaningful, no longer are in the same context. "Fighting to defeat the Germans" no longer justifies the loss of life and equipment his flight group is sustaining, because this phrase is no longer valid. As we shall see below, Saint-Exupéry successfully resists the absurdity of his involvement by finding a greater sense in his actions. At the beginning of Pilote de guerre, however, the absurd dominates. (pp. 268, 269, 271, 275-277, 286, 299-300, 303, 305, 308-309, 330-331)

Saint-Exupéry devotes a section of Pilote de guerre to the French evacuation as the German occupation began (XVI, pp. 318-330). Here actions are almost totally without
meaning. In each village the situation is the same:

--On évacue.
--Pourquoi. Bon Dieu!
--On ne sait pas. Le maire l'a dit.

(PG, p. 318)

The entire population of the invaded provinces fleeing before the advancing enemy resembles a flock of sheep in panic. Every possible means of transportation is hopefully put to use as those who flee begin an unplanned, ill-equipped journey to no one knows where:

Et ces moutons s'en vont dans un formidable tintamarre de matériel mécanique. Trois mille pistons. Six mille soupapes. Tout ce matériel grince, râcle et cogne. L'eau bout dans quelques radiateurs. C'est ainsi que commence de se mettre en marche, laborieusement, cette caravane condamnée! Cette caravane sans pièces de rechange, sans pneus, sans essence, sans mécaniciens. Quelle démence!

(PG, pp. 319-320)

Several kilometers down the road these old jalopies break down, and their occupants sit by the roadside waiting for someone to come along and save them, but "ça manque étonnamment de bergers!" (PG, p. 319) The refugees try in vain to restore order to all this chaos, and so rumors of victory, of defeat, of hope, of despair run rampant and temporarily give meaning to the absurd. The refugees are "empty" because in fleeing they have lost their identity; soldiers separated from
their units are "des chômeurs de guerre" (PG, p. 330) and Saint-Exupéry sums up the evacuation as "un été qui se détraque. Un été en panne..." (PG, p. 268) The refugees refuse to accept responsibility for the defeat—they deny their past and do not take from the present ordeal anything that might serve their future efforts. Their world is crumbling and they cannot act effectively because their actions no longer have any meaning. But this is precisely the type of situation which mandates effective action if man is to stave off successfully the absurd.

For Saint-Exupéry the absurd appears when man's actions no longer have any meaning, that is when man's place in the world is put in question in a particular historical situation. Saint-Exupéry discovers that by creating sense through action he can overcome the absurdity of a given situation. He does not see man as being irrevocably tied to the absurdity of things as, for example, Camus does. In spite of the absurd, Saint-Exupéry acts—not for the sake of acting, but for the dignity of authentic action:

Je jouerai mon rôle ... comme l'on sauve des rites lorsqu'ils n'ont plus de contenu. Quand le dieu s'en est retiré. (PG, p. 272)

An authentic act is one which affirms man's humanity through his subjective existence. An authentic subjective existence is just the opposite of an absurd existence based on invalid
motives and performing acts which do not correspond to the present situation. We have seen that a subjective point of view is the beginning point for a phenomenological understanding of the world; likewise subjectivity is the foundation of existential action in the world. For Sartre, and for Saint-Exupéry, man's individual consciousness is not the source of things, but it is man who creates their meaning from his phenomenological perspective. This is the role, then, of authentic action: to create meaning where there is absurdity.

Subjectivity in Action:
L'individu en Devenir

There exist as many world-views as there are individual consciousnesses to perceive the world, and each of these world-views is unique. My study of Sartre's conception of consciousness showed that for Sartre, appearance equals reality because one person can know only that which appears to his own subjective consciousness. Saint-Exupéry expresses the same notion in his phenomenological descriptions of the world seen from different viewpoints. He admits that another man's vision of the world will be forever unknown to him; the uniqueness of individual consciousness means that when a person dies, a world dies with him: "Mais, dans la mort d'un homme, un monde inconnu meurt, et je me demandais quelles étaient les images qui sombraient en lui" (TH, p. 202). But this same uniqueness means also that each individual must
create and sustain his own world, for it will be as he sees it, and--since consciousness is essentially an action of involvement in the world--it will be as he makes it.

In my discussion of Saint-Exupéry's contact with concrete reality I mentioned the preference he gives to "l'Esprit" over intelligence. Whereas Saint-Exupéry sees intelligence as that faculty which attempts to grasp the world objectively, he sees "l'Esprit" as "pas une faculté définitive, mais une attitude de la subjectivité vivante" (Major, p. 91). More precisely, "l'Esprit" is the means by which man makes authentic contact with the world. Like Sartre's "pour-soi," "l'Esprit" is nothing more than an attitude of the individual subjectivity, but it is one which interprets the world to the individual and is thus responsible for creating his unique vision of reality. (Major, p. 93)

Saint-Exupéry thus rejects intelligence and its characteristic modes of approaching reality: objectivism, logic, reason and, as we have seen, the pseudo-scientific attitude which demands proof beyond the evidence that something exists. For him, however, most men rely on their intelligence to guide them, and they have made a habit of objectivity. In Le Petit Prince, Saint-Exupéry caricatures this attitude as that of "les grandes personnes" (PG, p. 422). Such an attitude results in one's being closed to the concrete and unique and instead seeking only the universal and the
"proven." In Pilote de guerre, Saint-Exupéry speaks of the historians who, by wanting to see a logical order in past events, will misinterpret the sense of the war and the reasons for the French defeat (PG, p. 326). Those who generalize about man fail to see his complexity and his ties with his temporal and social situation. The result of such generalization is to see man as a product of uniform and systematic development whose causes can be traced and whose reactions predicted. The abstracting vision of historians thus poses a threat to man's true meaning by imposing another superficial one on him. (Major, pp. 39-40)

To combat the threat of abstraction is the task of existential thought, and both Sartre and Saint-Exupéry take up the task by means of the subjective consciousness acting in the world to create its own meaning. Systems existing outside of man and imposing behavior on him are no longer valid: "C'est l'expérience qui dégagera les lois, affirmait Rivière, la connaissance des lois ne précède jamais l'expérience" (VN, p. 111). Apparent contradictions which logic strives to explain are no longer seen as such:

Ne crains point ces contradictions dont ton langage insuffisant use pour parler sur les hommes. Car il n'est rien qui soit contradictoire sinon le langage qui exprime. (C, p. 654)

Car sache que toute contradiction sans solution, tout irréparable litige,
extrait de grandir pour l'absorber.
(C, p. 637)

Experienced phenomena, whether contradictory or not, are nonetheless real experiences—the fact that logic cannot explain them does not diminish their reality:

Ainsi des aspects qui paraissent s'exclure dans l'ordre des catégories intellectuelles peuvent parfaitement s'intégrer au devenir humain et y participer activement sans la moindre difficulté. (Major, p. 53)

This means that man is everything that he does, just as reality is all that he sees and no more. Saint-Exupéry directs his efforts to counteract those forces which would divide man: he offers experience as a substitute for reason as a way of learning, action as a substitute for thought and mental "projects" as a way of being, the understanding of phenomena as a substitute for analysis as a way of perceiving the world, and truth as a process rather than an end to be sought. For Saint-Exupéry, man is not, but he becomes what he will be; he creates the future by acting in the present:

Le futur ne se rencontre et ne se comprend que dans l'action sur le monde, comme accomplissement de la liberté et de la subjectivité, donc au delà des données de l'intelligence spéculative et de la logique. (Major, p. 50)

The active subject defines himself by becoming, and only
through action, since his existence is always future and he is nothing until he acts:

L'avenir ne me hante plus à la façon d'une apparition étrangère. Mes actes, désormais, l'un après l'autre, le composent. (FG, p. 281)

The future is indefinite until he acts because his acts create the future. Man is responsible for the future, then, because he creates it himself. Action means contact between the subject and the world, and thus man, who acts in order to be, can be expressed by the two concepts of engagement (being in the world) and dépassement (surpassing oneself by action in order to be other).

Saint-Exupéry points out the superior understanding of the world for the man who knows he is creating his own meaning through action. For Rivière, a star is the sign of two "courriers en vol" for which he is responsible, and the meaning it has for him reminds him of a piece of music that he understands and which his friends do not:

Il s'était, comme ce soir, senti solitaire, mais bien vite avait découvert la richesse d'une telle solitude. Le message de cette musique venait à lui, à lui seul parmi les médiocres, avec la douceur d'un secret. Ainsi le signe de l'étoile. On lui parlait, par-dessus tant d'épaules, un langage qu'il entendait seul. (VN, p. 100)
This same notion of an elite understanding of the world appears in *Terre des Hommes*. Taking a walk the night before his first mail flight, Saint-Exupéry is proud of the information Guillaumet has just given him about Spain and of his perception of natural phenomena which is heightened by the impending flight:

J'étais fier de coudoyer ces inconnus avec mon secret au coeur. ...
Ilst [les passants] me recevaient point, non plus, les messages que je recevais de la nuit. Car elle intéressait ma chair même, cette tempête de neige qui peut-être se préparait, et compliquerait mon premier voyage. Des étoiles s'éteignaient une à une, comment l'eussent-ils appris, ces promeneurs? J'étais seul dans la confiance. On me communiquait les positions de l'ennemi avant la bataille. (TH, p. 145)

Ainsi, les nécessités qu'impose un métier transforment et enrichissent le monde. Il n'est même point besoin de nuit semblable pour faire découvrir par le pilote de ligne un sens nouveau aux vieux spectacles. Le paysage monotone, qui fatigue le passager, est déjà autre pour l'équipage. (TH, p. 153)

One does not obtain this sort of understanding of the world by accident, but by the conscious choice of a métier or some other form of meaningful engagement. Once you have chosen a position and become situated in a particular perspective, the world changes and takes on a more authentic meaning. Your acts have sense for you and they give sense to the world, because they fix the world in a specific context. For Saint-
Exupéry, "l'homme en devenir" is he whose acts have meaning for him and whose perspective gives meaning to the world. Man is what he becomes, not what he obtains and hoards. This is why the bourgeois population which collects and consumes things and equates personal worth with the number and quality of things collected leads an unauthentic existence. Things have no meaning until we give them one; collecting them is insufficient.

The businessman in Le Petit Prince represents the bourgeois tendency to collect things and to attribute value to possessions. He spends his life counting stars and keeps the figures locked in a drawer. The stars are his, he reasons, "puisque jamais personne avant moi n'a songé à les posséder" (PP, p. 450). The little prince explains to the businessman that he, too, has some possessions:

---Moi, dit-il encore, je possède une fleur que j'arrose tous les jours. Je possède trois volcans que je ramone toutes les semaines. Car je ramone aussi celui qui est éteint. On ne sait jamais. C'est utile à mes volcans, et c'est utile à ma fleur que je les possède. Mais tu n'es pas utile aux étoiles. (PP, p. 45)

To which the businessman can reply nothing. Because the prince is "useful" to his possessions, because he has established a relationship with them, because he has acted upon them, they have meaning. The businessman's passive
"possession" of five million stars does neither him nor the stars any real good, and so his life is not an authentic existence.

You do not truly exist until you act: Saint-Exupéry learns this while flying over Arras. Nothing counts but his action, not life, death, his body; but his act is **everything**:

Tu loges dans ton acte même. Ton acte, c'est toi. Tu ne te trouves plus ailleurs! Ton corps est de toi, il n'est plus toi. Tu vas frapper? Nul ne témaitrisera en te menaçant dans ton corps. Toi? C'est la mort de l'ennemi. Toi? C'est le sauvetage de ton fils. Tu t'échanges. Et tu n'éprouves pas le sentiment de perdre à l'échange. (PG, p. 346)

Saint-Exupéry repeatedly uses the concept of "exchange" to explain how man creates his essence. My body, like all the other objects that surround my consciousness, means nothing until I put it to some use ("Tes membres? Des outils" [PG, p. 346]), and if I die in the action I have chosen, I will have sacrificed my body for the meaning I have created by acting. I act, not for the sake of action, but for the meaning of my action, which is to create what I am. Man, for Saint-Exupéry as well as for Sartre and Malraux, is the sum of his acts. But he is more, for Saint-Exupéry says, "une somme n'est pas un Etre" (PG, p. 380). Man, then, for Saint-Exupéry, is the **sense** of his acts, the meaning of what he has done and not simply a collection of acts.
"Dépassement" is man becoming other by exchanging his actions in the present for an existence in the future, the nature of which he will not know until he has created it: "L'essentiel, nous ne savons pas le prévoir" (TH, p. 244). "La vérité de l'homme," thus becomes his continual "dépassement" through exchange, a movement from a present situation to an indefinite future. Saint-Exupéry develops the concept of "dépassement" most thoroughly in Pilote de guerre. He speaks of man the individual "en route vers l'Homme" through a constant "dépassement" of himself. "L'Homme" seems to represent that which each individual is capable of becoming, the unique "possible" person we each can be if we live authentically. "L'Homme" is greater than the individual, but does not represent a collectivity because

L'homme est toujours l'homme. Nous sommes des hommes. Et, en moi, je n'ai jamais rencontré que moi-même. (PG, p. 294)

For Saint-Exupéry the evidence of subjectivity is so strong that it constitutes the field of development he calls "devenir" in which the individual becomes greater than himself, but never leaves his individual subjectivity to do so. Thus, he can say he is first a man of his childhood, of his country, of his flight group, and then go on from his established situation to become other by his acts. He is at once all he
has done, his present situation, and the promise of a future
"Etre" he will himself create:

L'unité de l'Etre n'est pas trans-
portable par les mots. ...
Ainsi devient-on l'homme d'une patrie,
d'un métier, d'une civilisation, d'une
religion. Mais pour se réclamer de
tels Etres, il convient, d'abord, de les
fonder en soi. Et, là où n'existe pas le
sentiment de la patrie, aucun langage ne
le transportera. On ne fonde en soi
l'Etre dont on se réclame que par des
actes. Un Etre n'est pas de l'empire du
langage, mais de celui des actes. Notre
Humanisme a négligé les actes. Il a
échoué dans sa tentative. (PG, p. 377)

The many attempts to define man by rational systems are thus
all equally invalid. Man discovers his essential character
when he experiences a so-called "moment of truth" and narrowly
escapes death. Saint-Exupéry experiences this enlightening
moment over Arras and says: "Si j'avais fait demi-tour une
seconde trop tôt, j'aurais tout ignoré de moi" (PG, p. 352).
What he discovers is the evidence of his subjectivity and the
meaning of his participation in the war: "Que suis-je, si je
ne participe pas?" (PG, p. 295). He and his companions are
not sent out to conquer but to become: "Vous nous poussiez
d'instinct, non plus à vaincre, c'était impossible, mais à
devenir" (PG, p. 358). Saint-Exupéry discovers man's
existential situation: when stripped of all his systems of
thought, when reason no longer has any sense, when he is
without recourse to any outside help, man finds that he is his
conscious self, that that conscious self is in a particular situation in time and space, and that life is before him, waiting to be defined by his actions: "Vivre c'est naître lentement" (PG, p. 295).

From this discovery Saint-Exupéry concludes that we must respect "l'Homme" as a potential in each individual. This respect forms the basis of his humanism. He refuses abstractions and does not talk about "mankind" (l'humanité) but about "man":

Mais je ne connais point l'homme, mais des hommes. La liberté, mais des hommes libres. Le bonheur, mais des hommes heureux. La beauté, mais des choses belles. Dieu, mais la ferveur des cierges. Et ceux-là qui poursuivent l'essence autrement que comme naissance ne montrent que leur vanité et le vide de leurs coeurs. (C, p. 875)

Like Sartre, he scorns les petits bourgeois who think they possess happiness, but are never happy, who lead unauthentic, unfulfilled lives ("De quoi remplissent-ils, quand ils sont libres, leurs absurdes petits dimanches?" [TH, p. 238]). Turning away from abstractions and "l'empire du langage," he forges his essence through action. For Saint-Exupéry, as for Sartre, man is free to act and thus responsible for his actions and their effects. I shall conclude this examination of Saint-Exupéry's existential perspective by considering three existentialist concepts, which find expression in his works: freedom, responsibility and anguish.
Freedom, Responsibility, Anguish

Saint-Exupéry does not pretend that man is absolutely free. His experience in the desert taught him the lesson of man's physical contingency:

On croit que l'homme est libre...
On ne voit pas la corde qui le rattaché au puits, qui le rattaché, comme un cordon ombilical, au ventre de la terre. S'il fait un pas de plus, il meurt. (TH, p. 237)

For Saint-Exupéry, as for Sartre, man is "une liberté en situation," which is to say that he is free to choose an action or an attitude which will engage him in the world, but not totally free in the sense of existing in a vacuum or having no direction. His freedom must always be directed toward some task, must be a response to some real event. Man is free to become greater than himself, but not free to be nothing, because then he does not exist. Nor is Saint-Exupéry's conception of freedom the same as Gide's "disponibilité," because to be "disponible" is to be passive and dependent on exterior events to define one's attitudes. Bernis experiences this kind of freedom and senses that it is negative:

Et tout à coup, il était libre.
Bernis a presque peur de se découvrir si disponible, si mortel. (OS, p. 7)

In Citadelle, Saint-Exupéry condemns this freedom without
direction as a "freedom not to be," and those who indulge in it as non-existent:

Car la license t'efface et,
 selon les paroles de mon père:
"Ce n'est point être libre que de
n'être pas." (C, p. 722)

Those who live by license recall Sartre's "salauds," and their attitude is one of "bad faith." They refuse to respond in an existential fashion to the reality of their own situation, and instead choose to live by others' codes and not their own. They refuse their real freedom which is to be responsible for one's acts in a given situation, and are a "race de chiens qui se croient libres, parce que libres de changer d'avis, de renier" (C, p. 602). Saint-Exupéry has no pity for such unauthentic people because in degrading themselves by refusing their real freedom, they degrade "l'Homme" they could each be if they were fully engaged in becoming:

Mais tous ceux-là je les dirai de la racaille, qui vivent des gestes d'autrui et, comme le caméléon, s'en colorent, aiment d'où viennent les présents, et goûtent les acclamations et se jugent dans le miroir des multitudes: car on ne les trouve point, ils ne sont point, comme une citadelle, fermés sur leurs trésors, et, de génération en génération, ils ne délivrent pas leur mot de passe, mais laisse croître leurs enfants sans les pétrir. Et ils poussent comme des champignons sur le monde. (C, p. 602)
It is clear that Saint-Exupéry refuses absolute freedom because this implies freedom from responsibility, which to him is unacceptable. Freedom has no sense unless it is freedom to act upon and establish ties with the world. Saint-Exupéry's concrete, active freedom is the opposite of an evasive desire to break all relations with objects and other people. To do the latter would be to cease existing, since man exists in the world and cannot escape this physical reality. In a very real sense, man's situation determines him, imposes a certain order which he cannot deny: "Mais de même que la liberté n'est point la license, ainsi l'ordre n'est point absence de liberté" (c, p. 619). And so Saint-Exupéry introduces his concept of freedom-as-constraint, which means the conscious acceptance of one's individual subjectivity in a given situation:

"Liberté et contrainte sont deux aspects de la même nécessité qui est d'être celui-là et non un autre." Libre d'être celui-là, non libre d'être un autre. (c, p. 631)

The evidence of man's freedom to be himself, and that of his responsibility to himself because he is free, added to the basic evidence of his subjectivity, becomes the cornerstone of moral action for Saint-Exupéry, just as it is for Sartre. "Contrainte" means nothing other than the imposition of a situation, and is the same as "l'obstacle" which provides man
with something to push against as he asserts himself and thus creates his essence:

Je n'ai point compris que l'on distingue les contraintes de la liberté. Plus je trace de routes, plus tu es libre de choisir. Or chaque route est une contrainte car je l'ai flanquée d'une barrière. Mais qu'appelles-tu liberté s'il n'est point de routes entre lesquelles il te soit possible de choisir? Appelles-tu liberté le droit d'errer dans le vide? En même temps qu'est fondée la contrainte d'une voie, c'est ta liberté qui s'augmente.

(C, p. 702)

"Chaque route est une contrainte" is a way of saying each situation forces you to take a stand: you must assume an attitude or position vis-a-vis the situation and you must act in direct response to the situation, because there is nothing else which will provoke your actions. "Contrainte," also because the situation you are in is your situation and no other. To refuse to face up to it is to neglect the only imposition made on man—which is that of his responsible freedom to act.

Saint-Exupéry expresses the concept of freedom-as-constraint as early as Vol de nuit. Fabien is surrounded by clouds and has no hope of flying below them to seek a safe place to land; his communication with the various "escales" is cut off: this is his situation. These are the only factors which limit him, but they limit him quite thoroughly. Still: "Il aurait pu lutter encore, tenter sa chance: il n'y a pas de
fatalité extérieure" (VN, p. 124). His reaction is not determined by his situation, rather the stage is set for him to act, and he does: "Mais il y a une fatalité intérieure: vient une minute où l'on se découvre vulnérable; alors les fautes vous attirent comme un vertige" (VN, 124). "La fatalité intérieure" is his own conscious choice to be lured by an opening in the clouds to fly out of the storm, but above it where there is no longer any hope of descending again to land: "Mais sa faim de lumière était telle qu'il monta" (VN, p. 124). Fabien makes his decision and lives with it. Doomed anyway, he chooses to spend his last half hour bathed in moonlight reflected off the bank of clouds below him which effectively seal him off from the earth. Constrained, severely limited by his physical environment, Fabien chooses to die one way and not another. A futile gesture, perhaps, but nonetheless a genuine exercise of his freedom of choice.

In Terre des Hommes we find both the positive freedom-as-constraint, and the negative freedom without ties. Saint-Exupéry describes what he calls "une vraie mort d'homme," that of a gardener who, on his death bed, wishes he were out digging in the earth because "On est tellement libre quand on bêche." By dying, he is leaving "une planète en friche" (VN, p. 167), which will slowly revert to the chaos resulting from license. In the name of life he struggled against the disorder of death and he misses the creative freedom of the struggle.
Bark, an Arab slave whom Saint-Exupéry bought and freed, experiences his freedom as negative because his life has lost the meaning it once had. Until he creates a new meaning, he will not really exist: "Mais cette liberté lui parut amère: elle lui découvrait surtout à quel point il manquait de liens avec le monde" (TH, p. 207). When he re-establishes contact with other people as a free man, he begins to regain his existence, feels "tiré vers le sol" and: "Il rentrerait, demain, dans la misère des siens, responsable de plus de vies que ses vieux bras n'en sauraient peut-être nourrir, mais déjà il pesait ici de son vrai poids" (TH, p. 208). Bark becomes truly free only when he assumes his situation and begins acting in a meaningful fashion. He truly exists when he has re-created ties with hundreds of children by giving them toys and slippers he buys with the money given him by the aviators that liberated him. In exercising his freedom to become in a given situation, he experiences the responsibility that accompanies authentic existence.

The last few pages of Pilote de guerre show clearly the link between freedom and responsibility. Responsibility is the meaning of freedom. Saint-Exupéry attacks the idea of a freedom limited only by "le tort causé à autrui," which assumes that man's positive or neutral actions have no effect on his fellows. This notion of freedom leads to absolute individualism and to license, an untenable attitude and "ce qui est vide
de signification, car il n'est point d'acte qui n'engage autrui. ... Il n'est point d'individu, seul" (PG, p. 379).

We are all equal in our responsibility, but equality does not mean absolute identity, and individual differences do not mean that "some are more equal than others." Saint-Exupéry's heroes carry on a noble struggle to create "l'Homme" through responsible action, but Saint-Exupéry does not mean to say that some men are more important to humanity than others. All are responsible and important, but many do not see or accept their responsibility:

Mais à vrai dire, ces degrés de responsabilité sont en fonction directe des dons. Degrés de fait, non de valeur. Sur ce point il ne semble pas que les critiques d'extrême droite aient beaucoup mieux compris la pensée de Saint-Exupéry que ceux d'extrême gauche.

It is of this existential equality of responsibility relative to one's situation that Saint-Exupéry writes in Pilote de guerre. He speaks of responsibility as Western civilization's debt to christianity, but does not mean to say that he is responsible for man through Divine intervention: simply that this attitude is borrowed from religious doctrine:

Ma civilisation, héritière de Dieu, a fait chacun responsable de tous les hommes, et tous les hommes responsables de chacun. Un individu doit se sacrifier au sauvetage d'une collectivité, mais il ne s'agit point ici d'une
It is precisely the principle of responsibility that gives man his dignity and distinguishes him from other creatures. Man alone among the world's inhabitants acts consciously and is responsible for his acts: "C'est dans ce principe, qui nous distingue si clairement de la termitière, que réside, avant tout, notre grandeur" (PG, p. 378). But, unfortunately, says Saint-Exupéry, our civilization has slipped from this belief which gave precedence to "l'Homme," to its present attitude which sees only a sum of "free" (non-existential) individuals. He thus attacks all collectivities which do not begin with the concept of equality of responsibility.

Responsibility is the conscious acceptance of one's freedom to act. Since by our acts we create the world, we are ultimately responsible for what we do. Saint-Exupéry endorses the concept of total responsibility and shows that man is responsible first of all for his actions in his immediate situation, as well as in a greater sense for actions in the past which have already established relationships of one sort or another. He is responsible for the negative as well as the positive effects of his actions and his attitudes, since an attitude is a conscious position adopted in regard to a situation. He is responsible not only for himself, but for the entire community of man.
The aviator in charge of delivering mail to a specific destination is aware of his responsibility for his immediate situation:

Tu devais à l'aube prendre dans tes bras les méditations d'un peuple. Dans tes faibles bras. Les porter à travers mille embûches comme un trésor sous le manteau. Courrier précieux, t'avait-on dit, courrier plus précieux que la vie. Et si fragile. Et qu'une faute disperse en flammes, et mène au vent. (CS, p. 8)

Speaking for himself in Terre des Hommes, Saint-Exupéry describes his growing awareness of his responsibility while awaiting the hour of his first flight. The pilot rides the same bus as les petits fonctionnaires of Toulouse, but for him the bus "n'était plus qu'une chrysalide grise dont l'homme sortirait transfiguré" (TH, p. 146). He is transfigured into a new person by his acceptance of his situation:

Chaque camarade, ainsi, par un matin semblable, avait senti, en lui-même, sous le subalterne vulnérable, soumis encore à la hargne de cet inspecteur, naître le responsable du Courrier d'Espagne et d'Afrique. (TH, p. 146)

Accepting responsibility is a way of "becoming," for by assuming entirely a new situation you forge a new being. Responsibility defines man's involvement in life, it is the condition of his engagement because he is what he does and he creates reality by his actions. And so, "Les hommes en fuite
sont responsables de la fuite, puisqu'il n'y aurait point de fuite sans hommes en fuite" (PG, p. 309). Each subjectivity creates the world, and so abstract notions like "retreat," "war," or "love" do not exist. Only "men retreating," "men fighting," or "men loving" exist. For Sartre, to fight in a war is equivalent to having declared war oneself because one always has the conscious choice of accepting or refusing a specific course of action. Saint-Exupéry agrees: fighting in a war creates the war, because if no one fought there would be no war. In the same sense, "fighting for peace" is absurd because

On fonde ce que l'on fait et rien de plus. ... Et si je fais la guerre pour obtenir la paix, je fonde la guerre. La paix n'est point un état que l'on atteigne à travers la guerre. (C, p. 566)

And so those responsible for seeking peace through war are responsible for creating war, since they are what they do, and what they are doing is fighting! Human responsibility covers all man's actions, and not merely the end which he hopes to achieve by means of otherwise unjustifiable actions. Thus, one either accepts or forfeits one's total responsibility because "partial responsibility" is contradictory to the meaning of freedom: "Si tu refuses d'être responsable de tes défaites, tu ne le seras point de tes victoires" (C, p. 874). To accept one's responsibility is to become part of the human community,
recognizing that one's actions ultimately affect all other men. Each of us is a "sentinel," and each sentinel "est responsable de tout l'empire" (TH, p. 256; see also C, p. 916). In the midst of defeat, Saint-Exupéry can feel victorious because of the ties his acceptance of responsibility has created between him and his fellows, and through them with all men "en route vers l'Homme":


Through positive action directed toward the establishment of ties between men and the creation of "l'Homme" in each individual, Saint-Exupéry experiences responsibility as the condition for giving meaning to life.

Saint-Exupéry recognizes our responsibility toward past actions and ties already created, as well as toward present situations. The fox in Le Petit Prince teaches the prince this lesson: "Tu deviens responsable pour toujours de ce que tu as apprivoisé" (p. 476). The little prince is thus responsible for his flower (pp. 476, 483, 492), and he returns to his planet because of this responsibility. In Terre des
Hommes, Saint-Exupéry describes the discovery of this aspect of responsibility in two episodes. When lost in the Andes, Guillaumet found the strength to continue because of his ties with the people waiting for him to return:

Ma femme, si elle croit que je vis, croit que je marche. Les camarades croient que je marche. Ils ont tous confiance en moi. Et je suis un salaud si je ne marche pas. (TH, p. 164)

Saint-Exupéry himself has the same reaction when lost in the Sahara. Feeling the ties between him and others, he knows they expect him to survive:

Je revois les yeux de tous ceux qui, peut-être, tiennent à moi. Et ces yeux interrogent. (TH, p. 223)

He no longer feels driven to struggle for himself, but for those who wait:

Si je m'endors je ne sais point la différence. Et puis quelle paix! Mais ces cris que l'on va pousser là-bas, ces grandes flammes de désespoir...... Chaque seconde de silence assassine un peu ceux que j'aime. (TH, p. 224)

Their responsibility for others forces Saint-Exupéry and Prévot to continue and to consider themselves the rescuers—by saving themselves, they save those who wait for them:

Encore une fois nous découvrons que nous ne sommes pas les naufragés. Les
naufragés, ce sont ceux qui
tendent! ... On ne peut pas ne
pas courir vers eux. Guillaumet
aussi, au retour des Andes, m'a
raconté qu'il courait vers les
naufragés! Ceci est une vérité
universelle. (TH, p. 232)

And so he can conclude at the end of the Guillaumet episode,
that "Etre homme, c'est précisément être responsable" (TH,
p. 166). Because we cannot live without creating ties with
the world and with other people, we must continually encounter
the results of our actions in the form of the outcome of
events and the feelings of other people. Accepting our res-
ponsibility simply means knowing consciously that by our
actions we are creating a world.

For Sartre, man experiences existential anguish
("angoisse") when he discovers that he is free to act in an
absurd world and alone responsible for his actions. Anguish
results from having no one or nothing to turn to for
assistance when deciding on a course of action. Each sub-
jective consciousness must act independently of all influence
by responding to its particular situation. "Angoisse," then,
is one of the conditions of the existential perspective: it
is the feeling of being alone in the world.

For Saint-Exupéry, too, the feeling of anguish derives
from the evidence of man's solitude, but in a different sense.
Anguish is a conscious reaction of the individual to the
inadequacy of his relations. He suffers from loneliness, from
knowing that his ties with the world and with other people are incomplete and insufficient. Bernis experiences the anguish of loneliness, and his first reaction is toward other people. His attempt at establishing a meaningful human relationship, however, leaves him still longing for a definitive solution: "Ah, quelque chose pour le sauver d'une inquiétude si humaine" (CS, p. 47). I shall treat the question of solitude further in a later chapter. This feeling of the need for human contact is the point of departure for Saint-Exupéry's quest for communication at all levels of experience. Existential at the start, this quest becomes spiritual and goes beyond Saint-Exupéry's existential perspective.

On the level of contact with other people, and on the level of personal "becoming," anguish is experienced as the possibility of something which is not yet. Anguish suggests to us that we can be more than we now are, that we are perhaps not yet fulfilled. In this sense, anguish is a positive sign which indicates the potential for greater individual growth. Saint-Exupéry is thus able to link the process of metamorphosis with anguish: "Quiconque mue connaît la tristesse et l'angoisse" (C, p. 570). "Angoisse" characterizes the "dépassement" of the individual to another state of existence, indicating the still-unconscious presence of that greater someone that he is going to become. I react to the unknown in me by experiencing "l'angoisse":


It is a question here, not of predetermination, but of self-determination, because I shall meet this "moi inconnu" only when I create him through action. If I choose not to act, or to vegetate in an unauthentic "bourgeois existence," I remain the same, and never meet him because he doesn't exist yet. He is formed only by the interaction of my present being with events and things outside myself in a given situation. This is why Saint-Exupéry can say that my "moi inconnu" is "extérieur" to me.

Entirely subjective, anguish maintains the essential instability of my existence so that I will continually try to leave behind what I am, striving to affirm myself as an active participant in the world. For Saint-Exupéry, "l'angoisse" is the "condition essentielle de la découverte de l'être authentique" (Major, p. 32), which explains why "toute ascension est douloureuse" (C, p. 610). "L'angoisse" is the basis for action which, through the constant reaffirmation of free choice, is the foundation of being. For Saint-Exupéry, as for Sartre, man experiences "l'angoisse" as an integral part of his existential condition, and specifically as that aspect of his condition which causes him to act responsibly or to reject the entire perspective and take refuge in the illusions of determinism.
"L'angoisse" is at once the key to existential action and the breaking point for many who cannot accept the responsibility of directing their own life.

Conclusion

My examination of Saint-Exupéry's existential perspective is by no means exhaustive, but I believe to have traced the major aspects of this perspective. Saint-Exupéry's thought parallels that of Sartre in many respects, and they appear to share the same world-view, as far as man's motives for action and the conditions of his existence are concerned. The originality of Saint-Exupéry's vision of the world seen with the aid of the airplane-as-tool caused Sartre to indicate him as a forerunner of phenomenological novelists and even to consider him an existentialist:

Saint-Exupéry? Un existentialiste, déclarait un jour Jean-Paul Sartre à un journaliste. Existentialiste, il l'est par la soudaineté de cette évidence, par cette vision de l'homme surgie du commerce des hommes et non reçue d'une tradition, d'une culture--tellement distante, au contraire, sous une certaine communauté trompeuse du vocabulaire, de l'usage et de la tradition, de la culture--par l'hégémonie enfin qu'elle fera peser sur toute sa pensée. (Quesnel, p. 23)

"Cette vision de l'homme surgie du commerce des hommes" is his conception of man as free, responsible and involved with others whether he wants to be or not. Man is not determined
by any outside source, but is a conscious subjectivity in constant relation with the world and with other men. Saint-Exupéry's existential perspective is a form of relativity—he insists on an individual perception of the world and the necessity of creating ties of some sort with everything and everyone we come in contact with:

Cette vue de la condition humaine comme un "noeud de relations" avec le monde et avec les autres découle d'un subjectivisme fondamental. Dire que tout est rapports revient à situer l'essence du réel dans la conscience qui pense, qui interprète ou qui crée ces rapports. Et c'est bien la position de Saint-Exupéry. 26

As well as creating ties—or extending responsibility—as he acts, man creates the sense of the world: "On ne découvre pas la vérité: on la crée" (Car, p. 135). This is true for the world of things as it is for the world of man, because man becomes what he is and is just another unknown until he acts and creates himself.

Rivière's seeming harshness with his pilots—sending them off to fly at night in order to conquer their fears—is the expression of a constant attitude toward existence itself: the only way to conquer the unknown is to brave it, not recklessly but consciously. The unknown (or absurd) becomes known, tamed, and acquires a meaning through action:

Seul l'inconnu épouvante lès.
hommes. Mais pour quiconque
l'affronte, il n'est déjà plus
l'inconnu. (TH, p. 166)

Just as shame is the expression of our impotence vis-à-vis
the past, fear is that of our impotence vis-à-vis the future.
The existential attitude is not to get immersed in such re-
actions which only bear witness to our lack of influence on
things which are no more or are not yet, but rather to choose
an attitude which gives meaning to or transforms the future
one step at a time: "à savoir que préparer l'avenir ce n'est
que fonder le présent" (C, p. 649). Saint-Exupéry assumes his
freedom to act and thus to change the future in the present,
by making it mean what he wants to and by giving it sense and
definition where it is vague and threatening (Major, pp. 27-28).

Saint-Exupéry resents civilization's softening effect
on modern man. His ideal of action is not for the sake of being
tough, nor is it "action for action" in hopes of reestablishing
a virile trait which is disappearing. Rather, he sees action
as the only way we become what we are. The man of leisure is
in his eyes a vegetable, he has ceased to be because he is no
longer creating his essence through action.

Work is thus in conflict with "leisure time culture,"
because "le travail t'oblige à épouser le monde" (C, p. 675),
whereas leisure makes no demands on you: "Car tu ne deviens
que contre ce qui te résiste" (C, p. 674). You do not exist
if you do not re-invent work, and not just any work, but a
meaningful métier in which you can exchange yourself:

Man, reduced to himself alone, is "nothing". He exists only in so far as by an act he "exchanges" or embodies himself in a thing, or in a different arrangement of things... The men of whom Malraux and Saint-Exupéry write efface themselves, like the anonymous masters of the Middle Ages, behind the work accomplished. The existentialist "we" has replaced the essentialist "I". (Knight, p. 170)

In this context we can understand the importance of the métier for Saint-Exupéry. If your work is not a "champ du devenir," you are not acting effectively and will most likely simply be putting in your time rather than truly exchanging yourself for what you will be.

Traditional thought makes a great mistake in considering human reality as an absolute whose existence and nature were given once for all time. It is upon this conception of reality that we base our analyses, our reasoning, our demonstrations. But, Saint-Exupéry tells us, logic can prove anything it wants to:

"Une fois de plus il me fut enseigné que le logique tue la vie. Et qu'elle ne contient rien par elle-même. (C, p. 585)

True human reality is, on the contrary, a living thing, thus an evolving, changing, becoming phenomenon. With this notion of reality, predictions become difficult:
Le monde futur échappe à l'analyse. Une vérité ce n'est pas ce qui se démontre: c'est ce qui simplifie le monde. (SV, p. 153)

Truth, then, is human experience—a subjective existence in constant evolution. Truth, in the existential perspective of Saint-Exupéry, is authentic action directed toward the world with the goal of surpassing one's present existence and creating with each act a new self. Truth is discovering not the answers to all the old questions, but that the old questions don't have any meaning any more and that what counts is life and the universe created and sustained by each subjective perception of the world.
PART II

SAINT-EXUPÉRY'S DIVERGENCE FROM THE EXISTENTIAL WORLDVIEW: MAN'S SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE AND COMMUNICATION

"Il n'est point d'individu, seul."

--Pilote de guerre

Page

CHAPTER ONE: MAN'S SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE...... 117

CHAPTER TWO: SAINT-EXUPÉRY'S BELIEF IN COMMUNICATION.................. 160
CHAPTER ONE

MAN'S SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE

Introduction

Saint-Exupéry shares Sartre's existential point de départ: man is free to create his own essence; he is without absolute values yet contingent on the physical world and responsible for what he does and what his fellows do. Saint-Exupéry accepts this perception of man and his position in the world as the ground for his own work and thought, but he wants to change man's relationship with the world and with himself. For Sartre, man's only existence is current individual existence, and the best man can hope for is to live authentically by accepting the responsibility for his acts and becoming "engagé" in an endeavor to benefit other individuals on a social and political level. He accepts the existential condition of man as the final, unchangeable truth.

Saint-Exupéry, however, does not accept existential reality as man's final state of being. He looks beyond responsibility on the existential level (of individuals whose actions affect other individuals) to a spiritual relationship among men. Saint-Exupéry writes of such spiritual ties as an historical reality and looks back nostalgically at a fifteenth
century French village as a spiritual community: "Rien qu'à entendre un chant villageois du XVè siècle, on mesure la pente descendue" (SV, p. 226; see also Car, p. 28). The "chant villageois" evokes for him the close-knit medieval community where every person had a meaningful role and where this interdependence was recognized by all. He also sees such a spiritual life as a possibility for the future, and indeed his goal in Citadelle is to show allegorically how modern man might find spiritual fulfillment. But as to the present existence of man's spiritual life he is ambiguous and equivocal. Sometimes he sees the spiritual life as dead, killed by "progress" and the dehumanization of the modern technical civilization; sometimes he suggests that the spiritual ties which would make possible this greater level of life are already there, but that because of our material preoccupations we are simply not aware of them.

The need for a spiritual dimension in human existence is evident: "Le recul religieux est un désastre qui nous démeuble notre monde spirituel" (Car, p. 28). Without this dimension, man for Saint-Exupéry is aimless, lacking a direction or a "route" which his animal functions do not provide:

Où me conduisez-vous, vous qui croyez que l'homme se perpétue en se nourrissant et en se reproduisant lorsque vous ne sentez rien de
l'importance de la superstructure spirituelle? (Car, p. 27)

Religions in the twentieth century seem to be powerless to reinstate the "superstructure spirituelle," and so "Remplacer la religion n'est pas un vain mot" (Car, p. 25). Saint-Exupéry thus sees a need for an effective system of sign and ritual, "quelque chose qui ressemble à un chant grégorien" (SV, p. 226), and his self-avowed task is to help man regenerate or rediscover his spiritual life.

It is evident that Saint-Exupéry's interest in man's spiritual life does not reflect a strictly existentialist view of man. The arguments of this chapter will at times appear to contradict some of the interpretations of Saint-Exupéry's thought which I have put forth above. We must remember, however, that Saint-Exupéry was not a philosopher and that he never pretended to be developing a coherent philosophy. In fact, he often speaks of contradictions, saying that they exist only because language is inadequate to express the underlying unity between two objects or concepts which when explained verbally appear in conflict. Even if he had developed a coherent philosophy, it is most improbable that it would have resembled the philosophy of Sartre in its every step. Beliefs which would appear as contradictions in a philosophical system can be seen as adding greater dimension to the thought of a writer such as Saint-Exupéry who sought to understand his
perceptions and to express them more clearly, rather than eliminate or modify certain ideas so as to make the body of his thought seem a more harmonious whole.

In this chapter I shall elucidate the various manifestations of Saint-Exupéry's belief in man's spiritual existence, paying particular attention to the novels and to Citadelle, for these are (or in the case of Citadelle, were intended to be) the more "public" of his writings, those in which he attempted to present his vision of man. The works and fragments grouped together in the posthumous Un Sens à la vie and Carnets, which was never intended for publication, provide additional insight into his views on man's spiritual life. These two works often help clarify an enigmatic passage in the novels, occasionally providing more background or showing us the original form of an idea or paragraph more fully developed in the published works.

The Life of the Spirit

The current state of human existence is disappointing and incomplete. In the Lettre au Général X, written just a year before his disappearance, Saint-Exupéry explains that his generation lacks shared spiritual values. The tone of the letter conveys his profound deception about current attitudes:

Je suis triste pour ma génération qui est vide de toute substance humaine. Qui,
n'ayant connu que le bar, les mathématiques et les Bugatti comme forme de vie spirituelle, se trouve aujourd'hui dans une action strictement grégaire [la guerre] qui n'a plus aucune couleur. ... Tout lyrisme sonne ridicule et les hommes refusent d'être réveillés à une vie spirituelle quelconque. Ils font honnêtement une sorte de travail à la chaîne. ... Je hais mon époque de toutes mes forces. L'homme y meurt de soif. (SV, pp. 224-225)

As saddened as he is, Saint-Exupéry is concerned with changing these attitudes, for he sees man's inner life as his true life. (see PP, p. 474: "L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux."); and it is l'homme intérieur which interests him the most. In 1943, winning the war is for him the most pressing question, but nowhere near the most important:

Certes, il est une première étape. Je ne puis supporter l'idée de verser des générations d'enfants français dans le ventre du Moloch allemand. La substance même est menacée. Mais quand elle sera sauvée, alors se posera le problème fondamental qui est celui de notre temps. Qui est celui du sens de l'homme, et il n'est point proposé de réponse et j'ai l'impression de marcher vers les temps les plus noir du monde. (SV, p. 230)

"Les temps les plus noirs du monde": he says this because he is not certain that there is an answer to "le problème fondamental," even though his life's work has been directed toward finding an answer and sharing it with the rest of mankind.
Perhaps Saint-Exupéry's greatest difference with other existential writers is on this crucial point. Sartre, Malraux and Camus offer worldly solutions whose overall effect is to make man aware of his condition and help him live a more authentic life, free, but isolated from other men, existing only as a subjective consciousness having no ties with other consciousnesses. Saint-Exupéry, on the other hand, poses the question: "Que peut-on, que faut-il dire aux hommes?" (SV, p. 231) "Que faut-il dire aux hommes" in order to re-instill in them the spiritual life which they lack? In other words, how to lift man above his current plane of existence to a higher, more complete level?

This difficult question immediately suggests Saint-Exupéry's attitude toward existential reality and "le courant de pensée contemporaine." Saint-Exupéry places himself between the existentialist attitude—characterized by the existentialist humanism of Sartre—and a future, not-yet-defined attitude. For Saint-Exupéry, existential reality seems to be the way things are now, the current stage of human affairs, the twentieth-century philosophy and worldview. In order to speak about man's future, one must accept the existential viewpoint as the most relevant analysis of human affairs, and then go on from there to consider possible further developments.

Saint-Exupéry sees himself and his heroes as
"existential men," acting by free choice to create their essence. But the individual essence which each man creates by acting freely is insufficient in Saint-Exupéry's opinion because he considers man capable of being more than merely a self-created, isolated individual. He understands existential reality as the current stage in man's evolution. Man will evolve to some "higher level of existence," where life will be characterized by the predominance of "l'Esprit." The last line of Terre des Hommes ("Seul l'Esprit, s'il souffle sur la glaise, peut créer l'Homme" [p. 261]), gives the first hint of this prophetic vision, and its tone so surprised Saint-Exupéry's good friend Leon Werth, that he urged Saint-Exupéry to delete it because it clashed with the rest of the book.

If we take "l'Esprit" to mean the spiritual life, or life on a higher plane than presently lived by man; and "la glaise" to mean the current state of man (Rivièrè sees man as being "une cire vierge qu'il faut pétrir" [VN, p. 92]); then "l'Homme" can be seen as a future state of man, or "spiritual man." Many have interpreted "l'Esprit" as meaning the Divine Spirit, in which case the last line of Terre des Hommes would be an echo of the biblical account of the creation. However, this line immediately follows the "Mozart assassiné" episode, where Saint-Exupéry speaks of Polish immigrants as "des tas de glaise" ("L'homme était pareil à un tas de
glaise" [TH, p. 259]; "Le mystère, c'est qu'ils soient
devenus ces paquets de glaise" [TH, p. 260]; "Pourquoi cette
belle argile humaine estelle abimée?" [TH, p. 260]), and
where he says, "Mais il n'est point de jardinier pour les
hommes" (TH, p. 260). An argument may be made for "l'Esprit"
interpreted as a divine spirit, but not, however, as the
Divine Spirit. There simply is not enough evidence to
support such an interpretation and too much evidence to the
contrary. I shall consider the Divine question further below
when I examine what Saint-Exupéry means by "Dieu," a term
which occurs throughout Citadelle.28

The interpretation of "l'Homme" as a future state of
man invites an interesting comparison between Saint-Exupéry
and Teilhard de Chardin, and an enlightening and objective
study has been made of the subject by André-Antoine Devaux.29
There is no evidence of any "influence" of one upon the
other, although they share many ideas and concepts. They read
each other's writings to some extent, and in fact several
mimeographed essays of Teilhard were found among the papers
in Saint-Exupéry's effects after his disappearance. For a
short while, these essays were mistakenly attributed to Saint-
Exupéry, since they were among his papers and because their
style sounded like his own, and they were nearly published
under his name!30

That their main interests coincide is clearly pointed
out by Devaux in a passage which echoes the *Lettre au Général* X:

Nous avons affaire à deux hommes d'exceptionnelle envergure, également tourmentés—et jusqu'à l'angoisse—par ce problème fondamental: que faut-il dire aux hommes du XXe siècle afin qu'ils ne se perdent pas, mais sachent prendre, au contraire, la bonne direction: celle du salut, individuel et collectif? (Devaux, Teilhard et Saint-Exupéry, p. 5)

Devaux stresses parallels in the lives and thoughts of Saint-Exupéry and Teilhard. Their major difference is Teilhard's faith in God through Christ and his belief that man is evolving toward a union with God. Saint-Exupéry is optimistic about the possibilities of man's destiny, but he runs into an impasse when he cannot supply an answer to the questions, "What justifies man? On what can man and humanity be based? To what end is man progressing?"

Their parallel experiences include aristocratic families, an extremely happy childhood and great devotion toward their mothers. Both insist on childhood memories as touchstones in later life (Devaux, Teilhard et Saint-Exupéry, pp. 8-10; see PG, pp. 311-313, 335-340). Both had a strong interest and aptitude in the sciences: Saint-Exupéry had nine patented inventions to his credit, and his mathematical brilliance often astounded specialists. Teilhard passionately studied geo-biology hoping to find "une meilleure découverte
de Dieu dans le monde" (Devaux, Teilhard et Saint-Exupéry, pp. 12-13). For both, it is clear that evolution is a scientifically provable fact and that its orientation is toward a certain progress (Devaux, Teilhard et Saint-Exupéry, p. 25).

Their strongest point of agreement is their common care and love for man. For Saint-Exupéry, as for Teilhard, this love has a spiritual foundation aimed at recognizing in the individual the potential for growth and union with others. The image of the cathedral composed of individual stones which each contribute to the whole and which are relatively insignificant on their own appears in Pilote de guerre (pp. 365, 372, 379) and throughout Citadelle as one of the primary symbols of spiritual unity (pp. 522-524, 533, 539, 556-557, 563, 578, 591, 623, 632, 665, 668, 687-688, 700-701, 702, 707-710, 713, 714-715, 716, 722, 726-727, 759, 780, 813, 816, 862, 885, 892, 928, 937, 959). The cathedral signifies a greater potential for the individual:

Peu à peu, oubliant l'homme, nous avons borné notre morale aux problèmes de l'individu. Nous avons exigé de chacun qu'il ne lésât pas l'autre individu. De chaque pierre qu'elle ne lésât pas l'autre pierre. Et, certes, elles ne se lèsent l'une l'autre quand elles sont en vrac dans un champ. Mais elles lèsent la cathédrale qu'elles eussent fondée, et qui eût fondé en retour leur propre signification. (PG, pp. 378-379)
It seems that Saint-Exupéry sees the rise of the individual as a major threat to real human progress in the sense of the spiritual development of humanity as a whole. He attacks Western Civilization's attitude of the supremacy of the individual because of the collective degrading of mankind that it brings about. Saint-Exupéry wants to expand the horizons of the individual, but keep this personal growth in harmony with the growth and well-being of the species. Any personal enrichment which detracts from or does not contribute to collective enrichment is rejected as unsuitable to his vision of the world.

Saint-Exupéry's desire to see all men enriched according to his vision has been called a fascist attitude by some critics who see him as too authoritarian and unwilling to accept a view different from his own. They draw attention to his active military involvement, to his almost religious affirmation of a life of action and to his belief in the supremacy of a collectivity over the individuals which make it up. 32 But Saint-Exupéry's universal embracing of mankind and his lack of nationalist focus (except when France succumbed to German oppression in 1940) seem clearly enough to disprove the claim of latent Fascism.

Saint-Exupéry, like Teilhard, sought intuitively to experience and understand the world and only then to transmit what he saw:
Dans *Pilote de Guerre*, toute la méthode exupéryenne se trouve clairement définie par ces lignes où transparaît une expérience vécue: "Connaître, ce n'est point démontrer [sic], ni expliquer. C'est accéder à la vision. Mais, pour voir, il convient de participer. Cela est dur apprentissage." (PG, p. 287) (Devaux, *Teilhard et Saint-Exupéry*, p. 21)

The connection between approach and goal is evident here: Saint-Exupéry's method is the systematic reporting of une expérience engagée whose end is a better understanding of man's spiritual existence. The above passage quoted by Devaux appears just before an encounter with enemy fighters on a reconnaissance mission piloted by Saint-Exupéry. He is apparently referring to the enlightening experience to come later on that same flight when he learns why he is fighting and what is really essential to him. Devaux suggests that what he learns from this mission is that by his participation in the war he is fighting to defend "le droit à l'étendue intérieure sans quoi le monde et la vie humaine perdent tout sens." 33 Saint-Exupéry calls "l'étendue intérieure" that which civilization, with its "héritage de croyances, de coutumes et de connaissances" (PG, p. 314) can open up in man. "L'étendue intérieure" refers evidently to a spiritual expansion of man's existence and suggests a direction for the search for the significance of the term "l'Homme."
L'Homme

There has been much speculation as to what exactly Saint-Exupéry means by "l'Homme" because he speaks of "l'Homme" sometimes as a collectivity, and sometimes as a quality emerging in one individual. The ambiguity of its usage prevents a precise definition of the term, but a rather broad definition can be justifiably attempted. Saint-Exupéry's own refusal to pinpoint what he meant suggests that he preferred to give the term as large a scope as possible. It apparently refers to the potential of each individual, that which each is capable of becoming, and includes communion with others or even the global unity of mankind as a possible potential which each individual may have the opportunity to develop. Saint-Exupéry's existential outlook further suggests the indefinite character of "l'Homme"--it is not some predetermined type idéal which individuals may strive to imitate, but a very real, although undefined, future possibility different for each individual. Existential man creates his essence through daily actions: in the same way, Saint-Exupéry feels, an individual has the potential to create "l'Homme" which can be defined only in retrospect because "l'Homme" exists only as a potential until created by man.

The ambiguity surrounding Saint-Exupéry's use of the term "l'Homme" suggests that he wished to formulate a new concept around a familiar term which would be accepted by his
readers. Saint-Exupéry was constantly aware of the obstacles created by the limitations of language and apparently tried to overcome them by the symbolic use of long-accepted expressions whose meaning does not fit the context of his works, and which therefore invite reinterpretation and encourage redefinition by the reader, the hoped-for result being an expanding of the reader's consciousness concerning these expressions and his assimilation of their new meaning. The term "l'Homme," for example, appears for the first time in Terre des Hommes (pp. 243, 261), extensively in Pilote de guerre, and again in Lettre à un otage (p. 404), near the end of all three works, and at a point in the narrative of each where the intensity of tone and the density of meaning have reached such fullness that "ordinary" words no longer convey what the author wants to say. These are the only works in which "l'Homme" appears.

In Terre des Hommes, where "l'Homme" appears only twice, Saint-Exupéry capitalizes the term for the first time in an attempt to express the significance he attributes to his rescue in the Sahara:

Quant à toi qui nous sauves, Bédouin de Libye, tu t'effaceras cependant à jamais de ma mémoire. Je ne me souviendrai jamais de ton visage. Tu es l'Homme et tu m'apparaiss avec le visage de tous les hommes à la fois. (Terre des Hommes, p. 243)

Here the Arab's individuality seems to fuse into an identification with man in general. The importance of such an event
is that a man was rescued by another member of his species.
The only other appearance of "l'Homme" in Terre des Hommes is
in the novel's last enigmatic line, for which I have suggested
an interpretation above in this chapter.

In Lettre à un otage, l'Homme also appears in only two
passages, both of which are found on page 404. In the first
of these, the use of the capital "H" appears inconsistent:

Respect de l'Homme! Respect de
l'Homme!... Si le respect de l'homme
est fondé dans le coeur des hommes,
les hommes finiront bien par fonder
en retour le système social, politique
ou économique qui consacrera ce
respect. (L0, p. 404).

The inconsistent use of the capital becomes even more puzzling
when the above passage is compared with the same phrase as it
appears earlier in the Lettre:

Respect de l'homme! Respect de
l'homme!... Là est la pierre de
touche! (L0, p. 402)

It seems almost as if Saint-Exupéry is using the capital "H"
simply to call attention to the phrase and thus to the concept
it expresses, in the way an orator would raise his voice for
the same purpose. Any interpretation of this discrepancy
would seem inconclusive.

The second passage on page 404 in which "l'Homme"
appears recalls the Sahara rescue of Terre des Hommes. The term
here seems to have the same significance, that of the individual acting as a vehicle or representative for the species. Here, Saint-Exupéry writes to his friend Léon Werth:

_Au-dessus de mes mots maladroits, au-dessus des raisonnements qui me peuvent tromper, tu considères en moi simplement l'Homme. Tu honores en moi l'ambassadeur de croyances, de coutumes, d'amours particulières. Si je diffère de toi, loin de te léser, je t'augmente._ (LO, p. 404).

In this passage, as well as in those quoted above, there is a suggestion of spiritual ties: one individual rescues another because they are both men; one individual honors another as "l'ambassadeur de croyances, de coutumes, d'amours particulières"; "l'Esprit" is seen as having a catalytic role in transforming "physical man" ("la glaise") into a future "spiritual man" ("l'Homme"). The relative infrequency of the term's appearance does not permit the drawing of any definite conclusions as to its importance or meaning in relation to the two works in question.

The term "l'Homme" appears most frequently in _Pilote de guerre_, where its varied contexts help us better understand its meaning. In the last 16 pages of _Pilote de guerre_, the term "l'Homme" appears a total of 66 times, a frequency which is all the more striking when one considers that, aside from these 16 pages and the four passages studied above (where the term appears only five times in all), this term is to be found
nowhere else in the works of Saint-Exupéry. This isolated concentration of "l'Homme" in the final pages of Pilote de guerre suggests that Saint-Exupéry is using the term here in an experimental fashion. Having perceived more clearly his role among men during the hazardous flight to Arras, he attempts to verbalize what he has experienced. The term seems to have come to mind in a moment of inspiration, and he admits his uncertainty of its validity:

Je ne sais ce que vaut l'image qui me vient, mais je me dis: l'individu n'est qu'une route. L'Homme qui l'emprunte compte seul (PG, p. 369)

In the pages which follow he develops this image further, not only clarifying what he means by "l'Homme," but bringing out the moral, social and political implications of the relationship expressed by the image.

Speaking of a past "commune mesure" of spiritual unity which brought men together to form his civilization, he chooses the term "l'Homme" to represent this "principe dont tout est sorti autrefois" (PG, p. 371). But when he tries to define "les règles" which "transportaient" the civilization he claims as his own, he discovers that they have been lost. Relying on another image to represent his position in respect to a dying civilization which he can imagine but which he no longer perceives as existing as it once did, he says that he has been living as a parasite enjoying his civilization's peace
and well-being, rather than as an architect working constructively to maintain these qualities (PG, p. 370).

He describes his awareness of the principle of constructive cooperation as an awakening; he has not discovered something new, but has rather begun to see again a relationship he had lost sight of: men who perform acts of artistic, cultural or social creation enrich not only themselves but all men. Their actions create that "principe" which Saint-Exupéry calls "l'Homme":

Dans ma civilisation, celui qui diffère de moi, loin de me léser, m'enrichit. Notre unité, au-dessus de nous, se fonde en l'Homme. (PG, p. 372. See above for a discussion of the passage in LO, p. 404, which paraphrases this same idea.)

Saint-Exupéry says that he had forgotten that his civilization was not merely a collection of individuals, but rather individuals working together. He calls upon a favorite image— that of the cathedral—to illustrate the concept of a being or spiritual entity which is more than the sum of its parts:

Mais, peu à peu, j'ai oublié ma vérité. J'ai cru que l'Homme résumait les hommes, comme la Pierre résume les pierres. J'ai confondu cathédrale et somme de pierres et, peu à peu, l'héritage s'est évanoui. Il faut restaurer l'Homme. C'est lui l'essence de ma culture. C'est lui la clef de
ma Communauté. C'est lui le principe de ma victoire. (PG, pp. 372-373)

In the case of the cathedral, as well as that of "l'Homme," there is an organizational step which gives sense to the "product," distinguishing the cathedral from a pile of stones and "l'Homme" from a group of men.

The above passage might be interpreted as a traditional essentialist statement asserting the pre-existence of the essence "Man" ("C'est lui l'essence de ma culture.") by the reader who ignores the role of the creative individual in forming and defining "l'Homme." It is precisely this individual's activity joined with the diverse activities of all other individuals working in concert, however, which make the potential existence of "l'Homme" a reality. Merely conceiving of "l'Homme" in verbal terms is not sufficient to bring him into being because

Quand il s'agit de parler sur l'Homme, le langage devient incommode. ... L'Unité de l'Etre n'est pas transportable par les mots. (PG, p. 377)

And so, although "l'Homme" gives sense and direction to the acts of men, these acts in effect create that spiritually uniting principle (be it "l'Homme" or some other "Etre") which gives them their meaning:
Ainsi devient-on l'homme d'une patrie, d'un métier, d'une civilisation, d'une religion. Mais pour se réclamer de tels êtres, il convient, d'abord, de les fonder en soi. Et, là où n'existe pas le sentiment de la patrie, aucun langage le transportera. On ne fonde en soi l'Être dont on se réclame que par des actes. Un Être n'est pas de l'empire du langage, mais de celui des actes. Notre humanisme a négligé les actes. Il a échoué dans sa tentative. (PG, p. 377)

This passage gives us the key to the meaning of "l'Homme" as used by Saint-Exupéry in Pilote de guerre. "L'Homme" is not an essentialist idea, or the "ideal man," nor does it represent human nature. Saint-Exupéry intends this term to represent the Fraternity of Man created by the actions of men.

There remains one important notion to be considered in this study of "l'Homme" in Pilote de guerre, and that is the nature of the action prescribed by Saint-Exupéry as essential to the creation of "l'Homme." He calls these acts sacrifices because they involve the giving of oneself to create something greater than self:

Sacrifice ne signifie ni amputation, ni pénitence. Il est essentiellement un acte. Il est un don de soi-même à l'Être dont on prétendra se réclamer. (PG, p. 377)

For Saint-Exupéry, not only must the individual give of himself to the community, but the community must also be prepared to give of itself for one individual because, in so doing, the
group is serving "l'Homme" in that one man. This universality of responsibility distinguishes Saint-Exupéry's community from the various political collectivities which, no matter what they may preach, demand sacrifices of the individual for the common good while refusing to make group sacrifices for one individual in need. This concept also provides another reply to the charge of Fascism discussed above.

The opposite of a community based on the principle of responsibility--and on those of equality and justice which the first principle so clearly implies--is one characterized by Saint-Exupéry as "une termitière" (PG, p. 378). In such a collectivity, the principle of equality degenerates into that of identity, and the freedom of a responsible individual whose actions involve and affect others becomes license restricted only by "le tort causé à autrui" (PG, p. 379). Here we have a hollow association of individuals which may call itself a community or even "l'Homme," but which in reality is devoid of all substance evoked by these terms.

Saint-Exupéry fears that his own civilization is in just such a process of degeneration and that men are losing sight of the true meaning of terms like brotherhood, humanity, civilization. Brotherhood exists only if men are brothers in something greater than themselves--both individually and collectively--and men must give of themselves in order to create this greater being. Saint-Exupéry uses the term "l'Homme" to
signify this greater being whose existence he sees fading away. His goal is to re-establish "l'Homme," to re-educate individual men to see that they can and must work responsibly together to create a true unity whose spirit will infuse the group and each individual alike. This spiritual bond between men which can be created only by men working together in an effort of conscious cooperation is what Saint-Exupéry calls "l'Homme."

Saint-Exupéry does not use the term "l'Homme" anywhere near as freely as some who have tried to interpret it in a traditional sense. When he does use it he seems to be trying to epitomize that which is most human and which reflects man's spiritual potential. Thus, "l'Homme" can be seen only as an indefinite promise, existing only when created by the individual or individuals who surpass their present capabilities to become or forge someone greater.

Dieu

Saint-Exupéry's use of the term "Dieu" has led to even more speculation than his use of "l'Homme." In the earlier works, "Dieu" appears hardly at all, but in Citadelle, "Dieu" is one of the most frequent words. On the other hand, "l'Homme," which appears in Terre des Hommes, Pilote de guerre, and Lettre à un otage, is never capitalized in Citadelle. This is curious indeed, since the period of composition of Citadelle spans that of the three earlier works (1936-1944). It appears very likely
that Saint-Exupéry substituted "Dieu" for "l'Homme" in Citadelle because the scope of the term "Dieu" was more appropriate to the style and structure of the work:

Dans une entreprise essentiellement poétique et "totalitaire", au sens étymologique du mot, telle que Citadelle, il est évident que le terme Dieu est plus près de l'ordre de l'image que le concept "Homme". (Major, p. 238)

and also because for him the term "Dieu" had the same value as "l'Homme," i.e., that of an indefinite promise,

Un "concept" dont la portée ne dépassait pas celle d'une hypothèse scientifique ou d'un mythe. C'est-à-dire une notion dont seules importent les possibilités qu'on en peut tirer, sans qu'il soit nécessaire de lui attribuer une valeur ontologique ou objective. (Major, p. 238)

Major goes on to refer to Saint-Exupéry's use of "Dieu" as characteristic of his mode of literary expression: "Il recourt à un concept connu et accepté dont il réfracte la signification par le contexte" (Major, p. 239). As I suggested above concerning "l'Homme," Saint-Exupéry appeals to the reader's familiarity with the term "Dieu" in order to gain his trust and hopefully make him receptive to some entirely new concepts which are not traditionally associated with God. Unfortunately, the "concept connu et accepté" almost invariably overshadows the "signification réfractée par le contexte," and
the reader unwittingly leads himself into a misinterpretation, as I shall show when I study this tendency of Saint-Exupéry in more detail in a later chapter.

It will be of some value here to illustrate briefly how some critics, primarily by automatically assuming a more traditional interpretation, have allowed the term to overshadow its intended meaning. In her work, *L'Humanisme dans l'oeuvre de Saint-Exupéry*, Helen Crane begins with a good definition of traditional humanism taken from Pierre-Henri Simon's *L'homme en procès*, and proceeds to show how Saint-Exupéry "fits the model," concluding not only that he does fit into the "noble lignée d'humanistes français," but that he "rejoint aussi la lignée d'humanistes français pieux en ce qu'il finit par affirmer sans relâche que la dignité de l'homme n'a pas de sens si elle ne se termine pas en Dieu" (p. 229). Crane makes the mistake of believing so strongly in her hypothesis that she leaves no room for disagreement and interprets Saint-Exupéry's life as an almost mechanical march toward the eventual rediscovery of his lost faith which he miraculously accomplishes and gives witness to in *Citadelle*: "Ce qu'on peut affirmer comme certain, c'est que la pensée de Saint-Exupery, comme celle du roi berbère dans *Citadelle*, prenait de plus en plus un tour spirituel, finissant par reconnaître Dieu" (p. 130). "De plus en plus un tour spirituel," yes; but "finissant par reconnaître Dieu," hardly in the sense she means. Crane
draws these conclusions, plus many others, from what has to be a superficial reading of *Citadelle* compounded by the honest mistake of accepting terms used symbolically as meaning what they have traditionally meant. She seems to have one idea so strongly in mind that she loses sight of the author entirely by forcing him to fit into her conceptions. There are many paradoxes and contradictions. (For example in *Citadelle*, where Saint-Exupéry supposedly shows his Christian faith, how to explain this statement: "Quand la foi s'éteint c'est Dieu qui meurt et qui se montre désormais inutile." [p. 546]) which she ignores and which show the fallacy of trying to determine a "system" where there is something infinitely more subtle and real—a man.

In *Saint-Exupéry, ou l'enseignement du désert*, Jean Huguet falls into the same trap of believing what he thinks he sees. Saint-Exupéry wrote on occasion that he wished he could believe in God; Huguet interprets this wish as a profound faith. Reasoning by analogy, Huguet describes how numerous religious writers and desert travelers (e.g., Philippe Diolé, François Balsan, Charles de Foucauld) either discovered God for the first time or found the desert a good place to meditate, how they all use terms similar to those used by Saint-Exupéry to describe the desert and its awesome silence, and concludes that Saint-Exupéry must also have had the same revelation. But whereas the experiences and situation
of Saint-Exupéry may have at times been analogous to those of these other adventurers, it is too large a gap to jump to draw the conclusion that he, too, must have found God in the desert.

Clément Borgal pronounces a warning unheeded by Crane and Huguet in their earlier efforts: "Méfions-nous donc de ce terme de Dieu, dont l'histoire nous a prouvé qu'il pouvait signifier presque n'importe quoi" (Borgal, p. 159). Borgal seems generally to agree with Major that "Dieu" is not much more than a useful concept for Saint-Exupéry. This interpretation is echoed by Réal Ouellet in an article on "Le personnage du chef dans l'oeuvre de Saint-Exupéry." He says that Saint-Exupéry himself suggests we approach Citadelle as a "poème" whose allegorical form contains "tout un univers de symboles applicables ... à chaque individu" (p. 355) and concludes: "Il semble donc que Saint-Exupéry nous invite à ne pas prendre au pied de la lettre les éléments dont il s'est servi pour construire Citadelle" (Ouellet, p. 356). One of the most frequently used of these elements is "Dieu." A note from Carnets situates the term "Dieu" in a symbolic role for Saint-Exupéry and suggests that he indeed "used" this term to signify something other than its traditional meaning: "Dieu est le parfait support symbolique de ce qui est à la fois inaccessible et absolu" (Car, p. 40). In Citadelle, "Dieu" is sometimes "silence absolu" or "absence" (C, pp. 682-685, 701), and some-
times the "terme" of man's "devenir" (C, pp. 961-962), therefore accessible to man. Saint-Exupéry does not resolve this apparent contradiction. "Dieu," and any rites or ceremonies involving "Dieu" are useful in re-creating and maintaining the fervor necessary to enable man to become himself. Saint-Exupéry stresses the usefulness of a religious attitude in strictly human terms: "Je ne connais qu'un acte fertile qui est la prière, mais je connais aussi que tout acte est prière s'il est don de soi pour devenir" (C, p. 666). We can see here that the existential terminology discussed in Part I ("agir pour être" or "devenir") has a spiritual significance in that the act is not only a gesture made by a subjective consciousness which creates the "being" of this consciousness, but that it is also a "prayer," i.e., that the existence it creates is spiritual as well as physical. This will be immediately recognized as a major departure from the Sartrian conception of the active consciousness.

For Saint-Exupéry, the existence of "Dieu," like that of "l'Homme," is future and contingent upon the conscious, willful acts of man. Saint-Exupéry says in Carnets, "Dieu est vrai, mais créé peut-être par nous" (Car, p. 34). Existential man thus becomes the creator, and "Dieu" is, in a sense, "son of man." Borgal sums up this new relationship:

Dieu n'existe que par notre volonté de la faire devenir. (Borgal, p. 183)
L'homme est un apprenti, et Dieu n'est pas son maître, mais le chef-d'oeuvre qu'il doit parvenir à réaliser. (Borgal, p. 184)

This conception turns the tables on the Christian view of man's relationship to God. In Citadelle, "Dieu" is "sourd et muet," and there is no question of grace descending from God to man: "Insensé qui espère la réponse de Dieu" (C, p. 620). There is movement in only one direction in this dynamic relationship, that of man toward God, or more precisely "through" God to become himself (Borgal, p. 174):

Tu n'es qu'une marche de mon ascension vers Dieu. (C, p. 594)

Ah! vous êtes terroir et nourriture et véhicule pour la superbe ascension de Dieu. (C, p. 629)

Referring to these same pages in Citadelle, Major asserts that: "Dieu est donc toujours une valeur en creux, une valeur jamais atteinte, vers laquelle l'homme s'oriente à travers son propre devenir" (Major, p. 180). Another note from Carnets stresses Saint-Exupéry's symbolic use of "Dieu" as an instrument for the spiritual enrichment of man: "Que m'importe que Dieu n'existe pas: Dieu donne à l'homme de la divinité" (Car, p. 40). The apparent contradiction regarding the nature and level of "Dieu" in the conclusions of Borgal ("ce en quoi l'homme doit s'échanger pour devenir lui-même" [Borgal, p. 174]) and Major ("vers quoi l'homme s'oriente à
travers son propre devenir" [Major, p. 180] echoes precisely the same contradiction in Citadelle where sometimes man is "un chemin vers Dieu" (C, p. 606), where sometimes he is told "tu ne seras qu'en Dieu" (C, p. 598), and where sometimes "Dieu" is silent and unattainable to man who will become himself short of his goal which was "Dieu" (C, pp. 682-685).

These variations may be due to the unfinished state in which Saint-Exupéry's disappearance left Citadelle, although he may well have meant to retain them all as facets of one broad concept concerning man's surpassing of himself. Saint-Exupéry did not worry about contradictions, which he felt are all due to the inadequacy of language to express what is:

Ne crains point ces contradictions
don't ton langage insuffisant use pourparler sur les hommes. Car il n'est rien qui soit contradictoire sinon le langage qui exprime. (C, p. 654)

The existence of an object or an attitude was sufficient for him to ignore any contradiction it might seem to create with regard to another object or attitude.

A. A. Devaux is another to suggest that Saint-Exupéry saw God as a "work of man." Devaux finds this attitude as early as Courrier Sud, expressed in the episode where Bernis enters Notre Dame and hears a sermon on man. The priest speaks of giving a sense to life, to man's efforts and passions; of all this, he says, "J'en feraï une chose humaine" (CS, p. 46).
At the end of his sermon, "Il adora ce Dieu qu'il venait d'établir" (CS, p. 47), Bernis is disillusioned because he sought "l'acte de foi" and found only "un cri parfaitement désespéré" (CS, p. 47). Speaking of the expression "ce Dieu qu'il venait d'établir," Devaux observes:

En cette formule transparaît l'idée qui, selon nous, va, désormais, dominer toute la position religieuse de Saint-Exupéry: Dieu est l'oeuvre de l'homme mu par l'amour des hommes. La transcendance verticale de Dieu affirmée par le christianisme tend à s'estomper au profit d'une transcendance horizontale réalisée par l'homme dans son désir de dépassement. (Devaux, Saint-Exupéry, p. 27)

For Devaux, Saint-Exupéry here sides with Bernis: hoping for "quelque chose pour le sauver d'une inquiétude si humaine" (CS, p. 47), but knowing that this "quelque chose" will not be a Christian God. It is up to man to take the place of this "dieu défaillant" (Devaux, Saint-Exupéry, p. 28). And achieving this substitution is, according to Devaux, Saint-Exupéry's goal throughout the works. "Dieu," then, will be a vague concept to be more precisely defined later, a concept serving to "fill the vacancy" left by the decline of Christianity's power to guide man. In light of this interpretation, Saint-Exupéry's idea of "remplacer la religion" becomes a prime goal of man. Devaux calls Saint-Exupéry's conception of an "interim-God" a "déisme très vague faisant de Dieu une
projection de l'homme" (Devaux, *Saint-Exupéry*, p. 39), and says that:

> La civilisation de demain fera de l'Homme l'analogue de Dieu: en ce sens, on peut dire que Dieu n'est pas encore, mais qu'il tend à devenir à mesure que l'Homme se constitue comme pôle rassembleur de toutes les énergies humaines, 'l'Homme, commune mesure des peuples et des races' (*PG*, p. 371). (Devaux, *Saint-Exupéry*, p. 52)

The Christian God has been a valid symbole éclairant for man, but this is no longer true. For his "homme en devenir," Saint-Exupéry seeks a conception of God that can account for man's intellectual and technical progress and set the stage for uplifting his flagging moral progress. Human progress, for Saint-Exupéry, "n'est point biologique, il est conceptuel" (Devaux, *Saint-Exupéry*, p. 54). 36

Saint-Exupéry did not, of course, attain his goal, but the last pages of *Pilote de guerre* along with all of *Citadelle* are evidence of his search for a new mysticism capable of providing the twentieth century with "cette évidente synthèse que les valeurs religieuses offraient au monde romain" (*Car*, p. 39), and which is sadly lacking today. *Citadelle* and *Pilote de guerre* also give witness to the struggle Saint-Exupéry constantly waged with his terminology, trying to compress his vision into an understandable formal expression. As an apparent attempt at transcending the limits
of worn-out terminology, Saint-Exupéry chose an allegorical form for *Citadelle*. But why a "biblical setting," as some have called it, with a "prophet-king" as the main character and the author's spokesman? Perhaps this brief note from *Carnets* offers some explanation: "Tant que je n'ai pas mieux, je tiens à mes cadres traditionnels..." (*Car*, p. 27). Or perhaps Saint-Exupéry felt his allegory transcends all time (there is no date mentioned in the 500 pages of *Citadelle*) and is the best vehicle for a message directed toward man in his present state as well as the man of the future. Writing for "l'homme en devenir," Saint-Exupéry purposely kept *Citadelle* on as universal a level as possible so that the merits of his message might be accepted by readers whose attitudes and social situations he could not foresee.

It is most likely, as I have suggested above, that Saint-Exupéry chose the term "Dieu" not only to symbolize some inaccessible and absolute goal which could act as a magnetic guiding force for man's moral evolution, but also that "Dieu" as used in *Citadelle* actually represents the term of this evolution: "Dieu" is the last stage of "l'homme en devenir," or *l'homme devenu*:

Le "Royaume des Cieux" est sans doute ici-bas, mais il faut toujours un Dieu pour l'habiter: Dieu est le nom que le poète donne à l'idée motrice du devenir humain, au terme idéal du pèlerinage des hommes décidés à grandir (*Devaux, Saint-Exupéry*, p. 61)
There is a strong parallel between "l'Homme" which only "l'Esprit" can create (TH, p. 261), and the "Dieu" of Citadelle who remains invisible and mute, who is "aussi vrai que l'arbre, bien que plus difficile à lire" (C, p. 784). The ability to "read" God's presence is not the result of some initiation that one undergoes, but the result of a conscious act of man—a free, existential act of creation which alone can give meaning to the world because "les événements n'ont également de forme que la forme que le créateur leur accordera" (C, p. 856). The "créateur" here is existential man:

...l'homme capable de suggérer l'interprétation qui prévaudra. Dieu n'est lu dans le monde que si la conscience décide de l'y reconnaître. (Devaux, Saint-Exupéry, p. 69)

Saint-Exupéry speaks of the "founding" of God in another passage echoing the existential responsibility of such a conscious act: "Un Dieu, une fois fondé, sa donne à tous sans se réduire" (C, p. 928). If man is to be God's creator, and if in the existential sense man's essence is identical with his conscious acts, then it follows that at some future time, man's essence will be identical with the God that he has created. "L'Homme" and "Dieu" are essentially one and the same. Both represent a future point in human conceptual evolution which is characterized by conscious acts of free man in an effort to
transcend the purely physical realm of existential reality. This transcendence is necessary for Saint-Exupéry because there is "rien qui ait un sens sinon spirituel" (Car, p. 46). Existential reality is the present framework of man's activity, but for Saint-Exupéry this current state is merely a necessary springboard for the creation of a higher level of life.

Death

One additional element which demands consideration in the present discussion is the role of death in Saint-Exupéry's conception of "l'homme en devenir." His attitude toward death also offers another point of contrast with other existential writers. Death is depicted simply in his works because "Il a su lui donner un sens qui lui rendait la simplicité de la vie elle-même" (Major, p. 156). In Pilote de guerre, Saint-Exupéry depicts death as part of the natural order of things and not as a tragic event to be accompanied by anguish or pathos:

Je n'opposerai pas l'été, les fruits qui mûrissent, les poussins qui prennent du poids, les blés qui lèvent, à la mort si proche. Je ne vois pas en quoi le calme de l'été contradirait la mort, ni en quoi la douceur des choses serait ironie. (PG, p. 268)

This view of death is in direct opposition with that of Camus: "Tout ce qui exalte la vie, accroît en même temps son
absurdité: For Camus, the richer one's life is, the more absurd is one's death. This is because Camus seeks an explanation of the meaning of existence in the universe itself. But for Saint-Exupéry, who himself creates the meaning of his existence, "Ce qui donne un sens à la vie donne un sens à la mort" (SV, p. 181).

There exists here an interesting contrast between Saint-Exupéry and Sartre, for while both "[sient dans la subjectivité même le sens valorisatrice de l'existence" (Major, p. 158), Saint-Exupéry alone "a reconnu en chacun un pouvoir de dépasser la mort en quelque sorte à l'intérieur même de l'existence" (Major, pp. 158-159). Sartre's view of death is much the same as that of Saint-Exupéry, in that "le sens de la mort se mesure au sens de la vie" (Major, p. 159) for Sartre affirms that: "Plus sinistra la vie, plus absurde la mort" (Sartre, Situations II, p. 150). But Saint-Exupéry accepts death as part of life's experience almost without qualification and sees death not so much as a physical finality, but as a moment of transition—perhaps even as a transcendent step in man's "dépassement": "J'aurai l'air d'être mort et ce ne sera pas vrai..." (PP, p. 490), says the little prince to the narrator just before he "dies" in order to return to his planet. Facing the probability of his own death in the desert, the thought of dying does not agonize Saint-Exupéry. He is concerned more with the suffering of those who wait for him than
with his own suffering, and the finding of an orange is an occasion for joy which is not at all diminished by his conviction that he will not survive the desert ordeal: "Nous sommes condamnés et encore une fois cette certitude ne me frustrer pas de mon plaisir" (TH, p. 231). Perhaps the most enlightening passage concerning death is one of the earliest. At the end of Courrier Sud when the narrator finds Bernis dead, he remarks:

C'était donc ici le trésor: l'as-tu cherché! ... Dans l'étoile la plus verticale a lui le trésor, ô fugitif! (CS, p. 77)

This passage foreshadows the "death" of the little prince and suggests that Bernis has transcended his physical existence. A note from Carnets suggests what this "trésor" might be:

Le culte des morts, c'est la naissance de l'espèce en tant qu'unité spirituelle. Tous ces témoins. Tous ces éléments de divin parce que modèles. (Car, p. 46)

This isolated passage suggests a strong affinity between "l'Homme," "Dieu" and "la mort," and so offers a key to the possible understanding of Saint-Exupéry's symbolic use of these terms to indicate man's moral evolution. Saint-Exupéry uses "naissance" when talking of "l'homme en devenir": "...quand tu seras lentement devenu et pétri de tes actes, car l'homme, vois-tu, est long à naître" (C, p. 598). The expression
"éléments de divin parce que modèles" evokes first the notion of God or a god ("divin"), and second the very use Saint-Exupéry makes of the term "Dieu"—his "Dieu-concept" which acts as a guide for human conduct ("parce que modèles"). We have seen above that "l'Homme" and "Dieu" seem to represent the same superior state of man, and that man "becomes himself" through God ("tu ne seras qu'en Dieu" [C, p. 598]), or that he "becomes" God ("il était un chemin vers Dieu" [C, p. 606]), in either case as a result of conscious acts. (For man "becoming" God or "en marche vers" God, see also C, pp. 599, 629, 637, 792, 86\textsuperscript{4}, 868, 884, 888, 894-895, 906, 961-962) In the above passage, death appears to share the same status as "l'Homme" and "Dieu"—it acts as a guide toward "l'unité spirituelle de l'espèce," toward a higher level of existence that constitutes true human progress which is the moral and spiritual "dépassement" of the individual:

Seule, la mort peut combler l'homme qui a assez "d'espace dans le coeur" (C, p. 574). L'homme est lent devenir, patient épanouissement; il existe, mais il n'est pas. Il ne sera qu'au terme de sa vie dans la mort féconde qui permet l'échange en Dieu.

... La mort est "mue" douloureuse comme toute mue, mais condition de l'accès à un plan supérieur. (Devaux, Saint-Exupéry, pp. 80-81)
L'Archange: Man's Spiritual Goal

Saint-Exupéry uses a term which seems to synthesize the three concepts "Dieu," "l'Homme" and "la mort" used symbolically, as I have shown, to represent a future state. In *Citadelle*, the "chef berbère" speaks of "l'archange" who lies asleep in the "fumier" of ordinary men, waiting to be awakened as they "naissent" or "deviennent" (*G*, pp. 537, 551, 660, 888). And the father of the narrator, the "grand Caid" whose work is carried on by his son, speaks of his own transformation as death approaches in terms that strongly suggest that he is "becoming," passing to a spiritual level of existence, merging with the long-sought "archange" he has created by exchanging himself through his acts:

Me vint aussi la consolation d'être délié de mes entraves, comme si toute cette chair racornie je l'avais échangée dans l'invisible ainsi que des ailes. Comme si je me promenais, enfin né de moi-même, en compagnie de cet archange que j'avais tellement cherché. Comme si, d'abandonner ma vieille enveloppe, je me découvrais extraordinairement jeune. Et cette jeunesse n'était point faite d'enthousiasme, ni de désir, mais d'une extraordinaire sérénité. Cette jeunesse était de celles qui abordent l'éternité, non de celles qui abordent à l'aube les tumultes de la vie. Elle était d'espace et de temps. Il me semblait devenir éternel d'avoir achevé de devenir. (*G*, p. 627)
"L'archange" here appears to represent the culmination of the Caid's personal evolution and contains elements of the three terms Saint-Exupéry has already used independently to signify "dépassement": "l'archange" is a kind of man-god whose realm is not of this world, but rather of the world beyond death, in this sense a representative of "l'humanité sublimée" (Ouellet, p. 351), of which Saint-Exupéry hopes each man can become part.

In light of this spiritual goal, the greatest "problem" facing man is how to maintain this attitude of continual "dépassement" through action. In order to maintain the momentum of free sacrifice (exchange of self), Saint-Exupéry could find no better motivation than that of the concept "Dieu"—a divine future state of man after death—to be attained by continuous authentic (existence-creating) action. That is all that "Dieu" means for Saint-Exupéry, but on the other hand, "Dieu" is all that which man can become. The concept "Dieu" represents the total possibility of human "dépassement," on an individual level as well as communally and on a universal plane. Saint-Exupéry's prime interest is man's future state, not his initial one: "Ce que vaut un homme c'est tellement ce qu'il devient. Moi, je ne sais pas ce qu'il est" (Car, p. 69) because man is nothing to start with. Man, being the sum of his acts, is now only what he has done up to this moment, thus limited by his history. But the future possibilities are infinite: "L'homme est d'abord réalité dynamique orientée vers un idéal non-réalisé, et ce n'est
ainsi qu'on peut l'aborder" (Major, p. 55). Major summarizes here Saint-Exupéry's dualistic position which contains basic elements of both existentialist and essentialist attitudes: Saint-Exupéry starts from an existentialist worldview in which man is act and creator of his own essence and individual being, keeping, however, the seemingly essentialist notion of an ideal humain toward which each individual does or could strive. Man is act, but act is always a present gesture creating the future; man is "devenir," but he becomes only what he himself does. Man, then, creates his own essence and is at the same time on his way to some higher level of being. This "idéal non-réalisé" which Major mentions is a conceptualization ("l'Homme," "Dieu," "l'archange") made to represent that which the individual will become. Man's possibilities are practically limitless; he is the arbiter of his own destiny, unbound by imposed direction, externally determined goals or a prescribed nature. This is Saint-Exupéry's expanded vision of human freedom.

Conclusion

Saint-Exupéry seems to have chosen to use the term "Dieu" throughout Citadelle from a manifold necessity. He needed a symbol for that which man could become individually and evolve toward collectively: in this sense, he approaches Teilhard de Chardin both in terminology and message. He needed
a goal as well as a symbol, a sort of absolute or essential being which man could envision, not so much as a traditionalist model to emulate, as a guide for his existential self-creation. He needed a source of spiritual authority; and came to this aspect of God for lack of another answer:

Je suis épouvanté de la difficulté à dériver l’autorité d’autre chose que de Dieu. On ensemence par le haut. (Car, p. 31)

He needed also an agent of unification among men because he could not accept the solitude of existential reality as man's final state. Saint-Exupéry needed, in other words, a religion when he no longer had one. In a sense, he created his own, but in so doing he chose traditional terminology to convey his vision, rather than invent another arbitrary language for an intuition that any language would betray:

En dernière analyse, plutôt que dans une création ou une invention nouvelle, aléatoire et sans doute même illusoire, la solution semble bien être à chercher du côté d'une adaptation ou, mieux encore, d'une transposition. "Si j'ai perdu le bénéfice de l'explication religieuse, il faut au moins que j'en transpose les valeurs, car elles sont nécessaires et fertiles." (Car, p. 40)
Phrase d'une importance capitale pour comprendre toute la suite de l'oeuvre, et en particulier la doctrine exposée dans Citadelle. Doctrine d'une religion sans croyance, sorte de cathédrale désaffectée, qui a pu faire dire à Luc Estang que "Saint-Exupéry était au fond un 'mystique sans la foi.'" (Estang, L. Saint-Exupéry par lui-même, p. 163) (Borgal, p. 114)
The problem Saint-Exupéry sought to solve is a false one for Sartre, for whom man must accept his own contingency and work strictly within the limits of his temporal and physical existence. Looking for a substitute for God is seeking another absolute, which is essentially avoiding the responsibility of a free man in an absurd world. Saint-Exupéry would not deny his existential responsibility: he simply saw another dimension to it:

Si la vie humaine n'a point de sens qui le fait tendre vers une fin, le souhait se réduit à vivre le mieux possible—mais je ne puis me contenter de l'atroce joueur de bridge qui consomme une à une ses années sans rien préparer en lui-même; il est, en cet insecte muré avec sa provision de nourriture, quelque chose qui n'est point de l'homme. L'homme doit chercher ailleurs et s'évader (musique, poème, religion, sacrifice, universalité, etc...); le petit ingénieur de l'X avec lequel je déjeunais à Perpignan et qui ne savait rien hors les équations de sa fonction et le poker d'as: quelque chose en lui est manqué.

Il peut s'imager heureux, il peut se préférer ainsi, il manque le bonheur véritable (au titre où, n'étant plus un but, il n'est que le sentiment de richesse) qui accompagne une activité véritablement humaine, il ne sait point le goût de la pleine mer. (Car, pp. 40-41)

The last paragraph of this passage is almost a reply to Camus' judgment on the happiness of Sisyphus, and the entire passage is at once an acceptance of existential reality as the present
condition of human existence and at the same time a personal
dedication not to revolt against this condition, but to go one
step beyond it, to discover the reality of the spiritual life
which is Saint-Exupéry's answer to the absurdity of the world.
By taking this spiritual step beyond the limits of Sartrian
existential reality, Saint-Exupéry foresees a new horizon
denied man by Sartre and Camus and reveals his essential
difference with these writers whose worldview he otherwise
shares.
CHAPTER TWO

SAINT-EXUPÉRY'S BELIEF IN COMMUNICATION

Introduction: Solitude and Communication

I have shown in Chapter One of Part II that Saint-Exupéry's belief in a future spiritual state of man marks an unequivocal point of divergence from such writers as Camus and Sartre. The existentialist notion that man is what he does is accepted by Saint-Exupéry, but he sees another level of human existence which transcends the physical state of the individual. Man's solitude is another existentialist concept acknowledged by Saint-Exupéry, but which he does not accept as final. For Sartre, man is irrevocably alone, locked up in his own consciousness without hope of communicating with other consciousnesses, yet depending on others for a definition of his character. In Sartre's Huis clos, Garcin soon understands that he must convince Ines and Estelle that he was a brave man, for not only do his acts make him a coward, but also the women see him as a coward. For Sartre, man is judged by "autrui" according to his acts, according to the way he appears from the point of view of others. He will remain a coward as long as they continue to believe he is one (which is forever, since they are all dead and thus fixed in their essence, having
lost their freedom), and so Garcin discovers the nature of their eternal punishment, which is also Sartre's comment on human relations: "L'enfer, c'est les Autres." 39

"L'autre," according to Sartre, fixes our character because he sees us as an object; we are powerless to change the way "l'autre" sees us if he refuses to do so. 40 Saint-Exupéry recognizes this power of objectification and warns against it:

Ils s'abordent tous, ma disais-je, avec un langage rudimentaire et qui croit transporter lorsqu'a peine il signifie. Et les voilà tous occupés de manœuvrer leurs balances et leurs instruments de mesure. Ils ont tous raison mais trop raison. Ils n'ont que raison et donc ils se trompent. Et l'un de l'autre, ils se bâtissent des images pour exercice de tir. (C, p. 617)

He cites a personal experience when he was employed as a journalist during the Spanish Civil War. A group of anarchists arrested and detained him because he had no identity papers (he had left them at his hotel). He recognized the absurdity of the situation and was fearing for his life because he knew that these anarchists "fusillaient sans grands débats de conscience" (LO, p. 400). The horror and absurdity of his predicament resulted from the total lack of human feeling, the complete absence of communication: "J'eusse presque souhaité, comme un contact humain, une marque d'hostilité" (LO, p. 399).
Faced with the indifferent stares of his captors, Saint-Exupéry feels his own humanity dwindle; he becomes an object in the eyes of "l'autre": "Ils me regardaient sans réagir, comme ils eussent regardé un poisson chinois dans un aquarium" (LO, p. 399).

Human contact is established, however, and suddenly these young soldiers—who up until now were simply mechanically representing a role and were thus objects for Saint-Exupéry as he was for them—take on individual personalities. Reacting to Saint-Exupéry's smile and gesture regarding a cigarette, a young anarchist smiles back at him. This smile is a miracle:

"Ce miracle ne modifia rien qui fût visible. ... Mais toute chose fût transformée dans sa substance même. Ce sourire me délivrait. C'était un signe aussi définitif, aussi irréversible que l'apparition du soleil. Il ouvrait une ère neuve. Rien n'avait changé, tout était changé. La table aux papiers épars devenait vivante. La lampe à pétrole devenait vivante. Les murs étaient vivants. L'ennui suinté par les objets morts de cette cave s'allégeait, par enchantement. C'était comme si un sang invisible eût recommencé de circuler, renouant toutes choses dans un même corps, et leur restituant une signification.

Les hommes non plus n'avaient pas bougé, mais, alors qu'ils m'apparaissaient une seconde plus tôt comme plus éloignés de moi qu'une espèce antédiluvienne, voilà qu'ils naissaient à une vie proche. J'éprouvais une extraordinaire sensation de présence. C'est bien ça: de présence! Et je sentais ma parenté. (LO, p. 401) (Italics mine.)"
The key words here ("signification," "présence," "vivant," "naissaient") are the same terms Saint-Exupéry uses to describe "l'homme en devenir." Their use in this context suggests a similar, lower level "dépassement": men and objects are first seen as inanimate, senseless portions of brute matter which then take on meaning as a human gesture ("le sourire") is made. The step from inert object to man, or to object-having-a-meaning is similar in nature to the projected step from individual man to "l'Homme" or "Dieu," and is actually a necessary prelude to "dépassement": men must become human before they become "l'Homme."

Significantly, the existential leap made by the men and objects in the above passage is realized by an act of communication ("le sourire"), and these men and objects share, even on this level, the same spirit or "sang" which supplies them with life. This passage exemplifies Saint-Exupéry's belief in communication between individuals: the anarchist's smile relays to Saint-Exupéry that he is among friends and assures him that these men recognize him as a fellow human being, a fact he was uncertain of. The affair seems to have been settled as well--this, too, is transmitted by the smile: "Rien encore n'avait été dit. Cependant tout était résolu" (LO, p. 401). But more than a simple means of communication, the smile reveals the basic unity of mankind and acts as a meeting-ground where differences no longer count:
Nous nous rejoignons dans le sourire au-dessus des langages, des castes, des partis. Nous sommes les fidèles d'une même Eglise, tel et ses coutumes, moi et les miennes. (LO, p. 403)

The "Eglise" mentioned here recalls "Dieu" and "l'Homme"—the spiritual destiny of "l'homme en devenir," and may indeed be another indication of the goal of individual "dépassement" discussed in Chapter One of Part II. But this passage also brings out the notion of a spiritual communion among individuals "en route vers l'Homme," regardless of their stage of personal development. This communion is based on the common goal of men sharing the same route:

Quelle étrange parenté! elle se fonde sur l'avenir, non sur le passé. Sur le but, non sur l'origine. (LO, p. 403)

but is too often forgotten in the mad rush of individuals toward their own ends: "Et voici qu'à nous diviser sur les méthodes, nous risquons de ne plus reconnaître que nous nous hâtions vers le même but" (LO, p. 403). Occasionally, we re-discover the truth of our unity at such moments as in the episode described above: "Nous avons goûté, aux heures de miracle, une certaine qualité des relations humaines: là est pour nous la vérité" (LO, p. 403). These "heures de miracle" are relatively scarce and Saint-Exupéry sees them as becoming even more so. This is the subject of Lettre au Général X and,
in part, of *Lettre à un otage*, and is the reason for Saint-
Exupéry's great interest in communication in general and spe-
cifically in communicating his own message to his readers. Men
must rediscover not only their "devenir spirituel," but also
their ties with all other men who, whether they are aware of
it or not, not only share the same goal but also have the
potential to communicate with each other on the way to that
goal. This potential is not realized often enough, as men seem
to do everything but develop their communication. They do not
seem to see that: "Il n'est qu'un seul luxe véritable, et c'est
celui des relations humaines" (*TH*, p. 158).

**The Experience of Solitude**

Human solitude was a profound personal experience for
Saint-Exupéry and a phenomenon which found significant ex-
pression in his works. Rivière and "le Caid" of *Citadelle* come
to mind immediately as solitary figures, but Saint-Exupéry's
other characters, too, are often alone. Throughout *Courrier
Sud*, Bernis tries to escape his solitude by sharing his life
with Geneviève, but even when there is no physical space between
them he learns that "on est si loin d'une autre vie" (*CS*, p.
68). Bernis' solitude and his attempt to escape it is the
whole problem in *Courrier Sud*: "Tout *Courrier Sud* pourrait
d'ailleurs se résumer dans le drame d'une inquiétude à la
recherche d'un sens qui le comble" (*Major*, p. 20).
The aviator in *Le petit prince* says, "J'ai ainsi vécu seul, sans personne avec qui parler véritablement, jusqu'à une panne dans le désert du Sahara, il y a six ans" (*PP*, p. 413), and the little prince himself lives alone on his miniature planet, as do the individuals he meets on his interplanetary voyage: each man is alone in his own world. When he arrives on earth, the little prince finds himself in the desert and wants to know, "Où sont les hommes? ... On est un peu seul dans le désert..." (*PP*, p. 462). To which the serpent he has just met replies, "On est seul aussi chez les hommes" (*PP*, p. 462). Climbing a high mountain, the prince expects to be able to see the whole planet and all its inhabitants, but he sees nothing but more rocky peaks. He calls out, "Bonjour," and hears his greeting echoed over and over. Mistaking the echo for a reply, he goes on:

---Qui êtes-vous? dit le petit prince.
---Qui êtes-vous...qui êtes-vous...
qui êtes-vous...répondit l'echo.
---Soyez mes amis, je suis seul, dit-il.
---Je suis seul...je suis seul...je suis seul...répondit l'echo. (*PP*, p. 465)

This passage reveals a preoccupation of the author: everyone the prince meets in his travels is alone, and most of the characters welcome him and have some need for his presence. The king needs subjects, the "vaniteux" needs admirers, the geographer needs explorers, the fox needs a friend. Of these, the fox alone respects the prince for himself:
Si tu m'apprivoises, nous aurons besoin, l'un de l'autre. Tu seras pour moi unique au monde. Je serai pour toi unique au monde... (PP, p. 470)

The king, the geographer and the "vaniteux" saw the prince only as a role; such superficial relationships as those that result from role-playing do nothing to alleviate one's solitude. The fox, however, who is "tamed" by the prince, will cry when the prince leaves, but "J'y gagne, dit le renard, a cause de la couleur du blé (PP, p. 472). The wheat is golden in color, like the prince's hair, and so the fox will recall his friend when he sees a field of wheat because the wheat has a new meaning for him, while before it was useless.

Several of the most significant passages of Terre des Hommes concern a man isolated from the rest of mankind: Guillaumet's crash in the Andes, Saint-Exupéry and Prévot lost in the Sahara, plus all the numerous solo flights which Saint-Exupéry evokes as moments of spiritual exploration of himself and the universe. Having landed on an elevated desert plateau, inaccessible from below because of its sheer cliffs, Saint-Exupéry fells his uniqueness on this barren landscape:

J'éprouvais une joie peut-être puérile à marquer de mes pas un territoire que nul jamais encore, bête ou homme, n'avait souillé....
J'arpentais un sable infiniment vierge. J'étais le premier à faire ruisseler, d'une main dans l'autre, comme un or précieux, cette poussière de coquillages. Le premier à troubler ce silence. Sur cette sorte de banquise polaire qui, de toute éternité, n'avait pas formé un seul brin d'herbe, j'étais, comme une semence apportée par les vents, le premier témoinage de la vie. (TH, p. 175)

Solitude, anything but a simple phenomenon for Saint-Exupéry, is the occasion for a multiplicity of human feelings. At times, an existential affirmation of man's condition, solitude provokes feelings of anxiety or depression for Bernis. Rivière's solitude heightens his perception of his responsibility for the men and operations he directs. The "Caïd" knows his solitude is a necessary condition for the effective guidance of his people, but it occasionally constitutes a burden as well: "Ayez pitié de moi, Seigneur, car me pèse ma solitude" (C, p. 779).

**Vol de nuit** shows both negative and positive aspects of solitude, but differs from *Courrier Sud* in the nature and importance of the solitude portrayed. Robineau, the operations inspector, finds himself isolated from the pilots because in the hierarchy he is their superior. He can ground a pilot for mistakes or violations of regulations, so the fliers avoid him and would not think of confiding in him for fear he might use their confidences against them. He is also left out of the community made up of those who are the same métier because he
does not fly. On the other hand, he is looked down on by Rivière perhaps for a similar reason. Robineau is not one of the men that Rivière is "forging" through action—he is simply a company fonctionnaire. Robineau tries without success to befriend the pilots, motivated by his own weakness.

Rivière, too, is alone, but his solitude is the chosen position of a chief. He tries to instill in Robineau the noble detachment that must accompany a leader's concern for his men and tells him, "Aimez ceux que vous commandez. Mais sans le leur dire" (VN, p. 98). He hides his emotions in order to direct more effectively the airmail operation he is responsible for: "Et nul ne sut jamais quel songe, il fit, ni ce qu'il éprouva, ni quel deuil s'était fait dans son coeur" (VN, pp. 133-134). And it is his own inner strength and belief in his convictions that enable him to restore order and maintain night flights after he loses a pilot in a storm. But despite his position as director, Rivière experiences a closeness to his pilots because they are engaged in the same endeavor:

Pourant, dans cette lutte, une silencieuse fraternité liait, au fond d'eux-mêmes, Rivière et ses pilotes. C'étaient des hommes de même bord, qui éprouvaient le même désir de vaincre. (VN, p. 111)

This fraternal bond is denied Robineau because his role in the airmail operation is intermediary, and he is not directly
involved in the action.

In *Terre des Hommes*, Saint-Exupéry continues to explore solitude and discovers "le mystère d'autrui" (Major, p. 111):

Ce n'est pas la distance qui mesure l'éloignement. Le mur d'un jardin de chez nous peut enfermer plus de secrets que le mur de Chine, et l'âme d'une petite fille est mieux protégée par le silence que ne le sont, par l'épaisseur des sables, les oasis sahariennes. (TH, p. 180)

This passage recalls the Sartrian concept of the independent subjective consciousness which creates its own world, unknown to all other consciousnesses. Saint-Exupéry's reaction to this unknown world is the same as that of the existentialist:

Je suis un étranger. Je ne sais rien. Je n'entre pas dans leurs Empires. (TH, p. 173)

Watching a group of young girls whom he does not know, Saint-Exupéry reflects on this "mystère humain":

Dans un monde où la vie rejoint si bien la vie, où les fleurs dans le lit même du vent se mêlent aux fleurs, où le cygne connaît tous les cygnes, les hommes seuls bâtissent leur solitude. (TH, p. 173)

Only man is "alone" because only man can create a "monde intérieur" of reflection. Solitude is not a matter of physical separation, but rather the existential experience of being a
consciousness separate from others, "enfermée dans son secret, dans ses coutumes, dans les échos chantants de sa mémoire" (TH, p. 173). Saint-Exupéry concludes, as does Sartre, that one consciousness can never know another, but he marvels at such a discovery which is the "révélation de la subjectivité et de son approfondissement" (Major, p. 112), the uniqueness of every individual which, on the one hand, means isolation from others and, on the other, reveals the existence (but not the nature) of as many "empires" as there are individuals.

Apart from the existential solitude of one consciousness in regard to others, another type of solitude appears in Terre des Hommes:

Mais je connais la solitude. Trois années de désert m'en ont bien enseigné le goût. On ne s'y effraie point d'une jeunesse qui s'use dans un pays minéral, mais il y apparaît que, loin de soi, c'est le monde entier qui vieillit. (TH, p. 187)

The desert imposes its own solitude by physically separating the individual from contact with other men, and further by providing an ideal décor for meditation, stripped of society's superfluities which cloud the mind and the heart. Here a man is reduced to what he brings with him, and he must supply the desert with meaning, for there is nothing here a priori: "S'il [le désert] n'est d'abord que vide et que silence, c'est qu'il ne s'offre point aux amants d'un jour" (TH, p. 187). By virtue
of its almost pure absence of life's activities and social 
stimuli, the solitude of the desert teaches the existential 
solitude of the individual and of his own subjective world: 
"L'empire de l'homme est intérieur" (TH, p. 187). This 
absence creates a sort of tabula rasa state where man "reads" 
his own essence as he creates it and where he "becomes" the 
meaning of the desert:

Le désert pour nous? C'était ce
qui naissait en nous. Ce que nous
apprenions sur nous-mêmes. (TH,
p. 190)

Thus far I have examined Saint-Exupéry's expression of 
human solitude in several of his works and have shown that 
solitude can be both a positive as well as negative experience, 
and that moments of solitude are often a time of profound per-
sonal discovery. In Lettre à un otage, however, Saint-Exupéry 
expresses the paradox of experiencing both the notion of "liens" 
between men and the feeling of solitude as being equally true 
and real. In fact, solitude is often the occasion for ex-
periencing these "liens," and when it is not such an occasion 
(i.e., when it is a negative experience), it seems to call for 
the establishment of communication which would be the creation 
or recreation of "liens." Saint-Exupéry feels that man should 
naturally react to solitude by trying to re-establish ties that 
have been broken or to create ties where none yet exist. Soli-
tude for Saint-Exupéry thus leads to communication or at least
indicates a need for communication, whereas for Sartre solitude leads nowhere.

Créer des Liens

The possibility of overcoming solitude seems to have been Saint-Exupéry's first intuition concerning communication and one which led to his great interest in exploring communication, an interest bordering on obsession which pervades his works. My concern in the remaining pages of this chapter will be to show the relationship between solitude and communication and then to describe briefly the three levels of communication that we discern in Saint-Exupéry's works and the organization that they lend to the works. In a later section I will examine this organization in detail.

Lettre à un otage contrasts the notions of real and apparent solitude and clarifies the importance of "liens" experienced as the occasion of meaningful exchange:

Ainsi apparaîtra cette notion qui deviendra le thème central de toute sa pensée et de toute son œuvre: la notion des liens. Rapports étroits avec le monde des objets et celui des hommes. Communication, osmose, ouverture, accueil, sympathie, amitié, amour, confusion. (Borgal, p. 31)

Saint-Exupéry develops the concepts of absence and presence, showing them to be dependent on invisible "liens" felt as memories of shared experience, rather than on any tangible,
immediate and physical ties:

L'occupation allemande donne à l'exil qui est depuis longtemps le lot de Saint-Exupéry, une acuité dramatique qui l'oblige à en méditer plus profondément la nature. Elle lui révèle la force et la réalité de liens devant lesquels l'éloignement physique est dérisoire. Elle dénonce la vanité de ces notions d'absence ou de présence physique qui l'ont trop longtemps retenu. (Quesnel, pp. 138-139)

The city of Lisbon, with its wealthy (compared to the Portuguese) European "refugees" who attempt to maintain a facade of the life they once led, is like a city of ghosts, isolated from the ravages of the war and lacking any connection with reality. These wealthy pleasure-seekers gamble away fortunes based on property and industry in France over which they no longer have any control. Later, crossing the Atlantic with other refugees, Saint-Exupéry finds them evoking memories of friends and homes they would likely never see again: "Mais rien de ce passé, puisqu'ils s'expatriaient, n'allait plus leur servir" (LQ, p. 392). They lack ties with their past and are floating between an abandoned, once-meaningful existence and a new one they have not yet created. Lacking what Saint-Exupéry calls "densité," they are hollow because:

Ils n'étaient plus l'homme de telle maison, de tel ami, de telle responsabilité. Ils jouaient le rôle, mais ce n'était plus
vrai. Personne n'avait besoin d'eux, personne ne s'apprêtait à faire appel à eux. (LO, p. 393)

Their solitude is precisely a lack of "liens" (because they are no longer actively maintaining them) with the past that is still present, and Saint-Exupéry concludes that it is just such ties that make up a person's essence. With no inter-subjectivity, an individual does not exist completely, something is missing:

Je me disais donc: "L'essentiel est que demeure quelque part ce dont on a vécu. Et les coutumes. Et la fête de famille. Et la maison des souvenirs. L'essentiel est de vivre pour le retour..." (LO, p. 393)

These emigrants, although physically present for Saint-Exupéry, create instead an impression of absence. The attitude expressed here is not so much an attachment to the past in itself as a recognition of the fact that ties which were created and actively maintained in the past gave meaning to the existence of those who created and maintained them. When this active involvement ceases, the ties dissolve and with them goes the meaning which they bestowed upon people and things. Paradoxically, the persons and places in actual distance the farthest away may be in reality those whose presence is most strongly felt.

We saw above that in Terre des Hommes, Saint-Exupéry
learned that the desert can teach a man that his real world is the one he carries with him. Saint-Exupéry reiterates this feeling in *Lettre à un otage*: "Je vaux, dans le désert, ce que valent mes divinités" (LO, p. 395). These "divinités," or spiritual ties, create a network or field of magnetic poles "qui tirent sur vous ou vous repoussent, vous sollicitent ou vous résistent" (LO, p. 395). As a result, the individual so surrounded by "liens" discovers that his true wealth depends on their quality and nothing else. Thus, despite extremes of physical separation, he can say that:

> Jamais je n'ai mieux aimé ma maison que dans le Sahara. Jamais fiancés n'ont été plus proches de leur fiancée que les marins bretons du XVIᵉ siècle, quand ils doublaient le Cap Horn et vieillissaient contre le mur des vents contraires. (LO, p. 392)

Saint-Exupéry experiences this same phenomenon on his Atlantic crossing. Surrounded by people he does not know, who, themselves have cut all ties with the past, he is alone but is able to say: "Je me sentais riche, à bord de mon paquebot triste, de directions encore fertiles" (LO, p. 395), because his own ties still exist and are now becoming more apparent to him during a time of relative isolation, just as was true in the desert. Solitude need not be accompanied by a feeling of absence, but may rather be an occasion for experiencing the presence of friends or homeland. From an existential and
phenomenological point of view, admitting as true only immediate, subjective reality, the feeling of being in contact with friends can be just as real as actually experiencing that contact.

There are times of solitude, however, when the felt presence of far-off friends does not occur, or when such presence does occur, that it is insufficient to dispel the solitude being experienced. Such moments in the works of Saint-Exupéry manifest a need for communication on several different levels. J. L. Major calls this phenomenon "l'intersubjectivité manquée" (Major, p. 189). The need for intersubjectivity is manifested throughout the works, each time against a background of absence, in response to a particular experience of "intersubjectivité manquée."

The first page of Terre des Hommes expresses this theme which will recur in nearly every episode throughout the book. Saint-Exupéry recalls his first night flight in Argentina, and describing the lights from towns and isolated homes, some as "étoiles vivantes" and others as "étoiles éteintes," he says:

Il faut bien tenter de se rejoindre.
Il faut bien essayer de communiquer
avec quelques-uns de ces feux qui brûlent de loin en loin dans la campagne. (TH, p. 139)

In the episode describing his crash landing in the Sahara,
Saint-Exupéry expresses the same need, this time in a moment of desperation. Dying of thirst and without human contact, he and Prévot build a huge bonfire in the night when he calls "notre silencieux et rayonnant message." Their wish is two-fold: "Nous demandons à boire, mais nous demandons aussi à communiquer" (TH, p. 222). Significantly, Saint-Exupéry thinks in terms of communication and not merely of finding men who can give them water. The appeal here is pathetic and dramatic, but it is no less profoundly real when it is expressed in less desperate circumstances.

Nor is it less real when expressed allegorically in Le Petit Prince. We have noted above that the prince's first feeling on earth is one of solitude. He immediately begins looking for men, and a flower he meets tells him that men are unstable and lack roots, and also that they seem to be isolated from their fellows:

On ne sait jamais où les trouver.
Le vent les promène. Ils manquent
de racines, ça les gène beaucoup.
(PP, p. 464)

Saint-Exupéry proposes several ways of combatting solitude, all of which are effective means of improving communication between individuals. The fox, we remember, wants the little prince to "tame" him. In answer to the prince's persistent request for a definition of "apprivoiser," "C'est une chose trop oubliée, dit le renard. Ça signifie créer des liens" (PP,
p. 470). And in the ensuing conversation, the fox is clearly talking about the same "liens" upon which Saint-Exupéry so firmly insists in Lettre à un otage: ties of a non-physical nature between individuals. The fox adds another dimension to these "liens" by reminding the little prince that once they are established, he becomes responsible for the person with whom he has established ties. Creating ties and accepting the responsibility for them are inseparable and essentially of the same order of experience.

As I have suggested above, the "liens" which help relieve one's solitude may be with objects or places as well as people. Some characters in the works of Saint-Exupéry are depicted as having more ties than others with the world of objects, and these are generally young girls. (See TH, ch. V "L'oasis," pp. 180-185; and in CS, Geneviève as a child.) In my chapter on Saint-Exupéry's phenomenological outlook (Part I, chapter two, "Return to the concrete"), I have shown that Saint-Exupéry was keenly interested in faithfully depicting his various experiences of contact with the world of objects. This interest can be more clearly understood in light of the present discussion of "liens." If Saint-Exupéry showed a great interest in describing the world as he perceived it, and if he felt man learned much about himself through active contact with the real world, this was apparently because he so strongly sensed that man is tied to the world in the same way
he is tied to other men. In Terre des Hommes, for example, he describes the short length of time that a man can survive without water as an umbilical cord attaching him to a well (TH, p. 237). These "liens" can be natural physical laws, often overlooked or misunderstood, or perhaps ties of some subtler kind that are even less apparent. Saint-Exupéry's attitude toward the earth is clear, however; he wanted to uncover these ties and wanted others to recognize them and re-establish them where they had been broken or neglected (Major, p. 135).

The awareness of the creation of ties is itself a part of an individual's becoming, and it is by acts of consciousness that we create our own subjective essence, as well as the existence of the world for us. Our actions also create ties between us and other individuals, just as they create ties with the world that we act upon:

Ce qui crée des liens à l'intérieur du métier d'aviateur par exemple, c'est moins la situation commune que le fait de participer activement à une réalisation commune à l'intérieur de cette situation. Telle est la prise de conscience qui s'affirme sur le plan de l'intersubjectivité à travers les récits de Terre des Hommes. (Major, p. 208)

The "devenir" considered as an individual process in Part I, Chapter Two, and as a collective evolution toward "l'Homme" in Part II, Chapter One, takes place also as an exchange
between individuals, and this exchange enriches not only the individual in his personal development, but also the species on the way to its unification in "l'Homme."

The process of individual "devenir" can also contribute to uniting individuals participating in the same endeavor. Action, and specifically a shared métier, promotes an intersubjectivity which allows individuals to "become" themselves alone and together:

*Telle est la morale que Mermoz et d'autres nous ont enseignée. La grandeur d'un métier est, peut-être, avant tout, d'unir les hommes."
*(TH, p. 158).*

In *Pilote de guerre*, Saint-Exupéry expresses "devenir" first on a personal level, then on a group level with his fellow fliers. From here he proceeds to a national and finally to a universal level: "Je suis part constituante de la communauté des hommes" *(PG, p. 369; see also pp. 369-384).* But authentic interaction presupposes authentic individual action, and "l'Homme" will be created only through the participation of subjectivities who are living authentically.

We can now more clearly understand the enigmatic last line of *Terre des Hommes* by considering the *credo* which ends *Pilote de guerre* and the last two pages of *Lettre à un otage.* Both these latter works end with a plea for unity and for a common effort to create "l'Homme." Individual differences are
not to be sloughed off, but rather integrated into the whole:
"Si je différe de toi, loin de te léser, je t'augmente"
(L0, p. 404). Saint-Exupéry's goal is one of total commu-
munication in hopes of creating a mutual respect for individuals
and through them for "l'Homme" that they will become. In
another passage from Lettre à un otage, where Saint-Exupéry
sounds like a utopian theorist, he gives an overview of his
vision which is also an accurate resumé of his essential
position in Citadelle:

Respect de l'Homme! Respect de
l'Homme!... Si le respect de l'homme
est fondé dans le coeur des hommes,
les hommes finiront bien par fonder
en retour le système social, politique
ou économique qui consacrera ce respect.
Une civilisation se fonde d'abord
dans la substance. Elle est d'abord,
dans l'homme, désir aveugle d'une
certaine chaleur. L'homme ensuite,
derreur en erreur, trouve le chemin
qui conduit au feu. (L0, p. 404)

What the finished form of Citadelle would have looked like,
no one can say, but it is very likely that its basic structure
would have been much what it is now, even if Saint-Exupéry
might have changed many details and the order and construction
of episodes. Saint-Exupéry wanted to provide a medium for
developing the insights and meditations expressed often brief-
ly in the other works. Citadelle represents an attempt to
integrate the "devenir" of the individual with the collective
"devenir de l'Homme":
On peut dire que Citadelle repose entièrement sur la nécessité de provoquer perpétuellement en l'homme ce qu'il peut devenir et sur la volonté de soumettre les rapports inter-personnels à cette exigence. Telle est l'attitude globale qui se définit chez Saint-Exupéry à travers l'ensemble de son oeuvre. (Major, p. 212)

A key word for understanding Saint-Exupéry's goal in Citadelle is "provoquer," for it appears he hoped Citadelle would serve as an example to men and spur them on to the pursuit of their self-development and unity with others:

Toujours seul, enfermé en moi en face de moi. Et je n'ai point d'espoir de sortir par moi de ma solitude. La pierre n'a point d'espoir d'être autre chose que pierre. Mais de collaborer, elle s'assemble et devient temple. (C, p. 708)

Solitude is an element of the human condition which Saint-Exupéry does not try to deny, but which does not impress him as being the final state of human relations as it does Sartre. Saint-Exupéry believes that communication is possible and that an individual's isolation from others is itself a starting point for efforts to change the phenomenon of separateness.
Conclusion: The Levels of Communication in the Works

Saint-Exupéry’s work represents a fascination with communication from several different viewpoints. The failure of individuals to communicate with, or to understand and accept each other is not an uncommon literary theme. In Courrier Sud, Saint-Exupéry explores this theme as the central issue concerning the main characters. This is the "story" level of the novel and is the most evident, although not the only, statement concerning human communication. Courrier Sud is the only work of Saint-Exupéry, with the possible exception of Le Petit Prince, whose principal subject is communication. In the other works, his concern for communication is more subliminal, and communication becomes the substance of a leitmotif recurring in all the works to such an extent that it can be seen as giving them a definite structure. I shall examine Courrier Sud in detail in Part III to show that communication is indeed the subject of this novel and to determine the original appearance of the various elements of the leitmotif which betrays Saint-Exupéry's preoccupation with methods and levels of communication. These elements will then be traced through the other works where they will be seen to create a visible structure which does not dominate each work, but rather acts as a framework showing the author's underlying concern, within which the various episodes and narratives unroll. Saint-Exupéry seems to distinguish between three "levels" or types
of communication: verbal, non-verbal and communion. Under verbal communication, I shall examine Saint-Exupéry's attitude toward language as a means of communication and his reaction to the dilemma of the failure of language to transmit essential ideas, concepts and feelings to others. I shall also consider his symbolic use of language, and his conception of language as poetry. In the second classification, I will discuss man's communication with objects, objects seen in the works as means of communication as well as symbols of communication, and man's communication with others through objects and other non-verbal means (e.g., "avion," "musique," "gestes," etc.). Finally, the third classification deals with communion on a higher plane than achieved through language or through non-verbal exchange. Mutual participation is the key to communion between men, and this is most fully experienced through a shared métier or other active endeavor. The experience of silence can lead to a feeling of communion with the cosmos, or of being a part of all that is. Saint-Exupéry discovered this potential of communion with the world during his repeated stays in the desert, often alone and sometimes with little hope of returning alive.

In Part IV, I will consider still another aspect of communication to be found in the works, which combines all the others but which ironically marks a shortcoming in Saint-Exupéry's overall goal. Saint-Exupéry's greatest concern
seems to have been to transmit his discoveries to others. Communication was not only the subject of his writing and the substance of a constant theme when not the subject, but above all the main objective of the writer. His insight led him to see relationships unknown to the average consciousness, and to find meaning where most would find none. *Citadelle* was to be his attempt to share this vision, and he knew the task would be exceedingly demanding if not impossible. Near the end of his life he spoke of having at least ten more years' work to do on *Citadelle*. I shall attempt to summarize what it was he hoped to express and to show why, greatly through the inadequacy of language, he failed in his ultimate goal which was to communicate his vision.
RICE UNIVERSITY

SAINT-EXUPÉRY AND THE FAILURE OF LANGUAGE:
A STUDY OF THE THEME OF COMMUNICATION
IN HIS LITERARY WORK
VOLUME II

BY

DANIEL GENE SMALL

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Houston, Texas
May, 1974
PART III

THE THEME OF COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKS
OF SAINT-EXUPÉRY

"J'ai cru remarquer que, chaque fois qu'une oeuvre présentait une cohérence profonde, elle était presque toujours réductible à une commune mesure élémentaire."

--Un Sens à la vie

"... l'arbre est contenu dans sa graine."

--Citadelle

INTRODUCTION: COURRIER SUD AND THE THEME OF COMMUNICATION......... 189

CHAPTER ONE: VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN COURRIER SUD, VOL DE NUIT, TERRE DES HOMMES AND PILOTE DE GUERRE............... 201

CHAPTER TWO: NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN COURRIER SUD, VOL DE NUIT, TERRE DES HOMMES AND PILOTE DE GUERRE............. 259
INTRODUCTION

COURRIER SUD AND THE THEME OF COMMUNICATION

The Tree- is Contained in the Seed

The theme of communication which encompasses all the works of Saint-Exupéry appears first in Courrier Sud in its basic form and later becomes more developed in succeeding works. "The tree is contained in the seed" is a concept found in Citadelle. For Saint-Exupéry, the tree is an important symbol usually representing man:

Je me sentais dans ce sol, dans ce ciel, comme un jeune arbre. (CS, p. 18)

Tu sentais soudain ta vie si certaine, comme un jeune arbre se sentirait croître et développer la graine au jour. (CS, p. 21. See also C, pp. 544-545, 707, 725, 764, 794, 885 and 918.)

and sometimes representing a temple (C, pp. 848, 885) or even life itself (C, p. 907). Like a seed, man is "une puissance en devenir," and man carries within himself not only his future, but also dreams which may become "a city or an empire":

Car je vous le dis, moi: la tour, la cité ou l'empire grandissent comme l'arbre. Elles sont manifestations de la vie puisqu'il faut l'homme pour
qu'elles naissent. ... Et la cité est contenue en lui, dans l'image qu'il porte dans son cœur, comme l'arbre est contenu dans sa graine. (C, p. 559)

This same metaphor can be used to describe the theme of communication as expressed in *Courrier Sud*, a work containing the germ of all the manifestations of this theme in the later writings of Saint-Exupéry. The theme of communication as expressed in "embryonic" form in *Courrier Sud*, and more fully developed in the later works, is global rather than linear, that is to say that it does not develop simply along a chronological plane, nor does it concern only one aspect of the works. Its thread can be found throughout the works in negative as well as positive manifestations, dealing with people as well as objects, on a spiritual as well as a material level.

In the following chapters of Part III I shall study the three types of communication recognized by Saint-Exupéry: verbal, non-verbal and communion, tracing the manifestations of this multivalent theme throughout his novels. My concern will be to show that the theme of communication acts to bind the writings of Saint-Exupéry together around his central concern and life-long preoccupation. In the remaining pages of this introduction, I wish to show first that the problem of communication is indeed the author's main concern in his first novel, as I have suggested above, and second that a
definite relationship exists—from the point of view of imagery and subject matter—between Courrier Sud and the later works. I shall study in detail the theme of communication as manifested in Courrier Sud in the chapters which follow.

Bennis and "Le Trésor"

Saint-Exupéry's main concern in Courrier Sud is the problem of communication and especially the failure to communicate experienced by the main character, Jacques Bennis. This short work is the story of one flight from Toulouse to Dakar, interspersed with many flashbacks. These interruptions in the story line create bright tableaux of imagery and characterization seen from two viewpoints: that of the narrator and occasionally that of the author. These impressions tell enough of the story to allow the reader to "fill in" the missing episodes so that he can understand the sequence of events leading to Bernis' death. The events both do and do not "lead up to" Bernis' death: his experience with Geneviève has nothing to do with his job as a mail pilot. As far as the story of their unsuccessful attempt to find happiness together is concerned, Saint-Exupéry could have ended Courrier Sud with Bernis leaving Geneviève's deathbed knowing that their relationship was a failure and intending to return to his more meaningful life as a pilot.
On the other hand, the episodes concerning aviation and life in the Sahara outposts are largely autobiographical and serve to show what it was like, from Saint-Exupéry's viewpoint, to live in the Sahara and to fly mail planes in the 1920's. Nothing in these episodes leads logically to Bernis' death, although we learn of hostile nomadic tribes and of the possible failure of those early, somewhat unreliable airplane engines. These are simply some of the hazards that Saint-Exupéry and his fellow pilots put up with every day in their line of work, and pilots were occasionally killed by the natives. The last lines of Courrier Sud indicate just how matter-of-factly such events occurred, and that the loss of pilots and planes was expected in the normal course of events: a telegram is sent to Toulouse indicating that the pilot and plane were lost, but that the mail is intact and will be carried on to Dakar. From Dakar, a message is sent reporting the safe arrival of the mail.

Saint-Exupéry no doubt intended to make the account of the adventuresome way of life of the mail pilot a central point of interest in Courrier Sud, but there is much more. Certain critics have rightly identified with Bernis and the narrator as representing the author, which is probably what Saint-Exupéry intended. The narrator and Bernis have been close friends since childhood, and both have known Geneviève as long as they have known each other. Their friendship, the
strongest human bond mentioned in Courrier Sud, offers a key to a deeper understanding of the work. One page before the end, the narrator recalls something Bernis once said to him:

Bernis, tu m'avouais un jour:
"J'ai aimé une vie que je n'ai pas très bien comprise, une vie pas tout à fait fidèle. Je ne sais même pas très bien ce dont j'ai eu besoin: c'était une fringale légère..."

Bernis, tu m'avouais un jour:
"Ce que je devinais se cachait derrière toute chose. Il me semblait qu'avec un effort, j'allais comprendre, j'allais le connaître enfin et l'emporter. Et je m'en vais troublé par cette présence d'ami que je n'ai jamais pu tirer au jour..." (CS, pp. 76-77)

A few lines later, the narrator speaks of himself as the only friend Bernis had left and says their friendship was the only tie holding Bernis on earth. But this tie is not strong enough, and the narrator feels he has let Bernis down: "Berger infidèle, j'ai dû m'endormir" (CS, p. 77).

The narrator continually makes a sharp distinction between himself and Bernis, between his inability to perceive beyond appearances and Bernis' magical qualities:

Je dirai quel voyage tu accomplis. 
Comment tu soulèves les apparences, pourquoi les pas que tu fais à côté des nôtres ne sont pas les mêmes. (CS, p. 60)
This is perhaps because he, the narrator, accepts his present life, whereas Bernis is still seeking the "trésor." However, if we recall the fact that Bernis has already died before the book opens and that the narrator is telling this whole story in an attempt to hang onto as many memories of Bernis and Geneviève as possible, then we may consider the narrative as existing on two levels. On the first level, the narrator is placing himself in the story, and when he says: "Je dirai quel voyage tu accomplis," he means a journey undertaken while Bernis is still living. On the second level, however, Bernis is already dead, and the narrator, looking back as he tells the story, is implying that the journey and quest are continuing after his death. If this is so, then the "trésor" refers to eternity, or a spiritual existence beyond death, or communion with the world. Because Bernis is no longer "of this world," or because for some reason he has retained a child's idealism and vision, his steps "ne sont pas les mêmes" as the narrator's, even though they are both "sortis de la même enfance" (CS, p. 60).

Bernis is alone at the beginning and he dies alone at the end. Courrier Sud is the story of Bernis' search for himself and for something to give his life an added dimension—that created by complete communication with someone or something. His friendship with the narrator acts as a constant, a point of reference, which—along with his métier—gives him the stability needed to function while searching for another
strong bond. The narrator refers several times to "le trésor" sought by Bernis (pp. 62, 77) and suggests that he may have found it by dying. This suggestion, plus the enigmatic nature of Bernis' confession quoted above ("...une fringale légère ... cette présence d'ami que je n'ai jamais pu tirer au jour..."), evoke a mystical preoccupation of the author's which defies definition and which may very likely be the first sign of the vision Saint-Exupéry tries to express in the later works, especially Pilote de guerre and Citadelle. (note: Indeed, he uses the term "archange" (CS, p. 17) referring to Bernis. Perhaps Bernis is the prototype of "l'homme en devenir" and an indication that Saint-Exupéry had already begun to experience his intuition about man's spiritual life at the time he wrote Courrier Sud) end of note.

The Relationship of Courrier Sud to the Rest of the Works

A number of critics consider Courrier Sud to be immature and insignificant compared with the later works. Certainly, Saint-Exupéry had only begun to develop his literary style in 1928. The imagery and poetic quality characteristic of Terre des Hommes and Pilote de guerre appear more sporadically in Courrier Sud, but are nonetheless present as promises of future development. Courrier Sud lacks the force of Vol de nuit, but nevertheless highlights the métier of mail pilot and presents enough of this way of life to give the
reader an appreciation of its joys and dangers.

Certain mystical imagery ("le trésor," "le navire," "le désert," "l'archange") presages Citadelle's vast array of signs and symbols. The sermon on pp. 44-47 sounds strikingly like the style of Citadelle, and the narrator has a tendency to address Bernis directly, just as "le Caïd" addresses man; compare:

Jacques Bernis, cette fois-ci, avant ton arrivée, je dévoilerai qui tu es ... Je dirai quel voyage tu accomplis.

(CS, p. 60)

and:

C'est pourquoi tu ne sauras point, si nul ne descend vers toi de sa montagne et ne t'éclaire, quelle route à suivre te sauvera. De même que tu ne croiras point aussi savamment que l'on te raisonne, quel homme naîtra de toi ou s'y réveillera puisqu'il n'y est point encore.

(C, p. 736)

Specific passages in Courrier Sud prefigure episodes of the later works. The narrator talks of Bernis' death in terms that recur in Le Petit Prince at the moment of the prince's "death," when he returns to his planet. The narrator of Courrier Sud says:

Cette nuit tu pesais peu de chose ... ...
Cette nuit tu pesais moins encore.

(CS, p. 77)
Compare this with the aviator's description of the death of the little prince:

Il tomba doucement comme tombe un arbre. Ça ne fit même pas de bruit, à cause du sable.
... Mais je sais bien qu'il est revenu à sa planète, car, au lever du jour, je n'ai pas retrouvé son corps. Ce n'était pas un corps tellement lourd... (FP, p. 493)

The prince chooses to die on the anniversary and at the exact location of his landing on earth, because, he says: "Mon étoile se trouvera juste au-dessus de l'endroit où je suis tombé l'année dernière..." (FP, p. 488). And Bernis' friend says: "Dans l'étoile la plus verticale a lui le trésor, ô fugitif!" (CS, p. 77).

The episode in Terre des Hommes where Saint-Exupéry meets an old French sergeant in a desert outpost (TH, pp. 188-189) appears first in Courrier Sud as two separate incidents. Bernis makes an emergency stopover at the fort and spends the night talking and drinking with the sergeant who is overjoyed to see another Frenchman (CS, pp. 71-73). The next evening, the narrator stops at the fort and learns of Bernis' passage (CS, pp. 75-76). Both he and Bernis talk about the stars with the sergeant, and in Terre des Hommes, Saint-Exupéry says of this episode:

J'ai raconté ça dans un livre, mais ce n'était point du roman. (TH, p. 188)
Elle fut réelle aussi, cette nuit passée sur la terrasse du fortin, à parler des étoiles. (TH, p. 189)

Speaking of a captain who had visited him when he had no wine to offer him, the sergeant says he hopes to see him again soon for he has wine now. Saint-Exupéry asks him: "Où est-il, sergent?" To which the sergeant replies, "montrant les sables: --On ne sait pas, il est partout, le capitaine!" (TH, p. 188). In Courrier Sud the narrator says to the sergeant:

--Sergent, demain je trouverai mon camarade: où crois-tu qu'il soit? Le sergent, sûr de lui, me signale tout l'horizon...
Un enfant perdu remplit le désert. (CS, p. 76)

With these significant passages so admittedly autobiographical, it is quite likely that others are equally so, even though precise verification cannot be made. Saint-Exupéry evidently considered Courrier Sud an important enough work to borrow from it throughout his writing career. He may have relied so heavily on personal experiences in writing Courrier Sud that it was almost impossible not to re-utilize one or two episodes, especially in Terre des Hommes which deals largely with flying and the desert. Saint-Exupéry habitually revised a manuscript repeatedly before turning it over, still unsatisfied with it, to his publisher. A sample of such revision can be seen by comparing Courrier Sud with L'Aviateur,
a short story published by Jean Prévost in *Le Navire d'Argent*, April 1926, and which also appears in the posthumous *Un Sens à la vie*. *L'Aviateur* was abridged by Prévost from *L'Evasion de Jacques Bernis*, the manuscript of which has been lost. Much of the aviation material in *Courrier Sud* is taken directly from *L'Aviateur* with some revision. How much more was taken from *L'Evasion* we shall never know.

The "borrowed" episodes from *Courrier Sud* clearly show Saint-Exupéry's tendency to revise and re-use early ideas, but they show something even more important: as early as *Courrier Sud*, Saint-Exupéry had developed to a great extent his forms of expression, and he had created a fund of material concerning aviation and the desert, from which he would draw throughout his writing career. Even more striking, however, is the discovery that the global theme of communication which encompasses all the works also appears originally in *Courrier Sud*.

Some argument could be made for the "evolution" of Saint-Exupéry's treatment of the global theme of communication, but I prefer to see the various manifestations of his concern for this phenomenon as the product of his acute sensibility and attentiveness in this area coming in contact with new situations. His intuition does become more keenly developed, but his basic orientation does not change or "evolve." Rather, the literary representations of his intuition's contact with
reality grow like the trees he so often speaks of metaphorically.
CHAPTER ONE

VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN COURRIER SUD, VOL DE NUIT, TERRE DES HOMMES AND PILOTE DE GUERRE

Verbal Communication in Courrier Sud

Saint-Exupéry's attitude toward language as a means of communication appears rather complex in Courrier Sud. In some instances, verbal exchange is quite adequate, while in others language is sorely lacking as a means of communication between individuals. Generally, verbal exchanges among pilots and others involved in the airmail operations are of the first category. Men sharing the same métier seem to communicate effectively with one another, at least as far as the performance of their duties is concerned. Their verbal exchanges are brief, clear and to the point; they need only a few words to convey messages because their technical language is well-defined and understood by all. This facility for communication on a material, practical level suggests a deeper understanding between such individuals, a sort of communion through participation that Saint-Exupéry attributes to a shared métier.

On the other hand, verbal exchanges between individuals who do not share a common métier, and who otherwise have little or no deeper-level communication, is often of the
second category—that is insufficient, incomplete and often misleading. The conversations between Geneviève and Herlin, and Geneviève and Bernis clearly illustrate the failure of language to convey accurately the speaker's thoughts and feelings. Verbal exchanges appear to act as a "barometer" indicating the nature of the overall communication between individuals. Thus satisfactory (even though perhaps superficial) communication expressed verbally would seem to indicate a more profound mutual understanding, just as inadequate verbal communication clearly betrays trouble at a deeper level.

Looking first at examples of inadequate verbal exchanges, we see that the attempts at communication between Geneviève and Herlin result in failure and create misunderstandings between them. Herlin feels isolated and wants desperately to have Geneviève share his feelings. Unable to put up with his own weakness all alone, he invents a crisis to compel Geneviève to suffer when he suffers. During their son's illness, he wakes her up to tell her the child is suffocating. Geneviève reacts as any mother would and instinctively runs to her child only to find him sleeping. Her heart still pounding from the shock, she asks Herlin: "Pourquoi m'as-tu dit qu'il étouffait? Pourquoi m'as-tu fait peur?" He replies only: "J'ai cru." She knows he is lying, but does not hold his weakness against him: "Elle
pardonait ces mille chantages parce que les mots...quelle importance?" (CS, p. 25). In an attempt to verbalize his anxiety, Herlin twists his own suffering into an expression of the child's suffering which initially misleads Geneviève. Unable to say what he wants to, he ends up not communicating at all. Geneviève finally understands what he means when she sees her son asleep and then concludes that her husband needs attention, not her child. Words here have only hindered possible communication.

Later, Herlin again wants to communicate, but he cannot find the right words, and so he speaks in pompous cliches which convey no meaning but which confuse Geneviève by their tone:

> Il lui faisait des conférences:
> "Mon devoir le plus élémentaire...
> Ton orgueil..." Elle ne comprenait rien à toutes ces phrases, parce qu'elle avait sommeil, mais certains mots l'étonnaient au passage.
> "Orgueil." Pourquoi orgueil?
> Qu'est-ce que ça vient faire ici? (CS, p. 26)

Their difficulty extends far beyond the verbal level. The superficial language barrier evident in dialogue confirms what the reader can observe throughout the narrative passages.

Their communication, weak to begin with, breaks down altogether as Herlin wants to apologize but cannot because he will not make the first reconciliatory move: "Il veut lui
dire qu'il était fou, cruel, injuste, qu'elle seule est vraie, mais il faut d'abord qu'elle s'approche, qu'elle témoigne de la confiance, qu'elle se livre" (CS, p. 29). Saint-Exupéry uses this entire episode to show what effects a failure to communicate can have on two individuals, and show how their attempts to correct that failure can actually worsen the situation.

In a letter to Bernis, the narrator attempts to warn him of the hidden dangers in words that seem to say more than they actually do. He points out that Bernis' world and Geneviève's world are so different that to attempt to consolidate them would necessitate such drastic compromises that the two individuals would no longer be the same, and that "Geneviève, emportée par toi, sera privée de Geneviève" (CS, p. 23). He concludes his letter with this strong admonition:

Mais j'imagine que, pour toi, aimer c'est naître. Tu croiras emporter une Geneviève neuve. L'amour est, pour toi, cette couleur des yeux que tu voyais parfois en elle et qu'il sera facile d'alimenter comme une lampe. Et c'est vrai qu'à certaines minutes les mots les plus simples paraissent chargés d'un tel pouvoir et qu'il est facile de nourrir l'amour...
Vivre, sans doute, c'est autre chose. (CS, p. 33)

The narrator sees in advance what Bernis will understand only after suffering through a love affair whose future is obscured
by the lovers' tendency to believe that they can create an ideal relationship simply by saying that it will exist. Their implicit belief in the power of words is as great a factor in their mutual deception as their expressed confidence that the past can shape the future to its image. Bernis and Geneviève discover that their words lead them to believe in the possibility of a future for them when they really have nothing in common except their now-distant childhood. They had built these false hopes on the memory of a former childhood communication that they had grown out of as their maturity led them in different directions. They had developed different needs as adults than those which a childhood intimacy could fulfill and were now in reality two strangers. The treacherous infidelity of verbal exchanges compounded the misunderstanding created by the memory of past communication. They had spoken little before leaving Paris together, and the language of their exchanges betrays their attachment to past experiences. Running to Bernis' hotel one night after a fight with Herlin, Geneviève tells him:

--Jacques, Jacques, emmenez-moi! ...
--Vous allez m'emporter...
(CS, p. 30)

Later, just after her child dies, Bernis evokes the same memories:

Bernis lui parle doucement: "Je
They have allowed themselves to be tricked by their words which express their deepest needs in such a way as to make them believe they have found the answer to their problems, when in reality they have only verbalized the problems and at the same time expressed a mutual nostalgia for a past that cannot help them now. Their verbal communication is thus extremely superficial and leads to a faith in the past which prevents them from functioning lucidly and from recognizing themselves and each other now as they are in the present. Once they stop talking about this dream, however, events seem to happen of their own accord, leading them back to Paris and away from each other. Words sustain the illusion for a short time, but ultimately fail to create a relationship whose likelihood does not exist.

When Bernis is alone with the dancing girl he has picked up, he accepts their physical relations as their only possible communication, whereas she tries to bridge the gap that exists between them. Fearing Bernis' silence, which only aggravates her perception of their mutual isolation, she tries to get him to talk, asking him what time it is and romantically imagining the two of them as an old couple: "Je t'imagine très bien, les cheveux blancs, et moi sagement
ton amie..." (CS, p. 50). When she asks, "Parle-moi de ton pays?" Bernis answers only: "Là-bas..." (CS, p. 50), knowing that he cannot express in words the uniqueness of a place which must be sensed by actually going there:

Villes, mers, patries: toutes les mêmes. Parfois un aspect fugitif que l'on devine sans comprendre, qui ne se traduit pas. (CS, p. 50)

Either he does not care to establish any deeper communication with this girl, or he understands the futility of any such attempt. For whatever reason, he retreats behind a screen of silence, protecting himself against the treachery of words that might mislead the girl or commit him to an attitude he does not feel. His faith in language led him far astray with Geneviève and he is not about to repeat that experience with another woman.

The sermon which Bernis hears by chance at Notre Dame is another illustration of the difficulties of verbal communication. As he begins to speak, the preacher experiences a flood of images, all of which "entraînaient un cortège de réminiscences, qui duraient." He tries to sort them out and funnel them into a verbal form that will have meaning for the crowd of listeners, but he hesitates because this sorting is not easy:
Il s'interrompit, haletant un peu:
eses sentiments étaient trop pleins
pour s'exprimer. Il comprit que les
moindres mots, les plus usés, lui
paraissaient chargés de trop de sens
et qu'il ne distinguait plus les mots
qui donnent. (CS, p. 44)

Much in the same way that Bernis sensed he could not say any-
thing meaningful about "son pays...là-bas" because words
cannot accurately translate perceptions that are non-verbal
in origin, the preacher here finds his words bursting with
meaning that they cannot convey. The preacher's predicament
foreshadows to an extraordinary degree Saint-Exupéry's own
difficulty in Pilote de guerre and Citadelle. The words he
chooses signify much more to him than they do to his audience,
and instead of communicating his profound intuitions, he
ends up creating a wide gap between what he means and what
his listeners think he means. Bernis reacts violently, see-
ing nothing but despair in the preacher's words. Bernis was
seeking some expression of transcendence, whereas as far as
he can tell the priest has sunk farther into a belief in man,
saying, "J'en ferai une chose humaine," (CS, p. 46) of all
human misery and shortcomings.

The narrator describes another situation where words
lose their ordinary meaning; but this time, instead of being
heavy with a new sense, they are empty as if dried up by the
sun and wind of the desert. This phenomenon is due perhaps
to the relentless and unchanging nature of the desert,
contrasting so greatly with the society and civilization which have formed the sense of his language, and lacking their complexity and institutions which provide familiar words with meaning:

Le jour s'écoutait nu et non meublé d'événements. C'était le mouvement solaire des astronomes. C'était, pour quelques heures, le ventre de la terre au soleil. Ici les mots perdaient peu à peu la caution que leur assurait notre humanité. Ils n'enfermaient plus que du sable. Les mots les plus lourds comme "tendresse," "amour" ne posaient dans nos coeurs aucun lest.

(OS, p. 57)

Human language here appears as rather tenuous and unstable in the face of the undeniable reality of the desert. The desert imposes itself so strongly on man that it forces him to reckon with it and even renders useless most of his institutions and the strongest bond and vehicle of his civilization: his language.

Thus far we have examined passages in Courrier Sud where language (chiefly verbal exchange between individuals) either fails altogether as a means of communication or functions in a very unsatisfactory manner by conveying a message to the listener other than that which the speaker intended. These moments of verbal inadequacy do not by any means constitute the whole of Courrier Sud, but they do represent most of the dialogue and thus characterize verbal
exchange as failing to establish communication between individuals.

A curious conversation between Bernis and the operations chief at Casablanca combines the tendency of words to convey something other than their normal meaning, with the normal effectiveness of verbal communication between men cooperating in the same line of work. Bernis has just landed at Casablanca after a ten-hour flight and learns he is scheduled to continue to Agadir even though night has fallen. He and the chief compete in a verbal duel, each trying to show the other he knows best:

---Et...vous avez l'intention de me faire continuer?
Le chef d'aéroplane brassait les feuilles d'un air bourru:
---Vous ferez ce qu'on vous dira.
Il savait déjà qu'il n'exigerait pas ce départ, et le pilote savait de son côté qu'il demanderait à partir. Mais chacun voulait se prouver qu'il était seul juge.
(CS, p. 54)

Bernis continues to protest, claiming the task is impossible but knowing all the while he can do it. The chief says he will have stars and the moon to guide him, which vexes the pilot even more because he can fly without the moon. The chief finally gives in: "--Bon. C'est entendu. Eh bien restez." Bernis has won, the question is settled:
Le pilote se calma, déplia des sandwiches qui dataient de la veille au soir et mastiqua paisiblement. Il partirait dans vingt minutes. Le chef d'aéroplace souriait. Il tapotait le téléphone, sachant qu'avant long-temps il signalerait ce décollage. (CS, p. 55)

The debate is a game whose outcome is known in advance, in which Bernis and the chief play roles determined by their respective positions of pride and authority. Their verbal exchanges are symbolic of their respective roles and do not convey the meaning they appear to. They give the appearance of disagreeing, but behind the language of their apparent dispute they are in complete agreement.

Saint-Exupéry's pilots exchange few words. When they do speak, however, it is evident that their verbal communication is satisfactory. The narrator recalls the briefing he gave Bernis the night before his first flight. Communication here is essential, and Bernis eagerly soaks up all the information given him by a comrade who is a veteran of the route he will take tomorrow for the first time. A mail pilot is fully aware of the importance of his work: each day's assignment is a mission in the furthering of human communications, and, as important as his role may be, the pilot himself is expendable whereas the mail is not. Bernis learns what terrain is safe for emergency landings and what obstacles he must watch out for. The briefing strongly resembles a geography lesson whose subject has suddenly come alive and taken on a very
tangible reality:

Bernis retrouvait le collège sous l'abat-jour vert de cette lampe, devant ces cartes dépliées. Mais de chaque point du sol, son maître d'aujourd'hui lui dégageait un secret vivant. Les pays inconnus ne livraient plus de chiffres morts, mais de vrais champs avec leurs fleurs—où justement il faut se méfier de cet arbre—mais de vraies plages avec leur sable—où, vers le soir, il faut éviter les pêcheurs. (CS, p. 8)

Their conversation is direct—the narrator's every phrase contains several vital facts, and Bernis repeats them to be sure he retains the information:

—Ecoute-moi donc: s'il fait beau ici, tu passes tout droit. Mais, s'il fait mauvais, si tu voles bas, tu appuies à gauche, tu t'engages dans cette vallée.
—Je m'engage dans cette vallée.
—Tu rejoins la mer, plus tard, par ce col.
—Je rejoins la mer par ce col.
—Et tu te méfies de ton moteur: la falaise à pic et des rochers.
—Et s'il me plaque?
—Tu te débrouilles. (CS, p. 8)

The relevance of this aerial geography course contrasts greatly with that of his former lessons because this time he has learned something which may possibly save his life:

Et Bernis était fier de cet enseignement: son enfance n'avait pas tiré de l'Enéide un seul secret
qui le protégeait de la mort. Le doigt
du professeur sur la carte d'Espagne
n'était pas un doigt de sorcier et ne
démasquait ni trésor ni piège, ne
touchait pas cette bergère dans ce
pré. (CS, p. 9)

The lessons learned here are not only eminently practical, but
also, in a sense, magical because they protect against death,
and intimate, dealing with secrets not shown on a map, re-
vealing of Spanish cities, "ni l'Alhambra, ni les mosquées,
mais un ruisseau, un oranger, mais leurs plus humbles confi-
dences" (CS, p. 8). His conversation with the narrator not
only communicates important flight data from the veteran to
the novice, but also puts the novice in closer contact with
the earth and specifically with the cities and terrain he
must fly over while carrying out his mission.

In a letter to the narrator, Bernis recalls a similar
exchange, this time of written notes passed from the narrator
to him while in flight. Again the language is simple and
direct, the information transmitted vital to the success of
the flight and the communication complete:

J'ai gardé les papiers que tu me
passais:
"Surveille ce cliquetis bizarre...
ne t'engage pas sur le détroit si ça
augmente."
Deux heures après, à Gibraltar:
"Attends Tarifa pour traverser:
meilleur."
A Tanger: "Ni te pose pas trop
long: terrain mou."

(CS, p. 18)
Bernis stresses the immeasurable value of such communication:

Avec ces phrases-là, on gagne le monde. J'avais la révélation d'une stratégie que ces ordres brefs rendaient si forte. Tanger, cette petite ville de rien du tout, c'était ma première conquête. (CS, p. 18)

The narrator, accompanying Bernis on his first mail flight, has made it possible through his guidance for his friend to safely complete his flight and to experience the exhilaration of "capturing" a city from the air. Responsibility for the success of this experience rests solely on the verbal communication between the two pilots, a fact of which Bernis is fully aware and which the author wants the reader to understand.

On the day before his death, Bernis makes an emergency landing at a French outpost in Senegal where he is greeted by a French sergeant and twenty Senegalese soldiers. He spends the night talking with the sergeant, repairs his plane in the morning and flies off to his death in the desert. This short episode stresses both isolation and communication. The sergeant, who sees another white man only every six months when the mail arrives, greets Bernis with tears of joy, and his first impulse is to tell the young pilot everything about himself, his family, his friends and even other visitors he has received in the last year or so:
The sergeant gives him wine and tobacco, treating him, in his fashion, like royalty. A young lieutenant, whose last visit was "presque un souvenir d'amour" (CS, p. 72), had identified some stars the old man could see. Bernis says, "Oui, ... il vous les passait en consigne" (CS, p. 72), and he, too, teaches the sergeant some astrology. Then Bernis starts to sing a popular song, but he has forgotten the words:

"Dis-moi la suite, sergent. J'ai besoin de m'en souvenir."

--Attendez voir:

Rentre tes blancs moutons
Là-bas dans la chaumière...

"Sergent, sergent, ça me revient:"

Entends sous le feuillage
L'eau qui coule à grand bruit,
Déjà voici l'orage...

"Ah comme c'est vrai! fit le sergent.
Ils comprenaient les mêmes choses..."

(CS, p. 73)

Daylight comes, and they work together in perfect harmony to repair Bernis' plane. The sergeant carries out his orders willingly, and they complete the necessary repairs in a short time. The clipped phrasing of their conversation suggests the effectiveness of their cooperation and communication:
--Voici le jour, sergent, allons travailler.
--Travaillons.
--Passe-moi la clef à bougies.
--Ah! bien sûr.
--Appuie ici avec la pince.
--Ah! commandez... je ferai tout.
--Tu vois, ce n'était rien, sergent, je vais partir.  

(CS, p. 73)

Bernis uses the familiar **tu** to address his helper, which shows that for him a certain rapport has been established, whereas the sergeant's attitude, equally as warm, is one of near adoration:

Le sergent contemple un jeune dieu, 
venu de nulle part, pour s'envoler.
...Venu lui rappeler une chanson, 
Tunis, lui-même. De quel paradis, 
audela des sables, descendent sans 
bruit ces beaux messagers?
--Adieu, sergent!
--Adieu...

Le sergent remuait les lèvres, ne 
se devinant pas lui-même. Le sergent 
n'aurait pas su dire qu'il gardait 
aucœur pour six mois d'amour. 

(CS, p. 73)

Their verbal communication has been very good, but this last line indicates once again a communications impasse: The sergeant cannot find words to express the emotions he feels as Bernis leaves, and the pilot will never know how deeply the sergeant has been touched by their brief friendship. Language has served the sergeant well by allowing him to pour out his memories and experiences which he had stored up for months while waiting for someone like Bernis to share them with.
Bernis has been able, again through language, to demonstrate his sensitive understanding of the sergeant's need to share his life (with the song), and to engage the sergeant in helping him repair his motor. Language has cemented a friendship, but ironically the ties created are so deep for the sergeant that he cannot express them in words. The rapport thus created through their brief shared experiences extends to a level beyond the limits of language, and once again—although for reasons other than those which hampered communication between Bernis and Geneviève, and Geneviève and Merlin—language falls short as a means of human communication.

In *Courrier Sud*, Saint-Exupéry expresses an ambivalence toward verbal communication primarily through the use of dialogue which shows that what is beneath the surface may be more profound than the meaning conveyed by a speaker's words, or that words may deceive the listener altogether as to the speaker's intended message. Saint-Exupéry does occasionally voice an opinion to this effect in *Courrier Sud*, but not nearly as extensively as he will come to do in the later works. Essentially, he distrusts language and is wary of believing in the power of words, although he recognizes that man must rely on language in his daily contact with others. The narrator is alone in *Courrier Sud* to share the author's awareness that, despite our dependence on language to insure the permanence of our civilization and to facilitate our
dealings with other men, our words themselves are devoid of real meaning. They can only at best indicate that a significance, a relationship, a message, exists, but they do not in themselves constitute the phenomenon which we call on them to represent.

Verbal Exchanges of Men at Work and at War in Vol de nuit, Terre des Hommes and Pilote de guerre

Verbal communication in Vol de nuit follows the same pattern established in Courrier Sud. Men who work together exchange few words but communicate well, whereas those involved in aviation are unable to communicate verbally with those outside the profession. Even within the profession, there are men who belong to a close-knit group (Rivière, the pilots) and those who do not (Robineau); between these two groups there is no meaningful communication. Saint-Exupéry uses very little dialogue in Vol de nuit and makes practically no "editorial" comments about language. If verbal communication does not play so large an active role in Saint-Exupéry's second novel, its relative absence is certainly significant. Rivière and his men have little to say to each other, and underlying their lack of verbosity is a feeling of common experience which has no need of verbal expression.

Bending down to inspect an axle that one of his mechanics is working on, Rivière thinks of the laborer's total
dedication to his work, which has been his whole life for 40 years—just as it has for Rivière—and asks him a strange question whose answer he knows in advance:

—Vous vous êtes beaucoup occupé d'amour, Leroux dans votre vie?
—Oh! l'amour, vous savez, monsieur le Directeur...
—Vous êtes comme moi, vous n'avez jamais eu le temps.
—Pas bien beaucoup. (VN, p. 86)

This almost banal conversation reveals that these two men have led the same kind of life, in which their commitment to their chosen task has simply not left them time for the tenderness of love. Appraising the tone of Leroux's reply, Rivière discovers no bitterness, but rather "le tranquille contentement du menuisier qui vient de polir une belle planche: Voilà. C'est fait." Rivière shares this contentment and thinks to himself, "Voilà ... ma vie est faite" (VN, p. 86).

When he lands safely after battling a fierce cyclone, Pellerin contemplates the men awaiting his arrival. He sees them as his "property," and feels that through his efforts he has "earned" them as well as the movement, women and life of the city he is returning to. Wanting to tell his comrades of his narrow escape and what the experience was like, he says simply:

—Si vous saviez!...
Jugeant sans doute en avoir assez dit, il s'en fut retirer son cuir. (VN, p. 87)
Unable to say more, he retreats into his thoughts and relives the experience. There are no words to convey his feelings, and so he does not even attempt to do so. Later, when Rivière questions him, Pellerin explains the facts of what happened to him: how his path was blocked by the storm, how the snow blinded him, how a violent updraft had saved him by carrying him over the jagged peaks. His conclusion is also more factual than anything else: "Je n'ai jamais vu ça..." (VN, p. 90).

In a chapter cut from *Terre des Hommes* but which appears in Lewis Galantière's translation, *Wind, Sand and Stars*, and later in French in the posthumous *Un Sens à la vie*, Saint-Exupéry describes his own experience with a similar cyclone in terms that suggest that this episode and the cyclone experienced by the fictional Pellerin were one and the same. The same attitude toward language prevails here, although somewhat clarified. Saint-Exupéry calls an attempt to describe the "adventure" of flying through a severe storm pure journalism and proceeds to show that the tragedy, or drama, of such an experience just does not exist but is rather invented after the fact when one tries to describe the event. Verbal expression of an experience, then, betrays the experience by invariably introducing judgments or feelings that the person having the experience did not feel at the time because he was too immersed in what he was doing—in this case
struggling with a 150 mile-an-hour wind.

Riviére uses Robineau to execute his hard and fast regulations which are at times unjust because they do not take the weather or other uncontrollable variables into consideration when sanctioning a "chef d'aéroport" for a delayed flight or a pilot for wrecking a plane. Riviére and Robineau do not understand the regulations in the same way: "Un règlement établi par Riviére était, pour Riviére, connaissance des hommes; mais pour Robineau n'existait plus qu'une connaissance du règlement" (VN, p. 91). And so by carrying out the verbal orders of Riviére, Robineau is proud of having such a strong chief and himself gains "quelque majesté d'un pouvoir aussi offensant" (VN, p. 91), but the purpose and message of the orders escape him altogether: "Le règlement, pensait Riviére, est semblable aux rites d'une religion qui semblent absurdes mais façonnent les hommes" (VN, p. 92). Robineau is thus nothing more than a tool, a living telegram, bearing a message he does not comprehend. There is no communication between Riviére and Robineau, but through Robineau's verbal conveyance of severe regulations, Riviére communicates a profound message beneath the superficiality of rules and sanctions directed at the "inner life" of his men:

"Ces hommes-là sont heureux, parce qu'ils aiment ce qu'ils font, et ils l'aiment parce que je suis dur."
Il faisait peut-être souffrir, mais
Robineau misunderstands the very language he uses and acts, in spite of himself, as a vehicle for the communication between Rivière and his men. The gulf between language and message here illustrates once again the often-deceptive nature of verbal exchange.

Rivière binds the airmail operation into a cohesive unit. Without his determination to succeed, the order he maintains would degenerate into chaos. He maintains this stability by coordinating all segments of the operation: directing the search for Fabien by asking weather conditions of police in thirty towns and alerting outposts for 2000 kilometers to relay the plane's position, if determined, to the base. We see him phoning messages to several outposts, while continuing operations as usual in preparation for the trans-Atlantic flight later that same evening. Through all this he uses few words, snapping brief orders where needed, refusing to allow the least important secretary to be idle during the search for Fabien. His words have far greater significance than their immediate expression, as he fights the inertia of his staff and thus ensures the continuity of the overall operation. His orders convey more than a "keep busy" mentality, for his confidence and determination instill a
sense in the work and lives of his staff and pilots. After Fabien's disappearance, Rivièrè brings his Buenos Aires staff back to life by replying to Robineau's request for orders that the trans-Atlantic flight will leave on schedule. Robineau will relay these orders and so establish a chain of verbal communication of a very simple sort, but necessary and effective, which ensures the continuation of nighttime mail flights.

Rivièrè speaks to a pilot who turned back due to fear his last time out. His intention is not to reprimand him, but, he says, "Je le sauve de la peur" (VN, p. 110). To the pilot's attempt at excuses, Rivièrè says simply, "Vous avez trop d'imagination. Allez" (VN, p. 110). By refusing to listen to the pilot, or to take him seriously, Rivièrè hopes to dispel the apparent mystery of night flying: one fears only the unknown. This pilot's hesitation before the unknown threatens to paralyze him and thus jeopardize Rivièrè's operation. Rivièrè's curt refusal to believe that the imagined dangers existed acts as a sort of "sober" incantation which seems to work because later, just before boarding his plane, the pilot throws back his head, sees himself pitted against clouds, mountains, rivers and seas, and laughs silently as he thinks: "Cet imbécile de Rivièrè qui m'a... qui s'imagine que j'ai peur!" (VN, p. 136). Through judicious use of words, Rivièrè has once again managed to create the effect he sought, and so communicate not an idea inherent in
the few words he uses, but a profound feeling of courage and confidence beneath the surface of his language.

The conversation between a pilot and his wife reveals that they really exist in two different worlds. Rising at midnight, the pilot scheduled to fly the trans-Atlantic leg of the South America-Europe run is calm and confident. His young wife worries about his welfare and wishes she could shelter him from danger. She knows him well in a domestic context, but an entire segment of his life is unknown to her: "Elle connaissait les sourires de cet homme, ses précautions d'amant, mais non, dans l'orage, ses divines colères." When he awakes, he asks her several questions pertinent to his flight which she cannot answer:

--Quel temps fait-il?
--Je ne sais pas.
Il se leva. Il marchait doucement
vers la fenêtre en s'étirant.
--Je n'aurai pas très froid.
Quelle est la direction du vent?
--Comment veux-tu que je sache...
(VN, p. 107)

As he contemplates the weather, she in turn questions him, and his reply shows that his mind is already in the world of flight and that he has effectively left the domestic world behind, whereas she remains fixed in her only context, unable to follow him:

--A quoi penses-tu?
Il pensait à la brume possible du côté de Porto Allegre.
--J'ai ma tactique. Je sais par où faire le tour.

Tu n'es même pas triste...Pour combien de jours t'en vas-tu?
(VN, p. 108)

She helps him gather his equipment and says she is jealous, while he laughs, content to be once again on his way. He expresses no regret as he puts her back to bed like a little girl and marches out to "sa conquête," leaving her behind in a world of "ces fleurs, ces livres, cette douceur, qui n'étaient pour lui qu'un fond de mer" (VN, p. 109).

The only other woman in Vol de nuit is Simone Fabien, wife of the ill-fated pilot Rivière struggles so valiantly to rescue. Her world, the same as that of the pilot's wife we have seen above, is in direct opposition to the world of flying, and her attempts to communicate with representatives of the airmail company result in broken, hesitant conversation. She demands to know where Fabien is; they cannot answer her. She speaks for "un autre sens de la vie" (VN, p. 120), a "vérité" just as real as that of the airmail operation.

Later, she comes to the office to see Rivière and discovers that work and life are continuing here almost in defiance of her presence and without concern for Fabien's disappearance. She and Rivière cannot communicate verbally, as
she feels like an intruder and he realizes how futile it would be to try to express his feelings of sympathy:

Elle eût voulu fuire:
--Je vous dérange...
--Madame, lui dit Rivièreme dérangez pas. Malheureusement,
Madame, vous et moi ne pouvons mieux faire que d'attendre.
... Rivière taissait une pitié profonde. (VN, p. 129)

Their verbal exchange is practically non-existent, but Rivière is moved by the "truth" she represents, which he reads more in her gestures than her words. (See: Part III, Chapter Three below.) He is unable to reciprocate the "message" he receives, however, and their communication remains one-sided. Verbal communication between Rivière and Simone Fabien fails because each can express only his own viewpoint. Here are two strong personalities representing two worldviews which cannot be reconciled--the home vs action and conquest--for each categorically challenges the values of the other. Their limited conversation is not responsible for the gap between them, but serves to illustrate the width of this gap.

*Terre des Hommes* contains even fewer examples of verbal communication than *Vol de nuit*. Again, the absence of verbal exchange is significant. As we have seen in *Vol de nuit* and *Courrier Sud*, when a profound rapport exists between
individuals, the essential can be conveyed by a few words. In *Terre des Hommes*, even those few words are rare. Saint-Exupéry recalls having learned, "sans que dix mots eussent été échangés, la mort du pilote Lécrivain" *(TH*, p. 146).

Riding the same old bus every day from Toulouse to the airfield, the fliers and their director have little to say to each other, even on the occasion of the death of one of their number:

> Il était ainsi trois heures du matin, le même silence régnait, lorsque nous entendîmes le directeur, invisible dans l'ombre élever la voix vers l'inspecteur.
> --Lécrivain n'a pas atterri, cette nuit, à Casablanca.
> --Ah! arraché au cours de son rêve, il fit un effort pour se réveiller, pour montrer son zèle, et il ajouta:
> --Ah! Oui? Il n'a pas réussi à passer? Il a fait demi-tour?
> A quoi, dans le fond de l'autobus, il fut répondu simplement: "Non."
*(TH*, p. 147)

Listening for a further explanation, the other pilots realize that this "non" is definitive, that Lécrivain is dead. The director's voice, coming almost disembodied from the shadows, announces with finality the news that needs no discussion.

*Vol de nuit* contains a similar episode. As mail sacks are transferred from one plane to the next, the pilots have little to say to one another, even though one of their comrades has just disappeared:
---C'est toi qui continues?
---Oui.
---La Patagonie est là?
---On me l'attend pas: disparue.
Il fait beau?
---Il fait très beau. Fabien a disparu?
Ils en parlèrent peu. Une grande fraternité les dispensait des phrases. *(VN, p. 135)*

Likewise, when a pilot has successfully completed a flight, he has very little to say about it. While still a novice, Saint-Exupéry asks the veteran Bury "si son vol avait été dur."

Bury appears not to have heard, but then bursts out laughing as his only response:

```
Et ce rire m'émerveilla, car Bury riait peu, ce rire bref qui illuminait sa fatigue. Il ne donna point d'autre explication sur sa victoire.
*(TH, p. 142)*
```

That his flight was successful is obvious, for he has returned alive. Anything else that may have happened was between the pilot and his plane and cannot be put into words. The veteran knows that language is inadequate to convey to a novice what he has just experienced, so he does not resort to it.

```
When they do speak, these comrades are able to communicate well with few words because they share a common experience. Thus, the very reason why they seldom speak explains the effectiveness of their communication when they do.
```

On the eve of his first mail flight, Saint-Exupéry learns from
Guillaumet what to look out for when flying over Spain. In this passage, which echoes a similar episode in Courrier Sud (CS, pp. 8-9), Guillaumet passes on to Saint-Exupéry the facts he needs to know for a safe flight. Saint-Exupéry's map of Spain, thanks to Guillaumet, has become "un pays de contes de fées" (TH, p. 145), and he comes away with a new understanding of the dangers he must be aware of.

When Saint-Exupéry and Prévot are lost in the desert, their verbal exchanges keep them in touch with reality and also continually remind them of their predicament. When one begins hallucinating, the other informs him that his vision is only a mirage, and this is always a cruel discovery:

Je lui dis:
--Enfin, ça y est!
--Quoi?
--Les Arabes!
--Quels Arabes?
--Les Arabes qui sont là, avec vous!...
Prévot me regarde drôlement, et j'ai l'impression qu'il me confie, à contre-coeur, un lourd secret:
--Il n'y a point d'Arabes...
Sans doute, cette fois, je vais pleurer. (TH, p. 230)

They also encourage each other to continue when the desire to give up is strong. But Saint-Exupéry admits that the most significant experience in the desert is non-verbal, and the entire episode of Part VII serves to illustrate the first line of Terre des Hommes: "La terre nous en apprend plus long sur nous que tous les livres. Parce qu'elle nous résiste" (TH,
During an earlier experience in the desert, Saint-Exupéry describes how he spent the night in dissident territory with two other crews who were forced to land due to engine trouble. As they waited for dawn or the arrival of hostile Arabs, something "donnait à cette nuit son goût de Noël" (TH, p. 159). They passed the time in pleasant conversation, sharing stories, joking and singing. But beneath this superficial level of verbal exchange, a greater communication appears to them, occasioned by the common danger they face:

Nous goûtons cette même ferveur légère qu'au cœur d'une fête bien préparée. ...
Nous nous étons enfin rencontrés. On chemine longtemps côte à côte, enfermé dans son propre silence, ou bien l'on échange des mots qui ne transportent rien. Mais voici l'heure du danger. Alors on s'épaule l'un à l'autre. On découvre que l'on appartient à la même communauté. On s'élargit par la découverte d'autres consciences. On se regarde avec un grand sourire. On est semblable à ce prisonnier délivré qui s'émerveille de l'immensité de la mer. (TH, p. 159)

Their words here have more significance than those normally exchanged by men, but their successful verbal communication is merely an indication of a more profound communion whose "ferveur" gives this experience the air of a celebration. Indeed, in this passage which expresses the joys of profound communication through shared experience, Saint-Exupéry clearly displays his evaluation of the every day conversations among
those who work side by side when he says, "ou bien l'on échange des mots qui ne transportent rien." The daily conversations between comrades "de la même communauté" may suggest this community in which they participate at an unconscious level, but their words can in no way transport it to consciousness. A community may exist, then, and go unnoticed by its members because they lack the catalytic experience which can bring it into consciousness. Language alone cannot provide the necessary thrust to create this awareness.

In Pilote de guerre, as in the other works, conversations are quite terse. Only those words necessary to the performance of the fliers' duties are pronounced. Thus, when making the final checks with his crew before a mission, Saint-Exupéry wastes no time with superfluous words; and when his gunner hesitates before replying, the pilot reacts quickly to determine what is amiss:

---Dutertre, vous l'entendez, le mitrailleur?
---Je l'entends bien, mon Capitaine.
---Le mitrailleur, vous entendez le lieutenant Dutertre?
---Je...oui...très bien.
---Pourquoi dites-vous toujours: "Je...oui...très bien?"
---Je cherche mon crayon, mon Capitaine. (PG, p. 280)

While in flight, the crew must rely on speaking tube contact for all communication among themselves. Constant verification
of this contact is necessary to be sure the equipment is working and also to be sure that all is well with the individual crew members. A flier may black out from lack of oxygen, due to a failure of the mechanism which regulates his oxygen supply. If a crew member fails to answer when called, it could be for one of these reasons, and he could thus be in danger of suffocation. Saint-Exupéry transcribes one such conversation between himself and his two crew members. First, he discovers a bad connection which hinders his communication with the navigator which is provisionally corrected by shaking the wires. Then, turning to the gunner, he obtains no response:

--Le mitrailleur, ça va l'oxygène?
Point de réponse.
--Mitrailleur, hep!
Point de réponse.
--L'entendez, Dutertre, le mitrailleur?
--Entends rien, mon Capitaine...
--Appelez-le!
--Mitrailleur, hep! mitrailleur!
Point de réponse. (PG, p. 283)

At this point, Saint-Exupéry is about to dive to a lower altitude which would enable the stricken gunner to breathe without the oxygen equipment:

Mais avant de plonger je secoue brutalement l'avion, pour réveiller l'autre, s'il dort.
--Mon Capitaine?
--C'est vous, le mitrailleur?
--Je...heu...oui...
--Vous n'en êtes pas certain?
--Si!
--Pourquoi ne répondiez-vous pas?
--Je faisais un essai de radio.
J'avais débranché!
--Vous êtes un salaud! On prévient!
J'ai failli plonger! Je vous pensais mort!
--Je...non.
--Je vous crois sur parole. Mais ne me jouez plus ce mauvais tour! Prévenez, nom de Dieu! avant de débrancher!

This passage illustrates the flier's dependence on the functioning of his sophisticated and temperamental equipment and, through it, on his verbal contact with the rest of his crew. The flying team is a unit which cannot function properly without one of its members, and since each is physically isolated from the others they must rely on verbal communication to assure one another that the team is complete and capable of performing its duties.

And so, several pages later, when the plane is being followed by German fighters, we see the team function smoothly as each member's several roles complement those of the others, and they are able to elude the enemy fighters. Without the perfect functioning of their equipment which allows them to communicate quickly, they would have great difficulty coordinating their efforts to track and avoid the enemy.

Unfortunately, this mission, as well as all others being flown by Saint-Exupéry's reconnaissance group, cannot
hope to accomplish anything of value. The German occupation is becoming so total that reconnoitering enemy positions no longer makes sense. The French support troops which would be dispatched as a result of any information received do not exist. And the headquarters, from which emanate the orders to conduct these missions, are in such a state of turmoil (telephone lines out, roads blocked) that, even if they have not been relocated since the orders were sent, they will not be capable of receiving the information and making use of it. The overall impression of these missions and their relative value is one of absurdity. Men and planes are being pointlessly sacrificed simply to create the illusory impression that the French are still waging a war. More than anyone, the pilots are aware of the futility of their missions. Ironically, however, they must prepare as carefully for these missions as they would for those having greater worth. Their conversations express their frustrations and the tragic irony of their efforts:

Dépêche-toi...Où sont mes gants?...
Non...Ce ne sont pas ceux-là...cherche-les dans mon sac...
--Les trouve pas, mon Capitaine.
--Tu es un imbécile.
Ils sont tous des imbéciles. Celui qui ne sait pas trouver mes gants. Et l'autre, de l'Etat-Major, avec son idée fixe de mission à basse altitude. ...
--Ça va, Dutertre? Manque rien?
Vous avez calculé les caps?
--J'ai les caps, mon Capitaine...
Bon. Il a les caps. Une mission sacrifiée... Je vous demande un peu s'il est sensé de sacrifier un équipage pour des renseignements dont personne n'a besoin et qui, si l'un de nous est encore en vie pour les rapporter, ne seront jamais transmis à personne...
Ils devraient engager des spirites, à l'État-Major...
--Pourquoi?
--Pour que nous puissions les leur communiquer ce soir, sur table tournante, leurs renseignements.
Je ne suis pas fier de ma boutade, mais je ronchonne encore:
--Les États-Majors, les États-Majors, qu'ils aillent les faire, les missions sacrifiées, les États-Majors!
*(PG, pp. 277-278)*

The details of a mission cannot be overlooked, even when the mission itself becomes absurd.

Saint-Exupéry describes the pitiful exodus of French villagers from areas threatened with imminent occupation. These people do not know where they are going and have barely enough provisions to survive a day or two, when the roads south are choked with more like themselves. Their flight is like an epidemic whose contagion spreads from village to village with the same result:

--Vous ne pourriez rester chez vous?
--Ah! oui qu'on aimerait mieux rester chez nous!
--Alors pourquoi partir?
--On nous l'a dit...
--Qui vous l'a dit?
--Le maire.
Toujours le maire *(PG, p. 320)*
They blindly follow orders handed down from their traditional
town leaders, even though they may be irrational, and their
chaotic flight becomes the symbol of the French defeat:

Pas un mot sur la défaite. Cela est
evident. Vous n'éprouvez pas le besoin
de commenter ce qui constitue votre
substance même. Ils "sont" la défaite.
(PG, p. 324)

Here, again, as we have seen before, words are useless to con-
vey what everyone knows.

Logic and reason no longer prevail because com-
munications have broken down. In the same way that the flight
crew depends on their speaking tubes, the entire military
command as well as the civilian authorities depend on tele-
graph, telephone and roads in order to transmit their verbal
messages. Information and the language which conveys it are
without value or purpose if they cannot reach other people:

Comment les responsables connaîtraient-
ils si dix millions de Français ne sont
pas déjà morts de faim? Et cet appel de
dix millions d'hommes tient dans une
phrase. Il faut une phrase pour dire:
--Rendez-vous à quatre heures chez X.
Ou:
--On dit que dix millions d'homme sont
morts.
Ou:
--Blois est en feu.
Ou:
--On a retrouvé votre chauffeur.
Tout ça sur le même plan. D'emblée.
Dix millions d'hommes. La voiture.
L'Armée de l'Est. La Civilisation
occidentale. On a retrouvé le chauffeur.
"Le même plan" to which Saint-Exupéry refers here is that of language. Any message needs a language or some symbolic representation, plus a vehicle for transmitting it: a human voice for short distances, telephone, telegraph or mail service for longer distances. In the wake of the German invasion, these vehicles have ceased to function, and language can no longer communicate because it cannot reach those who would receive the messages.

**Language and the Community of Man**

In *Pilote de guerre*, Saint-Exupéry deals at length with the relationship between language and the experience of a spiritual community among men, a subject touched on in *Terre des Hommes* (See this chapter above). He speaks of a "Collectivité," a "Communauté" (*PG*, pp. 380-381) of men, whose existence is merely rhetorical, but which could exist in reality if men woke up to the fact that "une somme n'est pas un Etre" (*PG*, p. 380). I have examined Saint-Exupéry's belief in man's individual and collective evolution in Part II Chapter One above, and have mentioned the author's concern for finding a means of expressing this collectivity in such a way as to inspire men to seek to achieve fulfillment together. The ineffectiveness of language in this effort is
evident to Saint-Exupéry:

Notre vocabulaire semblait presque intact, mais nos mots, qui s'étaient vidés de substance réelle, nous conduisaient, si nous prétentions en user, vers des contradictions sans issue. (PG, p. 380)

And yet, the potential community we are seeking (or which we would welcome if we discovered it) is within reach. Saint-Exupéry himself senses its presence and has tried to share this awareness, especially in Pilote de guerre and Citadelle. Ironically, all that is necessary for the realization of this community is an act of consciousness and a language to express what the consciousness discovers:

Notre communauté nous est déjà sensible. Il nous faudra certes l'exprimer pour rallier à elle. Ceci est effort de conscience et de langage. (PG, p. 367)

But we have just seen that our current vocabulary lacks substance and leads to dead-end contradictions. Indeed, the French defeat in 1940 symbolizes for Saint-Exupéry the breakdown of the human community and of man's ability to express his community through language. Contrasting victory and defeat, he emphasizes the disintegration characteristic of defeat:

La victoire seule enveloppe de
Of his personal thoughts just prior to a mission from which he may not return, Saint-Exupéry says: "Je manque de concept directeur, de langage clair. Je pense par contradictions" (PG, p. 271). It is precisely this clear language he is seeking on the more immediate plan in Pilote de guerre and in a more far-reaching sense in Citadelle because, even if defeat is accompanied by the destruction of "language" (in the sense of general communication and unity), and even if the words we use to express an illusory collectivity are misleading, it is still language which can lead us once again in the right direction, for "c'est le langage qui noue les choses":

L'étendue véritable n'est point pour l'oeil, elle n'est accordée qu'à l'esprit. Elle vaut ce que vaut le langage. (PG, p. 314)

And since "l'étendue ... vaut ce que vaut le langage," it is not worth much at present because, as we have seen, current language has little value for expressing man's community in other than hollow, rhetorical terms.

Saint-Exupéry feels that it is imperative to restore sense to language, but admits his own inability to do so:
"Mais comment ranimer le sens de mon langage, à l'heure où tout se confond?" (PG, p. 315)

In the last twenty pages of *Pilote de guerre*, Saint-Exupéry expresses the need to eliminate the paradoxes and contradictions which pervade man's language in order to awaken the meaning it once held, but which is now hidden. His reservations about language in general erode his confidence in his own choice of images and expressions by which he attempts to convey his observations on man's collectivity:

```
Je ne sais ce que vaut l'image que me vient, mais je me dis: l'individu n'est qu'une route. L'Homme qui l'emprunte compte seul. (PG, p. 369)
```

At the very beginning of this concluding section of *Pilote de guerre* in which Saint-Exupéry eloquently pronounces his belief in the collective evolution or "devenir" of individuals toward a Community of Man, he himself wonders just how arbitrary his language is. We can only interpret this hesitation as an admission of the tentative nature of his enterprise, which at best illustrates the author's modesty and wisdom as to the relative value of any such pronouncement on man, and at worst indicates that he was not at all certain of the meaning of his perceptions. Lying somewhere between these two possibilities is a third, which is that he believed strongly enough in the value of his perceptions, but doubted just as strongly the adequacy of language to convey their
value to others. Whence his recourse to poetic images rather than discursive logic to express these perceptions.

Saint-Exupéry intersperses the images of the last few chapters of Pilote de guerre with statements on the inadequacy of language both for speaking of and for creating "l'Homme," accusing "l'Humanisme" of taking the wrong approach in attempting to grasp the notion of "l'Homme" by "une argumentation logique et morale" (PG, p. 377), and thus transport it into men's consciousness. Even in such diatribes, Saint-Exupéry mixes poetry with his argument, seeking support through analogy for his distinction between a community and a simple group of unrelated individuals:

Mais quand il s'agit de parler sur l'Homme, le langage devient incommode. L'Homme se distingue des hommes. On ne dit rien d'essentiel sur la cathédrale, si l'on ne parle que des pierres. On ne dit rien d'essentiel sur l'Homme, si l'on cherche à le définir par des qualités d'homme. L'Humanisme a ainsi travaillé dans une direction barrée d'avance.  
(PG, p. 377)

He further clarifies his position, saying:

Aucune expression verbale ne remplace jamais la contemplation. L'unité de l'Être n'est pas transportable par les mots. (PG, p. 377)

This passage warns again of the limitations of language and of the supremacy of contemplation, of an act of consciousness,
for arriving at an understanding of the community. Saint-Exupéry says that if he had to teach the values of patriotism and attachment to "un domaine" to men whose civilization did not already understand these values, he would not have a single argument capable of moving them. One can become attached to "une patrie," "un métier," "une civilisation," "une religion," only through personal experience:

Mais pour se réclamer de tels Êtres, il convient, d'abord, de les fonder en soi. Et, là où n'existe pas le sentiment de la patrie, aucun langage ne le transportera. On ne fonde en soi l'Être dont on se réclame que par des actes. Un Être n'est pas de l'empire du langage; mais de celui des actes. Notre Humanisme a négligé les actes. Il a échoué dans sa tentative. (PG, p. 377)

Thus, verbal activity is insufficient to establish a community. Speaking of a collectivity is meaningless unless some substantive activity has already created the ties which distinguish a community from a group of individuals, a cathedral from a pile of stones. The initial thrust of the communicative effort must be non-verbal, or all that will exist will be a group with the rhetoric, but not the experience, of unity.

Communication by Radio

Coded radio messages are a modified form of language, and they serve to transmit verbal communication between men over long distances. Being a pilot, Saint-Exupéry was well
aware of the importance of wireless radio in aerial navigation. His first three novels contain such an abundance of episodes dealing with radio communication that to neglect them would be to overlook a significant aspect of the global theme under study. Indeed, radio messages are the pilot's chief form of verbal communication.

It is of no small significance that the first line of *Courrier Sud* is a radio message:

Par radio. 6h. 10. De Toulouse pour escales: Courrier France-Amérique du Sud quitte Toulouse 5h. 45 stop. (CS, p. 3)

This first message orienting the reader in time and space is quickly followed by more telegrams using the same clipped phrasing which reveal an organized network of observation posts, the lifeline of the airmail company:

En dix minutes, la nouvelle nous parvenait par Barcelone, par Casablanca, par Agadir, puis se propageait vers Dakar. Sur cinq mille kilomètres de ligne, les aéroports étaient alertés.

Messages, like the mail run, originate from Toulouse: "Toulouse, tête de ligne. Dieu lointain." These messages are the only contact between an isolated relay post and the outside world. Their weekly arrival rejuvenates the post's existence and breaks the heavy silence between posts which Saint-Exupéry likens to the "silence entre les planètes
The short Chapter I ends with a flurry of telegrams as the various posts attempt to locate Bernis' plane. Once a plane is in the air, the main concern of dozens of relay stations is simply to keep in touch with it. Losing communication contact means losing the pilot, the plane, the mail, and jeopardizing the future of airmail service. The success of a mail flight depends on communication, and Saint-Exupéry, by devoting his first chapter to this aspect of aviation, lets the reader see that he is not only keenly aware of this dependence, but that he wishes to stress communication as a central theme of the novel.

When the novel's focus returns in Part III to Bernis' last flight, the role of radio communications surfaces once again. Depending on the content of telegrams received from the other stations, the men at a given post know whether to prepare for the plane's arrival or wait until later. These telegrams determine the sense of the activity at each station down the line:

A huit heures du soir, la T.S.F.
de Malaga communiqua: "Courrier passé sans atterrir." Et Casablanca essaya ses feux.

By the same token, if no message is received, the men at a given post cannot act because the absence of communication cannot be interpreted with certainty: plane delayed or lost? Equipment failure? A post losing radio contact is like a ship lost at sea: "...isolés du monde, nous lancements des signaux de détresse comme un navire." The usually harmonious activity at the waiting posts breaks down as their isolation and helplessness increases: "Ainsi à mille kilomètreset les uns des autres nous jetions dans la nuit des plaintes vaines" (CS, p. 53). Once contact becomes reestablished, however, order is restored just as quickly as chaos and despair had set in. The radio relays brisk, confident messages up and down the restored chain of posts, informing all of the plane's whereabouts and itinerary.

In a very short episode, Saint-Exupéry demonstrates the importance of radio to the airmail operations: Confidence reigns as long as telegrams can be successfully sent and received, disintegrates when contact is lost and reinstates itself with the return of radio contact. Radio communication is the fragile link from one post to the next which determines the success of this human and economic endeavor, just as communication between individuals—the achievement of a mutual understanding of purpose—determines the value of a
human relationship.

This same drama is repeated several pages later as the narrator waits for Bernis to arrive at Juby the next morning. This time we observe the actual operation of the wireless in an attempt to contact Agadir, from where Bernis has taken off for Juby. The passage echoes and amplifies the one just studied, showing in detail another aspect of the operation we have seen on a larger scale: the frustrations of the radio operator, the noise of the diesel motor running the generator, the transformation of code signals into words as the narrator watches the operator transcribe a message from Agadir to Casablanca:

Nous captions en fraude des secrets d'âne. Le crayon hésite, s'abat, cloue une lettre, puis deux, puis dix avec rapidité. Des mots se forment, semblent éclore.

Saint-Exupéry's insistence on the radio as a symbol as well as a means of communication is evident here. The functioning of the machine and the coded language result finally in a message that can be understood: the plane had to return to Agadir and leave again later; it is therefore not lost. While waiting for this message to come through, the narrator picks up a headset and is surprised at the number and variety of "voices" he hears: "Longues, brèves, trilles trop rapides, je déchiffre mal ce langage, mais combien de voix révélées dans un ciel que je croyais désert." As he differentiates one signal
from another, the operator identifies them as coming from Bordeaux, Dakar, Barcelona and Sainte-Assise. The narrator marvels at this manifestation of communication whose significance he appreciates even if he cannot decipher the signals:

Quel rendez-vous au Sahara! Toute l'Europe rassemblée, capitales aux voix d'oiseaux qui échangent des confidences. (CS, p. 59)

The now-familiar sequence of telegrams seeking information concerning Bernis' plane recurs in Chapter VII of Part III, as we watch the assembling of a search party from three different posts thousands of kilometers apart. Several short messages suffice to convey the urgency of the situation and to organize the search, emphasizing the efficiency of radio communications when conditions are favorable for transmission.

Just as it began with a radio message, Courrier Sud ends with two of them, one announcing the finding of the plane:

...Pilote tué avion brisé courrier intact. Stop. Continue sur Dakar.

The final message relays the safe arrival of the mail at its destination:

De Dakar pour Toulouse: courrier bien arrivé Dakar. Stop.
Significantly, this last message is for Toulouse, where the initial message and the flight originated. We know that all the stations along the line will relay the message until it reaches Toulouse, thus completing the circuit.

Bennis is dead, however, and the narrator blames himself for having lost contact with his friend: "Le fil de la vierge de mon amitié te liait à peine: berger infidèle, j'ai dû m'endormir" (CS, p. 77). Their personal communication has broken down, resulting in the death of Bennis. But on a larger scale communication has succeeded. The mail has arrived, and news of this will be sent to Toulouse. Thus, the purpose of the flight has been accomplished at the cost of one pilot and one plane, and communication between men through the airmail operation will continue even if it occasionally fails on the individual level.

Radio messages in the later works represent basically the same ties as seen in Courrier Sud. When established, radio contact with the outposts assures the pilot that the rest of his team will be able to support his efforts and come to his aid if need be. Once these ties are severed by bad weather or equipment failure, the pilot feels his inexorable solitude and is literally at the mercy of the elements, as well as being ironically bound to his plane and doomed to go down with it if his fuel runs out before he can reach safety.

As in Courrier Sud, Vol de nuit contains a radio
message on its first page. The first notes of this leitmotif announce the successful completion of one leg of Fabien's last flight:

"San Julian est en vue; nous atterrirons dans dix minutes."
Le radio navigant passait la nouvelle à tous les postes de la ligne. (VN, p. 81)

Again, as in Courrier Sud, we witness the relaying of this message from post to post, this time "du détroit de Magellan à Buenos Aires" (VN, p. 81), and learn the extent of the line of support backing up this flight. At this moment, all is well, with all outposts reporting "ciel pur, vent nul" (VN, p. 82). The navigator, however, has been hearing so much static caused by distant storms, that he feels a foreboding of disaster and asks Fabien if they will stay at San Julian or continue on by night. Fabien makes the fatal decision to continue and does not share the navigator's fears. Ironically, the very storm that will kill the aviators is now warning them by filling the navigator's earphones with static, but Fabien fails to read the significance of an unconscious message sent by nature to man. The navigator has sensed the danger of this "nuit ... belle et pourtant gâtée" (VN, p. 82), but he does not insist, and so he and Fabien fly on to their deaths.

Later, Rivière reflects on telegrams and how they can
disrupt a peaceful existence in a matter of seconds, transmitting a message like a secret from a far-off source, through the telephone, to the person who answers the phone, who in turn keeps the secret for a few seconds which seem like an eternity, before revealing it to the rest of the family:

Rivière pensait aux télégrammes qui touchent les familles sous les lampes du soir, puis au malheur qui, pendant des secondes presque éternelles, reste un secret dans le visage du père.

Tracing in his mind the message's progress, he cannot help hearing in the telephone's ring, an echo of the human suffering which provoked the telegram, even though the message originates as a mere radio wave whose pulsations are evoked here by Saint-Exupéry's poetic description:

Onde d'abord sans force, si loin du cri jeté, si calme. Et, chaque fois, il entendait son faible écho dans cette sonnerie discrète.

Once again, a telegram conveys more than the simple message it contains: this time it is a feeling of the misery that caused the message to be sent. On the lighter side, the regular messages sent and received constantly concerning information, the weather and supplies, are for Rivière, "les bruits familiers de la maison" (VN, p. 102), and they too, by suggesting the family-like cohesiveness of the "escales" united in a common effort, convey a meaning deeper than their
businesslike exchanges seem to indicate.

Soon, however, all telegrams have but one purpose: to rescue the two fliers caught suddenly in the cyclone whose earlier warnings they did not heed. In a rapid series of messages, Fabien learns that he is surrounded on all sides by the cyclone and radios his plight to Buenos Aires. This triggers a flurry of action in the company's central office, as Riviè re tries to determine if any outpost has clear enough weather for landing. One by one, the posts that are able to report that the cyclone has reached them. Many are unable to respond, the storm having knocked out their local communications. Riviè re is forced to telephone when the telegraph fails, but each message he receives tells him of the storm's progress:

Ainsi, chaque message menaçait le courrier. Chaque ville, quand elle pouvait répondre, avant la destruction des lignes, signalait la marche du cyclone, comme celle d'une invasion.

When the trouble first started, Riviè re had quickly telegraphed police in thirty towns hoping to find clear weather anywhere at all. Then, any "escale" making contact with the plane could notify "dans les trente secondes Buenos Aires, qui lui communiqueraient, pour la faire transmettre à Fabien, la position du refuge." But even this potentially effective chain of communication is too late, and Riviè re can do nothing but gaze out at the treacherous night which seems to
be mocking his efforts with its clear skies and "étoiles trop luisantes" (VN, p. 117) over Buenos Aires, while elsewhere it assists the cyclone in blinding Fabien and preventing his return.

Saint-Exupéry stresses the importance of radio communication to the success of aviation by emphasizing the helplessness of both plane and central office when this communication is hindered by severe weather: "Un avion, quelque part, était en péril dans ses [celles de la nuit] profondeurs: on s'agitait, impuissant, sur le bord" (VN, p. 117). The night becomes a sinister ocean, and the plane a ship lost at sea in a metaphor often used by Saint-Exupéry to describe the perilous nature of aviation during its early years.

When Fabien climbs above the clouds, communication again becomes possible. In a scene reminiscent of a similar episode in Courrier Sud, Saint-Exupéry describes the birth of a message as a radio operator at one of the outposts is able to decipher the plane's message despite the crackling of static:

Ils se penchaient sur un papier vierge et durement éclairé. La main de l'opérateur hésitait encore, et le crayon se balançait. La main de l'opérateur tenait encore les lettres prisonnières, mais déjà les doigts tremblaient.

.................................

Puis il nota quelques signes indéchiffrables. Puis des mots. Puis on put rétablir le texte.
Due to the storm, contact is intermittent and long-distance communication impossible, so they send the message one post at a time, forming a chain to reach Buenos Aires: "Le message avançait dans la nuit, comme un feu qu'on allume de tour en tour" (VN, p. 126). This allusion to a more primitive form of transmitting signals over long distance attests to the limping nature of the reestablished communication, as all involved make one last concerted effort to defeat the storm. The message reaches Buenos Aires, and a question makes its way "de veilleur en veilleur" as does the reply, telling Rivière that the plane has a half hour of fuel left. Contact has been reestablished ironically only to transmit the news that this plane will run out of fuel before it can escape the clutches of the relentless cyclone.

The next message the storm allows to reach the waiting outposts is also the last, and two different posts pick up several words each as the reconstructed chain of communication breaks down for the last time:

"Descendons. Entrons dans les nuages..."

"...............................
"...rien voir..." (VN, p. 130)

Saint-Exupéry explains the fickle nature of short wave transmission:

Les ondes courtes sont ainsi. On les capte là, mais ici on demeure sourd. Puis, sans raison, tout change. (VN, p. 131)
He goes on to suggest that, due to the short lapse of time
between the sending of the wire and its reception and trans-
scription, by the time the message is deciphered the flight
crew may already be dead and that, in effect, the outpost is
communicating not only with a plane whose location is unknown,
but with ghosts!

Cet équipage, dont la position est
inconnue, se manifeste déjà aux vivants,
hors de l'espace, hors du temps, et
sur les feuilles blanches des postes
radio ce sont déjà des fantômes qui
écrivent. (VN, p. 131)

This eerie suggestion serves also to point out once again the
unreliability of any form of communication.

Now that the crew has been lost and no more messages
are being received nor need to be sent, the very mechanism
for transmitting these messages has lost its usefulness and
appears to have died:

Et parmi tous ces nickels et ces
artères de cuivre, on ressent la tristesse
même qui règne sur les usines ruinées.
Tout ce matériel semble pesant, inutile,
désaffecté: un poids de branches mortes.
(VN, p. 132)

As if to complete the image of defeat, the means of com-
munication has become the symbol of broken communication,
dying with the men who could not successfully use it to stay
alive.
We learn after Fabien's disappearance that the flight coming down from Paraguay will arrive safely and that "Rivière, même aux pires heures, avait suivi, de télégramme en télégramme, sa marche heureuse." As futile as radio communication appeared during Fabien's flight, now it appears not only successful, but also routine:

Ce vol heureux annonçait, par ses télégrammes, mille autres vols heureux. "On n'a pas de cyclones toutes les nuits." Rivière pensait aussi: "une fois la route tracée, on ne peut pas ne plus poursuivre." (VM, p. 134)

This last scene lends a note of optimism to the portrait of the airmail operation and of the role played by radio communications. It also indicates Saint-Exupéry's objectivity in regard to radio success and failure, showing that he does not wish to create a one-sided impression by ending Vol de nuit with a communication breakdown.

We see the same pattern of radio communication in Terre des Hommes as in Vol de nuit. On a nighttime mail run, Saint-Exupéry and his navigator Néri are lost, having been misled by inaccurate position readings reported to them by the various "escales." They are able to maintain radio contact but, due to atmospheric conditions, cannot get their bearings:

Les escales qui nous répondaient
renonçaient à nous renseigner sur nous-mêmes: "Pas de relèvements... Pas de relèvements...", car notre voix leur parvenait de partout et de nulle part. (TH, p. 150)

They have flown out to sea unknowingly and are now heading for the coast desperately seeking the beacon at the Cisneros airstrip. Homing in on each light that appears at the horizon, they find that, one after another, each is in reality a star which disappears as the earth turns. Each star they spot becomes a beacon of hope for a short time as their fuel supply dwindles:

Malgré l'essence qui s'épuisait, nous mordions, chaque fois, aux hameçons d'or, c'était, chaque fois, la vraie lumière d'un phare, c'était, chaque fois, l'escale et la vie, puis il nous fallait changer d'étoile. (TH, p. 151)

They suddenly feel "perdus dans l'espace interplanétaire" (TH, p. 151), in which the deceptive stars are "cent planètes inaccessibles" (TH, p. 151). Their only hope is to find "la seule planète véritable, ... la nôtre, ... celle qui, seule, contenait nos paysages familiers, nos maisons amies, nos tendresses" (TH, p. 151). This passage recalls Fabien's situation when he and his navigator break through the clouds only to find themselves in a sort of limbo-world where they are condemned to wander alone until their fuel runs out.

We see here, as in Vol de nuit, the network of radio
communications suddenly become reestablished, as once again Saint-Exupéry demonstrates the effectiveness of this chain. Cisneros is finally able to pinpoint their position and advises them on a course which will take them there. Because of their low fuel supply, Saint-Exupéry decides to maintain his present course in hopes of at least reaching the coast. At this point, all the outposts react in an attempt to guide them to safety:


Once again, as in Courrier Sud, Toulouse breaks in with the information that changes the entire situation: their plane's fuel tank is larger than they had thought, and they have enough fuel to make it to Cisneros. This personal experience, or others like it, may well have been the source for similar episodes in Courrier Sud and Vol de nuit which stress the essential role played by radio communication in flying at night or whenever weather conditions are less than ideal. It is very likely that such experiences caused Saint-Exupéry to see the symbolic nature of radio messages and their relevance to
the broader theme of human communication.
CHAPTER TWO

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN COURRIER SUD,

VOL DE NUIT, TERRE DES HOMMES AND

PILOTE DE GUERRE

Introduction

In addition to the evident role of language as a means of communication, Saint-Exupéry recognizes certain non-verbal types of communication between men.

He refers to gestures as a sometimes effective means of communication, which may at times be elaborated into a language. People also communicate with the world of objects: Courrier Sud gives us our first glimpse into the nature and meaning of non-verbal links between people and things.

These means and symbols of non-verbal communication reappear in Vol de nuit where they create a sort of background upon which Fabien's dramatic struggle for life and Rivière's noble quest for "des réalites qui durent" are depicted. In Terre des Hommes, these same elements recur from one episode to the next, helping to relate these diverse periods of Saint-Exupéry's life spanning ten years of experience in aviation.

In Vol de nuit, Terre des Hommes, and in Pilote de guerre, we see pilots experiencing vital relationships with their planes which enable them to discover a new contact with the earth.
Other types of non-verbal communication which we can observe in Courrier Sud appear in the later works, where they take on additional dimension. Saint-Exupéry shows a continual awareness of the dynamics of gestures and body language in Vol de nuit and in Pilote de guerre, where he recalls observing unconscious gestures which in retrospect turned out to be prophetic of the person's death. In Vol de nuit and in Terre des Hommes, Saint-Exupéry, as well as his characters, "reads" a variety of signs or signals from the natural world which go unnoticed by the uninitiated observer. Finally, Pilote de guerre depicts the French defeat in 1940 and the accompanying breakdown of communications of all sorts.

\textbf{Communication with the Airplane and with Other Objects}

We first see Simone Fabien as she is making her usual preparations for her husband's return, following his progress on her clock, as each hour brings him "escale" by "escale" closer to Buenos Aires. At the time he should be approaching, she rises and prepares his dinner. Each gesture has a meaning and is linked with the timing of Fabien's arrival. As soon as she learns of his delay, however, the sense of her actions disappears, and her ties with the objects in her home break down, leaving her helpless. She senses the meaning of her entire way of life threatened by a contrary truth that she and her domestic happiness are powerless to fight: "Elle était
retombée, presque à ses pieds, lui semblait-il [à Rivière],
ayant usé ses faibles poings contre le mur" (VN, p. 120). She
visits Rivière's office in hopes of finding some sign that
Fabien has not disappeared, because: "Chez elle tout montrait
cette absence: le lit entrouvert, le café servi, un bouquet
de fleurs..." (VN, p. 128). But here in the company office,
her ties remain broken:

Elle ne découvrait aucun signe.
Tout s'opposait à la pitié, à l'amitié,
au souvenir. (VN, p. 128)

She finds that in this other world, life goes on as before.
There are other flights to watch, many small jobs to do, ges-
tures to make. Here, all these activities have a sense just
as her own once did. Rivière acknowledges that former sense
and thinks about her actions and the household objects which
will still reach out for Fabien for some time to come:

Pour cette femme aussi, la mort de
Fabien commencerait demain à peine,
dans chaque acte désormais vain, dans
dans chaque objet. Fabien quitterait
lentement sa maison. (VN, p. 129)

Eventually, she will probably create new ties which will
restore meaning to her life, but at the moment her freshly cut
ties are dying slowly, like severed nerves whose throbbing re-
minds one of a recent wound which has not yet healed.

Nearly all of Saint-Exupéry's pilots experience a
feeling of unity with the planes they fly. This usually begins with the sensation that the plane is a living creature. Bernis' relationship with his plane is almost human. Before take-off, he controls the plane's engine as it warms up, but once in the air he gradually allows the plane to rise of its own accord. He responds to the plane's "desire" to seek a cruising altitude and lets each surge of the motor lift him like a wave and rush through him:

Maintenant, il résiste moins à l'avion qui cherche à monter, laisse s'épanouir un peu la force que sa main comprime. Il libère d'un mouvement de son poignet chaque vague qui le soulève et qui se propage en lui comme une onde. (CS, p. 6)

Saint-Exupéry describes Fabien's discovery of this sensation, which comes as no surprise to the pilot. In a gesture suggestive of a caress ("effleura"), Fabien runs his finger along a steel longeron and feels life flowing through it: "Le métal ne vibrait pas, mais vivait" (VN, p. 83). The power of the motor provokes a metamorphosis in this "matière" and changes "sa glace en chair de velours" (VN, p. 83). The line which follows strongly suggests that this sensation is altogether natural and normal: "Une fois de plus, le pilote n'éprouvait, en vol, ni vertige, ni ivresse, mais le travail mystérieux d'une chair vivante" (VN, p. 83). This qualification—"ni vertige, ni ivresse"—attests to the pilot's
acceptance of this life he senses in the plane, which is the first step in any kind of communication. We are reminded of the plane's life once again a page later by the phrase "l'avion qui respire" (VN, p. 84). And again in the final episode, when the pilot about to make the Europe flight is leaning against his plane while the ground crew starts the motor:

Le pilote ne bougea pas. On mettait son moteur en marche. Le pilote allait sentir dans ses épaules, appuyées à l'avion, cet avion vivre. (VN, p. 135)

In Terre des Hommes, Saint-Exupéry describes once again the pilot's feeling that the plane lives and that he communicates with it as with a living creature:

Il sent se préparer, dans ces quinze tonnes de matières, cette maturité qui permet le vol. Le pilote ferme les mains sur les commandes et, peu à peu, dans ses paumes creuses, il reçoit ce pouvoir comme un don. Les organes de métal des commandes, à mesure que ce don lui est accordé, se font les messagers de sa puissance. Quand elle est mûre, d'un mouvement plus souple que celui de cueillir, le pilote sépare l'avion d'avec les eaux, et l'établit dans les airs. (TH, p. 170)

The plane communicates to the pilot that it is ready to fly and transfers the power to him. He manipulates this power, controlling the huge machine and transforming its blind rush into a poetic gesture. This passage from Terre des Hommes
conveys the same sensation as the above passage from *Vol de nuit*, with the only difference being an elaboration of the metaphor which reinforces the impression of exchange between plane and pilot. Saint-Exupéry shows more interest here in the pilot's role also, by suggesting the gracefulness of the take-off.

In *Pilote de guerre*, Saint-Exupéry displays an ever-growing concern for precision of impression, describing his relationship with his plane as symbiotic. He controls the plane's speed and direction, but the plane keeps him warm and supplies him with oxygen, as well as providing a means of communication (through speaking tubes) with his crew members, from whom it isolates him physically:

> Un tube en caoutchouc me relie à l'avion, tout aussi essentiel que le cordon omnilcal. L'avion entre en circuit dans la température de mon sang. L'avion entre en circuit dans mes communications humaines. On m'a ajouté des organes qui s'interposent, en quelque sorte, entre moi et mon coeur. *(PG, p. 278)*

When dressing before a flight, he says he feels like a walking junk dealer ("brocanteur") and complains that the extra weight of his gear makes his joints and his old fractures hurt. But once in the plane, he experiences the same relief Bernis felt and speaks almost lovingly of the plane and its paraphernalia:
Ma paix est faite aussi de ce que tous les instruments dont j'étais encombré ont pris leur place et reçu leur signification. Toute cette tripaille de tuyaux et de cables est devenue réseau de circulation. Je suis un organisme étendu à l'avion. L'avion me fabrique mon bien-être, quand je tourne tel bouton qui réchauffe progressivement mes vêtements et mon oxygène. ... Et c'est l'avion qui m'alimente. Cela me paraissait inhumain avant le vol, et maintenant, allaité par l'avion lui-même, j'éprouve pour lui une sorte de tendresse filiale. Une sorte de tendresse de nourrisson.

(PG, pp. 282-283)

The pilot's dependence on the proper functioning of his equipment is evident here, and Saint-Exupéry reminds the reader of this dependence several more times. He must constantly verify his oxygen supply and check the condition of his crew (See: Part III, Chapter One above) because oxygen failure can cause death in a matter of minutes, and because the first signs are "une euphorie vague" (PG, p. 284) which the victim may fail to interpret correctly. Physical exertion, which demands increased oxygen, can cause the flier to suffer the same symptoms because his oxygen supply is automatically regulated for normal needs at a given altitude. Thus, when Saint-Exupéry strains to dislodge a frozen control, he nearly blacks out, and only afterwards does he realize what has happened. His foolishness in this instance nearly cost him his life, and he heeds the warning during the rest of the flight. This brush with death serves to illustrate the significance and vulnerability of the close bond between pilot and plane, which must be
carefully controlled throughout the flight.

**Communication with the Earth**

We have seen how the plane acts as an organ of perception, allowing the pilot to see the earth below him in ways he never has before (See: Chapter Two of Part I above). Saint-Exupéry draws upon his rich experience of observing the earth below from a pilot’s perspective, and in *Vol de nuit* and *Terre des Hommes* he identifies several ways in which this perspective enhances man’s interaction with as well as his perception of his world. He views natural elements anthropomorphically at times, as they appear actively to resist the pilot’s efforts. From their elevated perspective, Saint-Exupéry and his pilots occasionally experience a communication with men below via the lights of a city. The variations of the pilot’s attitude in this case range from patronizing to humbly grateful for human presence and lights to steer by.

In *Terre des Hommes*, Saint-Exupéry meditates on the role of his métier in the establishment of new ties between men and the earth. The pilot must constantly watch for weather changes which will menace or favor his efforts. A large cloud mass at the horizon is more than part of the scenery. It will perhaps spell trouble, and the pilot, in readying himself for this eventuality, discovers that "un langage véritable la lie à lui." Likewise, a distant peak
attracts his attention. If the sky remains clear, the mountain will serve as a landmark. But if clouds obscure his view, "le pic se changera en explosif, il remplira de sa menace la nuit entière, de même qu'une seule mine immergée, promenée au gré des courants, gâte toute la mer" (TH, p. 154).

When he flies into a cloud at night, the reflection of his wing-tip running-lights on the cloud forms "un bouquet rose" which glows intermittently as the cloud's density varies. He expresses his dislike for "ces communications chiffrées avec les démons de la nuit" (TH, p. 216).

Saint-Exupéry compares the pilot to a farmer who "reads" the weather and seasonal changes, deciphering their messages which tell him when to plant and harvest. The importance of the airplane in forming this new relationship with the earth is clear: "La machine, qui semblait d'abord l'en écarter, le soumet, avec plus de rigueur encore, aux grands problèmes naturels." Saint-Exupéry concludes the opening section of Terre des Hommes by expanding the image of the pilot's contact with the elements into that of a trial-by-ordeal pitting the pilot against "trois divinités élémentaires, la montagne, la mer et l'orage" (TH, p. 154).

In a passage near the end of Part VII, "Au centre du désert," Saint-Exupéry compares the airplane to the farmer's plow, saying "ce n'est pas une fin, c'est un moyen" by which "l'on retrouve une vérité paysanne." He goes on to explain the
dimensions of the pilot's contact with the earth:

On fait un travail d'homme et l'on connaît des soucis d'homme. On est en contact avec le vent, avec les étoiles, avec la nuit, avec le sable, avec la mer. On ruse avec les forces naturelles. On attend l'aube comme le jardinier attend le printemps. On attend l'escale comme une terre promise, et l'on cherche la vérité dans les étoiles. (TH, p. 237)

The direct contact with the forces of nature, which becomes a two-way communication because one must "read" the signs correctly and then act accordingly within the element one is struggling against, bestows a new meaning upon natural phenomena precisely because of the pilot's dependence (like the farmer's) on what for others is simply a change in decor. Thus, the pilot is impatient for dawn as the gardener is for spring, and he looks to the stars for guidance in a real sense as well as for a spiritual reassurance that the natural elements favor his success. Likewise, each "escale" along the way becomes--more than a refueling station--a promised land whose rewards await the successful pilot but which must be continually won again and again as he makes his way from one end of the line to the other.

In Vol de nuit, Saint-Exupéry shows us that the pilot occasionally perceives the earth and other natural manifestations not only as living entities, but also as hostile forces having almost human traits. Pellerin describes his
encounter with a cyclone in terms of a struggle with angry beings, and Saint-Exupéry calls him "le témoin d'un miracle" (VN, p. 88). He first senses that something is wrong when he feels he is being watched, then that he is surrounded "par de la colère," which he guesses somehow "suivait des pierres, ... de la neige" (VN, p. 88). As he watches the harsh Andean landscape, he sees it slowly begin to change, to come alive, as if emerging from a dormant, neutral state to become human:

Mais un monde à peine différent, sur place, sortait de l'autre. Pellerin regardait, avec un serrement de coeur inexplicable, ces pics innocents, ces arêtes, ces crêtes de neige, à peine plus gris, et qui pourtant commençaient à vivre—comme un peuple. (VN, p. 88)

The mountains remain calm, "mais chargés d'un étrange pouvoir," for awhile, but then they begin to deploy around him like "navires géants qui s'installent pour le combat" (VN, p. 88), and finally the storm breaks loose with all its fury. Pellerin cannot remember much about the storm itself, except that he fought it with a violent determination. Afterwards, he has forgotten the details and says:

"Le cyclone, ce n'est rien. On sauve sa peau. Mais auparavant! Mais cette rencontre que l'on fait!"
Il pensait reconnaître entre mille, un certain visage, et pourtant il l'avait déjà oublié. (VN, p. 89)
He cannot recall the precise image of the illusive face he saw form in the mountains, but he retains the acute awareness of having seen and understood something fiercely human in the moments before the storm.

Fabien experiences a similar awareness as he struggles with the storm that eventually kills him. Saint-Exupéry describes his face which he does not turn away from the storm: "cette moue, cette volonté, cette colère, tout ce qui s'échangeait d'essentiel, entre ce visage pâle et, là-bas, ces courtes lueurs" (VN, p. 99).

Fabien's hands on the plane's controls give the impression of throttling the storm which appears as a beast: "Sans doute ces mains, fermées sur les commandes, pesaient déjà sur la tempête, comme sur la nuque d'une bête" (VN, p. 99). The aviator's hands hold a great deal of interest for Saint-Exupéry, who shows Fabien losing his grip on the controls as the storm intensifies. At one point Fabien realizes that he literally holds his life and that of his navigator in his hands, and this thought frightens him because his hands have become numb. The fear that his hands might open of their own accord obsesses him, and he finally climbs above the storm. (Saint-Exupéry reports feeling this same sensation when fighting a storm in a passage cut from Terre des Hommes, but appearing in the English translation and later in Un Sens à la vie [pp. 199-200].)
For Rivière, the pilot's hands can perform miracles. He thinks of various significant gestures by which Fabien has communicated his love, and how the pilot now controls his own destiny, if only for a short while:

Rivière pense à la main de Fabien, qui tient pour quelques minutes encore sa destinée dans les commandes. Cette main qui a caressé. Cette main qui s'est posée sur une poitrine et y a levé le tumulte, comme une main divine. Cette main qui s'est posée sur un visage, et qui a changé ce visage. Cette main qui était miraculeuse. (VF, p. 127)

In a progression of images, the significance of Fabien's hands follows an ascension to where they take on symbolic importance as the representative and protector of all that which is human as they cling in desperation to the controls for the last time:

Il tient encore le monde dans les mains et contre sa poitrine le balance. Il serre dans son volant le poids de la richesse humaine, et promène désespéré, d'une étoile à l'autre, l'inutile trésor, qu'il faudra bien rendre...
(VF, p. 127)

Saint-Exupéry calls the airplane at times "un outil" and also "un instrument d'analyse," stressing the plane's role as that of an intermediary between man and his world, an intermediary man can use to see more clearly and better understand a world which until now he thought he knew well. In
Part IV of *Terre des Hommes*, "L'avion et la planète," Saint-Exupéry informs us that "cet instrument nous a fait découvrir le vrai visage de la terre," because "avec l'avion, nous avons appris la ligne droite" (*TH*, p. 171). Our roads have deceived us for centuries because they avoid "les terres stériles, les rocs, les sables" and instead "vont de fontaine en fontaine" (*TH*, p. 171). We have consequently come to believe that the earth is a tame planet controlled by man:

Nous avons longtemps embelli l'image de notre prison. Cette planète, nous l'avons crue humide et tendre. (*TH*, p. 171)

Man's conception of his superiority has received support from his vision of the rest of the earth and is nothing but an illusion. Once in the air, the pilot learns very quickly the true proportions between inhabited and uninhabited land, between the earth's mineral sterility and occasional signs of life:

Alors seulement du haut de nos trajectoires rectilignes, nous découvrons le soubassement essentiel, l'assise de rocs, de sable et de sel, où la vie, quelquefois, comme un peu de mousse au creux des ruines, ici et là se hasarde à fleurir. (*TH*, p. 172)

This new perspective changes the pilot into a scientist who sees man not as the dominant force in the world, but as a
laboratory curiosity. All of man's history takes on a
different meaning as man himself is seen in this new light:

Nous voilà donc jugeant l'homme à
l'échelle cosmique, l'observant à
travers nos hublots, comme à travers
des instruments d'étude. Nous voilà
relisant notre histoire. (TH, p. 172)

At the same time, however, human life becomes a miracle when a
city like Punta Arenas is "permise par le hasard d'un peu de
boue, entre les laves originelles et les glaces australales" (TH,
p. 173). Saint-Exupéry's new perspective leaves him in awe as
he contemplates man's relative unimportance on a universal
scale and his uniqueness at the level of individual conscious-
ness, echoing the pascalian vision of man.

Fabien sees himself as the shepherd of the small
villages he flies over, passing from one to the next as a
shepherd would move from flock to flock:

Les bergers de Patagonie vont, sans
se presser, d'un troupeau à l'autre:
il allait d'une ville à l'autre, il
était le berger des petits villages.
Toutes les deux heures il en rencontrait
qui venaient boire au bord des fleuves
ou qui broutaient leur plaine. (VN, p. 81)

A "ferme perdue" appears to him like a ship carrying "sa charge
de vies humaines" (VN, p. 81), and he dips his wings as one
might wave to a distant vessel. Later, as he flies over
lighted villages at dusk, he blinks his running lights in a
similar salute, as if to thank them for lighting his path:
"La terre était tendue d'appels lumineux, chaque maison
allumant son étoile, face à l'immense nuit, ainsi qu'on tourne
un phare vers la mer" (VN, p. 83). This time, the roles are
reversed, and the plane seems to be the ship that the earth is
watching over. At the same time, each light below represents
a human life and is, in a sense, communicating this presence to
the pilot: "Tout ce qui couvrait une vie humaine déjà scintillait"
(VN, p. 83). Saint-Exupéry develops this image a page later to
establish a minor theme of one-way communication between the
unconscious lights below and the pilot above who reads their
involuntary message of man's presence:

Et maintenant, au coeur de la nuit
comme un veilleur, il découvre que la
nuit montre l'homme: ces appels, ces
lumières, cette inquiétude. Cette
simple étoile dans l'ombre: l'isolement
d'une maison. L'une s'éteint: c'est
une maison qui se ferme sur son amour.
(VN, p. 84)

For Fabien, each light bears the same message, a radiant hope
to bridge the physical and spiritual distance between men, a
hope for communication. A peasant family gathered around its
table is unaware both of the sense of their hope and that some-
one else can detect its presence:

Ils ne savent pas que leur désir
porte si loin, dans la grande nuit
qui les enferme. Mais Fabien le
découvre quand il vient de mille
kilomètres et sent des lames de
dond profondes soulever et descendre
l'avion qui respire. ... Ces hommes
croient que leur lampe luit pour
l'humble table, mais à quatre-vingts
kilomètres d'eux, on est déjà touché
par l'appel de cette lumière, comme
s'ils la balançaient désespérés, d'une
île déserte, devant la mer. (vn, p. 84)

This image is rather complex: men who do not know they are
reaching out to other men, as if to be rescued from a desert
island, are indeed making contact with the pilot who not only
recognizes their presence but guesses their unconscious hope,
while at the same time guiding his flight by the lights of their
houses, which are the instruments of this contact.

In one of the last pages of **Vol de nuit**, we find an
echo of several of the images discussed above:

Les petites villes d'Argentine
égrenaient déjà, dans la nuit, tout
leur or, sous l'or plus pâle des villes
d'étoiles. Le pilote, à l'avant,
soutenant de ses mains sa précieuse
charge de vies humaines, les yeux
grands ouverts et pleins de lune, comme
un chevalier. Buenos Aires, déjà,
emplissait l'horizon de son feu rose,
et bientôt luirait de toutes ses
pierrres, ainsi qu'un trésor fabuleux.
(vn, p. 135)

Here, at the end of a successful flight, the pilot sees and
feels the same things Fabien did at the beginning of his ill-
fated flight. In addition to reinforcing the original images,
this passage stresses the continuity of these and all other
endeavors concerning night airmail flights. Such flights are essentially the same experience repeated over and over, and although a few may fail in their immediate goal, each contributes to the greater goal of furthering human communication.

Communication by Gestures

Saint-Exupéry considers gestures to be a type of language, and, like language, to be sometimes successful, sometimes unsuccessful as a means of communication. When Geneviève first comes to Bernis after a confrontation and misunderstanding with her husband concerning her behavior during their son's illness, Saint-Exupéry points out briefly but poignantly that gestures can belie the communication they appear to represent:

Elle appuyait son front à son épaule et Bernis crut que Geneviève, tout entière, trouvait là son refuge. Sans doute le croyait-elle aussi. Sans doute ne croyaient-ils pas que l'on aventure, sous la caresse, bien peu de soi-même.  
(CS, p. 29)

This judgment turns out to be prophetic of their entire adventure whose failure we traced through their inadequate verbal communication above. Here, Saint-Exupéry seems to say that the non-verbal communication of gestures runs the same risk of failure as does language.

After hearing the sermon at Notre Dame, Bernis spends
the evening in a night club where he observes a symphony of gestures, all of which have far more meaning for him than the sermon he has just heard. The dancers seem to take on the soul of the dance: "...l'âme du ballet leur prêtait une âme." Their fluid gestures, changing each time just before fixing themselves in any clear image, have a disquieting effect on the senses, but Bernis perceives a message in their fluidity:

Elles inquiétaient les sens de toujours dénouer l'image qui était sur le point de s'établir, et, au seuil du repos, de la mort, de la résoudre encore en mouvements. C'était l'expression même du désir.

Bernis can see only the back of the woman sitting in front of him; his first impression is "un mur." But as he watches her, the "wall" becomes a smooth lake whose surface ripples with the slightest disturbance:

Devant lui ce dos mystérieux, lisse comme la surface d'un lac. Mais un geste ébouché, une pensée ou un frisson y propagent une grande ondulation d'ombre.

No clear message is transmitted by this woman's slight movements, but Bernis feels an attraction for what lies below the surface: "J'ai besoin de tout ce qui se meut, là-dessous, d'obscur" (CS, p. 48). Her gestures suggest the secret existence of another being, but do not betray its nature.

The dancers finish their number, leaving the same vague
impression: "Les danseuses saluait, ayant tracé, puis
effacé quelques énigmes dans le sable" (CS, p. 48). As Bernis
calls "la plus légère" dancer over to his table, he suddenly
discovers the meaning of the gestures he has been witnessing.
Everyone here is merely doing his job which harmonizes with the
jobs of the others. The gestures they make fuse together to
transmit a message to the customer who alone can gather its sense:

Toute cette agitation nocture prenait
un sens. L'agitation des grooms, des
chauffeurs de taxi, du maître d'hôtel.
Ils faisaient leur métier, qui est, en
fin de compte, de pousser devant lui ce
champagne et cette fille lasse. ... Cette
danse même, qui rassemblait des gestes
pour en composer un langage, ne pouvait
parler qu'à l'étranger. L'étranger seul
découvrait ici une construction mais qu'eux
et elles avaient oublée depuis longtemps.
(CS, pp. 48-49)

Ironically, the communication here is a one-way experience. A
lonely man finds meaning and a little solace in the mechanical
actions of night club employees whose jobs have become merely a
routine. These people can help alleviate his loneliness, even
though they are never aware of the feelings motivating him to
come to a bar looking for a girl.

In Vol de nuit as in Pilote de guerre, there are
several moments of both voluntary and involuntary communication
through gestures. As he is debating whether or not to dismiss
an old employee for a mistake (his first in twenty years) that could have cost a pilot's life, Rivière remembers his conversation with the man he was removing from his job. Roblet's verbal pleas are to no avail, but his voice is not alone in conveying his dedication to his work. As he shows Rivière a photograph of himself with the first plane assembled in Argentina, his hands betray his pride: "Rivière voyait les vieilles mains trembler sur cette gloire naïve" (VN, p. 104). Untouched by Roblet's words, Rivière respects him nonetheless for the work he has done in the past and cannot help noticing his hands which attest to his past competence and almost win over the chief who struggles to be firm: "Et les vieilles mains tremblaient, et Rivière détournait les yeux de cette peau fripée, épaisse et belle" (VN, p. 104). The old man's hands are almost disembodied as they speak better for what he has done than do the words he can muster. Returning from his recollection of this confrontation, Rivière cannot banish from his mind the haunting impression of these hands, even stronger than that of the old man's face:

"J'aimais bien le visage de ce vieux compagnon..." Et Rivière revoyait ces mains. Il pensait à ce faible mouvement qu'elles ébaucheraient pour se joindre. Il suffirait de dire: "Ça va. Ça va. Restez." (VN, p. 105)

Rivière nearly relents and destroys the dismissal order he is about to sign as the obsession grows in his mind:
Rivière rêvait au ruissellement de joie qui descendrait dans ces vieilles mains. Et cette joie que diraient, qu'allai t'on dire, non ce visage, mais ces vieilles mains d'ouvrier, lui parut la chose la plus belle du monde. "Je vais déchirer cette note?" (VN, p. 105)

Rivière has read the message inherent in the all but imperceptible gestures of an old worker's hands, indeed the message of the hands themselves: twenty years of dedication to the trade through which Rivière is trying to forge the greatness of his men. It is sad that he is so sensitive as to perceive this message and yet must be so severe as to turn away such dedication for the security of the future of his endeavor.

Saint-Exupéry describes several other gestures which convey significant meaning and which serve perfectly to communicate what words cannot for various reasons. After struggling with the cyclone for so long that he has nearly run out of fuel, Fabien climbs above the storm to where all is serene. He and his navigator exchange smiles, and the navigator shouts his relief, "mais la voix se perdait dans le bruit du vol, seuls communiquaient les sourires" (VN, p. 125). Fabien knows they are doomed, but this knowledge does not keep him from sharing a moment of joy and peace with the comrade with whom he has fought this losing battle.

We witness another brief gesture whose meaning is instantly understood by those present. Immediately after the fliers break through the clouds, they telegraph for help:
Un des radiotélégraphistes de Commodoro Rivadavia, escale de Patagonie, fit un geste brusque, et tous ceux qui veillaient, impuissants, dans le poste, se remassaient autour de cet homme, et se penchèrent. (VN, p. 125)

The telegraph operator's gesture conveys to those around him that he has picked up what they have all been waiting for. Even before the message is transmitted and received, this gesture has told the "veilleurs" the essential: the fliers are still alive and able to communicate.

When Simone Fabien, unable to wait any longer without word of her husband's status, comes to see Rivièræ, they exchange few words. She has come looking for some reassurance, an official confirmation of Fabien's continued existence, because his existence alone can give meaning to her actions: "Elle venait plaider timidement pour ses fleurs, son café servi, sa chair jeune." But she finds herself out of place in this world of business, this technical world of flying, in which she has been an unwilling participant and an innocent victim. As this is Rivièræ's world, so, she finds, hers is elsewhere and incommunicable: "Elle aussi découvrait sa propre vérité, dans cet autre monde, inexprimable." And so she cannot speak, but Rivièræ is sensitive enough to perceive the meaning her gestures betray, as well as the reasons for her hesitation:

Elle eut un faible haussement d'épaules, dont Rivièræ comprit le sens: "A quoi bon
cette lampe, ce diner servi, ces fleurs que je vais retrouver..."

After she has left without saying another word, Rivière considers her visit to have been of great importance and an aid to him in seeing more clearly his own goals:

"Mais elle m'aide à découvrir ce que je cherchais..."

"Nous ne demandons pas à être éternels, mais à ne pas voir les actes et les choses tout à coup perdre leur sens. Le vide qui nous entoure se montre alors..."

(VN, p. 129)

She has unwittingly given strength to Rivière, when she came seeking the same thing for herself, and has shown him not only that another truth exists which is as real as his own, but that these two truths are striving toward the same goal, even though they are, unfortunately, incompatible.

A very interesting episode concerning gestures and non-verbal communication through absence of gestures occurs as Fabien's plane begins to encounter rough weather. The navigator reaches out twice to touch the shoulder of the pilot who does not move or acknowledge the gesture. Saint-Exupéry describes Fabien as completely absorbed in the incipient struggle and his features and feelings as impenetrable to the navigator who can see only the pilot's head and shoulders in the dimly-lit cockpit, and who "regardait cette nuque sombre." Although Fabien does not respond, the navigator feels confidence in the
pilot's ability. This very lack of response communicates a sense of security:

Il devinait pourtant la puissance ramassée dans l'immobilité de cette ombre, et il l'aimait. Elle l'emportait sans doute vers l'orage, mais aussi elle le couvrait....
Le radio pensa qu'après tout le pilot était responsable. Et maintenant, il savourait, entraîné en croupe dans ce galop vers l'incendie, ce que cette forme sombre, là, devant lui, exprimait de matériel et de pesant, ce qu'elle exprimait de durable. (VN, p. 99)

He reads in the pilot's steadfastness an assurance which is in reality not there and mistakes the total dedication to their craft that Saint-Exupéry depicts in all his pilots for an immediate guarantee of his own safety. He witnesses in Fabien, without knowing it, one manifestation of the universal airline pilot.

Just as gestures may communicate when no words are exchanged, a person may involuntarily convey his thoughts or feelings through body language. Saint-Exupéry mentions the nose of one of his comrades which turns bright red the day he is ordered to fly what turns out to be his last mission. Remembering this incident after the pilot's disappearance, Saint-Exupéry reconstructs the scene between the pilot and his commanding officer:
Israël, certes, n'avait rien répondu à l'ordre du départ, sinon: "Oui, mon Commandant. Bien, mon Commandant. Entendu, mon Commandant." Israël, certes, n'avait pas tressailli d'un seul des muscles de son visage. Mais, doucement, insidieusement, traîtreusement, le nez s'était allumé. Israël contrôlait les traits de son visage, mais non la couleur de son nez. Et le nez en avait abusé pour se manifester, à son compte, dans le silence. Le nez, à l'insu d'Israël, avait exprimé au Commandant sa forte désapprobation.

Saint-Exupéry adds that, had he been the commanding officer, the memory of Israël's nose would have haunted him as a reproach for a long time. Israël, he suggests, had the premonition that he would die on this mission, but his courage ("Il devait le prendre pour de la prudence" (FG, p. 273) forced him to remain silent, while only his nose betrayed his feelings.

Another comrade displayed an even subtler reaction when ordered out on his last mission. Saint-Exupéry calls this man "T." and says his fear was as strong as Israël's courage. T. simply stiffens slowly into a solid block of anxiety until he appears as transformed:

Son visage était comme lavé de toute expression. Et les yeux commençaient de luire.
Contrairement à Israël, dont le nez m'avait paru tellement pénaud, pénaud de la mort probable d'Israël, en même temps que tout irrité, T. ne formait point de mouvements intérieurs. Il ne réagissait pas: il muait. Quand on avait achevé de parler à T., on
découvrait que l'on avait simplement en lui allumé l'angoisse. L'angoisse commençait de répandre sur son visage une sorte de clarté égale. T., dès lors, était comme hors d'atteinte. On sentait s'élargir, entre l'univers et lui, un désert d'indifférence. Jamais ailleurs, chez nul au monde, je n'ai connu cette forme d'extase. (PG, p. 274)

And on that day, T. inexplicably parachuted from his tail-gunner position over French territory only ten minutes from the base while returning from a mission. He was struck by the plane's rudder and killed. He had insisted on going on the flight, since it was his turn to do so, although the commander had offered to replace him since he appeared so strange. Saint-Exupéry tells us that Alias, the commander, does not like to send off those who seem "accablés de pressentiments," even though "les pressentiments trompent presque toujours" (PG, p. 273), because such forewarnings make an order sound like a death sentence.

These few striking episodes demonstrate Saint-Exupéry's interest in gestures and his awareness of the involuntary signals which our bodies produce under stress. Their role in the overall theme of communication is evident: when a person cannot find the words to express himself, or when he does not wish to speak, his movements often speak for him. Our control of gestures is often less complete than that of our language, and so we may convey a very clear message to an
observer perceptive enough to interpret involuntary gestures.

Music and Other Signs

Instrumental music is a form of non-verbal communication, and in Vol de nuit we learn that classical music has a meaning for Rivière which escapes his friends:

Une phrase musicale lui revint:
quelques notes d'une sonate qu'il
écoutait hier avec des amis. Ses
amis n'avaient pas compris: "Cet
art-là nous ennuie et vous ennuie,
seulement vous ne l'avouez pas."

He feels alone because of his superior understanding, but at the same time discovers "la richesse d'une telle solitude."
He alone understands the message the music bears and in this way is privy to "la douceur d'un secret." In the same way, the night has meaning for him:

Ainsi le signe de l'étoile. On
lui parlait pardessus tant d'épaules,
un langage qu'il entendait seul.
(VM, p. 100)

The stars tell him of clear weather and thus predict the safety of his pilots and the success of the mail flights. He sees a star seeking him out in a crowd in order to give him this sign which constitutes a whole language—that of meteorology and its relationship to aviation.

Rivière thinks of the telegrams sent by a plane in
flight as musical, perhaps because of the sound of messages sent in Morse Code, or perhaps because--like the music he is so fond of--the telegrams convey a deeper meaning. He recalls nights when disorder reigned,

Où l'avion lui semblait dangereusement enfoncé et si difficile à secourir. On suivait, du poste radio de Buenos Aires, sa plainte mêlée au grésillement des orages. Sous cette gangue sourde, l'or de l'onde musicale se perdait. Quelle détresse dans le chant mineur d'un courrier jeté en flèche aveugle vers les obstacles de la nuit! (VN, p. 95)

Here the song is plaintive, almost drowned out by static, and the fragility of the telegram's music translates the uncertainty of the flight's success. Later, when Fabien loses radio contact for the last time, the radio operators listen for the "song" which will be a sign of life:

Ils vont peut-être accrocher cette note qui serait un signe de vie. Si l'avion et ses feux de bord remontent parmi les étoiles, ils vont peut-être entendre chanter cette étoile...
(VN, p. 131)

When it is fairly certain that Fabien will not return, radio contact—even if those listening are unable to help—is the only remaining sign of his solidarity with the rest of the world. Rivière thinks of this last link with the condemned pilot, which assumes a musical quality. The purity of the note suggests the spiritual tie between Fabien and the earth,
or other men, which is about to be broken:

Rivièrê pense qu'un poste radio
l'écoute encore. Seule relie encore
Fabien au monde une onde musicale, une
modulation mineure. Pas une plainte.
Pas un cri. Mais le son le plus pur
qu'ait jamais forme le désespoir.

(VN, p. 127)

This passage recalls a passage near the end of *Courrier Sud*,
where the narrator mentions "le fil de la vierge de son amitié"
(CS, p. 77) as the only link still holding Bernis to earth.
The situations are parallel: Rivièrê thinking of Fabien lost
and about to die; the narrator imagining Bernis' last few
minutes of life when he was without help. The substance of
the lien is different in each case, but their fragility is
strikingly similar: in the first case, a gossamer thread; in
the second, simply a sound.

In contrast, as a successful flight is arriving in
Buenos Aires, the music of the final telegram is joyous,
echoing Rivièrê's sonata:

Le radio, de ses doigts, lachait
les derniers télégrammes, comme les
notes finales d'une sonate qu'il eût
tapotée, joyeux, dans le ciel, et
dont Rivièrê comprenait le chant.

(VN, p. 135)

And as the Europe flight leaves, the noise of the plane's
engine is a "chant d'orgue" (VN, p. 136) to Rivièrê who
has won his battle against the night, inertia and contrary
opinions.

Saint-Exupéry, like many of his characters, is able to "read nature's signs" and detect a meaning more profound than is superficially evident. Often the information thus perceived is related to flying and crucial to an upcoming flight. On the eve of his first mail flight, he walks alone in a crowd "parmi les passants ignorants" who know nothing of his secret: that he will be carrying their messages ("leurs soucis, leurs élans") at dawn. They are also, like the people Rivière walks among, unaware of the night's messages:

Ils ne recevaient point, non plus, les messages que je recevais de la nuit. Car elle intéressait ma chair même, cette tempête de neige qui peut-être se préparait, et compliquerait mon premier voyage. Des étoiles s'éteignaient une à une, comment l'eussent-ils appris, ces promeneurs? J'étais seul dans la confiance. On me communiquait les positions de l'ennemi avant la bataille. (TH, p. 145)

Saint-Exupéry's feelings here echo both Bernis' youthful pride and Rivière's distant yet protective attitude combined with his near-arrogance over his ability to understand such messages.

In the desert ordeal episode, Saint-Exupéry dwells again at length on messages from nature. By following tracks left by a fennec, or desert fox, the stranded pilot learns how these animals live by eating a few snails from small bushes
they encounter on their pre-dawn rounds. Saint-Exupéry muses on the fennec's "reason" for skipping some bushes, while eating only two or three snails from those he does "aborder," and concludes that this selective feeding ensures the continuation of both species. Because this episode coincides with the desert crash, and because Saint-Exupéry becomes engrossed in the fox's habits even though his own life is menaced (he calls the fox "mon ami" and "mon petit fênech" [Th, p. 226], and says to him: "Mon petit renard, je suis foutu, mais c'est curieux, cela ne m'a pas empêché de m'intéresser à ton humeur..." [Th, p. 227]), it seems quite clear that this is the source of Saint-Exupéry's inspiration for the episode in Le Petit Prince where the prince "tames" the fox and becomes his friend.

In another passage concerning the deciphering of natural signs, Saint-Exupéry lets the reader follow the events as he perceived them and shows how a seemingly insignificant occurrence can portend sudden great changes of extreme importance to the aviator. As he is shaving one hour before he is scheduled to fly the next leg of the Dakar-Toulouse run, he notices that the wind, whose direction has not changed for months, has suddenly died down. This may mean bad weather, but it is still too early to tell. But a few moments later, he hears a buzzing sound and finds a dragonfly flitting around his lamp, and he immediately senses that something is wrong: "Sans que je sache pourquoi, elle [la libellule] me pince le
coeur" (TH, p. 191). Looking outside, he sees that "tout est pur" (TH, p. 191), and that "sur le désert règne un grand silence de maison en ordre" (TH, p. 192). The dragonfly is joined by another, however, and by a green moth, and again the flier feels "un sentiment sourd, qui est peut-être de la joie, peut-être de la crainte, mais qui vient du fond de moi-même" (TH, p. 192). The feeling is "encore très obscur" (TH, p. 192), but he begins to guess what is coming because he has received a message from far off:

Quelqu'un me parle de très loin.
Est-ce cela l'instinct? ... Ni le ciel ni le sable ne m'ont fait aucun signe,
mais deux libellules m'ont parlé, et un papillon vert. (TH, p. 192)

Climbing upon a dune, he faces east and soon feels the faintest puff of a breeze which he knows announces a sandstorm. The insects have been blown away from oases to the east which the storm has already devastated. The present lull is only the Sahara catching its breath; within ten minutes sand will fill the air, and he will have to take off "dans ce feu, ce retour de flammes du désert" (TH, p. 192). All this stirs him deeply, chiefly because he was able to foresee the storm in the dragonfly's plight:

Ce qui me remplit d'une joie barbare,
c'est d'avoir compris à demi-mot un
langage secret, c'est d'avoir flairé
une trace comme un primitif, en qui tout
l'avenir s'annonce par de faibles
rumeurs, c'est d'avoir lu cette colère
aux battements d'ailes d'une libellule.

(TH, p. 192)

The length of this passage, the development of the imagery
(The East Wind is a wave which laps at Saint-Exupéry, the
distant shore; and it is also a beast catching its breath for
another "soupir.")), the suspense and emotion it generates and
the insistence on a secret, primitive language, leave no doubt
that Saint-Exupéry considered this type of non-verbal com-
munication to have validity in the realm of human experience
and that he himself was often privy to the secrets of nature
in this way.

Breakdown of Non-Verbal Communication:
The Defeat

The overall impression created by the first half of
Pilote de guerre is that of chaos and disintegration. Saint-
Exupéry analyzes this image of France in May, 1940 to determine
the character of the French defeat, and he sees defeat—as well
as victory—in terms of communication. At one point during
his flight over German-occupied French territory, he begins to
think more profoundly of his communion with Man and expresses
these more optimistic impressions almost entirely in poetic
metaphors. I shall examine his spiritual victory more closely
in my next chapter, but let us return now to the image of
defeat.
The difference between defeat and victory can be expressed in terms of the status of ties or lines of communication between men and among the various sectors of military or civilian society:

Ils [the German tank] ont joué le rôle d'agents chimiques qui détruireraient, non l'organisme, mais les nerfs et les ganglions. Sur le territoire qu'ils ont balayé en éclair, toute armée, même si elle paraît comme presque intacte, a perdu caractère d'armée. Elle s'est transformée en grumeaux indépendants. Là où il existait un organisme, il n'est plus qu'une somme d'organes dont les liaisons sont rompues. (PG, p. 307)

Examining the French defeat, Saint-Exupéry observes an army split up into ineffective units which have lost contact with each other and with an effemeral headquarters which is forced by the enemy's advance to relocate so frequently that messages sent either to or from it never reach their destination:

Le sergent du camion militaire atteint les douze hommes qui dépendent de lui. Mais il lui est impossible de se souder à quoi que ce soit d'autre. A supposer qu'un chef génial, capable par miracle d'un coup d'œil d'ensemble, conçoive un plan susceptible de nous sauver, ce chef ne disposera pour se manifester que d'un fil de sonnerie de vingt mètres. (PG, p. 329)

In fact, he characterizes the efforts of his reconnaissance group as strictly absurd and accuses those in charge of simply maintaining the appearance of fighting a war by sacrificing
token flight crews to the enemy as one might symbolically toss
glasses of water on a forest fire to signify one's opposition
to it. The intelligence information collected on these mis-
sions can be of no use to anyone, since there is no way to
transmit messages to a fast-retreating headquarters and even
less hope of dispatching forces to the front since the army
has totally come apart.

Saint-Exupéry depicts isolated patrols which are
assimilated into the villagers' exodus, the soldiers becoming
"mécaniciens, médecins, gardiens de troupeaux, brancardiers":

Les soldats ont été convertis à la
paix. Parce qu'ils ne trouvaient pas
la guerre.
... Parce qu'il est aussi vain de
prétendre communiquer un renseignement,
ou recevoir un ordre, que d'entamer
une discussion avec Sirius. Il n'est
plus d'armée. Il n'est que des hommes.

(PG, p. 326)

Saint-Exupéry even calls himself a pilot of defeat:

Je fais correctement mon métier.
N'empêche que je suis un équipage de
defaite. Je trempe dans la défaite.
La défaite suinte de partout, et
j'en tiens un signe dans ma main
même. (PG, p. 302)

The "signe" he mentions here is his throttle stick, which has
frozen stuck because of the low temperature encountered at
thirty thousand feet. Throughout the flight, Saint-Exupéry
struggles to steer a plane which resists his efforts and
responds only sluggishly when it does at all.

For Saint-Exupéry, peace exists when there are ties between things which give them a sense greater than the sum of the individual objects, whereas war means that these ties have been broken. He feels this breakdown personally:

Il est difficile d'exister.
L'homme n'est qu'un noeud de relations, et voilà que mes liens ne valent plus grand-chose.
(PG, p. 311)

and wonders what has happened to him, as he wonders what has happened to his country and to its people:

Qu'y a-t-il en moi qui soit en panne? Quel est le secret des échanges? D'où vient qu'en d'autres circonstances ce qui m'est maintenant abstrait et lointain me puisse bouleverser? (PG, p. 311)

An uncertain something which once bound him to objects, institutions, people, is now missing, and its absence is as mysterious as was its presence. He himself feels detached and out of order, and he observes the same phenomenon in other victims of the defeat. The villagers who blindly obey absurd orders to evacuate would much rather remain in their homes, but the baker has already left, and there is no one to make their bread. The result is a breakdown of the village's organic structure:
Le village est déjà détraqué.
Il a crevé ici ou là. Tout coulera
par le même trou. C'est sans
espoir.  (PG, p. 320)

Saint-Exupéry recalls another striking image of disorder: a
village pump has been left running and has flooded the main
street, but there is no one to turn it off. Belongings which
were treasured in the context of the home they were a part of
lose all value when carted off in bundles by their owners who
seek to salvage something from their happy past, but end up
merely encumbered with objects whose sense has disappeared.
The people themselves, each of whom once had his own place in
the world, will become nothing but parasites and vermin who
will "se répandre sur les campagnes et les dévorer" (PG, p.
321).

The occasional soldiers Saint-Exupéry encounters
epitomize this disintegration. Victims of "l'incohérence
générale," they are cut off from their units and wander aim-
lessly, having lost all horror they may have had of death and
war because "ils sont vides." Saint-Exupéry says they
"souhaitent confusément la paix" in terms of an identity of
one sort or another. These soldiers lack a meaningful role to
play, that of carpenter, shoemaker, baker, and are now nothing
more than "des chômeurs de guerre" (PG, p. 330).

Each individual sees only his personal share of "le
désastre universel," because the object or situation he was
responsible for is all that remains tangible to him. And so the French defeat is merely a hodge-podge of individual defeats:

La France qui croule n'est plus qu'un déluge de morceaux dont aucun ne montre un visage; ni cette mission, ni ce camion, ni cette route, ni cette saloperie de manette des gaz. (PG, p. 331)

The overall impression is one of the dislocation or dismemberment of a body whose organs are scattered about and which no longer functions as a complete organism. All meaningful contact between parts has been lost; the theme of non-communication presented in Pilote de guerre contrasts sharply with the portrayal of meaningful non-verbal communication in the earlier works.

The disruption of the mechanical means of communication engenders the dissolution of the spiritual ties which made a group of men into an army, a group of peasants into a village, groups of villagers into a nation: "Les téléphones sont embouteillés ou détraqués, et n'ont pas le pouvoir de transmettre, dans san densité, l'Être qui pour l'instant se décompose" (PG, p. 325). All these intangible entities are slowly dying. Saint-Exupéry uses the recurrent image of "pourriture" infecting a once-living organism and of mechanisms--like clocks--winding down with no one capable of winding them back up again. This degeneration appears to be
unending and anticlimactic, as France's life and spirit seem to just slip away into oblivion:

Rien ne se conclura, car il n'est plus de noeud où saisir le pays, comme l'on saisirait une noyée, le poing noué à sa chevelure. Tout s'est défait. Et l'effort le plus pathétique ne ramène qu'une mèche de cheveux. (PG, p. 326)

And so a strange sort of peace sets in, which is not "le fruit d'une décision prise par l'homme" (PG, p. 326), but is rather like a disease which has inexorably taken hold of a dying France. The sporadic efforts still being made will sink into this marécage without leaving a trace.

Conclusion

Of the works studied, all contain episodes of non-verbal communication sufficiently developed to constitute a thematic structure running through the individual works and often overlapping several works. Saint-Exupéry makes extensive use of a few favorite situations (pilot-plane relationship, role of the radio in aviation, communication with objects and the earth), modifying experiences that can be verified as his own in Terre des Hommes to suit the narration of Courrier Sud and Vol de nuit.

Saint-Exupéry depicts instances both of successful and unsuccessful communication. In Terre des Hommes, the balance
leans toward success, while Courrier Sud gives a more negative impression, and Vol de nuit strikes a reasonable equilibrium between success and failure. Pilote de guerre is unique among these four works because of both subject and tone. While one could say that the beginning of Pilote de guerre is pessimistic (or realistic) and the end optimistic as far as its general outlook is concerned, the portrayal of non-verbal communication is decidedly negative. Saint-Exupéry systematically chooses examples which illustrate a breakdown of non-verbal ties in order to complete his analysis of the French defeat. The fact that he saw defeat in terms of communication is well-documented and is readily understood by the careful reader. Non-verbal communication is one strand of the unifying thread in all the works; paradoxically, the agent of structural unification in Pilote de guerre plays at the same time a major role in the portrayal of disintegration, which is the principle image created by Saint-Exupéry in this work.
CHAPTER THREE

COMMUNION IN COURRIER SUD, VOL DE NUIT, TERRE DES HOMMES AND PILOTE DE GUERRE

Introduction

There is still a higher level of communication in the works of Saint-Exupéry which is more a state of mind or an understanding than the transfer of any specific message. This type of communication is more profound than the others discussed, and it often requires no formal acknowledgment by those who share it. This condition often favorizes an exchange of words or gestures between people who share it, and it provides those who are aware of it with a sense of fraternal participation—a feeling of harmony with one’s comrades, fellow workers or even all mankind. It can also exist between men and the natural world, as well as between elements of the natural world, such as all the animals of one species. I shall consider these phenomena together under the heading "communion" because they appear to represent this higher level of communication.

Some of Saint-Exupéry’s characters have the power to establish ties between themselves and objects and so experience a harmony with the world which makes their existence more complete, more meaningful. In Courrier Sud, Bernis feels the
presence of such ties with his plane, and Geneviève has had
the experience of strong ties with the world of things ever
since childhood when she acted as "interpreter" of nature's
mysterious messages to her young companions. Geneviève
attains a level of communion with the world through the ties
she experiences with things. Bernis, seeking this same peace,
finally understands that he will achieve communion with the
world through his métier, and that his plane will bring him
the meaningful contact with things that he and the narrator
knew as children.

Vol de nuit presents a limited but clear view of this
phenomenon, with Rivière acting as the central figure in two
ways: first, he is the magnetic force which holds the airmail
operation together and which animates all the company's em-
ployees; second, he is the only person always aware of the
communal bond among all his workers, and between them and him-
self. And so, he acts as a sort of reference point, a con-
stant which continually renews this bond and reminds those
united by it of their common goal. He does this by being a
strong and committed director and by believing in himself and
in the work of his pilots even more than they themselves do
at times.

Terre des Hommes presents a vision of communal bonds
which have existed over a long period of time and which are
intact. Except for the Barcelona and Madrid episode and the
"Mozart assassiné" episode, *Terre des Hommes* depicts men collaborating in peacetime and sharing a consciousness of their spiritual unity. *Pilote de guerre* contrasts sharply with most of *Terre des Hommes* in its orientation, but maintains a strong continuity with the final ("Mozart...") episode, and thus in a very real sense, as far as its message is concerned, it takes up where *Terre des Hommes* left off.

Saint-Exupéry sensed these bonds which united his country and which form the warp of *Terre des Hommes* to be threatened with destruction, and he sought to convey this fear along with a hope that they might be restored to their former stability. This explains the urgency so clear in *Pilote de guerre*’s tone and message.

**Contact with Things and Communion**

*with the Earth in Courrier Sud*

In a letter to his friend, Bernis describes Geneviève as the key to the meaning of things:

```
Geneviève...tu te souviens, nous la disions, elle, habitée. Je l'ai retrouvée comme on retrouve le sens des choses et je marche à son côté dans un monde dont je découvre enfin l'intérieur... (CS, p. 22)
```

Feeling that Geneviève can bring him in closer touch with the world and its meaning, he begins with her an affair whose failure we have already seen. But what is Geneviève's great
attraction? What power does she possess that other women do not and which Bernis so strongly needs?

As a child, Geneviève possessed an unusual gift which Saint-Exupéry attributes to young girls (Cf. TH, pp. 180-185: Ch. V, "Oasis"). She is in profound communion with the earth and exhibits a kind of magical quality—the ability to "charm" anyone who will believe in her powers, as do the narrator and Bernis:

Parfois du village un glas s'élevait, portant aux grillons, aux blés, aux cigales l'inexplicable mort. Et vous vous penchiez en avant, inquiète pour les fiancés seulement, car rien n'est aussi menacé que l'espérance. Mais la lune montait. Alors couvrant le glas, les chats-huants s'appelaient l'un l'autre pour l'amour. Les chiens errants l'assiégeaient en cercle et criaient vers elle. Et chaque arbre, chaque herbe, chaque roseau était vivant. Et la lune montait. Alors vous nous preniez les mains et vous nous disiez d'écouter parce que c'étaient les bruits de la terre et qu'ils rassuraient et qu'ils étaient bons. (CS, p. 19)

She could read the signs of natural forces and interpreted them for her companions, creating a bond between them and the earth.

Growing up has not caused Geneviève to lose her childhood magic and ability to communicate with things. Her powers are still evident to Bernis for a time, and he is once again "charmed" just as in his childhood:
Elle lui venait de la part des choses. Elle servait d'intermédiaire, après mille divorces, pour mille mariages. Elle lui rendait ces marronniers, ce boulevard, cette fontaine. Chaque chose portait de nouveau ce secret au centre qui est son âme. (CS, p. 22)

Geneviève has experienced through her childhood the same kind of bond with natural things that she herself knew as a child. Her own child is another "piece of evidence" of the unity and inherent goodness of life. She feels a part of the world, that she is contributing to the continuity of life, and is at peace:

Elle avait servi cet enfant à la surface des choses et parmi d'autres choses vivantes. Et les mots n'existaient pas pour décrire ce qu'elle avait tout de suite éprouvé. Elle s'était sentie...mais oui, c'était cela: intelligente. Et sûre d'elle-même et liée à tout et faisant partie d'un grand concert. Elle s'était fait porter le soir près de sa fenêtre. Les arbres vivaient, montaient, tiraient un printemps du sol: elle était leur égale. Et son enfant près d'elle respirait faiblement et c'était le moteur du monde et sa faible respiration animait le monde. (CS, p. 27)

The child's illness disrupts this harmony, not only in Geneviève's experience, but also in the things that surround her. She struggles against an obscure force that creates disorder in the world of objects and threatens to bring on death:
Elle luttait contre cette débâcle.
... Tout ce qui est sain, net et luisant semblait, à Geneviève, protéger de la mort qui est obscure. (CS, p. 26)

Struggling for life and order, she arranges the baby’s toys, straightens up the room and tells Herlin he ought to attend a scheduled business meeting. He fails to understand her reasons and chooses to cultivate his own grief and anxiety rather than try to resist constructively the forces of disorder besieging them.

The child’s death brings the final touch of disorder to Geneviève’s life. A flurry of unnatural activities accompanies death: "La mort vient dans un grand désordre: les piqûres, les pansements, les télégrammes" (CS, p. 31). After struggling so calmly to save her child, Geneviève finds herself powerless to continue resisting once the child dies:

Mille pactes rompus. C’était donc un enfant qui tenait les liens du monde, autour de qui le monde s’ordonnait? Un enfant dont la mort est une telle défaite pour Geneviève? (CS, p. 32)

Of all Saint-Exupéry’s characters, Geneviève is probably the one most fully in tune with the natural world, who experiences most profoundly her life as part of the universal harmony whose mysteries she so readily deciphered as a child. Saint-Exupéry points out that this dynamic bond is not invulnerable,
but contingent on one's own innocence or intimate contact with another innocent life. Communion with the world can create total confidence and knowledge of purpose, but its sudden loss can destroy the life its presence so well supported.

After his final separation from Geneviève and her world, where he unsuccessfully sought to regain the "source," we have seen Bernis return to his job with calm resignation, confident he has at last found his place and the means to continue his quest for the "trésor" he has never quite found. The key to understanding Bernis' quest lies in the childhood experiences he shared with the narrator. Just before Bernis arrives at Juby on his first mail run since leaving Paris, the narrator describes some of their childhood activities and stresses their significance as influences in later life. He also clarifies to some extent the mystery surrounding Saint-Exupéry's portrayal of Bernis as an "archange" or "magicien."

As children, Bernis and the narrator (For autobiographical source of these experiences, see Cate, pp. 6-12. These are things Saint-Exupéry did with his brother and sisters.) distinguished between the adult world, devoid of mystery, and their own secret world which they referred to as "l'envers des choses" (CS, p. 61). The adult world was the world of appearance, where the so-called serious business of life ("cette vieille ritournelle, ... cette vie faite de saisons, de vacances, de mariages, et de morts") (CS, p. 61)
was really nothing but "tout ce tumulte vain de la surface" (CS, p. 61). The ten-year-old boys had one feeling about the adult world: "Fuir, voilà l'important" (CS, p. 61). They would escape from the hot, sun-drenched world of summer where everything was "dégagé par ce soleil de tout mystère" (CS, p. 60), to a forbidden pond protected by a wall and gate, where the sun never reached. Protected from the sun, the boys were as if metamorphosed:

Nous goûtons la fraîcheur, l'odeur, l'humidité qui renouvelaient notre chair. Nous étions perdus aux confins du monde car nous savions déjà que voyager c'est avant tout changer de chair. (CS, p. 61)

Bernis has relearned this last lesson as an adult, as we have seen: his "voyages" and the passing of time have caused irreversible changes in him, and he is no longer the Bernis Geneviève once knew. This passage also echoes the narrator's words when he and Bernis visited their former school: "Quel homme pensais-tu être devenu?" (CS, p. 9). Change seems to preoccupy Bernis who is constantly comparing himself to what he was and unable to foresee what he will become. These passages strongly suggest that Bernis' flight—or "voyage"—which is the substance of the story, is in reality a period of metamorphosis for the aviator. His metamorphosis ends (or perhaps continues) in death, where he has possibly found the "trésor" he sought all his life: "C'était donc ici le trésor:
l'as-tu cherche!" (CS, p. 77)

The narrator's account of their childhood mystery world reveals the connection between "le trésor," "l'éternité" and "le mort." The pond they visit without permission appears to them "immobile depuis mille ans" (CS, p. 61), and they think of it whenever they hear the words "eau morte" (CS, p. 61). In their imagination, the pond is bottomless, and a stone thrown into it begins an eternal course, "comme un astre" (CS, p. 61). Their second secret place is the attic of the old house (Here again, see Cate, pp. 6-12. This all really happened in Saint-Exupéry's childhood.) where they find dead birds, empty trunks, old clothing: "un peu les coulisses de la vie" (CS, p. 62). For them the house is a ship launched on its course on the ocean of time, a secret known to them alone, and to which, by contrast, the adults in the house are oblivious:


Up in the attic, the children are aware of the presence of "ce trésor qui luisait faiblement" (CS, p. 62), but cannot define or locate it; its value seems to derive precisely from its inaccessibility. Here, as in the desert (CS, p. 68), the material reality of the house hides a greater reality.
Like man, the house—a ship launched in time—is in a state of slow but certain metamorphosis:

Nous sursautions. Travail obscur des choses. Poutres éclatées par le trésor. A chaque craquement nous sondions le bois. Tout n'était qu'une cosse prête à livrer son grain. Vieille écorce des choses sous laquelle se trouvait, nous n'en doutions pas, autre chose. Ne serait-ce que cette étoile, ce petit diamant dur. Un jour nous marcherons vers le Nord ou le Sud, ou bien en nous-mêmes, à sa recherche. Fuir. (CS, p. 62)

A ship launched in time, the house is slowly succumbing to the ravages of time, which is "le grand ennemi" (CS, p. 62). All its beams protect it, but they cannot last forever and the children know this. Time, which will burst the "cosse prête à livrer son grain," and eventually destroy the house as it changes everything, is the agent of the inevitable metamorphosis.

Stars are of great importance to the children, and each one has a special significance. There is "l'étoile qui rend malade," and "celle qui fait mourir." Each communicates its own message that only they can read, and the communication is infallible. Tuned to these astral messages, they obey immediately. A third star sends them off to bed:

L'étoile qui fait dormir tournait
l'ardoise qui la masquait, nette
comme un signe. Et nous descendions
vers notre chambre, emportant pour le
grand voyage du demi-sommeil cette connaissance d'un monde où la pierre mystérieuse coule sans fin parmi les eaux comme dans l'espace ces tentacules de lumière qui plongent mille ans pour nous parvenir; où la maison qui craque au vent est menacée comme un navire, où les choses, une à une, éclatent, sous l'obscuré poussée du trésor. (CS, p. 62)

This passage summarizes the childhood experience of a mysterious world hidden behind the everyday world, where only children can read the signs, and where time works slowly but relentlessly to change the shape and sense of things. Nothing will outlast the obscure push of "le trésor," the eternal passage of time. The narrator sees Bernis as somehow having retained his ability to perceive "l'envers des choses" as they both did as children. It is toward the ultimate discovery of the nature of "le trésor," beyond time and death, that Bernis is heading on his last flight.

Communion in Vol de Nuit

A profound sense of fraternity shared by men who participate in the common endeavor of the airmail company is the basis of their communion with one another, which constitutes a significant element of the central theme of communication. Rivière is not only the company's director and the central figure of the novel, but he is also the source of the energy of force which holds his men and their work together.
His will assures the company's success:

"Comme si ma volonté seule empêchait l'avion de se rompre en vol, ou la tempête de retarder le courrier en marche. Je suis surpris, parfois, de mon pouvoir."

(VN, p. 110)

Rivière derives his strength from his vast experience to which the company records attest:

Sur les dossiers en ordre les grandes armoires étaient fermées. Dix années d'expérience et de travail. L'idée lui vint qu'il visitait les caves d'une banque; là où pèsent les richesses. Il pensait que chacun de ces registres accumulait mieux que de l'or: une force vivante. Une force vivante mais endormie, comme l'or des banques.

(VN, p. 101)

As he surveys his domain, he senses that his strength—which is also the company's strength—represents not only the fruits of an investment of time and past effort, but a kind of living force which is spiritual in nature and has great potential for the future. This force is highly contagious, and indeed it infects the whole company.

All the outposts of the company under Rivière's direction are united in a common effort, like the links of a chain. Down to the least important clerk, those who work for the company play an essential role in the perpetuation of the will to succeed:
Quelque part il rencontrerait l'unique secrétaire de veille. Un homme travaillait quelque part pour que la vie soit continue, pour que la volonté soit continue, et ainsi, d'escale en escale, pour que jamais de Toulouse à Buenos Aires, ne se rompe la chaîne. (VN, p. 101)

Knowing this man is at his post even before he can verify it by seeing him, Rivière is reminded of the chain whose strength depends on everyone doing his part and thinks: "Cet homme-là ne sait pas sa grandeur" (VN, p. 101). When he meets the secretary in the office, he gives no indication of the "grandeur" he senses in the man's role, nor does their interaction suggest it, but still their communion is undeniable because of their mutual effort:

Rivière se découvrait une grande amitié pour cet homme, que chargeait aussi le poids de la nuit. "Un camarade de combat, pensait Rivière. Il ne saura sans doute jamais combien cette veille nous unit." (VN, pp. 102-103)

Despite the lack of verbal communication, this communal feeling exists. Even when Rivière feels he must reprimand a pilot for turning back out of fear, he does so not so much to discipline the man as to purge him of the debilitating emotional reaction which caused him to turn back and which—through his weakness—threatens to jeopardize the company's future:

Je le sauve de la peur. Ce n'est
pas lui que j'attaquais, c'est, à travers lui, cette résistance qui paralyse les hommes devant l'inconnu.
(VN, p. 110)

Their efforts are in reality a struggle against the unknown dangers of flying at night, and so even though they might sometimes clash with each other individually, collectively there is no conflict:

Pourant, dans cette lutte, une silencieuse fraternité liait, au fond d'eux-mêmes, Rivière et ses pilotes. C'était des hommes du même bord, qui éprouvaient le même désir de vaincre.
(VN, p. 111)

We have seen above in Part III, Chapter 1 that pilots who meet at an "escale" exchange very few words even on learning of the death of one of their comrades. The reason for this lack of verbal exchange is the strength of the communal bond which far surpasses the meager sense of words: "Une grande fraternité les dispensait des phrases" (VN, p. 135). This communal spirit takes on many aspects, and Saint-Exupéry uses several images to develop the richness of this theme. Above we have seen men united in their profession and compared metaphorically to soldiers in combat together, to shipmates with the same desire to conquer, to links in a chain. One of Vol de nuit’s last and most powerful images compares those who work together with Rivière to shipbuilders:
Rivière regardait toujours les secrétaires et, au-delà des secrétaires, les manoeuvres, les mécaniciens, les pilotes, tous ceux qui l'avaient aidé dans son oeuvre, avec une foi de bâtisseurs. Il pensa aux petites villes d'autrefois qui entendaient parler des "Îles" et se construisaient un navire. Pour le charger de leur espérance. Pour que les hommes pussent voir leur espérance ouvrir ses voiles sur la mer. Tous grands, tous tirés hors d'eux-mêmes, tous délivrés par un navire. "Le but peut-être ne justifie rien, mais l'action délivre de la mort. Ces hommes duraient par leur navire."

(VN, p. 130)

A complex image: their efforts to build an airline are like those of shipbuilders to construct a ship which symbolizes their hope. Their work has thus not only a material goal, but more significantly a spiritual one which not only unites them as they work, but represents their hope for deliverance from their individual condition of solitude. This deliverance takes the form of a spiritual communion derived not from the common end to which all are manifestly striving--the company's success--but rather from the bond formed among them by their efforts, desires and hopes to reach this end. This spiritual deliverance which they themselves create not only unites them by drawing them out of themselves, it also guarantees a certain collective permanence which individually they could never achieve. The artisan or artist whose actions create a lasting work is assured a sort of immortality because he literally puts a part of himself into a work which will outlive him. When
the efforts of many are joined in this endeavor, the result is a conscious resistance against (and even defiance of) the forces of destruction and disorder in the world, represented in this passage by "la mort."

These major lines of the theme of communion in Vol de nuit help us to understand the complexity of Rivière's appreciation of the night, which is both a respect for the unknown and sometimes hostile element which constitutes the context of his company's efforts, and also an awareness of the unifying effect of night—the enemy—on the company's efforts:

Devant une fenêtre ouverte il s'arrêta et comprit la nuit. Elle contenait Buenos Aires, mais aussi, comme une vaste nef, l'Amérique. Il ne s'étonna pas de ce sentiment de grandeur: le ciel de Santiago du Chile, un ciel étranger, mais une fois le courrier en marche vers Santiago du Chile, on vivait, d'un bout à l'autre de la ligne, sous la même voûte profonde. (VN, p. 95)

Night is thus context and enemy: an opposing force which offers resistance to foster the creation of a spiritual community among those who work in and against it, and the symbolic "voûte profonde" which, by enclosing all his men in the same struggle, acts as the cathedral in which their spiritual growth will take place.
Communion in Terre des Hommes

The English translation of Terre des Hommes--Wind, Sand and Stars--which was published before the original French edition, contains a number of passages which Saint-Exupéry later cut from the definitive French version. Several of the longer episodes deleted were published posthumously in Un Sens à la vie (Cf. WSS, pp. 186-238, "Barcelona and Madrid" and SV, pp. 81-169, "Espagne ensanglantée; also WSS, pp. 53-68, "The Elements," and SV, pp. 183-204, "Le pilote et les puissances naturelles.") In the shorter passages where changes were made, Saint-Exupéry either re-worded or dropped altogether an occasional paragraph. Some of these modified passages have a more didactic tone in Wind, Sand and Stars than in Terre des Hommes, giving the reader the distinct impression that the author is moralizing. The absence of such passages in Terre des Hommes renders the French version far more subtle and leaves more to the reader to decipher or conclude for himself.

Significantly, several of these passages deal with communication and communion between men, and they leave no doubt as to the author's purpose in Wind, Sand and Stars. In the chapter entitled "The Tool" (WSS, pp. 45-53). (In Terre des Hommes, parts of this chapter became "L'avion," pp. 168-170.), Saint-Exupéry praises mankind's technical accomplishments which he views as a conscious attempt to further the building
of a human community:

The central struggle of men has ever been to understand one another, to join together for the common weal. And it is this very thing that the machine helps them to do! It begins by annihilating time and space.

... Transport of the mails, transport of the human voice, transport of flickering pictures—in this century as in others our highest accomplishments still have the single aim of bringing men together. (WSS, p. 48)

This is precisely what Saint-Exupéry attempts to show in Terre des Hommes, that man's collective efforts have improved human communication and bettered man's understanding of himself, his fellows and his planet. These achievements are by no means complete, but man is progressing toward greater understanding and unity. Saint-Exupéry's own experience as a flier has led him to this belief:

Mermoz brusquement me serra les bras, et si fort que je sentis ses ongles. "Tu vois, c'est l'heure où à Dakar..." C'était l'heure où les mécanos se frottent les yeux, et retirent les housses d'hélices, où le pilote va consulter la météo, où la terre n'est plus peuplée que de camarades. (TH, p. 249)

Men who work together at the same job experience a unity of purpose, and often of effort, which binds them together, making a community out of a simple group. Members of this community often feel that their efforts have a spiritual
dimension and that by working together they are communing on a higher plane.

During periods of danger, this communal feeling becomes stronger. When forced to spend the night in hostile territory, Saint-Exupéry and several other fliers prepare a camp which may be their last: "Ainsi, en plein désert, sur l'écorce nue de la planète, dans un isolement des premières années du monde, nous avons bâti un village d'hommes" (TH, p. 159). And gradually they discover that in spite of their predicament—or perhaps precisely because of it, because it has relieved them of all extraneous considerations—they share a great wealth:

Du vent, du sable, des étoiles.  
Un style dur pour trappiste. Mais, sur cette nappe mal éclairée, six ou sept hommes qui ne possédaient plus rien au monde, sinon leurs souvenirs, se partageaient d'invisibles richesses. (TH, p. 159)

The communal feeling, once established among the members of a group, binds them together even when they are far apart:

Les camarades, la vie peut-être nous en écarte, nous empêche d'y beaucoup penser, mais ils sont quelque part, on ne sait trop où, silencieux et oubliés, mais telle-ment fidèles! (TH, p. 157)

Such a communal attitude is more than just a feeling of togetherness; it is an outlook on life which pervades and
adds dimensions to a flier's whole existence. Certain social
postures and expressions have no place in the communal re-

lationship:

Plaingre, C'est encore être deux.
C'est encore être divisé. Mais il
existe une altitude des relations
où la reconnaissance comme la pitié
perdent leur sens. C'est là que
l'on respire comme un prisonnier
délivré. (TH, p. 251)

Saint-Exupéry describes two such situations: one a personal
experience, the other an episode he witnessed in Spain during
the civil war there. In the first, he describes how a pilot
accepts as natural being saved by another, for he would do the
same without hesitation. So far from thanking his rescuer
is he, that he even blames him for having caused the break-
down!

Nous avons connu cette union quand
nous franchissions, par équipe de
deux avions, un Rio de Oro insoumis
encore. Je n'ai jamais entendu le
nauséboue remercier son sauveteur.
Le plus souvent, même, nous nous
insultions ... : "Salaud! si j'ai
eu la panne, c'est ta faute, avec
ta rage de voler à deux mille ... !"
Et l'autre qui offrait sa vie se
découvrait honteux d'être un salaud.
De quoi d'ailleurs l'eussions-nous
remercié? Il avait droit lui aussi
à notre vie. Nous étions les
branches d'un même arbre. Et j'étais
orgueilleux de toi, qui me sauvasi
(TH, p. 251)
Here again Saint-Exupéry makes use of the tree image, this time to suggest the organic unity of the group of fliers of which he was a part.

In the second situation, Saint-Exupéry considers the feelings of a captain who orders a sergeant to lead an attack with him where they are both likely to die. The captain starts to say something about the danger, but then chooses to remain silent on the obvious: "Tu sors le premier, avec moi, dit-il au sergent. Bois et va dormir" (TH, p. 246). Saint-Exupéry remarks that the "altitude" of the union established by their common situation rules out any superficial expression of pity:

Pourquoi t'aurait-il plaint, sergent, celui qui te préparait pour la mort? Vous preniez ce risque les uns pour les autres. On découvre à cette minute-là cette unité qui n'a plus besoin de langage. (TH, p. 251)

And Saint-Exupéry concludes by saying he has finally understood the sergeant's reason for leaving his home and joining in the struggle for liberation:

Si tu étais pauvre à Barcelone, seul peut-être après le travail, si ton corps même n'avait point de refuge, tu éprouvais ici le sentiment de t'accomplir, tu rejoignais l'universel; voici que toi, le paria, tu étais reçu par l'amour. (TH, p. 251)
The above passages all appear in Chapter VII, "Les hommes" (pp. 244-261), the final chapter of Terre des Hommes, where they constitute the central theme of this book's concluding pages. The theme of communion, or of the feeling of unity with others, receives support from several extended images which Saint-Exupéry introduces as analogous to the human theme.

In the first image, Saint-Exupéry describes the reaction of domestic ducks when a migrating flock of their wild brethren passes overhead as "de curieuses marées" (TH, p. 249); the barnyard creatures try to "answer the call of the wild," executing "un bond inhabile" in an attempt to join the wild flock: "Et voilà les canards de la ferme changés pour une minute en oiseaux migrateurs" (TH, p. 250). This momentary transformation is akin to the awakening of a communal spirit in men, analogous to an individual's discovery of purpose and truth in his affiliation with a group united in a common cause.

Saint-Exupéry develops further the second image— that of caged gazelles who stand leaning against the fence: "pesant, de leurs petites cornes, contre l'enclos, dans la direction du désert" (TH, p. 250). They are attracted, as if "aimantées," by something they have never experienced because they have grown up in captivity. Saint-Exupéry calls this something "l'étendue qui les accomplira" (TH, p. 250), and
their instinctive attraction toward it, "la nostalgie, c'est le désir d'on ne sait quoi..." (TH, p. 251). Saint-Exupéry says that these images explain to him the "vérité" which the sergeant could not put into words, but "dont l'évidence [l'a gouverné]" (TH, p. 249). As the animal's urge to pursue its truth is instinctive, so is man's beyond the capacity of language to express it: "Il existe, l'objet du désir, mais il n'est point de mots pour le dire" (TH, p. 251).

What we lack is the universal awareness of the goal which some have achieved:

Liés à nos frères par un but commun et qui se situe en dehors de nous, alors seulement nous respirons et l'expérience nous montre qu'aimer ce n'est point nous regarder l'un l'autre, mais regarder ensemble dans la même direction. Il n'est de camarades que s'ils s'unissent dans la même cordée, vers le même sommet en quoi ils se retrouvent. (TH, p. 252)

Saint-Exupéry and his flying comrades have reached this higher communion through shared experience, as have many others, but the author deplores the fate of "deux cent millions d'hommes, en Europe, qui n'ont point de sens et voudraient naître" (TH, p. 254). They are victims of war and of the de-humanizing effects of over-industrialization and of the displacement of farm laborers. Fighting together in a war effort, some of these men
auront retrouvé ce qu'ils cherchent, le goût de l'universel. Mais du pain qui leur est offert, ils vont mourir. (TH, p. 255)

Achieving solidarity through war is highly ironic, and unnecessarily destructive, often causing the death of the very men who discover their communal role. We don't need war in order to do this, says Saint-Exupéry, because we are all "dans une course vers le même but" (TH, pp. 255-256). Hatred adds nothing to the glory of the race, and war ultimately deceives us on this account:

Pourquoi nous haïr? Nous sommes solidaire, emportés par la même planète, équipage d'un même navire.

... Puisqu'il suffit, pour nous délivrer, de nous aider à prendre conscience d'un but qui nous relie les uns aux autres, autant de chercher là où il nous unit tous. (TH, p. 256)

Several examples of this positive search follow: the surgeon in curing one sick man seeks a definitive cure for all, and his work is "un langage universel"; likewise is that of the physicist who ponders "ces équations presque divines par lesquelles il saisit à la fois l'atome et la nébuleuse" (TH, p. 256). Men like these are "sentinels," and each "sentinelle est responsable de tout l'empire" (TH, p. 256).

Everyone, down to the simplest shepherd, can become a sentinel and experience his existential responsibility for all
men, not by committing some great heroic act, but by becoming aware of his role:

Quand nous prendrons conscience de notre rôle, même le plus effacé, alors seulement nous serons heureux. Alors seulement nous pourrons vivre en paix et mourir en paix, car ce qui donne un sens à la vie donne un sens à la mort. (TH, p. 256)

This "prise de conscience" renders even death "si douce," as for example when a dying "paysan de Provence" entrusts his few goats and olive trees unto his son so that he may continue the work of his father and at the appropriate time, pass them on to his son in turn: "On ne meurt qu'à demi dans une lignée paysanne" (TH, p. 257). Saint-Exupéry uses here one of his favorite images—that of "une cosse" which cracks open and "livre ses grains" (TH, p. 257)—to describe the role of each individual in a long peasant lineage, and by extension in the cultural and spiritual progress of human civilization.

He recalls standing at the death bed of an old peasant woman, at the side of her three sons. He compares death, the breaking of all ties between mother and sons, to cutting the umbilical cord a second time. The sons are set free on their own in the world, "privés du pôle en qui ils se retrouvaient tous." But at the same time, this death is the occasion of a rebirth, for each son will become "tête de
file" in turn and in time pass on to his own children
("cette portée de petits qui jouaient dans la cour") that
spark of direction and life which he is now taking from his
dying but immortal mother: "La mère est morte, vive la mère."
A simple, yet powerful, image of the eternal cycle of life
whose progress is certain, while its direction may not be,
this "lignée ... marchant vers je ne sais quelle vérité, à
travers ses métamorphoses" (TH, p. 257).

The communion between mother and sons is echoed in the
ringing of the death knell by the "cloche ... qui célébrait
de la même voix les enterrements et les baptêmes." The
bell's tone, as it announces "le passage d'une génération à
une autre," appears to Saint-Exupéry to be one, not of des-
pair, but "d'une allégresse discrète et tendre," singing of
"ces fiançailles d'une pauvre vieille et de la terre" (TH,
p. 257).

Saint-Exupéry fuses several images together as he
concludes this next to the last chapter of Terre des Hommes,
saying that not only life, but a conscious awareness, is
being passed from one generation to the next with the slow
but sure progress "d'une croissance d'arbre," and he marvels
at this "mystérieuse ascension." Like the surgeon and the
physicist, the old peasant woman has participated in the
accumulation and passing on of "le bagage ..., le patrimoine
spirituel ..., ce petit lot de traditions, de concepts et de
mythes qui constitue toute la différence qui sépare Newton et Shakespeare de la brute des cavernes." She has "enseigné un langage" (TH, p. 258) to her sons and thus has played (consciously, Saint-Exupéry believes) her part in man's communal effort to understand his world and himself.

Saint-Exupéry is apparently proposing her as a model for all who live in ignorance of our common goal, for he detects a hunger in men which indicates to him "que la genèse n'est point achevée et qu'il nous faut prendre conscience de nous-mêmes et de l'univers" (TH, p. 258). His perception of this hunger—whose pangs are in many cases dulled by the routine of a meaningless existence—as the greatest obstacle to spiritual progress is evident in his choice of the well-known "Mozart assassiné" episode to conclude Terre des Hommes, which is an allegorical plea to all men to foster the development of the spiritual potential inherent in every child. This potential is too often stifled by social or political regimes which ignore this essential aspect of man and in so doing destroy in him that which is truly human.

Saint-Exupéry recalls several personal experiences of communion with the earth itself, of times when he felt very strongly the ties binding him to this world. On one such occasion, having become lost on a night flight to Casablanca, he describes his feeling of being lost in interplanetary space, frantically searching for his home planet among the
myriad of stars surrounding him. All during this flight, the one image that haunts him is that of the breakfast he and his navigator will share at dawn in a small cafe, if they make it through the night:

Néri et moi, nous nous attablerions, bien en sécurité, et riant de la nuit passée, devant les croissants chauds et le café au lait. Néri et moi recevrions ce cadeau matinal de la vie.

Just as a painted image is the link between an old peasant woman and her God, so would this ordinary breakfast be life's message to the fliers: "Il faut qu'on nous parle un simple langage pour se faire entendre de nous." Thus, the coffee and croissants evoke the very fields where these foods are grown and by extension the whole earth, to which Saint-Exupéry has joyfully returned:

Ainsi la joie de vivre se ramassait-elle pour moi dans cette première gorgée parfumée et brûlants, dans ce mélange de lait, de café et de blé, par où l'on communie avec les pâturages calmes, les plantations exotiques et les moissons, par où l'on communie avec toute la terre. (TH, p. 151)

The joy of living is thus summed up in this communal breakfast which celebrates man's intimate ties with his planet.

Saint-Exupéry experienced something akin to communion with the desert where he spent several years as a pilot and chef d'escale. Devoting two long chapters in Terre des Hommes
to life and death in the desert (Chapters VI and VII), he describes at length the consequences of this life (See Chapter Two of Part II above.). The impression the reader gathers from the many stories of desert men (Bonnafous, the old sergeant, El Mamoun and the many Arabs Saint-Exupéry knew) is that they all respect and know the dangers of the desert so well that life is more natural for them there than anywhere else.

Bonnafous is a French camel corps officer who continually keeps the marauding Arab tribes off balance by striking when they least expect it. His prowess is legendary among the Arab warriors: "Son pas sonne jusque dans le coeur du désert" (TH, p. 198); and he radiates an almost magnetic field which provokes the warriors to pursue him: "Il demeure là tout droit, comme un gage à saisir, et son rayonnement est tel qu'il oblige les tribus à se mettre en marche vers son glaive" (TH, p. 197). When he returns to France, his enemies will miss him "comme si son départ enlevait à leur désert un de ses pôles, à leur existence un peu de prestige" (TH, p. 198). The Moors feel certain he will return when he discovers that Europe's games cannot equal "sa noblesse perdue," which he left behind in the desert, "là où chaque pas fait battre le coeur, comme un pas vers l'amour" (TH, p. 199). He had accepted the rules of the desert, sleeping like the Arabs, "la tête appuyée à des pierres," and
has known, as they have, "des nuits de Bible, faites d'étoile et de vent" (TH, p. 199). Their fighting has been more a rivalry of love and respect, than a war of bitterness and hatred. Bonnafous communed with the desert itself and with the nomads he so relentlessly pursued; and when he returns, his presence will once again animate these warriors who miss the challenge and the sense of purpose he instills in them. Saint-Exupéry says of himself and his fellow pilots:

Nous avons accepté la règle du jeu, le jeu nous forme à son image. Le Sahara, c'est en nous qu'il se montre. L'aborder ce n'est point visiter l'oasis, c'est faire notre religion d'une fontaine.

The only way to know the desert is to accept it on its own terms, as Bonnafous chose to do. A man must first renounce the rest of the world in order to understand the desert, and then he learns that the desert—along with "ses traditions, ses coutumes, ses rivalités" (TH, p. 187)—invades his very being. A well in the desert becomes a religious symbol, representing the traveler's hope and faith that it will provide water to keep him alive. The well is always present to him in spirit, allowing him to continue his journey; and when he reaches an oasis and replenishes his water supply, the traveler communes with the well which is literally the source of life. It is precisely this kind of elemental experience that taught Saint-Exupéry the importance
of his bond with the natural world.

**Communion in Pilote de guerre**

Near the end of the episode in which he describes the pitiful exodus of the French villagers and the degeneration into chaos of every aspect of French military and social order, Saint-Exupéry looks upon the defeat as a possible "path toward resurrection," suggesting that the seeds of resistance have been planted and may grow despite the present setback which appears to be totally debilitating:

> La vie, toujours, fait craquer les formules. La défaite peut se révéler le seul chemin vers la résurrection, malgré ses laideurs. Je sais bien que pour crêer l'arbre on condamne une graine à pourrir. Le premier acte de résistance, s'il survient trop tard, est toujours perdu. Mais il est éveil de la résistance. Un arbre peut-être sortira de lui comme d'une graine. (PG, p. 332)

Historically, this passage is prophetic of the French Resistance movement which indeed developed out of and in spite of the chaos engendered by the German occupation. Saint-Exupéry makes use of the tree image again here to signify the growth, potential strength and unity of a person, a nation or a movement. (This image is echoed in the last lines of PG: "Les vaincus doivent se taire. Comme les graines" [PG, p. 385].) He is suggesting that France, which
at the time of his writing is reduced to "un déluge de morceaux sans visage" (FG, p. 331), can put these fragments back together and regain an identity which has been destroyed.

Rebuilding a nation, like building a cathedral, involves more than simply piling together the various elements which make it up: "Un pays n'est pas la somme de contrées, de coutumes, de matériaux, que mon intelligence peut toujours saisir. C'est un être" (FG, p. 275). And such a being exists only through the communion or spiritual relationship of its parts. The first step, then, toward reconstruction must be an awareness or "prise de conscience" that an individual or an institution is a part of something much greater than itself.

In a crisis which demands a personal sacrifice, the individual discovers this "vérité de tous les jours" which is hidden by conventions and illusions that keep us pre-occupied with ourselves:

L'homme ne s'intéresse plus à soi. Seul s'impose à lui ce dont il est. Il ne se retranche pas, s'il meurt: il se confond. Il ne se perd pas: il se trouve. (FG, p. 346)

This is the discovery made by Saint-Exupéry over Arras. Up until the moment where he is being bombarded on all sides by enemy anti-aircraft weapons, he has seen primarily the absurdity and the disintegration of the war. But he undergoes a sort of awakening which enables him to perceive the ties
binding him to his comrades, his country and Man.

At the very beginning of Pilote de guerre, Saint-Exupéry stresses the intermittent nature of our perception of these ties and identifies this perception as a function of "l'Esprit," which he distinguishes from "l'Intelligence":

Je suis choqué par une évidence que nul n'avoue: la vie de l'Esprit est intermittente. La vie de l'Intelligence, elle seule, est permanente, ou à peu près. Il y a peu de variations dans mes facultés d'analyse. Mais l'Esprit ne considère point les objets, il considère le sens qui les noue entre eux. Le visage qui est lu au travers. Et l'Esprit passe de la pleine vision à la cécité absolue.

(Pr, p. 275)

By "l'Intelligence," Saint-Exupéry evidently means man's rational faculties, as he says "mes facultés d'analyse," whereas "l'Esprit" apparently refers to man's intuitive powers, his meditative faculty, or his capacity for spiritual perceptions. Saint-Exupéry not only feels that the former faculty is generally always in operation, he also holds in little esteem the value of its proceedings. "L'Esprit," on the other hand, represents a set of perceptions which are far more profound than those of "l'Intelligence" (See Le Petit Prince, p. 474: "On ne voit bien qu'avec la coeur. L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux.") It is through the operation of "l'Esprit" that man achieves communion
(spiritual knowledge of) with things and with other men.

The crucial observation made in the above passage from **Pilote de guerre** is that "l'Esprit" functions sporadically. We must conclude from this, then, that any communal ties created between men and objects, and men and men, exist only when "the switch is open," only when "l'Esprit" is able to perceive them. The other possibility is that these ties are always in existence, but come into the individual's subjective field of awareness only when his intuitive powers grasp them.

From an existential point of view, these two possibilities amount to the same thing: you can consider real only that which you subjectively perceive as reality—the rest does not exist for you, and therefore effectively exists not at all. Saint-Exupéry seems quite clearly to remain true to the existential viewpoint in this respect since he shows great concern over the relative nature of intuitive perceptions and stresses the need for conscious effort to cultivate these perceptions while holding in check a natural impulse toward apparent logical conclusions which may cloud a dormant spiritual truth:

*L'important est de se gérer dans un but qui ne se montre pas dans l'instant. Ce but n'est pas pour l'Intelligence, mais pour l'Esprit. L'Esprit sait aimer, mais il dort. La tentative, je connais en quoi elle consiste aussi bien qu'un Père de l'Eglise. Étre tenté, c'est être tenté, quand l'Esprit dort, de céder aux raisons de l'Intelligence.*

(Pr., p. 287)
This passage contains a warning as well as a prescription for the development of communal perceptions. Saint-Exupéry is urging us to gear up for an effort to resist facile conclusions which take the form of temptations, and to wait for the true perceptions of "l'Esprit" which will appear sooner or later. The defeat is for Saint-Exupéry merely a period of dormancy for the spiritual life which nourishes a united people, as winter is to a seed which will awaken and grow in the spring. The essential is to not let winter kill the seed.

Concerning his personal involvement in the war, Saint-Exupéry describes his own struggle with "l'Intelligence" and its logic. He says that he was offered several desk jobs by military authorities and urged to accept them by friends who said: "Là est votre place," thinking that Saint-Exupéry was too valuable a man to risk losing in battle. Practically anyone could learn to be a pilot, but few had his intellectual and creative talents. Logic dictated his compliance:

La démonstration était péremptoire. Toutes les démonstrations sont péremptoires. Mon intelligence approuvait mais mon instinct l'emportait sur mon intelligence.

But his "instinct" refused to let him obey logical impulses because he felt that direct participation was the only way in which he could genuinely contribute to the war effort, and the
only way he could see the hidden ties which give meaning, the only way he could commune with those resisting German occupation and struggling for French unity: "Mais pour voir, il convient d'abord de participer" (PG, p. 287)

Participation is in direct contrast with the detached observation he attributes to intellectuals who may analyze all the parts of a unit without seeing the whole. They might, for example, be able to pick apart a beautiful face and explain it bit by bit, but never see its smile. They are blind to the essential, because

Connaître, ce n'est point démontrer, ni expliquer. C'est accéder à la vision.

Clearly, Saint-Exupéry is talking about a spiritual sort of vision, an intuition of the intrinsic unity of a face, a nation, mankind. His desire to achieve this vision serves to justify his participation, "contre tous les raisonnements," in missions which are close to suicidal, and he tells us of his anticipation before the flight of the understanding which will come to him:

Viendra bien l'heure où je connaîtrai que j'avais raison contre ma raison. Je me suis promis, si je vis, cette promenade nocturne à travers mon village. Alors, peut-être, m'habituerai-je enfin moi-même. Et je verrai. (PG, p. 287)
These passages from the beginning of *Pilote de guerre* act as a sort of prelude of what is to come, not only explaining why Saint-Exupéry chose to undertake a mission from which he had little chance of returning, but also showing in advance his faith that the French people and mankind in general had not lost all spiritual identity and that a face and a smile did still exist amid the ruins.

Returning from Arras, Saint-Exupéry discovers that the difficulty of the combat has sparked the awareness he had sought: "Ceux qui nous tirent d'en bas, savent-ils qu'ils nous forgent?" (PG, p. 349) he also discovers that "'L'ivresse du combat ...', c'est l'ivresse de la vie!" (PG, p. 349), and that any "malheur" he might have felt or anticipated before or during the flight "s'est envalé quand les premières balles ont lui" (PG, p. 352). His premonition concerning the direct connection between participation and awareness was accurate: "Si j'avais fait demi-tour une seconde trop tôt, j'aurais tout ignoré de moi" (PG, p. 352).

He has learned, first of all, of the integrity of his own being. Recollections from childhood come to him during the flight to console him in his present predicament, giving him a strong feeling of unity with the child he once was:

Et il me semble que je suis un. Ce que j'éprouve, je l'ai toujours connu. (PG, p. 336)
As a result of this discovery, Saint-Exupéry feels reinforced and even at times invulnerable in the face of almost certain destruction. His past experiences second his efforts and supply the courage and determination needed to go on:

Ça s'aggrave, mais je suis à l'intérieur des choses. Je dispose de tous mes souvenirs et de toutes les provisions que j'ai faites, et de toutes mes amours. Je dispose de mon enfance qui se perd dans la nuit comme une racine. (PG, p. 338)

Once again, the effect of the tree image, which appears in this last line (with "racine"), is to symbolize the continuity of his past and present being and to evoke his prior use of this same image to represent the unity of all men.

Subsequent to the discovery of his personal continuity, Saint-Exupéry discovers that he is in a state of communion with his comrades and with all men. The last thirty pages of Pilote de guerre (Pléiade edition), which culminate in the much-quoted Credo, constitute an elaborate manifestation of this communion. This last section of Pilote de guerre is a good example of Saint-Exupéry's "spiral" thought development. He deals first with communion among the fliers, then communion he experiences with other Frenchmen, then finally communion with all mankind. He elaborates on one of these terms, then the next, returning to each in order to present further evidence of this aspect of communion
or to show one more example of the fraternal relations he experiences. This entire section builds to a peak and leads to the several paragraph "Credo" which summarizes the conclusions Saint-Exupéry has drawn from his recent observations. Saint-Exupéry allows us to witness the development of his thought—or, rather, stylistically speaking he chooses to present the various elements of the development of his thought so that we can follow the process.

One of his chief concerns here is to portray the men of his flight group, showing the strong bonds among them. On the way back from Arras he recalls recent events involving members of his squadron, and realizes how peaceful and content he feels to have successfully completed the mission which, after all its perils, has come off as smoothly as the image he conceived before the flight—that of walking to the corner store for a box of matches. His strongest impression is that of going home:

\[
\text{C'est ainsi. Je rentre chez moi. Le Groupe 2/33, c'est chez moi. Et je comprends ceux de chez moi. Je ne puis pas me tromper sur Lacordaire. Lacordaire ne peut pas se tromper sur moi. Je ressens cette communauté avec un sentiment d'évidence extraordinaire: "Nous autres, du Groupe 2/33!" Eh! Voici donc que les matériaux en vrac déjà se nouent... (PG, p. 353)}
\]

This community of feeling which exists between the men of
Group 2/33 is a product of their shared métier. The obligations and demands of the job they all perform fuse them together, creating a bond of love and participation. In this passage, Saint-Exupéry displays his attachment to the group and once again makes use of the tree image to represent unity:

Je savoure les obligations du métier qui nous fondent ensemble dans un tronc commun. J'aime le Groupe 2/33. Je ne l'aime pas en spectateur qui découvre un beau spectacle. J'aime le groupe 2/33 parce que j'en suis, qu'il m'alimente, et que je contribue à l'alimenter. (PG, p. 355)

And now he has forged still another bond with the group because he has renewed his participation, contributing unselfishly to the almost superhuman but futile reconnaissance effort in the face of devastating odds which make the group stronger while they render the entire endeavor absurd:

Et maintenant que je reviens d'Arras je suis de mon Groupe plus que jamais. J'ai acquis un lien de plus. J'ai renforcé en moi ce sentiment de communauté qui est à savourer dans le silence. (PG, p. 355)

These men express their bonds through silence out of respect for those who did not return. Sharing the same risks, they know that nearly every day one of their number is likely to disappear. Those who die strengthen those who remain, and all have earned, among other rights, the right to share in
the group's community:

Israël et Gavoille ont subi des risques plus durs, peut-être, que les miens. Israël a disparu. Mais, de cette promenade d'aujourd'hui, je ne devais pas revenir non plus. Elle me donne un peu plus de droit de m'asseoir à leur table, et de me taire avec eux. Ce droit-là s'achète très cher. Mais il vaut très cher: c'est le droit d'être.

"...J'ai acquis le droit de me sentir penaud, bientôt, quand le Commandant m'interrogera. C'est à dire de participer. D'être lié. De communier. De recevoir et de donner. D'être plus que moi-même. D'accéder à cette plénitude qui me gonfle si fort. (PG, pp. 355-356)

He goes on to justify the silence that characterizes this communion by saying, in effect, that it needs no justification just as it needs no verbal expression because it is felt and understood by all those who experience it. Speaking of "cet amour qu'[il] éprouve à l'égard de [ses] camarades," he adds that this love

n'a pas besoin de s'énoncer. Il n'est composé que de liens. Il est ma substance même. Je suis du groupe. Et voilà tout. (PG, p. 356)

In spite of the finality of this "et voilà tout," Saint-Exupéry cannot contain his enthusiasm for the feeling of communion which he attempts over and over to describe while admitting all along that description—not to mention
definition—of this sentiment is beyond his powers. He so strongly sensed the profoundness of this experience that he sought to convey it to his readers, perhaps in the hope that they, too, might manage to add this spiritual dimension to their lives and recognize their potential for a communal relationship with other men.

Saint-Exupéry talks about participating in the community of the group and of being nourished by a certain quality residing in the men themselves and in their relationship. The men seem unaware of their greatness, not out of modesty but simply because of their genuine unselfconscious interest in doing what they have to do without concern for recognition:

Je me nourris de la qualité des camarades, cette qualité qui s'ignore, parce qu'elle se fout bien d'elle-même, et non par humilité. Gavoille ne se considère pas, ni Israël. Ils sont réseau de liens avec leur travail, leur métier, leur devoir. ... Et je m'enivre de la densité de leur présence. ... Rien n'abîmera cette fraternité. (PG, p. 354)

Saint-Exupéry is very sensitive about being a writer but is reassured by the group's total acceptance of him as a participant. He recalls autographing one of his books for a farmer's wife who had just served a meal to him and to two of his comrades, and he says with pride that this act (and of course the difference between himself and the others which it
symbolized) did not in any way cut him off from them. He is pleased to be both participant and observer, but his participation categorically precedes and outweighs his value as a writer (in his own mind, of course).

In his praise of his comrades, he stresses that he does not mean to denigrate intellectual achievement, but that a man, in order to be complete, must be more than merely an intellect:

J'admire les intelligences limpides. Mais qu'est-ce qu'un homme, s'il manque de substance? S'il n'est qu'un regard et non un être? La substance, je la découvre en Gavoille ou en Israël. Comme je la découvrerais en Guillaumet. (PG, p. 354)

Among the men in his group, he singles out one named Hchedé as epitomizing the type of communion he has been describing, and toward which he has been striving. Hchedé is beyond courage because he is totally resolved in his actions. What he does is right because he is what he does:

Hchedé a fait à la guerre un don total. Mieux, probablement que nous tous. Hchedé est, en permanence, dans cet état où j'ai été difficilement conquérir. ... Hchedé est parvenu où nous allons. Où je voulais aller. (PG, p. 356)

Such a man is reconciled with the world—he has become what he is fighting for, and as such he probably served as a model
for Saint-Exupéry's "l'homme en devenir":

Il se bat pour soi. Hochedé se confond avec une certaine substance qui est à sauver, et qui est sa propre signification. ... Pour Hochedé mourir et vivre se concilient. (PG, pp. 356-357)

And like all those whose existence is communion, "il est pétri de tous ses liens avec le monde" (PG, p. 357). And so Saint-Exupéry feels that he is a part of Hochedé, just as he feels a part of Guillaumet, who has become "un des compagnons de [son] silence" (PG, p. 357). In addition, he feels that his ties with these men, living and dead, link him with all his countrymen in a way he had not previously experienced.

Admitting he has been guilty of misjudgement concerning the value of the mission he has just flown, Saint-Exupéry explains that his experience over Arras has caused him to find hope in the face of defeat: "J'ai bien changé!" (PG, p. 358). The returning pilot cannot help but rejoice in his victory, which is moral rather than material, and which consists of his discovery of still another facet of his communion:

Malgré le pourrissement de la défaite, je porte en moi, comme au sortir d'un sacrement, cette grave et durable jubilation. Je trempe dans l'incohérence, et cependant je suis comme vainqueur. Quel est le camarade retour de mission qui ne porte pas ce vainqueur en lui? (PG, pp. 358-359)
He is a conqueror because he has learned that the crowd of emigrants he had formerly seen as a chaotic mass of people without ties or meaning in reality constitutes a part of his community. His mission seemed pointless, but now he understands that he has been struggling to keep alive the spirit of resistance which alone can animate and unite the defeated French into a nation:

Cette foule que je survole, je l'ai prise en compte au-dessus d'Arras. Je ne suis lié qu'à qui je donne. Je ne comprends que qui j'épouse. Je n'existe qu'autant que m'abreuvent les fontaines de mes racines. Je suis de cette foule. Cette foule est de moi. A cinq cent trente kilomètres-heure, et deux cents mètres d'altitude, maintenant que j'ai débarqué sous mon nuage, je l'épouse dans le soir comme un bélier qui, d'un coup d'œil, recense, rassemble et nous le troupeau. Cette foule n'est plus une foule: elle est un peuple. Comment serais-je sans espoir? (PC, p. 358)

These emigrants' condition, however, is one of misery; they have cut all ties with their former lives. Having only each other, they are really in a state of transition (recalling Saint-Exupéry's dormant seed image), whereas the fliers, although in great peril, are able to return to the group as one returns home:

La nuit qui se fait parquera cette foule en vrac dans son étable de malheur. Le troupeau se tasse. Vers quoi crierait-il? Mais il nous est donné de courir vers les camarades, et il
me semble que nous nous hâtons
vers une fête. ... Là-bas où nous
allons nous communierons dans le
pain du soir. (PG, p. 361)

And what they find is a love that Saint-Exupéry can express
only metaphorically:

Cette communauté parmi vous, je
l'ai goûtée comme un feu pour
aveugle. L'aveugle s'assoit et
étend les mains, il ne sait pas
d'où lui vient son plaisir. De
nos missions nous rentrons prêts
pour une récompense au goût
inconnu, qui est simplement
l'amour.

... Il s'agit, ici, de l'amour
véritable: un réseau de liens
qui fait devenir. (PG, p. 361)

After his flight, he sits down to table with the
farm family he has been assigned to and discovers that the
ties which bind him to his fellow fliers and to the emigrants
extend out to still others, in fact "à tout [son] pays"
(PG, p. 362). As the family sits in silence and the farmer
cuts and distributes bread, Saint-Exupéry sees the scene
"comme l'exercice d'un culte, ce partage" (PG, p. 362), and
thinks of the fields of grain which have provided the wheat
for this bread and of the farmer's labor which has earned the
harvest. The cycle of fields, labor, wheat, grain, bread
assumes a ritualistic value, and the bread produced nourishes
man both physically and spiritually:
Le blé est autre chose qu'un aliment charnel. Nourrir l'homme, ce n'est point engraisser un bétail. Le pain joue tant de rôles! Nous avons appris à reconnaître, dans le pain, un instrument de la communauté des hommes, à cause du pain à rompre ensemble; ... l'image de la grandeur du travail à cause du pain à gagner à la sueur du front; ... le véhicule essentiel de la pitié, à cause du pain que l'on distribue aux heures de misère. La saveur du pain partagé n'a point d'égal. (PG, pp. 362-363)

But these spiritual values are threatened by the German invasion which, in this remote countryside, will be more symbolic than real: "Ce blé, demain, sera changé" (PG, p. 362). The change will be subtle, resembling the unseen progress of a cancerous growth which, invading one section of tissue, already threatens the viability of the entire organism. Like a spiritual cancer, the enemy will manifest its presence by perhaps posting one sentinel in the area, but this one sentinel is the first symptom of the occupation:

L'invasion, peut-être, ne montrera-t-elle, par ici, qu'une sentinelle solitaire, perdue au loin dans l'immensité des campagnes, une marque grise à la lisière du blé. Rien n'aura changé en apparence, mais un signe suffit, s'il s'agit de l'homme, pour que tout soit autre. (PG, p. 362)

Tomorrow, the farmer would still feed his family, but the bread would no longer be a sacrament of "la même religion
familiale" (PG, p. 363) because the spiritual freedom linking the members of the family together and with the land would be destroyed. Saint-Exupéry again calls upon a metaphor to illustrate this change, comparing the bread to the oil in a lamp. The purpose or merit of the bread is in the "light" it produces, and "le pain, demain peut-être, n'alimentera plus la même lumière des regards, ... ne formera peut-être plus la même flamme" (PG, p. 363).

He sees the farmer's niece as bread transformed into "grâce mélancolique, ... pudeur, ... douceur du silence," and her smile is "la lumière du blé" (PG, p. 363). She represents the end product, the goal of the chain which is being broken by the enemy, and unknowingly she provides the answer to Saint-Exupéry's question, "for what am I fighting?":

Je me suis battu pour préserver la qualité d'une lumière, bien plus encore que pour sauver la nourriture des corps. Je me suis battu pour le rayonnement particulier en quoi se transfigure le pain dans les maisons de chez moi. Ce qui m'émeut d'abord, de cette petite fille secrète, c'est l'écorce immatérielle. C'est je ne sais quel lien entre les lignes d'un visage. C'est le poème lu sur la page—et non la page. (PG, p. 363)

Going out for the walk he had promised himself, Saint-Exupéry feels intensely responsible for preserving the "richesse intérieure semblable au patrimoine d'un village" (PG, p. 363) he has witnessed in the members of this family, and
which he perceives as threatened. He carries his responsibility like a burden one accepts with joy, as one might carry a sleeping child. This image bears striking resemblance to a passage in Chapter XXIV of *Le Petit Prince*, where the aviator carries the sleeping prince as they search for a well in the desert. Compare:

J'emporte cette charge qui m'est plus douce que pesante, comme le serait un enfant endormi contre ma poitrine. *(PG, p. 364)*

Comme le petit prince s'endormait, je le pris dans mes bras, et me remis en route. J'étais ému. Il me semblait porter un trésor fragile. *(PP, p. 480)*

On the same page, the aviator refers to the prince's spiritual ties with his rose which he compares to the flame of a lamp:

"Ce qui m'émeut si fort de ce petit prince endormi, c'est sa fidélité pour une fleur, c'est l'image d'une rose qui rayonne en lui comme la flamme d'une lampe, même quand il dort..." Et je le devinais plus fragile encore. Il faut bien protéger les lampes: un coup de vent peut les éteindre... *(PP, p. 48)*

As he walks through "his" village, he understands that he has nothing to say. In spite of the defeat, he feels optimistic and even victorious, even though he admits that "Nous ne disposons d'aucun langage pour justifier notre
sentiment de victoire." He reflects on the discoveries he has made this day and decides that

    Je me sens lié à ceux de chez moi, tout simplement. Je suis d'eux, comme ils sont de moi.
    (PG, p. 364)

He scorns the terms that men use—such as victory or defeat—to describe their current condition, and attributes far more importance to the "seed" buried in the victory or the defeat. The blind and directionless mob of refugees regains sight and direction if one among them perceives his responsibility.

Saint-Exupéry cannot answer the question, "Que faut-il faire?" and does not try to, because "Il n'est point de déterminisme de l'avenir." The essential question is one of being rather than doing. Using metaphors once again, he suggests that it is difficult to say what one must do to consume a forest, but far easier to say what one must be: "Il faut être incendie!" (PG, p. 366) Turning to the resistance effort, his goal is to save France as a unified nation with its cultural identity intact. But no specific action is clearly indicated, and he fears that "les logiciens" will sacrifice either the people or the heritage to save the other when, if France is to remain what she is, both must be equally preserved.

This task requires a double effort, composed of consciousness and of language:
Notre communauté nous est déjà sensible. Il nous faudra certes l'exprimer, pour rallier à elle.

The French must remain conscious of what they are and learn to manifest this consciousness while avoiding the traps of "des logiques provisoires, des chantages et des polémiques" (PG, p. 367). In order to insure that he will not stray from pursuit of this goal, Saint-Exupéry imposes on himself several "règles simples" that will guide his efforts.

First, he recognizes his communal bond with all Frenchmen and pledges not to disown his people no matter what they may do. Nor will he reject some while embracing others. France has produced men of genius and courage, but she has also brought forth her share of "incapables, ... politiciens, et ... tricheurs." It would be too easy to "se réclamer des uns et de nier toute parenté avec les autres," but Saint-Exupéry refuses to make these distinctions which he calls "ces procès sans juge" (PG, p. 367). Defeat is divisive by nature, but it also reaches all those defeated. To respond by further self-division would only prolong the chaos and render more difficult any meaningful reconstruction.

Corollary, then, to accepting all his countrymen as brothers in defeat, is recognizing that each is equally responsible and must play his role in rebuilding the nation.

On an international scale, France and all other nations are equally responsible for world peace or war, just
as all Frenchmen share responsibility for the internal condition of their nation. Saint-Exupéry says he had reproached the rest of the world for not coming to France's aid, but now he sees that the blame is mutually shared:

La France était responsable du monde. La France eût pu offrir au monde la commune mesure qui l'eût uni. La France eût pu servir au monde de clef de voûte. Si la France avait eu saveur de France, rayonnement de France, le monde entier se fût fait résistance à travers la France. Je renie désormais mes reproches au monde. La France se devait de lui servir d'âme, s'il en manquait. (PG, p. 368)

This plea for world solidarity combines humility and strength through the leveling bond of responsibility, for if all nations worked together unselfishly, their powers might be combined in a totally positive effort which would benefit all far more than the conflicting efforts of vying powers could possibly benefit the individual countries involved:


Saint-Exupéry extends the existential concept of responsibility
to include nations as well as individuals, and he understands
this to be a spiritual bond, not simply the application of a
physical law of relativity to human endeavors. He sees the
French defeat as a sign that the spiritual community of men is
at best incomplete and infers that as long as communion is in-
complete the outrage of a German invasion can occur again
elsewhere and in other forms. At the same time, he rests the
hope of preventing such future occurrences on the achievement
of a worldwide spiritual communion among all men, and sees
that hope as the prime incentive to establish this communion.

Saint-Exupéry further elaborates the relationship
between the spiritual responsibility he advocates and the
communion that will come of it. Calling humility "le principe
même de l'action" (PG, p. 369), he states that by seeking ex-
cuses for his misfortunes, man enslaves himself to the forces
he blames for his problems. On the other hand, if he accepts
full responsibility for his failure, he clears the way for
existentially authentic action whose outcome will depend on
his own strengths and which he can direct toward building the
community of man:

Mais si je prends la faute en
charge, je revendique mon pouvoir
d'homme. Je puis agir sur ce dont
je suis. Je suis part constitutante
de la communauté des hommes.

(PG, p. 369)
Proceeding one step farther, he says that while it is true that we can blame specific incidents which contributed to the defeat of individuals, it is our civilization which must accept the ultimate responsibility because

Une civilisation pétrit les hommes. Si celle dont je me réclame est menacée par la défaillance des individus, j'ai le droit de me demander pourquoi elle ne les a pas pétris autres. (PG, p. 369)

Recognizing the need to rediscover "le ferment qu' [il a] perdu," the principles which animate the kind of man he hopes to save, he admits that until the experiences of this day's mission, he had been basking in the "paix, ... tolérance, ... bien être" of his civilization and had not been contributing to build it ("Je ne l'habitaïs plus en architecte.") (PG, p. 370).

Attributing his new awareness to the shock of enemy fire over Arras, Saint-Exupéry says, "Le tir a brisé une écorce." He resumes the principles he has been seeking in the term "l'Homme" (See Part II, Chapter Two and Part III Chapter One above.) and says that "l'Homme ... s'est installé à [sa] place" (PG, p. 371), and that through the eyes of Saint-Exupéry, "l'Homme" has seen the unity that the writer has expressed in such detail in the preceding pages.

In the course of his walk in "his village" on the evening of his return, Saint-Exupéry experiences the feeling
Il me semble comprendre beaucoup de choses dans mon étrange nuit de village. La silence est d'une qualité extra-ordinaire. Le moindre bruit remplit l'espace tout entier, comme une cloche. Rien ne m'est étranger. Ni cette plainte de bétail, ni ce lointain appel, ni ce bruit d'une porte que l'on referme. Tout se passe comme en moi-même. Il me faut me hâter de saisir le sens d'un sentiment qui peut s'évanouir. (PG p. 371)

This "sentiment qui peut s'évanouir" is the feeling of unity with "l'Homme" and that "l'Homme" is the keystone of his civilization. He next traces the development of "l'Homme" as "l'essence de [sa] culture" (PG, p. 373), which he sees as a derivative of Christian values:

La contemplation de Dieu fondait les hommes égaux, parce que égaux en Dieu. Et cette égalité avait une signification claire. Car on ne peut être égal qu'en quelque chose. ...

.................................
Ma civilisation, héritant de Dieu, a fait les hommes égaux en l'Homme.
(PG, p. 374)

In a sort of "profession de foi," whose refrain is "ma civilisation, héritant de Dieu...," Saint-Exupéry reviews the transformation of Christian doctrine into humanistic values. As Christians respected one another as Ambassadors of God, so we have come to respect "l'homme au travers des individus" (PG, p. 375). Likewise, men are brothers in "l'Homme" as
they were brothers in God; and charity—in Christian doctrine a gift to God through the recipient—has become a "don à l'Homme au travers de l'individu" (PG, p. 375). And finally, the spiritual responsibility Saint-Exupéry subscribes to has its origin in Christian belief as well:

Je comprends, enfin, pourquoi l'amour de Dieu a établi les hommes responsables les uns des autres et leur a imposé l'Espérance comme une vertu. Puisque, de chacun d'eux, elle faisait l'Ambassadeur du même Dieu, dans les mains de chacun reposait le salut de tous. Nul avait le droit de désespérer, puisque messager de plus grand que soi. ... Ma civilisation, héritière de Dieu, a fait chacun responsable de tous les hommes, et tous les hommes responsable de chacun. (PG, p. 376)

Unfortunately, he observes, we have lost sight of this heritage and have allowed the concept of "l'Homme" to dissolve into "cette termitière, qui repose sur la somme des individus" (PG, p. 378). As "l'Homme" has replaced God in our value structure, so now has "l'individu" replaced "l'Homme"; we have reduced our spiritual fraternity to a mutual toleration. Saint-Exupéry places the blame on language, or on our faith in language (See Part III, Chapter One above.) to convey and contain a heritage which it merely represents symbolically.

The Credo which concludes Pilote de guerre sums up the reflections Saint-Exupéry has been making on "l'Homme" and the value of this spiritual lodestone for our civilization. Placing
"l'Homme" above the individual as a universal value which can bind "les richesses particulières" and create "le seul ordre véritable, lequel est celui de la vie" (PG, p. 383), Saint-Exupéry promises to fight for the supremacy of "l'Homme" against all his enemies and even against himself if need be.

**Conclusion**

The four works I have studied in this chapter all clearly exhibit Saint-Exupéry's belief that man is capable of achieving a communal relationship with his fellows primarily through bonds created by shared experience. *Vol de nuit* presents a more restricted view of such communal bonds by limiting the community of shared experience to those men who participate in the France-South America airmail operation. *Terre des Hommes* continues to display the communal bonds created between fliers and deals with Saint-Exupéry's personal experience openly, whereas *Vol de nuit* undoubtedly contains much of the author's personal experience in novelized form. In *Terre des Hommes*, Saint-Exupéry begins to explore communal ties in other areas of human experience: the family, man and his planet, man with all men. The most emotion-laden passage of *Terre des Hommes* describes Saint-Exupéry's and Prévot's rescue by the nomadic Arab who symbolizes all of humanity for the stranded pilot:

*Quant à toi qui nous sauves, Bédouin*
de Libye, tu t'effaceras cependant
à jamais de ma mémoire. Je ne me
souviendrai jamais de ton visage.
Tu es l'Homme et tu m'apparais avec
le visage de tous les hommes à la
fois. Tu ne nous as jamais
dévisagés et déjà tu nous as reconnus.
Tu es le frère bien aimé. Et, à
mon tour, je te reconnaîtrai dans
tous les hommes. (PG, p. 243)

Conscious now of our universal solidarity, Saint-Exupéry ex-
presses a desire in the final pages of Terre des Hommes to
share this awareness. He has discovered that a communion
exists beyond the limits of language, and all of Pilote de
guerre represents his struggle to maintain his consciousness
of this truth. Admitting that he let this awareness get away
from him during his participation in the war, he describes in
detail how he came once again to take hold of it and how he
proposes to continue to face and live up to this reality.

I have grouped together under the rubric of communion
the passages studied in this chapter because they appear to
deal with a level of communication above and less tangible
than those which represent non-verbal communication, clearly
showing some kind of spiritual or non-material bond between
people and the world as they perceive it. These episodes re-
veal a preoccupation, dating from Saint-Exupéry's first com-
plete published work, with a phenomenon which the writer
grasped intuitively through personal experience and which he
continually explored as time went on, developing both his
understanding and his literary expression of this perception and of its value.
"Car ce n'est point par la voie du langage que je transmettrais ce qui est en moi. Ce qui est en moi, il n'est point de mot pour le dire. Je ne puis que le signifier dans la mesure où tu l'entends déjà par d'autres chemins que la parole. Par le miracle de l'amour ou, parce que, né du même dieu, tu me ressembles."

--Citadelle
CHAPTER ONE

CITADELLE AND THE FAILURE OF COMMUNICATION

Saint-Exupéry and the Writer’s Art

Throughout his written works Saint-Exupéry shows a concern for coherence and unity. The theme of communication which I have studied in Part III above reflects this concern. Saint-Exupéry was interested in all forms of communication as means of either perceiving, maintaining or establishing bonds between men and the earth; and furthermore, the theme of communication is so central to his writing that it serves as the framework upon which the narrative of each work and the thought of the author can be seen to grow.

254; "quelque chose d'informulable," p. 254; "arbre," p. 255; "rôle de l'expérience," pp. 257-259; "métier du pilote," pp. 243-246, 252, 254-256.) Other echoes here of his thought expressed elsewhere make the connection between these short pieces and his major works even stronger than the mere fact of recurrent images, and these echoes have the effect of clarifying several dispositions I have observed in the works previously studied, as well as forming a prelude to the study of Citadelle.

Speaking of the writer's dilemma in his preface to Anne Lindbergh's Le Vent se lève, Saint-Exupéry says that the major problem the writer faces is one of conveying relationships, and that the first relationship he encounters is the one existing between his subject and his reflections on the subject as he attempts to grasp and express what he perceives:

Le grand problème réside évidemment dans les rapports du réel et de l'écriture, ou mieux, du réel et de la pensée. Comment transporter l'émotion? Que transporte-t-on quand on s'exprime? Quel est l'essentiel? (SV, p. 249)

He goes on to distinguish "l'essentiel" from the "matériaux utilisés" by comparing it to "une nef de cathédrale" which rises out of a pile of stones. This is a familiar image to us by now, which Saint-Exupéry calls upon here to show that the writer's art deals not with objects but with that which
relates these objects one to another:

Ce que l'on peut prétendre saisir et traduire et transmettre du monde extérieur ou intérieur, ce sont des rapports. Des "structures," comme diraient les physiciens. (SV, p. 245. Cf. Car, pp. 102, 106, 111-112)

By "structures" he means the ways in which the parts of a given whole are grouped together in order to permit their cohesion. These relationships—the ways things are grouped together—are the primary object of the writer's consideration. Even though the writer observes objects or phenomenon—be they tangible or abstract, real or imagined—he cannot give us the thing in itself because

Il n'est point de lecture directe du réel. Le réel, c'est ce tas de briques qui peut prendre toutes les formes. (SV, p. 248)

The important fact for Saint-Exupéry here is that the writer cannot help but interact with his material, even if he is attempting a straight-forward, journalistic presentation; and secondly, although he may write about his subject, his writing will convey his relationship with the subject matter, and this will be the underlying message of his text:

Il est obligatoirement intervenu entre le réel et son expression. Il a choisi ses matériaux—car il n'a pas tout raconté—et leur a imposé
Saint-Exupéry must have been aware of this crucial aspect of his art in regard to his own writing, and we can even go so far as to assume that he is really speaking to and for himself here.

He makes a conceptual jump from the relationship between subject matter and writing to that of words and writing, saying that "ce qui est vrai des faits concrets est vrai des mots" (SV, p. 248), and he quotes a line from Baudelaire's "Chant d'Automne" ("Le bois retentissant sur le pavé des cours") to illustrate what he means: Baudelaire has taken "bois," "retentir," "pavé" and "cour" as raw materials to create an esthetically pleasing alexandrine. As any student of poetry knows, what counts is not the words themselves, but how the poet put them together. The poet's choice and ordering of words, of course, constitutes his style, and Saint-Exupéry understands style in terms of structure.

For Saint-Exupéry, the structure of a poetic image constitutes its value, because

Sa valeur se situe sur un autre plan que celui des mots employés. Elle ne réside dans aucun des deux éléments que l'on associe ou compare, mais dans le type de liaison qu'elle spécifie, dans l'attitude interne particulière qu'une telle structure nous impose. (SV, pp. 249-250)
The metaphor he uses to describe how a poetic image works on the reader shows how well he understands its effect:

L'image est un acte qui, à son insu, noue le lecteur. On ne touche pas le lecteur: on l'envoûte.
... Voyez le bâtisseur de cathédrales: il s'est servi de pierres, et il en a fait du silence.
Le vrai livre est comme un filet dont les mots composent les mailles. Peu importe la nature des mailles du filet. Ce qui importe, c'est la proie vivante que le pêcheur a remontée du fond des mers, ces éclairs de vif-argent que l'on voit luire entre les mailles.
(Sy, p. 250)

Saint-Exupéry could be describing his own writing here and, consciously or not, he is expressing his own aspirations as a writer, for this is what he himself hoped to do--especially in Citadelle. The appearance in the above quote of the image of the cathedral, and the concept of image as that which "envoûte" the reader, reveal that in 1939, Saint-Exupéry already possessed one of the most important metaphors of Pilote de guerre and Citadelle, and also that he understood already how he would use this and other images in an attempt to convey his perceptions of liens and continuity.

He goes on in an effort to describe the unifying structure of Mrs. Lindbergh's book, which he senses intuitively through a series of images, but which "il est difficile de ... définir" (Sy, p. 250), as a sort of life-blood of the book: "Et cependant, je sens, répandue à travers ces pages, une
angoisse très légère qui prendra des formes diverses, mais circulera inlassablement, ainsi qu'un sang silencieux" (SV, p. 251). Here once again he could be referring to his own writings. The "angoisse tres légère" he senses in her book brings to mind Bernis' "inquiétude si humaine" which indeed flows throughout Courrier Sud. Working slowly toward clarifying this "angoisse," Saint-Exupéry generalizes in another statement which applies perfectly to the analysis I have presented of his own work: "J'ai crû remarquer que, chaque fois qu'une oeuvre présentait une cohérence profonde, elle était presque toujours réductible à une commune mesure élémentaire" (SV, p. 251).

"Commune mesure élémentaire": in his own work, the theme of communication occupies this position. I have shown that Saint-Exupéry was indeed conscious of his interest in communication and that very probably he purposely chose images which displayed this interest in an attempt to convey his concern to his readers. The writer's involvement with this vital structure of his work is often greater than his awareness of it, however, and it is highly unlikely that Saint-Exupéry planned from the beginning to make communication the central theme of all his work:

Certes, cette commune mesure n'était point le fait d'un parti pris. L'auteur n'y avait pas songé. Mais qu'il fut possible de la dégager était la marque d'une continuité souterraine. (SV, p. 251)
This, then, is precisely the value I see in the theme I have traced through the works of Saint-Exupéry. The presence or "marque" of the "continuité souterraine" I have described in no way rules out the possibility of other images creating, in another reader's perception, another network of themes which demonstrates, from a different perspective or on a different plane, still another structural continuity in his works. I have simply found more evidence leading me to this subjective reading of the works than to any other.

The fact that Saint-Exupéry speaks of "structures" in this context may well indicate that—contrary to his statement about their unconscious existence—he knew very well what he was about and that he was trying to build into Citadelle (or all his works) a structural continuity transcending the capacity of individual images to "envoûter" the reader, which would give his work "une cohérence profonde." If not, he at least gives his reader tacit license here to look at his own works with an eye to discovering such a continuity.

Saint-Exupéry's Goal: To Share His Vision of Communication

In Part II, Chapter One above, I discussed Saint-Exupéry's twofold belief that a spiritual life is both possible and necessary for man, finding the expression of this belief most explicit in the Lettre au général X and in Carnets, neither of which works Saint-Exupéry intended for publication. It
appears that this need for a spiritual life which he perceived in modern man stimulated an almost obsessive desire on his part to answer the need, and that he directed his writing to this end. Having studied the many manifestations of the theme of communication and detected in certain of these manifestations Saint-Exupéry's awareness of man's unconscious need for spiritual experience, I believe that a strong connection can be shown to exist between Saint-Exupéry's desire to awaken man to an awareness and acceptance of his spiritual potential and the global theme of communication seen as the author's attempt to instill this awareness and promote this acceptance.

If we are to accept the opinions expressed in the Lettre au Général X as the sincere manifestations of Saint-Exupéry's deepest concerns, and not just the outpourings of his temporary bitterness during a period of extreme frustration (This letter was written in July, 1943 when Saint-Exupéry was trying unsuccessfully and desperately to gain permission to fly war missions.), we can now see that not only does Saint-Exupéry pose the problem he calls "seul de par le monde":

Rendre aux hommes une signification spirituelle, des inquiétudes spirituelles. ... Redécouvrir qu'il est une vie de l'esprit plus haute encore que la vie de l'intelligence, la seule qui satisfasse l'homme.

(SV, pp. 225-226)

but also he suggests a way to arrive at this awareness and
even defines "la vie de l'esprit" as beginning "là où un être 'un' est conçu au-dessus des matériaux qui le composent" (SV, p. 226).

Here, again, as in the preface quoted above, Saint-Exupéry refers to the "structures" uniting men and objects. In this letter, as well as in the above-mentioned prefaces, several of the most important recurrent images of the published works are conspicuous enough to warrant our attention. The problem of maintaining immaterial "liens" is a critical one to Bernis, to Fabien, to Rivière and to Saint-Exupéry himself in Terre des Hommes and Pilote de guerre. Here, Saint-Exupéry shows that he considers this to be a universal problem:

Les liens d'amour qui nouent l'homme
dauteur'hui aux êtres comme aux
chooses sont si peu tendus, si peu
denses .... Désert de l'homme.
(SV, p. 226)

The fictional representation of broken ties in a very specific situation (Geneviève's loss of contact with things, Simone Fabien's discovery of the meaninglessness of her gestures after her husband's death) then, appears as a literary sublimation of the author's perception of this same phenomenon on a much larger scale. Saint-Exupéry attempted to "incorporate" (in the sense of concrétiser, render concrete) in novel form what he sensed to be modern man's problem, in order to show that

Ce qui vaut, c'est certain arrangement
The Lettre au Général X displays quite clearly not only the same images that constitute a significant part of the theme of communication in the "novels" of Saint-Exupéry, but also the author's urgent concern for arousing a spiritual awareness in modern man. Furthermore, the tone of this letter and the relationship between the two factors just mentioned suggests that the most significant role of the theme of communication in the works of Saint-Exupéry is to express the author's perception of man's spiritual emptiness and his desire to help fill the gap.

A passage from Saint-Exupéry's message to Americans given as a radio address after his death supports this interpretation of the role of communication in his writing and further attests to his consciousness of mankind's greatest accomplishments and greatest need:

Look, my American friends, it seems to me that something new is in formation on our planet. The material progress of modern times has indeed linked mankind by a sort of nervous system. The contacts are innumerable. The communications are instantaneous. We are materially bound like the cells of the same body. But this body does not yet have a soul. The organism has
not yet grown conscious of itself. The hand does not feel itself a part with the eye. (SV, p. 238)

This, then was his basic goal as a writer: to give man a sense of spiritual continuity which would match the physical continuity brought about so rapidly by modern technology. This brief examination of Saint-Exupéry's views on his art and his purpose as a writer provides an appropriate context for the consideration of the theme of communication in Citadelle and of the many ideas concerning language expressed in this work.

An Approach to Citadelle

Any study of Citadelle can be at best tentative because it is an unfinished work representing Saint-Exupéry's first-draft expression of his thoughts collected over an eight-year period. He himself has been quoted as saying that he would never be finished with Citadelle, that this would be his "oeuvre posthume." (C, "Note des éditeurs," p. 502) The 500 pages (Pléiades edition) of Citadelle contain many repetitions and paraphrases of earlier passages which clearly attest to its premature form. In a number of instances, these repetitions, when studied side-by-side, have a clarifying effect, adding another image or expression which helps the reader better understand the author's purpose in the development of a given theme. Just as often, however, these
elaborations on the same theme lead either to greater
obscurity, broadening the scope of the original image to such
an extent that any precise determination of intent is im-
possible, or ultimately to contradictions which neither the
passages involved nor the work as a whole resolve.

In the following passage from a letter written to
his friend Pierre Chevrier in 1942, Saint-Exupéry's deep in-
volveinent in Citadelle can be clearly seen, and there can be
no doubt as to the importance or magnitude of this work in the
life of its author:

Je veux finir Citadelle. C'est
tout. Je m'échange là-contre. Je
crois que ça tient maintenant, à moi
comme une ancre de fond. On me
demanderà dans l'éternité: Qu'est-ce
que vous avez fait de vos dons et
comment avez-vous agi sur les hommes?
Puisque je ne suis pas mort à la
guerre, je m'échange contre autre chose
que la guerre. Qui m'aide là-dedans
est mon ami... Je ne poursuis aucun
but intéressé, aucune approbation
de l'opinion. C'est bien entendu
maintenant avec moi-même. Ça
paraîtra à ma mort car je n'aurai
jamais fini. J'ai sept cents pages.
Si je les travaillais comme un simple
article, ces sept cents pages de
gangue, il me faudrait déjà dix ans
rien que de mise au point. Je les
travaillerai simplement jusqu'au bout
de mes forces. Je ne ferai plus rien
d'autre au monde. Je n'ai plus
aucun sens par moi-même. Je me sens
menacé, vulnérable, limité dans le
temps, je veux finir mon arbre.
Some of the most significant images of *Citadelle* appear in this passage, reinforcing the impression of Saint-Exupéry's sincerity and of the high degree of his involvement in this work. The concept of exchange ("Je m'échange là-contre") plays an extensive role in the theme of communication expressed in *Citadelle*, and will be studied below. The term "arbres," here representing *Citadelle* and of course its structure, appears so often in the text (primarily as "arbres," but also more specifically as, in order of frequency, "cèdre," "oranger," "olivier"), that it would be easier to list the pages which do not contain reference to it than to attempt to catalog the vast majority which do. In the literally hundreds of passages where "arbres" or some species of tree plays a significant part, Saint-Exupéry calls upon the term to symbolize variously: "l'homme" (pp. 514, 517, 536, 544–545, 576, 580, 584, 593, 598, 602, 637, 639, 665, 685, 697, 709, 725, 739, 782, 800); "la femme" (p. 575); "Dieu" (p. 784); "le temple" (pp. 521, 724); the narrator (pp. 521, 627, 628, 687, 950); the unity of life (pp. 557, 568, 677, 724, 753, 756, 880); "l'empire" (pp. 554, 559, 565, 616, 689); "collaboration des hommes," "fraternité" (pp. 618, 633, 634, 739, 764); "la paix" (p. 558); "l'avenir" (p. 650); "la civilisation" (p. 752).

Saint-Exupéry is also warning us unintentionally here to "tread lightly" on *Citadelle* as we attempt to decipher its obscurities, as he himself calls it a "gangue" from which he
hoped to carve the gem he did not live long enough to see. Certainly, he would have eliminated many obscurities and hopefully most repetitions. Several expressions, not to mention individual words whose symbolic use is extensive, appear an inordinate number of times. E.g., "vent de paroles" appears at least 19 times (pp. 511, 563, 566, 579, 625, 667, 677, 723, 725, 731, 768, 786, 802, 803, 813, 819, 930, 971, 972); "mots qui se tirent la langue" appears at least eight times (pp. 728, 767, 777, 815, 871, 926, 972, 978); "noeuds divins qui nouent les choses" appears at least 17 times (pp. 701, 719, 722, 733, 743, 745, 746, 747, 751, 769, 770, 797, 879, 881, 900, 989, 993). The repetition of this last expression 12 times in a span of only 100 pages suggests strongly that Saint-Exupéry would have condensed this section drastically, cutting how much we can never know. And it is with respect for the early stage of development of Citadelle at which Saint-Exupéry would not have considered this work ready for publication, that I shall attempt to trace the appearance of elements of the global theme I have observed in the other works and discern the overall direction of this work.

Citadelle is a monologue told by the chief of a desert empire in a style that has been described as biblical (C, "Note des éditeurs," p. 504) or pseudo-biblical. The chief tells of his father's wisdom in governing his people and of his own role as the leader of a nation. Although there are
certainly political and social overtones present, Citadelle is not a treatise on how to run a government. The "Café"'s primary concern (and Saint-Exupéry's) is spiritual in nature, and this work can best be understood as an elaborate allegory whose subject is man's relationship to his world and his awareness of this relationship. Throughout the works, Saint-Exupéry's overall approach to the subject of his writing is spiritual rather than analytical. He repeatedly indicates, especially in Citadelle where much of the unfinished text may in fact consist of notes to himself (See pp. 763, 772 where Saint-Exupéry writes "note pour plus tard"); see also p. 760), that he is concerned not with things in themselves nor with people or groups of people in themselves, but above all with the relationships between and among people and things: "Mon territoire est bien autre chose que ces moutons, ces champs, ces demeures et ces montagnes, mais ce qui les domine et les noue" (C, p. 518).

The role of the chief as spiritual guide for his people represents Saint-Exupéry's goal in Citadelle. Believing that man exists in profound harmony with all other things and that man's greatness resides in his conscious participation in and acceptance of the harmony of the world, Saint-Exupéry wanted to share not so much the fruits as the process of his meditation, to arouse in his reader an awareness of the "réseau de liens" making up his spiritual existence.

The "Café" tells how his father, who perceived his
subjects as "cette humanité pourrissante," (C, p. 553) described the condition of his people:

Car voilà bien, disait mon père, un grand mystère de l'homme. Ils perdent l'essentiel et ignorant ce qu'ils ont perdu. (C, p. 551)

This perception of man's spiritual emptiness (which Saint-Exupéry experienced personally: "Je hais mon époque de toutes mes forces. L'homme y meurt de soif." [SV, p. 225]) prompts both the "Caïd"'s father and in turn the narrator himself to devote his life to fostering the development of a spiritual awareness in his people:

C'est pourquoi il convient en permanence de tenir réveillé en l'homme ce qui est grand et de le convertir à sa propre grandeur. Car l'aliment essentiel ne lui vient pas des choses mais du noyau qui noue les choses. Ce n'est pas le diamant, mais telle relation entre le diamant et les hommes qui le peut nourrir. Ni ce sable, mais telle relation entre le sable et les tribus. Non les mots dans le livre, mais telles relations entre les mots du livre qui sont amour, poème et sagesse de Dieu. (C, pp. 552-553)

The narrator's purpose in all of Citadelle, as well as Saint-Exupéry's message to man, is summed up in this brief passage and in dozens more like it. The rest of the work is an elaboration of this central noyau and indicates clearly that Saint-Exupéry had discovered his "message" but was still seeking
to perfect his expression of it. This also is the core of my study: he knew what he wanted to say, but not how to say it.

The Role of the Chief

In his perceptive article, "Le personnage du chef dans l'oeuvre de Saint-Exupéry," Réal Ouellet studies the role of the chief in Citadelle from the point of view of his active involvement with his people. Recognizing the spiritual nature of the allegory of Citadelle, Ouellet borrows some Exupéryan terms as he describes how the chief leads, provokes and invites his people to a "dépassement d'eux-mêmes" (Ouellet, p. 226) and to achieve "une forme de vie supérieure requérant l'exercice de leurs plus hautes facultés" (Ouellet, p. 227). The chief's discovery, which is Saint-Exupéry's as well, is intuitive and cannot be described or explained logically so that a certain method can be prescribed which will allow others to experience the same intuition. The chief's only recourse, then, is to "convert" his people—in a religious sense—in order to get them to feel what he feels: "En tant que conducteur d'hommes, son devoir est de transmettre aux autres les évidences qui le saisissent et de leur inculquer les sentiments, les désirs, la passion et la soif d'idéal dont lui-même se nourrit" (Ouellet, p. 229). The chief must act as a stabilizing element among his people, a point of reference for
the spiritual vision he hopes to evoke. Because a spiritual conversion is highly personal, the chief's most likely route to success in this venture is to instill in his subjects—laborers, shipbuilders, artists—the spark of enthusiasm which animates him and then allow this fervor to develop in each individual. He must plant the seed and maintain the proper conditions for the resulting tree's growth.

The irrational and non-linear nature of Saint-Exupéry's intuition led him to express his conception of the chief's role in symbolic terms. Ouellet recognizes Citadelle's "univers de symboles applicables ... à chaque individu" (Ouellet, p. 355), but the examination of these images is not within the scope of his study. Ouellet examines the active aspects of the chief's role, but scarcely mentions the effective aspects, alluding briefly to the poetic and allegorical nature of the writing in Citadelle. His suggestions as to precisely what the chief would do to bring about a general spiritual awareness in his people are vague and remain in the realm of general encouragement, constant supervision and morale-boosting. Saint-Exupéry very likely experienced the same difficulties and thus resorted to metaphorical expression of his non-verbal intuitions.

The chief speaks often of his role in terms of being and action: what he is or how he sees himself, and what he is doing or will do for his people. His language is primarily
metaphorical, especially when describing what he is. Here, he seems to represent time:

Je suis la routine qui comble le fruit. (C, p. 516)

Je suis celui qui recoud les fissures de sol et cache aux hommes les traces du volcan. Je suis la pelouse sur l'abîme. Je suis le cellier qui dore les fruits. Je suis le bac qui a reçu de Dieu une génération en gage et la passe d'une rive à l'autre. (C, p. 517)

As time ripens fruit and heals erosion scars, so will he supervise the maturing and "curing" of his people. He sees himself as having the power to unify and create, for example, a cathedral from a pile of stones:

Moi l'architecte. Moi qui possède une âme et un coeur. Moi qui seul détiens le pouvoir de changer la pierre en silence. (C, p. 523)

At times he is more direct and explicit:

Je suis le chef. Je suis le maître. Je suis le responsable. (C, p. 523)

And on occasion he mixes being and doing as he describes himself, and speaks both directly and metaphorically of his effects on man:

Je suis la vie et j'organise.
J'édifie les glaciers contre les intérêts des mares. Peu m'importe si les grenouilles coassent à l'injustice. Je réarme l'homme pour qu'il soit. (C, p. 521)

"Les glaciers" would seem to represent the forces of "l'homme en devenir," whereas "les mares" would be the stagnating "humanité pourrissante" which the chief's father worked to change. This metaphor is echoed in the more transparent last sentence which recalls "l'homme en devenir."

The chief's direct involvement in the devenir of his people is quite evident, and although many images which express this involvement evoke very graphically the self-directed growth which must take place, the foremost quality of the spiritual growth being depicted remains its ineffability:

Moi je suis le cadre et l'armature et l'acte créateur dont vous naissiez, il faut maintenant, comme l'arbre géant qui développe ses branchages, et non les branchages d'un autre, forme ses aiguilles ou ses feuilles, non celles d'un autre, croître et vous établir... (C, p. 602)

Saint-Exupéry maintains this figurative approach throughout Citadelle, but does not drift off into metaphysical abstractions. If the "Caïd" does not tell his people precisely what they must do, it is because they must find for themselves the proper expression of the acquired attitude, the appropriate
action within the framework which their chief is attempting to establish: "Mais j'impose non des actes mais des structures" (C, p. 763). He is thus above all a spiritual leader to his people concerned primarily with their inner development and with awakening in them an awareness of the "noeuds" which create a "rêseau de liens" between them and the world. The "Caïd" never questions the truth of this vision of the spiritual relativity of all things, although he doubts at times his own ability to persevere in representing this order to his people. The "Caïd"'s belief speaks for Saint-Exupéry's fundamental intuition of man's place in the world, and his activity parallels allegorically that of Saint-Exupéry as he attempted to express this intuition.

The Theme of Communication in Citadelle

Many elements of the global theme of communication, whose manifestations I have traced through the major works published during Saint-Exupéry's lifetime, reappear in Citadelle. Key words which signify one form or another of communication in the earlier works, such as "cathédrale," "arbre" and "graine," "liens," "tèsor," "devenir," "lumière," "silence," all abound in Citadelle where, by their frequency and because of the loose structure of this unfinished work, they tend to move more freely as evocative symbols. Many are expanded into elaborate, repeated images ("cathédrale" and
"liens," for example) which serve to represent the state of spiritual communion with the world which Saint-Exupéry wanted to achieve. Saint-Exupéry felt compelled to express the total picture concerning man's spiritual relations with the world, and so Citadelle contains countless images depicting this state of affairs itself, as well as characterizing the activities and attitudes which are susceptible of leading men to this state and those which are not.

Saint-Exupéry expanded the concept of "liens" in Citadelle, calling upon various images to represent the ties between men and objects. The "réseau de liens" prevalent in Pilote de guerre (C, pp. 526, 874) gives way to "noeud(s)," "noeud(s) qui noue(nt) les choses," "ce qui noue les choses" and "noeuds de relations" (C, pp. 553, 555, 735, 781, 873, 874, 875, 892, 993), which represent our only access to things: "Tu communique non avec les objets mais avec les noeuds qui les nouent" (C, pp. 735, 737). Saint-Exupéry often refers to these "noeuds" as "divins," and in fact he repeats verbatim the expression "les noeuds divins qui nouent les choses," as I have pointed out above in this chapter. He also uses the term "dieu" with a small-case "d" and the term "divinité--both in the singular and plural forms--to refer to the same ties between things. (C, pp. 553, 719, 720, 732, 754, 776, 809, 879, 880). The sense of this image coincides with that of "noeuds," as these lines clearly show:
Car il n'est de communication qu'à travers le dieu qui se montre.
(C, p. 732)

... l'homme étant celui qui ne communique qu'à travers les dieux qu'il se conçoit et qui gouvernent lui et les autres. (C, p. 809)

The chief plays an active role in creating or identifying these "dieux" which enrich the lives of his people: "Car j'ai tiré de cette matière disparate un dieu qui se rit des murs et qui est plus fort que les supplices" (C, p. 719).

Another expression which often appears in the same context as "noeud" and "dieu" and which appears to represent a further expansion of the same notion of spiritual ties is "le sens des choses" (C, pp. 517, 520, 548, 569, 649, 715, 718, 796, 844, 873, 880, 899, 911, 954). As man can communicate only with the "noeuds" connecting objects, the sense that these ties have for him constitutes the objects' only worth:

Seul compte pour l'homme le sens des choses. (C, p. 548)

Mais tu es l'homme et t'alimentes du sens des choses et non des choses. (C, p. 718)

L'essentiel n'est point des choses mais du sens des choses. (C, p. 796)

Car tu vis non des choses du sens des choses. (C, p. 844)

"Le sens des choses," of supreme value to man, is a fragile quality which exists only as long as man consciously maintains
it. Saint-Exupéry depicts men who have lost sight of the ties which enrich them and who "commencent de ... démanteler [leur maison]": "Les hommes dilapident ainsi leur bien le plus précieux: le sens des choses" (C, p. 520). Two other passages repeat this theme of the vulnerability of "le sens des choses," and in each instance man is responsible for disrupting the harmony of his existence:

Je me méfie de toi lorsque tu tranches, car tu y risques ton bien le plus précieux, lequel n'est point des choses mais du sens des choses. (C, p. 873)

Mon peuple bien-aimé, tu as perdu ton miel qui est non des choses mais du sens des choses, et te voilà qui éprouves encore la hâte de vivre mais n'en trouves plus le chemin. (C, p. 880)

The apparent content of these images is a moral warning to man that he is responsible for creating and maintaining the meaning of the things he surrounds himself with. These objects have no intrinsic worth in themselves, but take on value only as they relate to other objects and to man. When the relationships break down, "le sens des choses" ceases to exist. The symbols expressing the relationships between things and man lead us to another group of images which transcend several men or objects or groups of men or objects, and which appear to represent a greater unity both in time and space. Such terms as "communauté des hommes," "empire,"
"temple," and less concrete expressions such as "cohérence," "permanence" and "cérémonial" all broaden the scope of those discussed above, often appearing together in a passage whose expansive images intertwine to echo at the level of poetic structure the harmony which they individually and collectively depict. The following passage, into which Saint-Exupéry incorporates several extensively used images ("arbre," "navire"), illustrates his talent for blending concrete and abstract images to create a formal as well as connotative harmony:

Car cette communauté des hommes, ce nœud du tronc qui pousse des branches diverses, cette unité que je désire d'abord atteindre et qui est sens de mon empire, il faut, quand tu te perds dans l'observation des équipes qui tirent autrement leurs cordages, t'éloigner un peu pour la découvrir. Et tu ne verras plus que navire en marche sur la mer. (C, p. 686)

In this passage, Saint-Exupéry shows concern for poetic structure as he groups together several images of unity which complement each other as do individual notes in a musical chord. He appears to be reproducing in the form of his writing the "lignes de force" he refers to elsewhere in Citadelle. All these more expansive terms refer to some kind of structure, and Saint-Exupéry often uses the word "structure" to indicate order in the world of objects as well as, in a literary sense, order in his writing.

The expression "lignes de force" appears in conjunction
with the term "structure":

... des lignes de force dont la structure parle à l'esprit.  
(C, p. 780)

... une structure de lignes de force.  (C, p. 795)

in the first instance to describe the structure and spiritual order of a cathedral, and in the second to indicate the bonds one must maintain with the world in order to survive in the desert.  "Lignes de force" appears also together with "l'empire" (C, p. 973), and again (C, pp. 677, 725, 739, 771, 797, 798, 800, 806, 833, 963, 977, 978; and as "champ de force" on pp. 520, 805-806, 816, 833) in contexts which suggest that Saint-Exupéry intends this expression to represent the combined structure resulting from all the "liens," "noeuds," and "divinités" which support man's existence:

Et les rites de ta société sont visage qui te fonde cet homme-ci et non autre, tel goût du repas du soir parmi les tiens, et non un autre, ce sont lignes du champ de force qui t'anime.  (C, p. 806)

The word "structure" appears several times in the same kinds of contexts in which "lignes de force" is found to indicate the network or field of relations by which men defines himself.  (C, pp. 660, 702, 763, 778, 784, 798, 844) Describing a dancer's encounter with "des lignes de force" which shape her existence, the chief calls her a "structure dirigée
comme l'arbre vivant, lequel n'est point libre de croître
mais va se diversifiant selon le génie de sa graine" (C,
p. 677). Saint-Exupéry points out the natural order of a
tree and draws upon this order in several analogies which em-
phasize the organic structure of man and of man-made things:

Car moi je dis que l'arbre est
ordre. Mais ordre ici c'est l'unité
qui domine le disparate. (C, p. 585)

La tour, la cité ou l'empire
grandissent comme l'arbre. (C, p. 559)

L'ordre que je fonde, disait mon
père, c'est celui de la vie. Car je
dis qu'un arbre est en ordre, malgré
qu'il sort à la fois racines et tronc
et branches et feuilles et fruits, et
je dis qu'un homme est en ordre,
malgré qu'il ait un esprit et un cœur,
et ne soit point réduit à une fonction,
comme le serait de labourer ou de
perpéter l'espèce, mais qu'il soit
à la fois celui qui labourer et qui
prie, qui aime et résiste à l'amour,
et travaille et se repose, et écoute
les chansons du soir. (C, pp. 664-665)

These passages and many more evoke the unity and coherence which
Saint-Exupéry perceived in the world and which he attempted to
represent by a vast array of images and symbols. While the
hierarchical relationship (if indeed he intended a hierarchy
among his symbols) of these terms is far from clear, their
direction is unmistakably toward depicting the world and man's
place in it as potentially and ideally harmonious.

The symbols I have chosen to examine more closely are
but a few of those used by Saint-Exupéry to represent the
world's coherence and the spatial relativity of men and
objects. These and others evoke as well in certain passages
the temporal unity—or permanence—of things. The ubiquitous
arbre is the most prevalent among those images which refer to
both spatial and temporal unity:

L'humanité dans sa démarche est
celle d'un arbre qui croît et se
continue d'un à travers l'autre,
comme la puissance de l'arbre dure
à travers ses noeuds et ses torsades
et la division de ses branches. Et
j'ai affaire à un grand corps et
j'ignore, moi, ce que c'est que mourir
quand je regarde du haut de ma cité,
car ici et là tombent des feuilles,
car et là naissent des bourgeois et
cependant dure le tronc solide à
travers. (C, p. 584)

This lyrical passage, along with several others which deal
with permanence (e.g., One portrays a child who will some day
be a conqueror of cities as "la graine de l'arbre" [C, p.
580]; others depict the future tree contained in the seed
[C, pp. 707, 760, 845, 887, 907]), as well as an occasional
direct declaration ("L'avenir donc est contenu dans le
présent..." [C, p. 577]), all strongly suggest that Saint-
Exupéry's prime concern in Citadelle was to find the best
vehicle for expressing his intuitive vision of the world and
life as one: "La vie est une, de même que la pente vers la
mer, et cependant d'étage en étage se diversifie, déléguant son
pouvoir d'Etre en Etre comme d'échelon en échelon" (C, p. 710). His goal thus coincides on the allegorical level with the chief's role as spiritual leader of his people, and the "Caïd" speaks for Saint-Exupéry as creator of his literary Citadelle when describing his own efforts to build his spiritual citadelle which is order and harmony among his people:

Je ne connais qu'une vérité qui est la vie et je ne reconnais qu'un seul ordre qui est l'unité quand elle domine les matériaux. Et peu m'importe si les matériaux sont disparates. Mon ordre c'est l'universelle collaboration de tous à travers l'un, et cet ordre m'oblige à fonder ce langage qui absorbera les contradictions. Et qui lui-même est vie. (C, p. 586)

The chief recognizes two concepts as ways to achieve the harmony he seeks to perpetuate. One, "l'universelle collaboration de tous" mentioned here, concerns collective action for spiritual unity. The other, the concept of exchange ("l'échange") of self in one's work deals with the personal devenir of the individual. I shall look briefly at both these concepts before turning to Saint-Exupéry's struggle with the literary expression of his perceptions as he attempted to "fonder ce langage qui absorbera les contradictions."

Saint-Exupéry sees artistic creation, or that of an artisan, in terms of "l'échange" of effort and time put into the finished work. The greater the demand of time and effort, the greater the value of the product upon which economic and
esthetic considerations have no bearing:

Je veux connaître la qualité de
la maison bâtie, la ferveur de la
religion de ton domaine, et si le
repas s'y déroule joyeux au soir du
travail accompli. Et quel amour
tu as construit et contre quoi, de
plus durable que toi-même, s'est
échangée ton existence. Je te veux
devenu. Je te veux lire à ta
création, non aux matériaux inemployés
dont tu fais ta vaine gloire.
(C, p. 905)

Participating in the dynamics of "l'échange," which is the
very condition of creation, are the personal "devenir" of the
artisan ("Je te veux devenu") and something more enduring
than himself ("quoi, de plus durable que toi-même"). The
creation of an object "qui dure" dominates certain passages
(C, pp. 528-530, 565, 685, 864, 868, 906), while in others
the personal growth of the creator preoccupies the "Cañá" (C,
pp. 531, 533, 557, 628, 904). The ultimate value of all
these "échanges" is to add meaning to life which cannot be
found in a sedentary existence and to make man more aware of
his interrelationship with the world by drawing his attention
to specific portions of the world that he himself has acted to
shape.

Greater still than the personal growth of individuals
is their collective "devenir" through efforts directed toward
the same goal. In Vol de nuit and Pilote de guerre, Saint-
Exupéry attributes the highest possible value to the fraternal
bond created by men in the same métier, struggling against the same forces of opposition. He expands an image appearing in the earlier works which in Citadelle becomes the major expression of this fraternal bond:

Celui-là tissera des toiles, l'autre dans la forêt par l'éclair de sa hache couchera l'arbre. L'autre, encore, forgera des clous, et il en sera quelque part qui observeront les étoiles afin d'apprendre à gouverner. Et tous cependant ne seront qu'un. Créer le navire, ce n'est point tisser les toiles, forger les clous, lire les astres, mais bien donner le goût de la mer qui est un, et à la lumière duquel il n'est plus rien qui soit contradictoire mais communauté dans l'amour. (C, p. 687)

The image of collaboration among workers of different trades—sometimes unconscious of the efforts of others—to construct a ship which will unite them and give a greater sense to their efforts appears repeatedly in passages which all more or less paraphrase the above passage. (C, pp. 524, 686, 765, 825, 908, 930, 933, 977). Still other passages deal with the collective efforts of the crew of a completed ship who are seen at times to recognize the "majesté" of their collaboration and at other times to be oblivious of anything but their individual tasks. (C, pp. 525, 568, 710, 814, 815, 930) The chief's hope is to keep the ship's crew members (sometimes used figuratively to represent citizens of "l'empire") jealously conscious of their individual jobs, yet aware of the
greater order to which they contribute, so that variety and individual perfection are not sacrificed to uniformity which smothers the particular: "Unifier, c'est nouer mieux les diversités particulières, non les effacer pour un ordre vain" (C, p. 710).

In addition to the images of building and navigating a ship, Saint-Exupéry refers to collaboration in the first 100 pages of Citadelle in general terms, and the image of collaboration to build a tower is repeated twice (C, pp. 541, 564). Saint-Exupéry does not hide the importance of this concept as he shows the direct relationship of collaboration to love:

Alors ils s'aimeront de s'épaular
l'un l'autre et de bâtir ensemble.
(C, p. 563)

La charité selon le sens de mon empire c'est la collaboration.
(C, p. 539)

and to brotherhood: "Et seuls sont frères les hommes qui collaborent" (C, p. 542). Collaboration provides the only enduring hope for the individual, "Car il n'est rien à espérer de soi mais de la seule merveilleuse collaboration de l'un à travers l'autre..." (C, p. 601), and ultimately the sole guarantee that cultural stagnation can be prevented: "Il n'est de création que si tous collaborent et cherchent" (C, p. 618). More than a simple plea for men to work together,
Saint-Exupéry's elaboration of the concept of collaboration is an attempt to increase the level of man's awareness of the significance of his daily activities and of the undeniable relevance of his efforts to those of other men who are in fact his spiritual brothers through the common product of their limited efforts which combine to form a unity greater than any one contributor or his contribution, greater even than the sum of all contributors and contributions.

**The Limits of Language**

Not all the "Caïd"'s subjects understand his purposes, and he describes his encounters with those who do not. The generals in his army are the stereotyped, insensitive "hommes à poing" caricaturized by many critics of the military. They think they understand, which is dangerous, but their grasp of a situation is analytical rather than comprehensive. They may see all the parts of a relationship but not the "liens" which form its sense (C, pp. 569, 585-586). That which cannot be formulated in simple, logical language escapes them, and yet they give the appearance of understanding: "Mes généraux, assagis par l'expérience et quoique n'ayant rien compris de mes paroles, firent divers bruits d'assentiment" (C, p. 842). Others, like the generals, mistake the materials of a sculpture, the notes produced by a guitar or the words of a poem for the essence of the sculpture, the music or the poem.
They "te les agitent dans un désordre inextricable" (C, p. 969) in an attempt to reproduce the artistic effect they have experienced but not understood. Still others are depicted as simply insensitive to the "domaine" or "empire" which signifies the unity of the "Caïd"'s realm, and, allegorically, of the world. (C, pp. 611, 695, 765, 768, 805, 854, 856-857, 896, 974, 977)

Ignorance may be responsible for this lack of communication, as in the case of the generals, or the fault may lie with language. Saint-Exupéry uses the term langage in two senses, although he does not always indicate which of these senses he means in a particular instance: 1) written and spoken language, i.e., words that may or may not constitute a system. 2) a system of words, signs, rites, gestures, etc., which constitute a readable code understood by members of one group. He often talks about the lack of communication when two groups or individuals with different "langages" come together in an attempt to speak to or deal with one another. Those who do not understand the language, or system of thought, or code of values of a group which experiences and expresses its unity cannot hope to perceive this unity through attempts at verbal communication, through a translation of terms or even through observing and participating in the gestures or rites of meaningful activities:

Celui-là que j'ajoute à ta caravane,
s'il ignore ton langage et ne participe pas à tes craintes, à tes espoirs et à tes joies, si simplement il est réduit aux mêmes gestes que les conducteurs de tes montures, il ne rencontrera rien qu'un désert vide et bâillera tout le long de la traversée d'une étendue interminable dont il ne recevra qu'ennui, et rien de mon désert ne changera ce voyageur. (C, p. 796)

Likewise, if the transfer of cultural values between generations ceases, then "la génération nouvelle campeera en barbare dans la ville qu'elle t'aura prise" (C, p. 830), and all those objects which have a sense to the old generation and have become "des trésors" will be so much junk to the newcomers because "Ils ne savent point s'en servir, n'ayant point la clef de ton langage" (C, p. 831. Cf. also pp. 602, 732, 802, 818, 854, 861, 918).

Each civilization may well experience its own coherences but because its language differs from that of another civilization, the exchange between them may be minimal and they will likely fail to recognize their interrelationship which is potentially as strong as their internal web of "liens." Speaking of his rapports with "cet ambassadeur d'une cause autre que la [sienne]," the "Caïd" recognizes that the problem rests on what he calls the "sens de notre langage" (C, p. 732). He says that if he hopes to "jouer plus haut qu'au jeu d'échecs et rencontrer l'homme à cet étage où la rouerie se trouve dominée," that he will approach this man only "à travers l'image
nouvelle," which he calls "notre commune mesure" \((C, p. 732)\). Without this common measure, they will fail to understand each other:

\[
\text{Mais si tu ne trouves point quelque dieu qui domine il n'est point d'espoir de communiquer car les mêmes matériaux ont sens dans son ensemble et sens différent dans le tien, de même que les pierres semblables font, selon l'architecte, un autre temple et comment saurais-tu t'exprimer quand victoire signifie pour toi sa défaite et signifie pour lui sa victoire? \((C, p. 732)\)}
\]

Thus, while inter-group communion may be within reach, it cannot be grasped by any one language which does not transcend its cultural bounds:

\[
\text{Car l'être n'a ni habileté, ni défaillance, et il peut être inconnu de chacun qui en participe, faute de langage. Il apparaît en chacun selon son langage particulier. \((C, p. 861)\)}
\]

And at the level of group interaction, all that which is apparent is contradiction because there is no all-transcending language to express the unity which exists in potential: "Donc tous ils se contredisent car il n'est point encore de langage pour dire l'empire" \((C, p. 787)\). "Point encore" reveals the "Caïd"'s hope, and indeed he states elsewhere his goal, in terms of language, giving it this added dimension—language being the tool by which he wants man to apprehend his
unity:

Donc pour, de toi qui es l'un, tirer l'autre, point n'est besoin de rien te procurer qui soit visible et matériel, ou te modifier en quoi que ce soit. Suffit que je t'enseigne le langage qui te permette de lire en ce qui est autour de toi et en toi tel visage neuf et brûlant pour le coeur. (C, p. 891. See also pp. 633, 698, 704)

Saint-Exupéry does not resolve the apparent contradiction in these two passages. The "Caïd" says that there is as yet no unifying language "pour dire l'empire", but in the passage from p. 891 he gives the impression of possessing the language, saying that all that remains is to teach it to those who do not yet know it. This is typical of the contradictions found throughout Citadelle, many of which Saint-Exupéry would have resolved, although he does say frequently that contradictions exist only because we do not have the ability to perceive them as aspects of a greater whole. (C, pp. 558, 567, 584-585, 631-632, 638, 649, 654, 655, 682, 731, 735, 756, 783, 787, 819, 826, 827, 861, 926, 945).

This unresolved paradox points out once again the tentative nature of Saint-Exupéry's search for expression. Perhaps he felt that he would eventually discover the vehicle which would convey his intuitive perceptions, and so he had the "Caïd" speak of the language he would pass on to his people. In reality, Saint-Exupéry never did find the discursive
means of representing his perceptions, and his comments on
language give every indication that he recognized the futility
of searching for a rational explanation of an affective
experience which occurs on a non-verbal plane. On the other
hand, many images vividly portray the unity of life which is
there for all who would see it and which defies verbal ex-
pression but simply is.

As a writer, however, Saint-Exupéry felt the urge to
shape the tool of his language to his perceptions as strongly
as he did his intuition itself. He was thus locked into the
dilemma which every writer faces, that of the ineffectiveness of verbal language to express thought... Saint-Exupéry
struggled actively to reduce the gulf between perception and
language, and *Citadelle* records the vicissitudes of this
struggle. Again, Saint-Exupéry would most likely have
eliminated many repetitions and many comments which may have
been notes to himself for later development. Since he did
not have time to distill his numerous reflections on language,
however, he has inadvertently left us a catalog of these
reflections which attests to the magnitude of his concern
over the writer's fundamental problem.

*Citadelle* contains over one hundred references to the
inadequacy of language to express reality, with such terms
as "mots inefficaces," "langage usé," "langage stupide,"
"les artifices du langage" and "contradictions" in abundance.
One of Saint-Exupéry's favorite expressions concerning language shows quite clearly what he thought of the effectiveness of verbal communication:

Et ce n'était pas qu'ils fussent stupides, disait mon père. Mais c'est que les mots du langage ne charrient rien qui soit digne de l'intérêt. Apprends à écouter non le vent de paroles ni les raisonnements qui leur permettent de se tromper. (C, p. 563)

C'est pourquoi j'ai toujours méprisé comme vain le vent des paroles. (C, p. 566)

Car l'empire est chose puissante et lourde qui ne se charrie point dans un vent de paroles. (C, p. 786. Also, see pp. 511, 579, 625, 667, 723, 725, 731, 768, 802, 803, 813, 819, 930, 971, 972)

The "Caf'd" also states even more bluntly:

Et si tu veux comprendre les hommes, commence d'abord par ne jamais les écouter. (C, p. 769)

Car si tu désires comprendre les hommes il ne faut point les écouter parler. (C, p. 818)

These and many other similar passages denounce as worthless and misleading man's use of speech to communicate. (See also C, pp. 561, 566-567, 580-581, 582, 583, 598, 606, 621, 625, 650, 672, 676, 818)

If spoken communication is inadequate, so also is written communication because the tools are essentially the
same hollow words which cannot touch the knowledge experience
gives us which eludes verbal expression:

Mais les mots dont disposent et
caporaux et capitaines ne sont que
réservoirs infiniment insuffisants
pour transmettre de l'un à l'autre
un acquis qui ne peut pas se
dénombrer et ne s'exprime point en
formules. Et qu'il n'est point
possible de faire charrier par la
parole ou par le livre. (C, p. 583)

He goes on to explain why and how words fail to "charrier"
this "acquis":

Car il s'agit d'attitudes intérieures,
et de points de vue particuliers, et
de résistances, et d'âlans, et de
systèmes de liaison entre les pensées
et les choses... Et si je veux lex
expliquer ou les exposer je les
démonter en leurs parties et il n'en
reste rien. (C, pp. 583-584)

Words, then, disrupt the fragile harmony of a dynamic re-
relationship which is too great for one word to grasp. Any
attempt to describe such a relationship by logical discourse
must automatically follow an analytical course which reduces
what was a unified whole to separate and meaningless pieces.
This is precisely why Saint-Exupéry chose to represent his
perceptions metaphorically, creating elaborate images which
parallel on a verbal level the structural unity which he
perceived in the world. (For other passages concerning the
inability of language to grasp the unity, essence or truth of
a situation, see also C, pp. 759, 781, 814, 826, 827; and Car, pp. 132, 166).

Saint-Exupéry does not consider all language to be totally without value, obviously, for if he did he would condemn himself to silence. Although the "Caïd" believes that "Les contraires sont invention du langage, lequel embrouille ce qu'il croit saisir" (C, p. 926), he does recognize occasions where words are able to express accurately that which is perceived. Language, or some system of codification and transfer of perceptions, is the key to meaning in the world:

Le mot seul signifie quelque chose mais il n'est point de contradictions en dehors des mots. La vie n'est ni simple ni complexe, ni claire ni obscure, ni contradictoire ni cohérente. Elle est. Le langage seul l'ordonne ou la complique, l'éclaire ou l'obscurcit, la diversifie ou l'assemble. (C, p. 667)

And just as "un langage maladroit est seul cause de la contradiction" (C, p. 731), a language which resolves contradictions can be a means to fulfillment, "car vous avez besoin d'une étendue que le langage seul en vous délivre" (C, p. 549).

The "Caïd" even goes as far, as I have shown above, as to suggest that he holds the key ("Je donne les clefs de l'étendue" (C, p. 891), an effective language which he calls "un système de conventions" with which he can "atteindre ...
l'homme, qui est entièrement endormi" in his people (C, p. 763).

Another series of images which appear to support such statements of the "Caïd"'s conviction that he holds the answer, and which deal with a similar belief that language can help man out of his perceptive dilemma, deals with the feeling that current language must be "renouvelé," "sauvé" or "changé." The "Caïd" sees this process in terms of "healing" a sick language ("La sagesse ce n'est point réponse, mais guérison des vicissitudes du langage" [C, p. 620]), and in terms of "refining" a rudimentary language ("Et plus ton langage est rudimentaire, plus sont grossiers tes liens avec les hommes" [C, p. 593]. See also C, pp. 522, 557, 622, 625, 688, 690, 728, 752-753, 774, 786, 836-837, 859, 863, 891.)

Here, again, Saint-Exupéry the writer may be directing these remarks toward himself and his art.

Saint-Exupéry reflects candidly on his art in Carnets which contains many of the same comments and attitudes toward language expressed by the "Caïd" in Citadelle. These parallels support my contention that certain remarks in Citadelle are in effect notes by the writer to himself, and they reveal his profound interest in poetic construction and in the evocative properties of words used poetically.

Saint-Exupéry states in Carnets that it is not only "tout naturellement" that he expresses himself symbolically
(Car, pp. 110, 115), but also that "ces symboles sont plus complets que l'expression verbale maladroite" (Car, p. 115. See also p. 143). The "géomètre" in Citadelle says to the "Caïd," "Je ne connais que des structures qui plus ou moins me sont commodes pour dire le monde" (C, p. 784). The Caïd himself, in a passage which sounds like advice to aspiring poets, says:

Pour m'émouvoir il faut me nouer dans les liens de ton langage et c'est pourquoi le style est opération divine. C'est ta structure alors que tu m'imposes et les mouvements mêmes de ta vie, lesquels n'ont point d'égaux au monde. Car si tous ont parlé des étoiles et de la fontaine et de la montagne, nul ne t'a dit de graver la montagne pour boire aux fontaines d'étoiles leur lait pur. (C, p. 705)

Saint-Exupéry sees an author's style as his "instrument de préhension" (Car, p. 118), the means whereby he accedes to his own personal vision of the world and the first step in his "prise de conscience" of reality as it subjectively has meaning for him. (See C, p. 821 and Car, p. 120.) A writer's personal poetic style, then, represents more or less effectively reality as he perceives it and is thus the sign of a coherent worldview even if it does not convey this worldview to the reader:

Et me venait la certitude que les obscurités de mon style comme la
contradiction de mes énoncés n'étaient point conséquences d'une caution incertaine ou contradictoire ou confuse, mais d'un mauvais travail dans l'usage des mots car ne pouvait être ni confuse, ni contradictoire ni incertaine une attitude intérieure, une direction, un poids, une pente qui n'avait pas à se justifier puisque étant, tout simplement, comme est, dans le sculpteur quand il pétrit sa glaise, un certain besoin qui n'a encore point de forme mais deviendra visage dans la glaise qu'il pétrira. (C, p. 753)

An image must stand alone because its representation of reality cannot be enhanced by a logical explanation:

Là où la logique échoue déjà, commence la création.

La logique est incapable d'expliquer l'image. Elle l'est encore plus de la proposer. (Car, p. 151. See also p. 152.)

The reader has no other access to the poet's world (one might also say in this context to his mind) than that which the poet himself provides him. Saint-Exupéry denies categorically that a given explication of a text or of an image can be proven to be true, and in so doing he places total responsibility for understanding on the creator of the text or image: "La valeur de mon image n'a qu'une caution: son efficacité" (Car, p. 152).

Saint-Exupéry believed in himself and in the truth of his intuitive vision, of this there can be no doubt, and he
expresses an awareness of his shortcomings to date, while implying that he would have steadfastly pursued his elusive goal:

Peu m'importe les erreurs que tu me reproches. La vérité loge au-delà. Les paroles l'habillent mal et chacune d'elles est critiquable. L'infirmité de mon langage m'a souvent fait me contredire. Mais je ne me suis point trompé. ... Mes paroles sont maladroites et d'apparence incohérente: non moi au centre. Je suis, tout simplement. (C, p. 945)

His literary work records his struggle to bring to that vision the fruitful expression of "un poème parfait" (C, p. 917), thus creating a bridge between his reader's sensibilities and his own invisible world of unity.

Saint-Exupéry believed that the effectiveness of an image depends on the "attitude intérieure vis-à-vis de l'univers" which validates the rapports between the elements brought together in the image, and not on the elements or their rapports themselves (Car, p. 148). He chose common words to construct his images, words which all relate to his vision of unity which was his "attitude intérieure" in the sense mentioned above, rather than unusual or highly noticeable words which might have an initial "shock effect," but which would eventually dull the reader's senses (Whereas subtler liaisons between everyday words act as a "piège" which takes the reader unawares and holds him fast.).
Si le mot lève la tête au milieu de ta phrase, coupe-lui la tête. Car il ne s'agit point de me montrer un mot. Ta phrase est un piège pour une capture. Et je ne veux point voir le piège. (C, p. 799)

A word which "lève la tête" and calls attention to itself disrupts the harmony of the image, casting its shadow on the network of words which compose the image. As a result, the image leaves the realm of structure and reenters that of language, breaking down into its various elements whose evocative power deriving from their union in a certain way dissolves. Saint-Exupéry ideally wants words to leave their linguistic function behind when they take on a symbolic role in a poetic image, but he concedes that elevating words to this status and maintaining them there constitute his greatest problem as a writer:

C'est dans la liaison du langage social et du terrain organique que se posent les problèmes. Dans la soudure et à l'instant de soudure de l'homme social et de l'homme espèce. (Car, p. 107)

This liaison is, stylistically speaking, his primary goal, and it is from the perfection of the "rapports du rationnel et de l'irrationnel" (Car, p. 132) that his work will derive its organic structure:

Et ce que je modifierai perpétuellement jusqu'à ce que le verbal ressemble à
l'essentiel non verbal, ce sera précisement le plan. (Car, p. 135)

The future tense here and the adverb "perpétuellement," along with the subjunctive clause, recall only too vividly the unfinished state of Citadelle which was to be the definitive expression of Saint-Exupéry's thought but whose message will remain forever suspended.

The allegorical form of Citadelle (Saint-Exupéry called it "un poème") and the abundance of poetic images demand a certain approach of the reader. Distinguishing between "signifier" and "saisir," the "Caïd" says, "Je signifie mais ne saisis rien" (C, p. 612):

Je n'exprime point la montagne mais je la signifie. Mais je confonds signifier et saisir. Je signifie à qui connaît déjà, mais si celui-là ignorait, comment saurais-je lui transmettre cette montagne avec ses crevasses aux pierres roulantes et ses pans de lavande et son faîte crénélée dans les étoiles? (C, p. 600)

Saint-Exupéry repeats this same concept several pages later, when the "Caïd" says:

Car ce n'est point par la voie du langage que je transmettrai ce qui est en moi. Ce qui est en moi, il n'est point de mot pour le dire. Je ne puis que le signifier dans la mesure où tu l'entends déjà par d'autres chemins que la parole. Par le miracle de l'amour ou, parce que
né du même dieu, tu me ressembles.
(C, p. 613)

Saint-Exupéry is essentially telling the reader here that if he has already perceived what the author perceives and if their worldviews are similar, then he will understand what the author is saying because the images he reads will evoke the same experiences and observations for him as they represent for the author. If, however, the reader is not an initiate to the meditative view of man's participation in the world, then these images will "charrier" nothing for him. The book will remain in the realm of language for want of an affective referent in the reader's experience to transform the images into a recollection of past perceptions: "Mais pour que mon langage morde et puisse me devenir et te devenir opération, il faut bien, qu'il accroche en toi quelque chose" (C, p. 699). Communication through language is thus dependent on mutual experience, and words have no magic evocative power outside the limits of what has been done, perceived or imagined by the transmitter and receiver of verbal messages. (See also C, pp. 666, 672, 701, 703, 708, 731, 736, 841)

The final passage of Citadelle illustrates beautifully the dependence of verbal communication on shared experience and the simplicity of the words exchanged compared to the depth of communion they signify. The "Caïd"'s
gardeners, separated by many years and miles exchange letters
which sum up the experience of a lifetime in one phrase:
"Ce matin, j'ai taillé mes rosiers..." (C, pp. 990-993).
Enlightened by "l'essentiel ... informulable" (C, p. 990),
and judging his gardeners happy to communicate in this way,
the "Caïd" decides that he will unite himself, "selon leur
dieu," with all the gardeners of his empire. And so he goes
out into the garden at dawn to work among the roses:

Puis, me relevant de mon travail avec
effort, car je me fais vieux, je dis
simplement, en mon coeur, afin de les
rejoindre par la seule voie qui soit
efficace, à tous les jardiniers vivants
et morts: "Moi aussi, ce matin j'ai
taillé mes rosiers." Et peu importe,
d'un tel message, s'il chemine ou non
des années durant, s'il parvient ou
non à tel ou tel. Là n'est point
l'objet du message. Pour rejoindre
mes jardiniers j'ai simplement salué
leur dieu, lequel est rosier au lever
du jour. (C, p. 992)

As the "Caïd" thus communes with all gardeners everywhere, so
Saint-Exupéry reaches out to all who have experienced their
unity with the world and who thus can understand allegorically
what Citadelle signifies.

Saint-Exupéry has not failed those whose perceptions
parallel his own, but the reader for whom the allegory of
Citadelle evokes nothing in his own experience will not find
here a discursive attempt to explain the images he does not
understand because Saint-Exupéry believed that such
explanations are arbitrary and do not approach the true significance of the image. The reader for whom the language of Citadelle retains its linguistic function—for whom the terminology used by Saint-Exupéry means something only outside the context of the images of Citadelle—is bound to misinterpret the message of Citadelle. Saint-Exupéry's everyday vocabulary, when taken from its poetic matrix, re-enters the social context that has developed around it over the years.
CONCLUSION
Saint-Exupéry set out to communicate a new mysticism and did not succeed. As a reaction to the sterility and isolation of his times, he sought to instill in men a feeling of kinship and participation on the order of a religious experience. The importance of communication—the material and spiritual "liens" between man and his world—this was the very groundwork of his thought. It appears that few readers have grasped this underlying concept, however, and thus few have acceded to his intuitive vision of the world.

A major reason for this failure lies in Saint-Exupéry's inability to convey his perceptions by means of the language at his disposal. Saint-Exupéry himself says that our present language cannot express accurately new experiences in our fast-changing way of life:

Les notions de séparation, d'absence, de distance, de retour, si les mots sont demeurés les mêmes, ne contiennent plus les mêmes réalités. Pour saisir le monde aujourd'hui, nous usons d'un langage qui fut établi pour le monde d'hier. Et la vie du passé nous semble mieux répondre à notre nature, pour la seule raison qu'elle répond mieux à notre langage. (TH, p. 169)

This gap between experience and language deceives us into thinking that "la vie du passé" suits our nature better than "la vie du présent." There is a similar gap between Saint-
Exupéry's intuitive vision and his language, creating a similar deception. His extensive use of terms such as "l'Homme," and "Dieu" evokes traditional values familiar to the reader. But Saint-Exupéry uses these and other terms metaphorically to signify a certain quality of rapports with the world and not to mean, for example, "mankind" and a traditional God.

In the last section of his Le Degré zéro de l'écriture Roland Barthes elucidates the tragedy of the modern writer, which is precisely the dilemma Saint-Exupéry faced. The writer is caught between his vision of the world, his perception of social and natural phenomena, and the effective expression of his ideas. The inadequacy of language is what is stopping him: there is no vocabulary for what he has to say. The only language available to him is tied to the society of which it is a product:

Devant sa page blanche, au moment de choisir les mots qui doivent franchement signaler sa place dans l'Histoire et témoigner qu'il en assume les données, il [the writer] observe une disparité tragique entre ce qu'il fait et ce qu'il voit; sous ses yeux, le monde civil forme maintenant une véritable Nature, et cette Nature parle, elle élabore des langages vivants dont l'écrivain est exclu: au contraire, entre ses doigts, l'Histoire place un instrument décoratif et compromettant, une écriture qu'il a héritée d'une Histoire antérieure et différente,
Changes in the world and the writer's perception of these changes happen faster than language can change to express them. The writer's perception of social and natural phenomena occurring at a non-verbal level, may introduce him to an entire universe of relationships whose existence he cannot deny but which elude existing language patterns. Faced with a language that cannot express his perceptions, the writer has two choices, either of which leads to a communications breakdown which is precisely what he is trying to avoid. He can coin a new vocabulary, create his own "language" to express his ideas. If he does this, he risks being misunderstood because his readers have no referent or framework of associations within which to understand the new language. And without associations, there is no meaning. His second possibility is to attempt to fit his new conceptualizations into old patterns of expression, i.e., use old words to say new things. In this second case he is likely to be misunderstood for the opposite reason: his readers already have a system of associations built around
the words he has chosen. Traditionally accepted words have established meaning and either represent or suggest already determined values. By using such words, the writer evokes their old associations and only succeeds in reinforcing the reader's firmly-entrenched system of values. By referring to these values the reader shuts himself off from the writer's meaning because for him the text has meaning in his own terms.

Saint-Exupéry did not study language in any systematic manner. The only published record of his investigations of language are the random notes grouped under that heading in *Carnets*. His ideas on language, as I have presented them, are the product of his reflections and of his encounters with the problems of literary expression. Just as he made no attempt to develop a coherent philosophy, neither did he try to organize all his ideas on language. Preferring metaphor to logical discourse, he chose to let images convey what expository prose could not, thus revealing indirectly a bias in favor of poetic language, while only occasionally speaking out directly against a more prosaic language.

Saint-Exupéry tried to reproduce through images the comprehensive system of associations he perceived in the world around him, and thus "synthesize" from existing archaic vocabulary a language which would act in the same way as the
"langages vivants" whose natural development Barthes describes. But his synthesis remains incomplete, and his archaic vocabulary fails to "charrier" his message. As a result, a clear determination of the content of his message is impossible, except to say that it is most likely other than that perceived by the readers belonging to a society he strongly disliked and which he hoped there might be some way of recharging by substituting a new value system for the old. My study of the theme of communication has led me to conclude that the nature of his message concerns the individual and collective enrichment of man through an awakening to man's role in the world. If one analyzes the abstractions used by Saint-Exupéry ("vérité," "intelligence," "esprit," "fraternité," "responsabilité," etc), without concern for their context, his thought hardly appears original compared to traditional ideologies. But by respecting his symbolic use of these terms within individual images and within the greater framework of his writings, one can begin to see that his mode of thought represents a radical departure from that of his contemporaries. (Major, p. 240) This becomes progressively more true as we follow Saint-Exupéry chronologically through his works to *Citadelle*, where the terms with which he proliferated his earlier works give way to the all-encompassing symbol of "Dieu," which he appears to have chosen in an effort to "remplacer la religion" (Car, p. 25)
by a concept which could signify his vision of the world's unity.

It appears as though Saint-Exupéry found himself at more and more of a loss for a language and that he finally tried to establish a new one by regressing to the almost biblical expression of Citadelle, thus avoiding the language and values handed him by his society. But in so doing, he retreated beyond the current value system of his contemporaries and its language to a former one whose allegorical use (and literally speaking whose values) cannot be understood by the modern reader who is stuck in his own language and values.
NOTES
NOTES

INTRODUCTION:

1Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Un Sens à la vie (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), p. 250. Hereinafter, all quotations from the works of Saint-Exupéry will be identified in the text of this study. The following abbreviations will be used: CS (Courrier Sud), VN (Vol de nuit), TH (Terre des Hommes), PG (Pilote de guerre), LO (Lettre à un otage), PP (Le Petit Prince), C (Citadelle), Car (Carnets), SV (Un Sens à la vie), WSS (Wind, Sand and Stars). In addition to the Gallimard edition of SV referred to above in this note, the following editions were also used: Carnets (Paris: Gallimard, 1953); Oeuvres, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), contains CS, VN, TH, PG, LO, PP, and C; Wind, Sand and Stars, trans. Lewis Galantière (New York: Harcourt, 1967). All page references are to the above editions.

PART I, CHAPTER ONE:

2For the purposes of this study, the term "existentialism" shall be understood to mean specifically the existentialist philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre.


4All first references to works cited or consulted will appear in footnotes as in note 3 above. Thereafter, reference to works already identified in notes will appear in parentheses in the text of this study.


PART I, CHAPTER TWO:

11 For examples of such interpretations, see Helen Crane, L'Humanisme dans l'oeuvre de Saint-Exupéry (Evanston: The Principia Press of Illinois, 1957); and Renée Zeller, La Vie secrète d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, ou la parabole du petit prince (Paris: Alsatia, 1948).


14 See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phénoménologie de la perception (Paris: NRF, 1945), Avant Propos. See also Knight, p. 71.


17 André de Muralt, L'Idée de la phénoménologie, l'exemplarisme husserlien (Paris: PUF, 1958), p. 10

18 J. Edie, intro. to Thevenaz, p. 35.


Roger Caillois, preface to Saint-Exupéry, Œuvres, p. xiv. See also Knight, p. 160: "What we learn about him is no more than he himself has learned in a combat with the elements or with men."

Caillois goes on to say that "La transposition de la réalité est faible [in the earlier works]. Mais elle est presque nulle dans Le Petit Prince et dans Citadelle qui résument et définissent, avec une nudité accrue, une expérience morale." (Preface to Saint-Exupéry, Œuvres, p. xiv.) While this is most likely true, the relationship between experience and writing would be more difficult to prove by example in these two later works. The resulting case for Le Petit Prince and Citadelle as phenomenological accounts of the writer's experience would be somewhat tenuous.


PART II, CHAPTER ONE


For examples of critics who see Saint-Exupéry's reference to man's spiritual life as a sign of Christian faith, see: Louis Barjon, Gide et Saint-Exupéry; dialogue des deux ferveurs (Paris: Etudes, 1953); Louis Barjon, "L'Homme qui conquiert sa vérité. Fidélité de Saint-Exupéry," Etudes, 244 (Feb. 1945), 145-166. (Discusses "l'approfondissement spirituel" of Saint-Exupéry throughout the works.


30 Devaux, Teilhard et Saint-Exupéry, p. 4; see also Curtis Cate, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: his Life and Times (New York: Putnam, 1970), p. 552.


34 For critics who see Saint-Exupéry as a traditional humanist, see Helen Crane, L'Humanisme dans l'oeuvre de Saint-Exupéry; Helen Crane, "Une Réponse au thème de l'évasion: Vol de nuit d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry," Revue de l'Univ. Laval, 9, No. 7 (Mar. 1955), 595-605; Dominique Daguet, "Demain, Saint-Exupéry," Itinéraires, No. 80 (Feb. 1964), pp. 92-105; André Gascht, L'Humanisme cosmique d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (Bruges: Stainforth, 1947); A. Giroux, "Le Message d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry," Amérique Française, 1, No. 6 (Mar. 1943), 25-29; Elie Goulet, rev. of L'Humanisme dans l'oeuvre de Saint-Exupéry, by, Helen Crane, Revue Dominicaine, 64, No. 1 (Nov. 1958), 204-211.


36 Compare: "L'homme d'aujourd'hui n'est pas sur celui des cavernes un progrès biologique mais conceptuel. L'éducation passe avant l'instruction: elle fonde l'homme." (Car, p. 118).

37 For more on the "biblical style" of Citadelle, see Carlo François, L'Esthétique d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (Bruges: Stainforth, 1947).

PART II, CHAPTER TWO:


40 See L'Etre et le Néant, III\textsuperscript{e} Partie, Chapitre 1\textsuperscript{er}: "L'existence d'autrui," especially part iv: "Le regard," pp. 310-364.

PART IV:


43 This recalls the "divinities" mentioned in TH (p. 191) and in LO (p. 395). Saint-Exupéry used these terms much more sparingly in the finished works, which suggests once more that he would have cut much out of C.

44 Georges Pélissier, "Introduction à la lecture de Citadelle, œuvre posthume de Saint-Exupéry," Synthèses, 6 (1951), 293.

CONCLUSION:

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED
LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED

WORKS BY SAINT-EXUPÉRY:


OTHER WORKS CONSULTED:


Laval, 9 (1955), 595-605.


Giroux, A. "Le Message d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry." Amérique Française, 1, No. 6 (Mar. 1943), 25-29.


Goulet, Elie. "L'Humanisme de Saint-Exupéry." Revue Dominicaine, 64, No. 1 (Nov. 1958), 204-211.

____________. "Pilote de guerre." Revue Dominicaine, 61, No. 2 (Sept. 1955), 88-96.


Pélassier, Georges. "Introduction à la lecture de *Citadelle,* oeuvre posthume de Saint-Exupéry." *Synthèses,* 6
(Sept.-Nov. 1951), 293-307.


