THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN THE WORK OF ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

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Thesis

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THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN THE WORK OF ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

APPROVED:

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TO:

My Mother,

and

My Father -

With eternal gratitude.

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Any substantive research on foreign literature, not to mention any other field of human endeavour, has its own peculiar problems beside the usual problems of research generally. But when the research is in French literature in an Anglophone environment these problems are perhaps doubled. Very prominent among such problems is the scarcity of relevant published or unpublished materials on the author, period, genre or the relevant philosophy. Even in cases where the existence of these materials is known and the possibility of obtaining them is not too remote, there is always the enormous problem of obtaining the acceptable currency for such transactions. On the other hand, the intellectual isolation such a researcher is exposed to by the mere fact of living in a cultural and linguistic environment different from that of his target milieu constantly awakens in him self-doubt, erodes his self confidence and generally raises in his mind questions which, to say the least, do not facilitate his work.

In such a context, however, the human mind grows extra-sensitive to any help offered and happily loses almost completely the aptitude to feel frustration and adverse circumstances. It is, I think, a happy mystery of human psychology that a well developed sense of gratitude in an individual stifles, almost, the feeling of resentment or rancour where it might exist. For me, I have none. And it is in that privileged state of mind that I feel greatly indebted to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for the research funds granted me to enable me carry out some research work in France. I am particulary grateful to the members of the University Board of Research for understanding my problems and giving such an exemplarily prompt attention.

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Dr. D. Preston, formally of the Department of French, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria lent me a copy of Le Petit prince at the very time I was hesitating between doing my research work on either Saint-Exupéry or on Malraux. That copy was the first complete work of Saint-Exupéry I had read. With all modesty I believe Dr. Preston introduced me to Saint-Exupéry.

There are three friends whose assistance to me should not be allowed to go unmentioned. Mr. E.A. Soumonni of the Department of History taught me how to stay profitably in Paris with little money on me. That practical lesson proved invaluable. Mr. D. Vignal of the Department of French made it possible for me to obtain a copy of Un sens à la vie

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ABBREVIATIONS

For reference purposes, the following books by Saint-Exupéry are abbreviated as shown in brackets in order to incorporate in the thesis.

1. Vol de nuit (V.N)
2. Pilote de guerre (P.G.)
3. Citadelle (Cit.)
4. Le Petit prince (P.P.)
5. Lettre à un otage (L.O.)
6. Courrier sud (C.S.)
7. Terre des hommes (T.H.)

   All page references to the above books are to his Oeuvres. Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la pléiade, 1953.
8. Carnets (Carnets)
9. Un sens à la vie (Un sens.)
10. Lettres de jeunesse (L.J.)
11. Lettres à sa mère (L.M.)

INTRODUCTION

The main concern in the work of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is Man. From his first major work, Courrier Sud, to the uncompleted, monumental Citadelle one easily appreciates this preoccupation with establishing the kind of human being conscious of his constraints and the menace surrounding him, but who, by having recourse to his noblest qualities, overcomes his apparent fragility and makes the race proud. Saint-Exupéry's life, as he lived it, and all his work, which one can rightly regard as an exchange for his mortal self, have been a plea for the respect of Man, a call for the recognition that what really matters is Man. But being Man is not simply being born a human being. Being Man, according to Saint-Exupéry, is wilfully undertaking an engagement to rise above mediocrity found in simplicity, it is summoning all that is great and truly noble in each one of us, it is seeing each one of us in the context of the human race; in other words, it is showing proof of the virtues, the true virtues, of generosity, sacrifice, participation and fraternity. It is this progressive view of Man as being capable of continuously

developing and improving himself in a spiritual sense that we are going to consider in this thesis as Saint-Exupéry's concept of Man. In this perspective then, there is what we would like to call a Saint-Exupéryan Man, to denote the man who strives to recreate himself by an act of will through sustained efforts against the penchant to ease and transient well-being. In other words, what we are going to qualify as a Saint-Exupéryan Man is a human being first, who becomes a man after. We shall show in the thesis that despite similarities here and there, Saint-Exupéry's view-point is fundamentally different from the Sartrean notion that existence precedes essence.

In the world of a man who has been legendarily generous with his skin, who was looked upon by many as a "condamné à mort",[1] who believed in effort and action rather than in armchair good reasoning, we must, on the onset proscribe ease. In Citadelle the Berber king declares unequivocally, "Je hais la facilité" (Cit. p. 599). We shall therefore expect a man who consistently shuns ease, who does not spare himself, who

is always ready for sacrifice, always ready to give the best of himself. A Saint-Exupéryan man is one whose happiness is not based on enjoying ready-made services. His is the difficult, but the only worthy, happiness of contributing to creating, the joy of participating and sharing in the attendant problems and risks of life, but also sharing in the collective joy of success. A Saint-Exupéryan man never finds himself in a position of judge. He is always with those who toil to create and derives his immense satisfaction from the only genuine relationship that can be established among men - the one which is created out of common efforts, common aspirations and common toil.

Because Saint-Exupéry refused to feign emotions and had always preferred living first and writing as a consequence, one inevitably finds him dealing mostly with aviators and their heroic actions. With the exception of Le Petit prince and Citadelle, all his other books are drawn directly from his experiences, and those of his aviator friends. One may be tempted to conclude that Saint-Exupéry is only for the hero-type,

the adventurous. But this, in our opinion, is not strictly correct and by examining his books more closely we would like to point out that by describing Saint-Exupéry as Nietzschean as Luc Estang has repeatedly done in his Saint-Exupéry par lui-même, one is concluding too hastily. For, if it is true that Saint-Exupéry wrote Vol de nuit and Courrier sud, it is equally true that he also wrote Le Petit prince and Lettre à un otage, and these books certainly have no trace of the Nietzschean superman. As for Lettre à un otage and Lettre au général 'X', such critics find it more convenient to pass them over in silence. We believe this is the general position of studies on Saint-Exupéry at the moment, with however a proliferation of biographical works on him, some very detailed such as Curtis Cate's lengthy Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, laboureur du ciel. Although these biographies are very interesting and serve as an indispensable introduction to Saint-Exupéry, it is our belief that focusing so much attention on Saint-Exupéry the man - exemplary pilot

and comrade - they more often than not fail to project sufficiently the writer who made Man the cornerstone of his philosophy. There is another set of researchers on Saint-Exupéry who, short of labelling him a Christian, and obviously disappointed, set out nevertheless to prove that, on the evidence of his imagery and diction, Saint-Exupéry's spiritual itinerary would have unavoidably led him to christianity. This is the group to which Renée Zeller belongs with her La Grande quête d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry dans Petit prince et Citadelle. There is still another group of researchers exemplified by Serge Losic in his book, L'Idéal humain de Saint-Exupéry, who, preoccupied with their conception of human dignity and liberty, seem incapable of following objectively the Saint-Exupéryan concept of Man and the logical evolution of his thoughts on the condition of Man. Whereas Serge Losic believes that Saint-Exupéry's ethics are too severe for the weak ones among us, Jean Cau refers to them as outright military and sums up:

> En bref, la morale humaniste de Saint-Exupéry me semble être une éthique militaire, pas plus, pas moins, camouflée sous du beau langage.[2]

Taking into account such divergent views on the humanism of Saint-Exupéry, we shall strive to analyse as dispassionately as possible his ideas on Man, his quest for an integral Man, and thereby show why we consider him a great and an inspiring humanist. To begin with, we would like to stress right away that if Saint-Exupéry as a person has found self-fulilment in dangerous action he does not in any way prescribe adventure as the only issue for Man. He certainly admired the works of Nietzsche as he himself confessed in one of his letters to Renée de Saussine.[3] But this admiration does not necessarily make him subscribe to the superman theories of Nietzsche. After all, Saint-Exupéry's varied intellectual tastes also led him to works of Ibsen and Pascal, and the Princesse de Clèves of Madame de Lafayette, all of which he admired enormously. Living dangerously may be attractive to a university professor, which Nietzsche was before his

insanity, even to the extent of extolling the virtues of war, yet to Saint-Exupéry - a real man of action - this did not offer any attraction at all; witness this definition of war in Pilote de guerre:

> La guerre n'est pas une aventure. La guerre est une maladie. Comme le typhus. (P.G. p. 300).

Saint-Exupéry does not, however, shy away from danger for the simple reason that it offers Man challenges and tears him away from the sedentary illusions of hapiness and brings him face to face with realities, thus helping him to fully realize himself. Dangerous action for Saint-Exupéry is strictly as much a means to an end as such other activities like gardening or tending to sheep.

An aristocratic moralist, and therefore committed to aristocratic moral values? We believe that such a judgement on Saint-Exupéry, though very widespread, is really inadequate. The preface which André Gide wrote to the first edition of Vol de nuit in 1931 seems to look at this question in a most

satisfactory manner:

> Je crois que ce qui me plaît surtout dans ce récit frémissant, c'est sa noblesse. Les faiblesses, les abandons, les déchéances de l'homme, nous les connaissions de reste et la littérature de nos jours n'est que trop habile à les dénoncer; mais ce surpassement de soi qu'obtient la volonté tendue, c'est là ce que nous avons surtout besoin qu'on nous montre.[4]

For us also we see that there is abundant evidence in Saint-Exupéry's work to show that noble deeds are not the preserve of a privileged few. Indeed, he believes that it is the duty of every one of us to aspire to them. Therein lies his unrelenting optimism for Man. This is one of the aspects of Saint-Exupéry's thoughts which we intend to consider in this thesis.

To establish firmly the Saint-Exupéryan Man, it is necessary to look closely at what some critics like Pierre - Henri Simon[5] have seen as an inability of the author to reconcile the dichotomy which consists in a fierce individualism on the one hand, and on the other, the need to submerge individual interests to public good. Since nobody has the monopoly of truth and since people generally tend to have divergent ways of considering the same facts

of life, how can we arrive at transcendental values that call for concerted and collective effort? This problem is real in Saint-Exupéry and it seems that it comes from the realisation that too much of individualism negates collective progress and opens the way to anarchy and confusion. Saint-Exupéry always believed in Man and had confidence in the men with whom he worked. So, hope and not pessimism, order and not anarchy, have been the determining factors in finding a way out of this apparent confusion.

In this thesis we shall emphasize, in elaborating on the Saint-Exupéryan type of Man, that he is a builder and not a destroyer. He is a healthy citizen who aims at constructing his domain and is always conscious of the fact that all men seek the same goal, only differing on the means. A Saint-Exupéryan Main is always above parochial and factional squabbles. It is to Saint-Exupéry's credit that even though a true child of the century (born in 1900) and having witnessed the two wars - he actually participated and perished in the second world war - yet he never lost sight of the greatness of Man. In order to realize our ambition in this thesis, we intend to proceed as follows:

Our first chapter will deal with Saint-Exupéry's apprehension of the situation of Man on earth. Saint-Exupéry

views Man's situation as essentially tragic since he finds himself in a vast mineral world, with other hostile elements like cyclones, floods and even vast desertic conditions which threaten Man, at any moment, with destruction. It is, however, from this anguished situation that Saint-Exupéry sets out to rescue Man, by orienting him towards a life essentially spiritual, that is capable of safely accommodating the contingencies of this inorganic world. In this chapter, entitled "The human condition", we intend to explore the awakening of a Saint-Exupéryan Man to the realities of his terrestrial existence.

The second chapter looks at the relationship of the individual and the society and it shows clearly Saint-Exupéry's faith in Man, in his ability to rise to noble heights. The chapter is symbolically entitled "The Rock and the Cathedral", in order to express graphically at the outset the faith in all men considered as rocks, and the symbiotic relationship between the individual and society. We shall treat in this chapter such related themes as responsibility, participation and fraternity, all of which help to anchor Man firmly in society, thereby giving him a clear orientation and a sense of belonging.

The third chapter seeks to define action as it applies to Saint-Exupéry's concept. By analyzing some of his works more closely we intend to show that action in Saint-Exupéry, very early in his literary career, extends far beyond the merely heroic and becomes simply creative activity, a concerted effort to contribute to what he calls the perpetuity of the "communauté spirituelle". Entitled "The worthy course", this chapter shows the development of the notion of action, from heroism to creativity and to fervour. It shows the search by the Saint-Exupéryan man to attain the universal. It also shows clearly the broadening of the humanistic base of Saint-Exupéry since creativity and fervour can be aspired to by all.

The fourth and final chapter is entitled "An act of faith". It is based mainly, but not exclusively, on an analysis of Citadelle. This analysis is done in order to show that when Saint-Exupéry talks of God he is in fact referring to Man who is his ultimate. In other words, Saint-Exupéry sees in the essence of Man the only superior value that individual men should aspire to for their own salvation. This chapter, dedicated to the all-important spiritual import of Saint-Exupéry's message, takes a close look at

certain symbols such as temple, cathedral and citadel that are recurrent in the writings of our author. It also gives a symbolical interpretation of the recurrent desert background in most of the author's writings as well as analyze symbolically Saint-Exupéry's passion for flight.

In our conclusion we shall give a brief summary of the important issues raised in the thesis. We shall then proceed, by adopting the dialectical method, to discard some premises advanced by certain writers which we do not agree with, introduce our own premises and by resolving conflicting points of view arrive at our own integral evaluation of the author. We believe that by so doing we shall have contributed in interpreting objectively the humanistic concern of the author.

At the end of the thesis will be found a reference guide to quotations and other references, together with a select bibliography.

CHAPTER I

THE HUMAN CONDITION

A turning point in Saint-Exupéry's critical appreciation of the condition of Man on earth came in 1926 when he joined the newly created airline, the "Société d'Aviation Latécoère" In his "Lettre au général 'X'" written in La Marsa near Tunis in July 1943, Saint-Exupéry affirmed that he had covered some 6,500 flight hours "sous tous les ciels du monde" (Un sens, p. 221). In fact, at the time of his death in 1944, Saint-Exupéry had been virtually in all the skies of the world, had experienced virtually all the climatic conditions of the world, fought against innumerable vicissitudes of the natural elements (Un sens, p.11) and thus found himself in a much privileged position to assess the human condition - not as a city dweller surrounded at all times by the civilized comforts of life such as electricity, pipe-borne water and cafés, but as someone who has come face to face with the naked forces of the earth, has been tried and fortified by them.

Indeed, by flying over the vastness of the earth, Saint-Exupéry saw and learnt much more than many of us. The very first lines of Terre des hommes assert this fact:

> La terre nous en apprend plus long sur nous que tous les livres. Parce qu'elle nous résiste. 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, ou 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, mêle l'homme à tous les vieux problèmes (T.H. p. 139).

But what precisely does this experience from the cockpit reveal of the human condition? It reveals firstly that Man is desperately lonely and fragile. Saint-Exupéry has discovered that the cities with their net-work of inter-connecting roads give Man a false sense of security since all therein is well designed for his comfort. But a large proportion of the earth being uninhabited deserts, oceans and mountains, Man, isolated on its inhabited patches, looks really vulnerable and fragile. Even though it is generally accepted that Saint-Exupéry had a happy childhood at the hands of his tender mother, it must be remembered that at a very impressionable age of seventeen he lost his brother and playmate, Francois. But even before then, he had to be sent to Switzerland when the first world war ravaged on and many known faces left for the front without returning, and when his mother had to take up nursing at the hospital

of Ambérieu in order to help war victims. All these circumstances accentuated in him the feeling that the warmth and comfort of the family house, with a tender mother lavishing her care on the children to the extent of making one long for being ill, were privileges enjoyed by few and did not generally translate the true human condition. Saint-Exupéry once wrote exposing the childhood illusions:

> La chose la plus bonne , la plus paisible, la plus amie, que j'aie jamais connue, c'est le petit poêle de la chambre d'en haut à Saint-Maurice. Jamais rien ne m'a autant rassuré sur l'existence. Quand je me réveillais, la nuit, il ronflait comme une toupie et fabriquait au mur de bonnes ombres. Je ne sais pourquoi, je pensais à un carniche fidèle. Ce petit poêle nous protégeait de tout (L.M. p. 12).

With this in mind one is not surprised at the anguish of Saint-Exupéry in mature life when he really discovered the austere face of the human condition. In Terre des hommes, expressing this bitter reality acquired with the aid of the aeroplane, Saint-Exupéry laments:

> Dans quel mince décor se joue ce vaste jeu des haines, des amitiés, des joies humaines! d'où les hommes tirent-ils ce goût d'éternité, hasardés comme ils sont sur une lave encore tiède,

> et déjà menacés par les sables futurs, menacés par les neiges? Leurs civilisations ne sont que fragiles dorures: un volcan les efface, une mer nouvelle, un vent de sable (T.H. pp 173 - 4).

We will have to remind ourselves that what makes Saint-Exupéry's apprehension of the human condition particularly significant is the fact that he was not just an armchair theorist on Man, but he actually subjected his flesh to these experiences. It is thus that while attempting to establish a flight record between Paris and Saigon in 1935 he crashlanded in the night in the heart of the Libyan desert, on board only with his mechanic André Prévot. Without any water or food they would have perished from mere physical exhaustion but for an Arab caravan that just came across them in the nick of time. Once again, the reality of Man's fragility was so glaring that writing later in Terre des hommes, Saint-Exupéry could not suppress his anxiety:

> Et le sable se dore. Dieu que cette planète est donc déserte! Une fois de plus, les fleuves, les ombrages et les habitations des hommes m'y paraissent dus à des conjonctions d'heureux hasard. Quelle part de roc et de sable (T.H. p. 212)!

So precarious does Man's condition appear to Saint-Exupéry that it always looks to him that our very existence here is really a matter of chance. Man just seems to be in a fragile minority compared with the disproportionately large inorganic vastness. And even as a minority presence on earth, if Man could live long! But Man's life span is so short, even when spared by the inimical forces poised against him, that throughout his life Saint-Exupéry did not attach any importance to the mere fact of being alive. He was extremely generous with his own life. He freely exposed it to danger either to save his friends as he routinely did in his days as chief of the Cap Juby airstrip, among dissident Moors who were only too triger - happy at the sight of a fallen pilot; or again as he risked his life overflying the Andes Cordilleras at dangerously low attitudes, and in the most destructive of tempests to locate his friend, Henri Guillaumet, who had disappeared amongst these deadly cold heights, the Andes which, "en hiver ne rendent point des hommes"(T.H. p. 160). Guillaumet himself remarked after his rescue that judging by the low altitude of the search plane he knew for sure that it was Saint-Exupéry's plane. Asked how he knew it, Guillaumet simply replied that no other person could have dared

to risk so much. But here one must clarify a point, and that is that even though Saint-Exupéry's life style and that of his friends like Guillaumet and Jean Mermoz made people feel that they were reckless adventurers who disdained death, Saint-Exupéry consistently refuted such an opinion as childish:

> On veut confondre de tels hommes avec les toréadors ou les joueurs. On vante leur mépris de la mort. Mais je me moque bien du mépris de la mort. S'il ne tire pas ses racines d'une responsabilité acceptée, il n'est que signe de pauvreté ou d'excès de jeunesse (T.H. p. 167).

It is in this light that Saint-Exupéry's life style should be considered against the background of his vision of the human condition. To most of us his life may look heroic, but Saint-Exupéry certainly considered himself an ordinary worker simply striving to perform his task.

So from considering Man in his physical setting, Saint-Exupéry moves to look at the being himself. Here he comes to the same basic discovery as Camus' Caligula, that men die and are not happy. Any one who is familiar with

Camus' play knows what anguish and despair that discovery caused Caligula, and what he did thereafter. In Saint-Exupéry, this grasp of the situation, expressed with less violence but with equal intensity, is first noticed in Vol de nuit. Rivière gives orders to his pilots in what one may call the most random manner, as these orders are without regard to the pilots' safety. On the night of the drama in the book, three pilots are in danger of disappearing while discharging their duties on Rivière's orders. Simone Fabien, the wife of one of the pilots, has just challenged Rivière in the name of love for her husband. Rivière realizes that all these people who might perish on his orders could have continued living happily, and he wonders in the name of what consideration he is committing them to death. It is at this reflexion, however, that the truth of Man strikes him:

> La première loi n'est-elle pas de protéger ces bonheurs - là? Mais lui-même les brise. Et pourtant un jour, fatalement, s'évanouissent comme des mirages, les sanctuaires d'or. La vieillesse et la mort les détruisent, plus impitoyables que lui-même. Il existe peut-être

> quelque chose d'autre à sauver et de plus durable; peut-être est-ce à sauver cette part - là de l'homme que Rivière travaille? Sinon l'action ne se justifie pas (V.N. p. 121).

Old age and death are the realities of our lives to which Saint-Exupéry found it very difficult to resign himself. In fact the idea of being incapacitated by old age always haunted him:

> Si j'écrivais tous les jours, je serais heureux parce qu'il en resterait quelque chose. Rien ne m'émerveille plus que de m'entendre dire: Comme tu es jeune, parce que j'ai tellement besoin d'être jeune (L.M. p. 120).

On the whole then, the thought of passing some few insignificant years on earth and then disappearing into nothingness always kept Saint-Exupéry on his toes. This is certainly one of the motives for his daring adventures. We must, however, emphasize that nowhere in his writings has he recommended adventure as the only way to face our destiny. As we shall show later on, his more mature works clearly de-emphasize adventure. However, given that old age or death are inevitable, then the choice left to Man is clear: try as much as possible to leave your mark on the sands of time. This is the only consideration that can authorize risks. In other words, dangerous living becomes acceptable if it is

seen as a privileged way to some worth-while accomplishment.

It is the human condition, as it is, that makes this apparent "mépris de la mort" a sensible option. For if one considers the contrary as is obtained in the life of "les foules des petites villes, qui tournent le soir autour de leur kiosque à musique" with their kind of happiness which Saint-Exupéry refers to as "ce harnais" (V.N. p. 121), if one considers this then the pathetic of the situation becomes more painful. Saint-Exupéry gives us two revealing examples of this. During his trip to the Soviet Union in April 1935 to report for Paris-Soir on the Soviet situation, he happened to travel by train with some Polish nationals repatriated from France. These Poles, who in their youth were certainly bright - looking people full of promise, had become so degenerate that, while contemplating one beautiful child, Saint-Exupéry could not but lament the human condition in which hostile destiny is bent on making slaves of us all. The human condition is viewed here in the light of Man being constantly pushed into a servile state. In such a situation, constant effort against the current seems the only salvation. It is Saint-Exupéry's view that there is a hidden Mozart in us all who needs to be saved at all costs, even at the risk of

sacrificing our temporary life. Otherwise Mozart dies:

> Ce qui me tourmente, les soupes populaires ne le guérissent point. Ce qui me tourmente, ce ne sont ni ces creux, ni ces bosses, ni cette laideur. C'est un peu, dans chacun de ces hommes Mozart assassiné (Un sens p. 47).

And to those who tried to dissuade him from risking his life as a war pilot during the second world war, Saint-Exupéry retorted that the nature of things always was such that it was useless ever trying to save one's neck once one knew where one's way lay. Both sides weighed, Saint-Exupéry chose the way other intellectuals thought too risky. It is better, as men, to die with our boots on:

> Les intellectuels se tiennent en réserve, comme des pots de confiture, sur les étagères de la propagande, pour être mangés après la guerre (P.G. p. 287).

We have now seen the source of what one may call Saint-Exupéry's anguish, his awakening to the pathetic and the tragic of the human condition. But he is too much of an accomplished humanist to restrict his view of the human condition to what one may call the dark side of it. Pierre-Henri Simon notes in his book, L'Homme en procès, this essential element of humanism:

> L'humanisme consiste essentiellement à reconnaître à l'esprit une fonction privilégiée dans l'homme.

And Saint-Exupéry clearly believes that despite the seeming fragility of Man it is only Man that matters in the universe. It is with this thought in mind that, finding himself in the utter aridity of the Libyan desert surrounded only by mineral waste, Saint-Exupéry wonders:

> Mais le plus merveilleux était qu'il y eût là, debout sur le dos rond de la planète, entre ce linge aimanté et ces étoiles, une conscience d'homme dans laquelle cette pluie pût se réfléchir comme dans un miroir. Sur une assise de minéraux un songe est un miracle (T.H. p. 176).

So what is the essence of Man according to Saint-Exupéry? In his very first book he begins to figure out what really is of value in Man, if Man is not to despair after all. Jacques Bernis, the hero of Courrier sud, receives a letter from his friend living in the Cap Juby airstrip, in which the latter writes of Bernis' lover, Geneviève:

> Et puis sait-elle ce dont elle a besoin? Cette habitude même de la fortune, qu'elle s'ignore. L'argent, c'est ce qui permet la conquête des biens, l'agitation extérieure-et sa vie est intérieure - mais la fortune: c'est ce qui fait durer les choses. C'est le fleuve invisible, souterrain qui alimente un siècle les murs d'une demeure, les souvenirs: l'âme (C.S. p. 33).

One sees at this early stage in his life Saint-Exupéry's effort to differentiate what is important from what is not, in Man. Throughout his life Saint-Exupéry had a totally contemptuous regard for material wealth and the false happiness it brings:

> ... je n'aime pas les gens que le bonheur a satisfaits comme S ... et qui ne se développeront plus. Il faut être un peu inquiet pour lire autour de soi (L.M. p. 121).

The definition of money as given above confines it to a well-defined and limited function, effectively strips it of any exaggerated importance and of its quasi sacredness as so many people tend to hold it in our modern societies. Without elaboration at this stage however, Saint-Exupéry hints that what is important in Man is the inner life, "la vie intérieure". This is the essence of Man exposed to the contingencies of history and the material world. At the end of Terre des hommes Saint-Exupéry writes, "Seul l'Esprit, s'il souffle sur la glaise, peut créer l'Homme". In Saint-Exupéry it is common to see "l'Esprit" with a capital E and "l'Homme" with a capital H, and this makes many people

talk of mysticism in Saint-Exupéry.[2] In fact, the notion that Saint-Exupéry is a mystic is heightened by the fact that very often, without any clear elaboration, he makes one feel that there is a superior value that transcends the immediate human concern, a kind of ideal to which Man's efforts are constant aspiration. Sometimes Saint-Exupéry says that Man is looking for God, "Dieu", with a capital D. His constant reference to God in this way and the fact that he uses images and expressions that are familiar with readers of the holy scriptures (for example the quotation above), makes some people like Renée Zeller[3] feel that his is an unmistakable groping towards Christianity, that his mysticism will certainly lead him to this faith. If we consider as a mystic any person who has a strong and intuitive belief in religion and who seeks to join God beyond the ordinary appearance of things then we can easily apply the term to Saint-Exupéry. Indeed this helps us to appreciate his

consistent refusal to resign himself to Man's precarious situation as his sole lot, as many of us are tempted to do. Throughout his creative life as we have seen right from Courrier sud, Saint-Exupéry's conviction is that the essence of Man lies elsewhere beyond the merely visible. Be it "vie intérieure", be it "âme" or be it "l'Esprit" which he decorates significantly with a capital E, or again be it "l'Homme" who he believes is different from the individual (he sees "l'Homme" as the higher being in whom individuals ultimately unite in their various ascensional efforts, in whom all differences are resolved) the underlying fact has always been that the visible is only a mask of the truth which alone can satisfy us.

If we take the word "l'Esprit" we can show that though Saint-Exupéry is a mystic it is wrong to conclude that his spiritual itinerary would ultimately lead him to Christianity; we would rather see him as a "mystique sans la foi".[2]

We shall dwell more on this point when analyzing Citadelle. But for the mean time, from what we have seen of his thoughts at the end of Terre des hommes, Saint-Exupéry divides Man into "l'argile" and "l'Esprit" and as we have mentioned, this sounds like the Biblical account of the creation of Man whereby God, the creator, breathed on the clay His holy breath in order to vivify it. Although language may be similar - "seul l'Esprit, s'il souffle sur la glaise", peut créer l'Homme" - the sentence here obviously does not carry the generative, creative message. Here it simply emphasizes the supremacy of "l'Esprit" over the physical. This differentiation, apart from some peculiarities in the use of imagery, is not peculiar to Saint-Exupéry, and as Pierre-Henri Simon has pointed out, it is even a characteristic of the humanists:

> ... cette transcendance de l'humain est celle d'un être qui participe à l'esprit. Non qu'il soit pur esprit: l'homme est aussi essentiellement corps, ... mais il reconnaît pour évaluer ses actes, une hiérarchie de valeurs, et les plus haut placées sont celles que l'esprit poursuit comme ses fins propres.[4]

So while "la vie de l'esprit" seeks high ideals such as love, justice, truth and beauty and affirms itself in liberty and reason, the body or the animal part of Man, contents itself with mundane issues like egoism, craving, the exaltation of force and the desire for domination and exploitation of the weak by the strong, thus affirming itself in determinism and instinct.[5] This seems to us to characterize the position of Saint-Exupéry, the position which explains his aforesaid quasi contempt for the material and his readiness to subject the physical to any given hardship in order to achieve the lofty ideals which only the spirit can envisage.

The desire to reach out for superior values, to rise above the mediocrity of the natural inclination, "la pente naturelle", which tends towards the lowly, sometimes makes one have an uneasy feeling that a Saint-Exupéryan Man is necessarily callous, brutal and devoid of the milk of human kindness. At the first encounter with Saint-Exupéry's thoughts, one gets the feeling that the individual is treated with too much levity, and that human life is accorded too little importance. Some chosen examples will suffice to make this point clear. In the letter from a friend in Cap Juby to the hero of Courrier sud, Jacques Bernis, the friend writes:

> Malgré ce que tu dis d'Herlin, un homme ne compte pas beaucoup. Je crois ... la vie s'appuie sur autre chose ... (C.S. p. 33).

Before the above quotation, we have the following words in the same book:

> La Compagnie prêchait: courrier précieux courrier plus précieux que la vie. Oui De quoi faire vivre trente mille amants (C.S. p. 14).

Here, it is worthwhile to remind ourselves that the early planes being very unsafe and very uncomfortable to be used as passenger planes, they were used mainly for carrying mail. They had such fragile engines - "les moteurs d'alors ne resistant guère"- (T.H. p. 155) - that breakdowns were very frequent and this often resulted in the pilots getting killed. The job of a pilot at that time was very risky as there were few chances of surviving for any length of time. This parenthesis is useful in showing how Saint-Exupéry evaluated human life since he loved this job (L.J. p. 70) and it throws more light on the above quotation. The glimpses we have had so far of Saint-Exupéry's evaluation of human life come from his first book. But later books are even more

revealing. Vol de unit which is generally considered by many people as Nietzschean has this to say on the attitude of Rivière, the hero, towards the people working under him:

> Il était indifférent à Rivière de paraître juste ou injuste. Peut-être ces mots - là n'avaient - ils même pas de sens pour lui. Les petits bourgeois des petites villes tournet le soir autour de leur kiosque à musique et Rivière pensait: juste ou injuste envers eux, cela n'a pas de sens: ils n'existent pas. L'homme était pour lui une cire vierge qu'il fallait pétrir. Il fallait donner une âme à cette matière, lui créer une volonté (V.N. p. 92).

This attitude of dealing with human beings as mere wax to be shaped, by all means, this attitude which shows apparently a total lack of sympathy and sentiment tends to negate the humanist tag which one has already claimed for Saint-Exupéry. One more illustration from Vol de nuit highlights this point. For twenty years, Roblet has been an irreproachable worker. Now an old man with children, he commits his first error which is not very serious however, and yet he is dismissed, according to Rivière, to serve as an example to others that errors of any

type cannot be tolerated by the company. Rivière sums up his action thus:

> Ce n'est pas lui que j'ai congédié ainsi, brutalement, c'est le mal dont il n'était pas responsable, peut-être, mais qui passait par lui. Parce que les événements, on les commande, pensait Rivière, et ils obéissent, et on crée. Et les hommes sont de pauvres choses, et on les crée aussi. Ou bien on les écarte lorsque le mal passe par eux (V.N. p. 104).

To say the least, such a view of Man is disconcerting. Some critics have, however, shown that really Rivière is a kind - hearted man and in fact any reader who closes Vol de nuit with the picture of its hero as a ruthless, callous man needs to re-read it more carefully. Passages abound which show that Rivière, within him, feels some pains in taking some of the decisions which his office obliges him to take. In fact, in the scene between Rivière and Simone Fabien, one discerns a kind of incoherence in Rivière which shows a feeling and an understanding of tender emotions:

> Madame, je vous en prie, calmez-vous! il est si fréquent, dans notre métier, d'attendre longtemps des nouvelles (V .N. p. 120).

And even before this scence of confrontation between the demands of one's duty on the one hand, and the exigencies of domestic

life on the other, Rivière has repeatedly expressed his weariness with his rôle, the necessity to remain tough at all times, so that one feels that Rivière is causing himself some harm in order to discharge his duties, and one feels the words of Jean Anouilh's Créon come to mind, that the job may be messy, but if one must do it then there is no other way. With these glimpses of the other side of Rivière, one can say that he has just risen to the occasion and that the monster picture one may be tempted to accredit to him is indeed foreign to Rivière himself. We will be right thereofre to concede that Rivière is no unfeeling monster even though we may not go as far as saying that he is an admirable character. We may only conclude that if that is the way to be a leader and to form men, then how difficult is the whole rôle of leadership and how painful the process of being reborn Man. But this observation by Curtis Cate seems apt, and it succinctly interprets Saint-Exupéry's main concern in this regard:

> L'existence humaine ne se déroule pas sans effort à travers une plaine. C'est une ascension sur une pente glissante, sans merci pour celui dont l'effort se relâche. Et sans cette lutte ascensionnelle, l'individu demeure désoeuvré, une planche à la dérive, un chiffre dans un océan de chiffres, un atome dans une fourmilière d'automates.[7]

Viewed in this way then, one can say that he who loves men is the Rivière type, without undue sentimentality, without complacency and with ruthlessness even: qualities necessary to catapult men out of mediocrity and onto higher planes. With that in mind, one is not surprised to read in Terre des hommes this idea of reality, that the gazelles will always seek to escape from false security in confinement and gallop about in spite of jackals and lions in order to give full expression to their animality:

> Peu importent les chacals, si la vérité des gazelles est de goûter la peur, qui les contraint seule à se surpasser et tire d'elles les plus hautes voltiges! Qu'importe le lion si la verité des gazelles est d'être ouvertes d'un coup de griffe dans le soleil (T.H. p. 251)!

This concept of life, and thus of Man, may appear difficult and, we may even say, unattractive but we will have to see that Saint-Exupéry strongly believes in Man and he feels that the gangue which initially envelops Man should be polished to the true gem that is alone important. His is love, strong love, of a father who chastises his beloved son, even harshly, for failing to measure up to expectation, the father who sees

danger in unnecessary doting and complacency.

We would like to make the point clear at this stage about the so-called influence of Nietzsche on Saint-Exupéry. Saint-Exupéry's concept of Man stresses the importance of continuous and sustained effort. Man should be relentless in order to accomplish himself. This hard-grinding and even ruthlessness have their parallel in the thoughts of Nietzsche. It is also indisputable that Saint-Exupéry had expressed his admiration for the German philosopher in a letter to Renée de Saussine dated November 1926 in which he wrote:

> J'emporte Nietzsche sous mon bras. J'aime ce type immensément. Et cette solitude. Je m'allongerai dans le sable à Cap Juby et je lirai Nietzsche. Il y a des choses que j'adore mon coeur ou se consume mon été court, chaud, mélancolique et bienheureux ... (L.J. p. 77).

We must hasten to add that writing earlier to the same Renée de Saussine, Saint-Exupéry had even more exhaustively expressed his admiration for Ibsen, whose work he says "se passe sur un plan humain" as against Pirandello who, he says:

> ... a été créé et mis sur terre pour distraire les gens du monde et leur permettre de jouer avec la politique, les idées générales et les drames de l'adultère (L.J. p. 77).

All this is to emphasize that the fact that Saint-Exupéry expressed his admiration for Nietzsche does not make him Nietzschean just as his admiration for Ibsen or Pascal does not make him Ibsenian or Pascalian. In fact a few key differences suffice to drive this point home. Although Saint-Exupéry refuses to confuse equality with identity - men are equal and not identical in so far as each man has hidden in him a Mozart - he does not see the differences among men in terms of class as Nietzsche does. This is what Saint-Exupéry says:

> Je crois en l'égalité des droits de l'Homme à travers chaque individu. Et je crois que la Liberté est celle de l'ascension de l'Homme. Egalité n'est pas Identité (P.G. p. 383).

Nietzsche on the other hand obdurately believes that there are the vulgar masses on one side and on the other side of the social scale, there is a race of supermen and that whatever happens to the vulgar massess does not matter as long as their misery is favourable to the condition of the supermen:

> He (Nietzsche) holds that the happiness of common people is no part of the good per se. All that is good or bad in itself exists only in the superior few; what happens to the rest is of no account.[8]

In other words, Nietzsche's belief in biological superiority is a thought one cannot possibly expect to find in Saint-Exupéry. That apart, as Bertrand Russel has again pointed out, Nietzsche's constant reference to common people as the bungled and botched and his belief that there is "no objection to their suffering if it is necessary for the production of a great man"[9] can never be reconciled with the deep pains Saint-Exupéry experienced as he watched floods of French citizens moving south at the German invasion as he so movingly recounts in Pilote de guerre (see P.G. p. 327). It is unimaginable to think of Saint-Exupéry justifying the second world war as having made Charles de Gaulle possible as Nietzsche sums up the period from 1789 to 1815 in Napoleon:

> The revolution made Napoleon possible: that is its justification. We ought to desire the anarchical collapse of the whole of our civilization if such a reward were to be its result.[10]

We have already seen enough of the other side of Rivière of Vol de nuit - the side of human feeling and goodness - not to accept as entirely correct the Nietzschean figure some critics accord him. As we shall show later in this thesis, Saint-Exupéry's subsequent works amply vindicate our position.

We intend to conclude this chapter by highlighting the unique vision which Saint-Exupéry has of the human condition, by contrasting him with Sartre. As Curtis Cate has pointed out,[11] with the rise in popularity of Saint-Exupéry as a writer, more and more people began to see him as an existentialist, either because of the currency this philosophy gained especially in the immediate post-war era, or simply because of the need to classify Saint-Exupéry into an already known system of thought. We have singled out Sartre's existentialism for our contrast knowing fully well that existentialism is a very polyvalent word indeed and that there are christian existentialists as well as atheist ones. Sartre's existentialism seems to us the closest thing to the

general thoughts of Saint-Exupéry on the human condition and his concept of Man. Curtis Cate writes:

> Ils se trompaient ceux qui, plus tard prétendaient qu'il (Saint-Exupéry) était existentialiste. Saint-Exupéry ne fut jamais existentialiste, si tant est que l'on puisse trouver une définition satifaisante de ce mot polyvalent. Sa philosophie était "résistentialiste", dans le sens qu'a donné à ce mot José Ortega y Gasset...[12]

While agreeing with Curtis Cate that Saint-Exupéry is not existentialist, we find his "resistentialist" homonym to be side - tracking the issue, unacceptable semantic gymnastics.

In L'Existentialisme est un humanisme, Jean - Paul Sartre writes:

> L'homme est constamment hors de lui-même, c'est en se projetant et en se perdant hors de lui qu'il fait exister l'homme et d'autre part, c'est en poursuivant des buts transcendants qu'il peut exister; l'homme étant ce dépassement et ne saisissant les objets que par rapport à ce dépassement, est au coeur, au centre de ce dépassement.[13]

A little later in the same book, he writes again:

> ... nous montrons que ce n'est pas en se retournant vers lui, mais toujours en cherchant hors de lui un but qui est telle libération, telle réalisation particulière, que l'homme se réalisera précisément comme humain.[14]

Without going into details of Sartre's existentialism, we would like to submit that much of what we have seen as constitutive of Saint-Exupéry's Man is expressed in the above quotations: the need for continuous effort in order to reach out and attain greater heights, hence the exaltation of action and the exteriorization of the self. But if we would look at the basic definition of Sartrian existentialism: that existence precedes essence, we would easily come to the conclusion that there are some similarities here and there in the thoughts of Sartre and of Saint-Exupéry, but that these do not amount to making the latter existentialist. The differences in the concept of Man by the two writers are fundamental. To emphasize the basic notion that existence precedes essence Sartre writes:

> L'homme n'est rien d'autre que son projet, il n'existe que dans la mesure ou il se réalise, il n'est donc rien d'autre que l'ensemble de ses actes, rien d'autre que sa vie.[15]

Saint-Exupéry is more considerate than that in his concept of Man. It is indisputable that many of us would feel really desparate if we were to follow Sartre in his belief that there is no human nature. This mathematics, this addition of a being's acts to be able to define him as Man is certainly too strict for the natural disposition of Saint-Exupéry. Action and all personal efforts are undoubtedly stressed in Saint-Exupéry, but they are not meant to create an essence out of nothingness; they are instrumental in polishing what existed, in bringing it closer to the image of God, God being used strictly to mean the optimum where all the continuous ascensional efforts of Man, his generosity, culminate:

> Et toi-même si tu veux grandir, use-toi contre tes litiges: ils conduisent d'abord vers Dieu. C'est la seule route qui soit au monde. Et de là vient que la souffrance te grandit, quand tu l'acceptes (Cit. p. 637).

The repeated use of the word "gangue" in the work of Saint-Exupéry is significant in the sense that action and personal efforts are necessary as abrasives for laying bare the hidden gem.

In Saint-Exupéry then, there are other references for Man apart from the sum total of his actions. Certainly there is horror in not developing oneself and dying in one's "matrix" (to us the same image). We will therefore not classify Saint-Exupéry into any system apart from that of humanist. Only really broad systems are broad enough to accommodate him, as witness his refusal to be identified as either Petainist or Gaullist but simply French (Un sens pp 209 - 217), or placed either on the left or on the right of the political spectrum, but simply a citizen wishing the good of all. And in any case, could Saint-Exupéry be really considered as existentialist in spite of all this? To answer this question we may do no better than agree with Pierre-Henri Simon when he writes:

> ... Par tempérament, Saint-Exupéry n'etait pas pessimiste; il avait besoin de croire à la valeur de ce qu'il faisait et à la possibilité d'un ordre dont il acceptait le service.[16]

It is perhaps when we analyze in greater detail the spiritual message Saint-Exupéry has for us in the next chapter, and in subsequent chapters that the parting of ways with the existentialists, and his singularity, become clearer.

CHAPTER II

THE ROCK AND THE CATHEDRAL

In chapter one we have seen how, from a very disquieting position of anguish, Saint-Exupéry has quickly moved to a purely humanistic stance that has permitted him to trace the way to what he considers Man's true greatness and salvation. At the point of discovery of the fragility of the human condition, one could either slip into utter despair, the position which Camus' Meursault finds himself in L'Etranger, or with some lucidity and optimism, find a way out in order to rise above the human condition, to find cause for living or for dying, "car ce qui donne un sens à la vie donne un sens à la mort" (T.H. p. 256). Throughout his work, as we have seen, Saint-Exupéry has repeatedly stressed the importance of Man's effort, the need to direct one's efforts to some action outside oneself, the need to be occupied with something other than oneself, the need for generosity and sacrifice in order to establish bonds, which alone count:

> Quand le corps se défait, l'essentiel se montre. L'homme n'est qu'un noeud de relations. Les relations comptent seules pour l'homme (P.G. p. 347).

Speaking further of the need for total generosity and for sacrifice as the essential qualities of Man, Saint-Exupéry uses himself as an example in his war efforts:

> J'ai été chercher, une fois de plus, la preuve de ma bonne foi sur Arras. J'ai engagé ma chair dans l'aventure. Toute ma chair. Et je l'ai engagée perdante. J'ai donné tout ce que j'ai pu à ces règles du jeu. Pour qu'elles soient autre chose que des règles du jeu (P.G. p. 355).

Saint-Exupéry, as we know, lost his life in the second world war, having subjected himself to the most painful rigours of the war, considering his age and health - his head was already beriddled with fractures from his numerous accidents.

To engage in creative and demanding actions, the why and the wherefore questions are normally asked and answers obtained. This is saying that in the world of a man who always gives the best of himself there is the absolute necessity for order. A Saint-Exupéryan man lives in an orderly world and abhors chaos. He needs this order to be able to live a full life. This order which creates a conducive environment for the growth of a Saint-Exupéryan man is often referred to as his freedom. In Saint-Exupéry's

concept of Man, freedom is the framework within which Man can find the necessary constraints which alone permit him to live a full, purposeful life. Talking of freedom and constraints may at first seem a contradiction but in fact this is one of the happy paradoxes in Saint-Exupéry. Who is your enemy? Saint-Exupéry says he is that indispensable being who forces you to grow. The strong winds and other climatic inclemencies are the beneficial forces which help plants to grow strong and take specific shapes, that form plants in one way and not the other - they in fact give plants their identity. One example Saint-Exupéry gives is that of a player of a game that has well-defined rules. The more the player knows the rules of the game, the freer he feels in playing it. In this case, the rules which one might think serve as constraints are in fact his freedom to play (Cit p. 521). If my enemy incites me to surpass myself he is in fact a necessary element of my order, of my freedom, because he is a conducive condition for me to grow.

> Si quelque chose s'oppose à toi et te déchire, laisse croître, c'est que tu prends racine et que tu mues. Bienheureux ton déchirement qui te fait t'accoucher de toi-même; car aucune vérité ne se démontre et ne s'atteint dans l'évidence (Cit. p. 636).

Freedom in Saint-Exupéry then takes a refreshing, healthy turn. It is clearly not the freedom to do whatever one wants, which is in fact anarchy. Freedom is the constraint geared towards the attainment of specific, superior goals, the full realization of the self and the acquisition of an identity. Because without constraints, without order then, there is dispersal and shapelessness:

> Car il m'est apparu que l'homme était tout semblable à la citadelle. Il renverse les murs pour s'assurer la liberté, mais il n'est plus que forteresse démantelée et ouverte aux étoiles. Alors commence l'angoisse qui est de n'être point (Cit. p. 516).

Thus order in Saint-Exupéry is not just a luxury we can afford to do without. It is an indispensable requirement for existence. For it is order that organises and orientates and gives specific forms. The Berber king in Citadelle says of his role:

> Car je suis celui qui bâtit l'urne autour du parfum pour qu'il demeure. Je suis la routine qui comble le fruit. Je suis celui qui contraint

> la femme de prendre figure et d'exister, afin que plus tard je remette en son nom à Dieu non ce faible soupir dispersé dans le vent, mais telle ferveur, telle tendresse, telle souffrance particulière ... (Cit. p. 516).

Again in the Saint-Éxupéryan concept of things, order is essential so that our daily activities do not take on the look of the puppet theatre show, but assume significant cosmic dimensions. A Saint-Exupéryan man craves for a system whereby each step he takes has significance (Cit. p. 523) where his efforts are a contribution to the common fund of human civilization, where there is a permanent background on which anyone who tries can leave an imprint and thereby project himself into posterity. Saint-Exupéry's is a well - documented system of things in which the arbitrary is greatly reduced, if not in fact eliminated. But what is particularly interesting about order in Saint-Exupéry is the freedom the individual enoys. Order here obviously does not imply regimentation. It is rather a propitious condition favouring genuine diversity which alone can sufficiently enrich humanity by the virile unity it creates:

> Car autre chose est de s'oppOser et autre chose de se contredire et 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 création permanente. Car il m'oblige à fonder ce langage qui absorbera les contradictions (Cit. p. 586).

This notion of order is a genuine attempt by a Saint-Exupéryan man to transform the precarious world in which Man at first appears so vulnerable and fragile into a concrete, comprehensible world in which Man has pride of place.

With this notion of order, how does Saint-Exupéry envisage Man in the concert of things? We are going to see that Saint-Exupéry's world is that which is rigorously hierarchical, and the man of his concept is he who accepts this arrangement as a matter of course. Why does he do it? It has to be understood that a Saint-Exupéryan man is not a revolutionary who seeks to shake up society in its base, level up things in the hope of reordering them to suit his preconceived ideas. A Saint-Exupéryan Man is he who accepts his place in the scheme of things without envy or jealousy, knowing, with conviction,

that both those above and below him, together with himself are struggling towards the same direction, having the same goals and aspirations. In other words, they are all fellow travellers. In this perspective, one sees how it is easy for a Saint-Exupéryan man to have confidence in other people:

> Pourquoi nous haïr? Nous sommes
> solidaires, emportés par la même navire.
> Et s'il est bon que des civilisations
> s'opposent pour favoriser des synthèses
> nouvelles, il est monstrueux qu'elles
> s'entre-dévorent (T.H. p. 256).

And Saint-Exupéry concludes:

> puisqu'il suffit, pour nous délivrer,
> de nous aider à prendre conscience
> d'un but qui nous relie les uns aux
> autres, autant le chercher là ou il nous
> unit tous (T.H. p. 256).

It is the goal to achieve that matters, and in the achievement of the goal each contribution has equal weight. This is the true sense of equality. As long as we discharge our rôles faithfully in this concert, we are all equal in the struggle to attain the goal. To express this relationship more vividly Saint-Exupéry uses the image of the cathedral. We are all united in an effort to build a cathedral of humanity. Certainly there are some rocks more suitable to form the foundation and others more suitable to form the top. Rocks that form the top cannot

reasonably claim to be superior to those that form the middle or the foundation. For if any group of rocks is missing there will be no cathedral, but only a collection of rocks in a jumble. In fact the expression "en vrac" abounds in Saint-Exupéry's work and it aptly expresses a state of non - being in which by lacking structural organization things simply do not exist. It is when some rocks are used for the foundation, and others are used in some other specified locations that there is a cathedral, and hence there are foundation rocks and middle rocks and so on. It is the existence of the cathedral, by the consent of all the rocks to discharge their specified responsibilities (if we may push the image so far) that in turn gives the rocks their identity, their importance. The cathedral owes its existence to the individual rocks, but it is also the cathedral that gives them their coherence, their significance and their equality.

Translated into human terms, this hierarchical view of things and the acceptance of one's position in the social order augur well for human progress and civilization. One may argue, that in advocating the acceptance of one's place in the scheme of things, Saint-Exupéry is seeking to entrench social classes and urging social segregation by preaching a passive acceptance of mediocre social positions. In fact throughout the work of

Saint-Exupéry, there is what looks like a docile acceptance of authority; and emphasis is laid on the punctual discharge of one's duty. The more high-handed the authority is, the better for the people, as this is conceived as the only way to force people to overcome their indolence and apathy and to give out their best. Some examples: in Courrier sud, Jacques Bernis is irritated with the airport chief who hesitates to give him departure orders as he fears that the night is getting darker and darker. As the chief seeks signs of light from the stars, the young pilot vents out:

> Je me moque de vos étoiles: on en voit trois. Ce n'est pas dans Mars que vous m'envoyez, c'est à Agadir (C.S. p. 55).

Waiting for the moon annoys him even more: "avait - il attendu la lune pour voler la nuit? Etait - il encore un élève?" (C.S. p. 55). In Pilote de guerre, we see pilots taking off at command knowing fully well the very slim chances they have of ever coming back alive, and knowing in advance the futility of their assignment, as Saint-Exupéry pathetically but rhetorically asks his readers:

> 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 ... (P.G. p. 272).

In spite of that, the pilots only answer: "Bien mon commandant" and take off when ordered to do so. In Vol de nuit, one may even say it is a sort of reign of terror in which the fixed goal, which is the success of night flight, supercedes any other personal interests. Rivière continues giving departure orders even if pilots like Fabien perish. So the subjection of people to authority is a permanent feature in Saint-Exupéry's work. We believe, however, that an interpretation of Saint-Exupéry as a snob and essentially aristocratic, defending the interests of the ruling classes at the expense of the masses misses the fundamental human preoccupations of the author, and yet, in a sense it is a reasonable argument. We will now see how this objection can be both reasonable and yet, to our mind, short-sighted and inadequate. In the ordinary run of events, people

are preoccupied with such transient matters like social position, temporal power with its trappings of material wealth and such like comforts. This is the materialistic world that favours such slogans as egalitarianism and power to the masses . This is the world which sums up all human problems in terms of the production and distribution of material wealth. In a system like this, vague equality is stressed in order to facilitate merciless scramble for the so-called scarce resources. Looked at then in the perspective of the common run of life, it is reasonable to argue that Saint-Exupéry is elitist, fighting for the cause of the rulers. But, as we have mentioned before, to a Saint-Exupéryan man, this is the side of life that is the least important. Saint-Exupéry writes in Terre des hommes

> Nous ne sommes pas un cheptel à
> l'engrais, et l'apparition d'un Pascal
> pauvre pèse plus lourd que la naissance
> de quelques anonymes prospères
> (T.H. p. 244).

Perhaps this is where the notion of aristocratic morality comes in in describing Saint-Exupéry's moral standards. The feeling is that he does not occupy himself enough with the daily

concern of the people, their petty problems of economics, and of domestic felicity, and of power struggle:

> Nous sommes semblables à de riches voyageurs qui, ayant vécu longtemps dans des pays à corail et à palmes, reviennent, une fois ruinés, partager, dans la médiocrité natale, les plats graisseux d'une famille avare, l'aigreur de querelles intestines, les huissiers, la mauvaise conscience des soucis d'argent, les faux espoirs, les déménagements honteux, les arrogances d'hôtelier, la misère et la mort puante à l'hôpital (P.C. pp. 315-6).

In fact Saint-Exupéry always makes the difference between what is urgent and what is important. Material things fall in the urgent class, to sustain life so that Man can really face the only important thing in life - the search for the transcendental. This is why Pierre-Henri Simon characterises this attitude of Saint-Exupéry as an aristocratic humanism:

> ... un type d'humanisme aristocratique qui vénère et cultive le héros dans l'homme et qui fait bon marché du bonheur et des droits de l'individu.

The challenge here, however, is that if we can rise to the higher planes where the Saint-Exupéryan man operates we will find that, taking the cause of humanity into account, there is no question of subjecting some people to others - we shall consequently find it necessary to modify our language.

What Saint-Exupéry does is to invite all mankind to a general concensus to a certain necessary arrangement of things which will favour the ascent of Man. A Saint-Exupéryan man consents to purposeful authority with the best intentions in the world. No single pilot in Vol de nuit grumbles, more so as Rivière does not place himself as a lord over them, but acts simply as comrade in arms with his subordinates, or more appropriately, with his co-travellers. In fact, a leader in Saint-Exupéry is somewhat like a clockmaker who is necessary to set things moving, a leader is he whose rôle it is to organise people and give them a sense of direction. Without him, many people will falter and fall short of their salvation. In Vol de nuit, it is Rivière whose iron rule makes the pilots overcome their fear (V.N. p. 110), a necessary step to their becoming heros. More practically, it was the strong, powerful leadership of Didier Daurat as chief of the "Société d'Aviation Latécoère" which made it possible for Henri Guillaumet and Jean Mermoz to become the early heroes of civil aviation as we know them today. In Saint-Exupéry, the importance of strong leadership is evident. In Pilote de guerre, Saint-Exupéry traces the predicament of France during the second world war to the lack of purposeful leadership:

> Notre monde est fait de rouages
> qui ne s'ajustent pas les uns aux autres.
> Ce ne sont point les matériaux qui
> sont en cause, mais l'Horloger.
> L'Horloger manque (P.G. p. 303).

This love for strong, purposeful authority is very much in consonance with the whole philosophy of Saint-Exupéry with regard to his view of Man, and to Man's possibility of escaping from imminent annihilation. The thoughts of Rivière in Vol de nuit which are rhetorically uncompleted are very explicit in this regard:

> Il y a dans toute foule, pensait
> Rivière, des hommes que l'on ne
> distingue pas, et qui sont de
> prodigieux messagers. Et sans
> le savoir eux-mêmes. A moins
> que ... (V.N. p. 89).

We can conclude this reflexion: unless there is a farsighted, purposeful leader who can incite them and generate in them adequate force to recreate themselves. The leader here then, no matter how severe he is, deserves Man's love as he is an instrument for his realization.

This vision of Man as willingly subjecting himself to authority for his own good is not a new one since it is the basis of all community living. But we have noticed that the nuance in Saint-Exupéry takes this view outside the general

understanding of building human societies and civilizations, and directs it more specifically on the individual. As we have tried to show above, it is a vision broadly designed to mobilize the masses[2], awaken in them their dormant human resources, generate and channel their energies so that, overcoming their natural inclinations which tend towards mediocrity, they can fully develop themselves and be great. This view however raises the question as to whether or not Saint-Exupéry contradicts himself by, on the one hand, emphasizing communal harmony which is possible only when individuals submit themselves to centralized leadership, and on the other hand recognizing the particularity of each person. A centralized authority normally has a common goal or common goals for all, which goals do not necessarily articulate all the particular goals of the ruled. But as we have shown above from the example in Citadelle, Saint-Exupéry clearly favours freedom for the individual, and is in fact convinced that each of us is obliged to pursue any course of action that can lead to self-fulfilment. Does this show any wavering or equivocation on the part of the author? Unfortunately, the answer is yes, and it is not the purpose of this thesis to try to cover up Saint-Exupéry's weaknesses. But this sort of oscillation in the thoughts of Saint-Exupéry shows

a genuine and life-long determination to uphold the dignity of the individual, that dignity which should not be too readily compromised for reasons of social, political or economic expedience. Specifically, Saint-Exupéry has been consistently averse to subjecting the individual to the whims and caprices of the masses. This aversion explains why he has been strongly attracted to a brand of fierce individualism which precisely emphasizes that the individual should not be subjected to mass tyranny:

> D'autres ont rassemblé ces pierres répandues en vrac dans le champ. Ils ont préché les droits de la Masse. La formule ne satisfait guère. Car s'il est, certes, intolérable qu'un seul homme tyrannise une Masse - il est tout aussi intolérable que la Masse écrase un seul homme (P.G. p. 381).

In Saint-Exupéry, the solution to what we may call the problem of the individual - society relationship is a kind of consent on the part of the individual to harmonize with the Masse for mutual progress, a sort of symbiosis, a strict social contract:

> Je suis le plus fort parce que ma civilisation a seule pouvoir de nouer dans son unité, sans les amputer, les diversités particulières. Elle vivifie la source de sa force en même temps qu'elle s'y abreuve (P.G. p. 381).

The word that could be used to describe the relationship of the individual to the community to reflect this wilful cohabitation is therefore concession and not in any way submission. By conceding to communal requirements, to centralized authority, the individual loses nothing of his individualism, rather he is enriched by his ability to sacrifice. There is therefore no fundamental contradiction in this regard. The word sacrifice then takes on particular significance in the thoughts of Saint-Exupéry. Sacrifice is the meaningful gift of oneself or of one's interests for the good of all. It is one of the prime qualities of a Saint-Exupéryan Man. The need to look outside oneself, to occupy oneself with something other than oneself is stressed constantly. Let it be said again without any fear of repetition that the ability for sacrifice in Saint-Exupéry both in the author's exemplary life and in his work is astonishing.

His mother remembers:

> Mais plus que le héros, plus que l'écrivain, plus que l'enchanteur, plus que le saint, ce qui nous rend Antoine si proche, c'est son infinie tendresse. "Sur le chemin, l'étoile est inusable, il faut donner, donner, donner" (L.M. p. 28).

It is only when we fail to emphasize the idea of sacrifice sufficiently in Saint-Exupéry that we find it difficult to resolve the apparent contradiction between individualism on the one hand, and on the other this deep longing for communal harmony and order in which all our collective efforts have a meaning. One can say that Saint-Exupéry is instinctively an individualist who only submits to the exigences of communal living for fear of anarchy.[3] And to make this marriage possible he institutes sacrifice and raises it to the status of one of the most essential qualities of Man. Man, as conceived by Saint-Exupéry, is not possible without the constant penchant to sacrifice. In sacrifice, the otherwise non-conformist Saint-Exupéry finds his common denominator with other people:

> Si notre Humanisme restaure l'Homme. Si nous savons fonder notre Communauté, et si, pour la fonder, nous usons du seul instrument qui soit efficace: le

> sacrifice. Notre communauté, telle que notre civilisation l'avait bâtie, n'était pas, elle non plus, somme de nos intérêts - elle était somme de nos dons (P.G. p. 382).

We have seen that to remove Man from the arbitrary and to make him acquire roots, solidity and purposefulness, Saint-Exupéry has first placed him in the framework of a social hierarchy of equals performing, certainly, different functions but working collectively towards the same goal which is that of establishing Man beyond the confines of the contingencies of the human condition. A Saint-Exupéryan man, being firmly integrated in the scheme of things, participating fully within his ability, establishes bonds, "liens" , with other people engaged in the same effort, and is duly responsible for himself and for others. Responsibility and participation presuppose involvement, which in Saint-Exupéry, is more reasonably accomplished within the framework of a specific vocation. We shall now see how responsibility, participation and the establishment of bonds in the accomplishment of one's vocation are vital in Saint-Exupéry in forging and promoting Man.

Firstly, in the world of action where people expose themselves daily to danger, there is this sense of fraternity

that exists among such people. It is in this sense that in modern times, people who engage in such dangerous activities like guerrilla fighting or any revolutionary movement regard one another as comrades in arms, or even better still, as brothers and sisters.[4] Saint-Exupéry expresses this sense of belonging to a common fold that engenders deep love among its members as, in fact, the only one likely to create true love:

> Idés 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 (T.II. p. 252).

United in search of a common goal, subjected to the same ardours and experiences, each member of the group feels responsible for others: their hapiness, their sorrows, their successes or failures depend on him. He has a part to play in fostering others. It is like in a team game such as football where each of the players is responsible for the performance of another, and of the team in general. A Saint-Exupéryan man cannot be an isolationist, a loner. Since he has to participate in order to live, he has to enlist the cooperation of others; he has a responsibility not to let them down and to ensure their collective success that will

ennoble them all. A Saint-Exupéryan man is so bonded to others that he cannot stand aside and heap blames on them. Even where he is not personally instrumental to failure, he feels himself responsible for it all the same, simply because he believes that his more active participation could have averted it. This sense of total commitment at all times is the very essence of Man, since it is the only way to save an individual from being a prosecution witness, "un témoin à charge"[5] against fellow men:

> Etre homme, c'est précisément être responsable. C'est connaître la honte en face d'une misère qui ne semblait pas dépendre de soi. C'est être fier d'une victoire que les camarades ont remportée. C'est sentir, en posant sa pierre, que l'on contribue à bâtir le monde (T.H. p. 166).

And speaking of his close friend, collaborator and hero, Guillaumet, Saint-Exupéry again high-lights this essential quality, the sense of responsibility, in the most explicit of terms. The true quality of greatness in Man is not to isolate oneself like a paragon but to be immersed in common efforts, to share success and failure with others, celebrate others' success and participate in their sadness in failure. Guillaumet embodies the responsible man par excellence:

> Sa grandeur, c'est de se sentir
> responsable. Responsable de lui, du
> courrier et des camarades qui espèrent.
> Il tient dans ses mains leur peine
> ou leur joie. Responsable de ce qui
> se bâtit de neuf, là-bas, chez les
> vivants, à quoi il doit participer.
> Responsable un peu du destin des hommes,
> dans la mesure de son travail
> (T.H. p. 166).

Being responsible then establishes one firmly within a context of things, makes one necessary to others and others necessary to one. In other words, one finds one's place, and unlike Meursault in Camus' L'Etranger, one is not an outsider. In fact this, as we have tried to point out earlier, is the essence of Saint-Exupéry's philosophy[6], that this earth is in fact Man's home and that he should not feel himself a stranger on it. That this is in fact his only home. We have seen that this advocacy is neither complacent nor naive. Accepting this hostile earth for a"terre des hommes"requires hard efforts and Saint-Exupéry has shown us in Le Petit prince that it is through effort, through being responsible for something, that we can come to love, and accept it, out of many similar things, as dear to us. This is another aspect of being responsible.

Being responsible for something is not an accepted fact once and for all. One is continuously responsible, through thick and thin, in peace and in peril and the result is that one is devotedly attached to one's charge precisely because it is to it alone that one has given all of oneself and one's time. By contributing our quota to what goes on in the world of the living, we come to love this world, genuinely, and have a right to proclaim our love for it, because on our part we have not spared any effort for it either. This is the lesson the little prince has taught us in his love for his taunting rose flower, for which he is responsible. He talks to other roses in these words:

> Vous êtes belles, mais vous êtes vides. On ne peut pas mourir pour vous. Bien sûr, ma rose à moi, un passant ordinaire croirait qu'elle vous ressemble. Mais à elle seule elle est plus importante que vous toutes, puisque c'est elle que j'ai mise sous globe. Puisque c'est elle que j'ai abritée par le paravent. Puisque c'est elle dont j'ai tué les chenilles ... Puisque c'est elle que j'ai écoutée se plaindre, ou se vanter, ou même quelquefois se taire. Puisque c'est ma rose (P.P. p. 474).

Being responsible, and the awareness that others depend on us, is a very powerful spur to action, a good source for endurance and perseverance. It is also a distinctive quality of a purposeful man. On the other hand, it is the sense of responsibility which fortifies Man and sets him apart from lower animals. When Henri Guillaumet got caught up in the deadly cold Andes Cordilleras and death seemed the only issue for him, it was his sense of responsibility to his friends, and especially his feeling responsible for the upkeep of his wife, that kept him walking on and on against all hope of ever reaching safety alive. As he later explained, his hope was to die in a place where he could easily be found and certified dead so that his wife could claim indemnities for his life insurance policy and thus be able to maintain herself. In any case, the hope of not letting down those who were dependent on him sustained Guillaumet until he was rescued.[7] When Guillaument spoke in these words that brilliantly characterize human courage and pride "ce que j'ai fait, je le jure, jamais aucune bête ne l'aurait fait" (T.H. p. 165), - how can we fail to see in them the working of a human mind fortified by an exemplary sense of responsibility? Only Man imbued in his sense of commitment to others can stand

the most excruciating rigours with the sole aim of not letting down those for whom he is responsible. Of course, no beast could have done what Guillaumet did because the mere animal instinct of survival is not enough to urge it on in the most trying of physical situations. Only Man has that noble spiritual vision that enables him transcend what is merely a physical expediency.

One more example will suffice to illustrate the imperative nature of responsibility for a Saint-Exupéryan man. When Saint-Exupéry and his machanic André Prévot crash - landed in the Libyan desert some 200 kilometers to Cairo, the easiest thing for them to do would have been to lie down quietly and die from sheer physical exhaustion as they had neither food nor water to drink for some three days, in the rapidly drying heat of the desert in the day time, and the wintry cold in the night, in "ce vent d'ouest qui sèche l'homme en dix-neuf heures". (T.H. p. 239). But the fire of survival continued burning in them as they thought of their friends and relatives for whom they were responsible and who believed that wherever they were they were trying to reach out for them. The thought that one should never disappoint those for whom one is responsible spurred them on:

> Ah! J'accepte bien de m'endormir, de m'endormir ou pour la nuit ou pour des siècles. Si je m'endors je ne sais point la difference. Et puis quelle paix! Mais ces cris que l'on va pousser là-bas, ces grandes flammes de désespoir ... je n'en supporte pas l'image. Je ne puis pas me croiser les bras devant ces naufrages! Chaque seconde de silence assassine un peu ceux que j'aime (T.H. p. 224).

It is incontestible that a good number of people are responsible for some people or others, and for one thing or another. However, what we find particularly interesting in our study on Saint-Exupéry's concept of Man with respect to his notion of responsibility is the utter selflessness, that rare ability to forget about oneself and think only of others. In a rather curious twist, he affirms that the more one forgets oneself for others, the more one becomes important to them, and in turn the more one is personally exalted. There is therefore this reciprocity in responsibility which ensures a two-way flow of benefits. In other words, we are all interdependent spiritually, for it is indisputable that the mother who nourishes her baby to healthy growth derives at the same time immense satisfaction from discharging her sacred responsibility.

Talking of responsibility naturally brings us to the question of participation. For how can one be responsible for

someone without taking active part in what affects the said person? If the life of Saint-Exupéry has been such a beautiful one, even sometimes too difficult to accommodate, it has been precisely because of his ever readiness to participate in what is being done, "de neuf, là-bas, chez les vivants" (T.H. p. 166). If one takes the life of Saint-Exupéry as a starting point, one easily sees that from the time he found his footing in the "métier" of aviation, it has been a permanent scene of participation, body and soul. His post of chief of the airstrip at Cap Juby constantly brought him face to face with death as he immersed his life in the problems of his air company by trying against all odds to rescue pilots who had fallen into the hands of hostile Moors. Needless to go into the details of how Saint-Exupéry discharged his onerous duties with a rare combination of diplomacy and bravery - bravery which often looked like foolhardiness - as such accounts are given with minute details in his biographies.[8] Suffice it to note that the one year spent in Cap Juby was a brilliant testimony of his

extraordinary life of participation and generosity. While in Argentina as director of "Aeroposta Argentina", one witnesses the same total, unreserved involvement with the fate of his company and of his fellow pilots. For example, to the astonishment of all, including some of the most dare-devil early pilots like the legendary Jean Mermoz[9], his low-flying feats over the Andes in search of his friend, Guillaumet, seemed to Antoine himself as routine. But apart from these practical illustrations of the importance of participation in the system of things as conceived by Saint-Exupéry, there is a deep-seated, almost congenital, persuasion in Saint-Exupéry regarding the necessity for Man to participate in his environment. He expresses his persuasion thus in Pilote de guerre:

> Le métier de témoin m'a toujours fait horreur. Que suis - je, si je ne participe pas? J'ai besoin, pour être, de participer. 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 (P.G. p. 354).

In fact some of the most painful experiences Saint-Exupéry endured personally in his lifetime were on moments when he found himself deprived of the opportunity to participate, or as he liked to put it at times, to commune with his fellow human beings. One such experience was when, as a result of his expressed support for his former chief in the "Société d'Aviation Latécoère", Didier Daurat, he was laid off by the newly formed Air France which had absorbed the Latécoère company and whose directors were hostile to the energetic Mr. Daurat. Life really became unbearable for Saint-Exupéry at that time as he no longer could participate in the rigours of the job he loved so much, as he and some of his former friends on the Toulouse - Casablanca - Dakar line like Vacher, Mermoz, Estienne, Guillaumet and Lesorivain became estranged. One other occasion was during the second world war. To appreciate the predicament of Saint-Exupéry when his participation in the war was refused first on the basis of age (at 43 it was judged that he was too old for the fast American reconnaissance planes), and secondly by the active intervention of the Gaullists who wrongly accused him of being Petainist simply because he was not Gaullist, one only has to remind oneself of all the efforts he deployed in solliciting his friends to intervene with the

war chiefs on his behalf. If Saint-Exupéry insisted on active participation against all friendly advice to confine himself to less perilous activities, it was because he deeply believed that to be able to express one's ideas on any issue, one had to participate in it and get involved in its development. This may sound rather simplistic to many people, more so since in our time active participation in any endeavour is no criterion for criticism. But to Saint-Exupéry, participation was vital, not only to live, but also in order to acquire the right to speak. Perhaps one incident in his early life, illustrates this conviction better. In 1917, Saint-Exupéry entered the naval school to prepare for sea life. In 1919, he failed to qualify, and one of the main factors for his failure was this: He was given for French composition this topic, "Impressions d'un soldat revenant de la guerre". On the answer sheet provided to the candidate de Saint-Exupéry, one found only the following words:

> Je n'ai pas été à la guerre, donc je n'entends point en parler au chiqué [10]

That is the true picture of the same Saint-Exupéry who in later life would still insist that to write one has to live first and write as a consequence of living. He sees this as the only way

a writer can reasonably expect his words to be taken seriously on their face value, as Jean - Claude Brisville has rightly pointed out:

> La satisfaction d'être cru sur parole qui hante tous les écrivains, combien sont prêts à l'acheter au péril de leur vie. Celle de Saint-Exupéry, exposée tant de fois et donnée à la fin, nous garantit la vérité de l'homme.

With Saint-Exupéry, there is no game with ideas:

> Je ne peux pas considérer les idées comme des balles de tennis ou une monnaie d'échanges mondains. Je n'ai aucune qualité mondaine. On ne joue pas à penser (L.J. p. 44).

His astonishing disponibility at all times has meant that each word he writes assumes great importance to us as none is just thrown down on paper to impress the reader. Is it too much to say of a writer like Saint-Exupéry that each word of his is written with his very blood? Saint-Exupéry always gave himself totally and without any hope of recompense. He was like that. Faced with such glaring examples of participation, the least we can say is that a Saint-Exupéryan man is he who does not spare himself, who gets fully committed to the cause he believes in, in a word he is a person who considers interpersonal relationship as a sine qua non for existence.

It has been mentioned that there are bonds of love uniting people engaged in the same efforts with a view to attaining the same goals. So, these bonds that make one man essential to others and eliminate what Sartre describes in La Neausée as the feeling of being "de trop", in other words, these bonds generated by a sense of responsibility and of generosity in participating are the privileged results of what has become a key word in the works of Saint-Exupéry: "métier". We are going to see now the importance of vocation in forging men and in establishing bonds among them.

As we have already seen, Saint-Exupéry's belief is that writing should only come as a consequence of living: "Avant d'écrire, il faut vivre" (l.J. p. 17). As his later life showed, since he subjected most of his writing to his personal life as shaped by his occupation, in that short sentence Saint-Exupéry has propounded his literary theory. As we have recalled earlier, in youth while preparing for the navy, Saint-Exupéry had failed to qualify by his refusal to write on a subject of which he did not have the benefit of lived experience. But if he failed to qualify for the navy, that failure threw him inevitably to the career of his life: aviation. It is needless to debate on the question of

whether in discussing Saint-Exupéry, one should lay emphasis on Saint-Exupéry the aviator or Saint-Exupéry the writer. No doubt, it is as a writer that we know Antoine de Saint-Exupéry today; but it is highly probable, and in fact we have strong reasons to believe, that without aviation we might not have the writer as we know him today. This is not so strange; might one not say the same thing of Joseph Conrad and the sea? There are such people who draw their clear vision of life from their daily occupations. Not that they seek the cover of a career to talk shop; they simply need an activity, a privileged human activity, which puts them in direct contact with the human situation and, allowing them the privilege of the insider, it also allows them to talk with their fellow human beings with more conviction and persuasion. One cannot look at the human condition from all angles. One needs a particular angle to look better at the human condition; one needs to be particular in order to be general. Indeed, if one looks closely from his particular angle, then one's observations are valid for all human angles, since the human condition and aspirations, without the distortions of language and false reasoning, are basically same.[12] The need for the vantage point and the power it confers on us to talk to fellow human

beings and the right it gives us to demand that we be taken seriously is basically the message we have in all of Saint-Exupéry's books, especially Vol de nuit and Terre des hommes.

> 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, ou 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, mêle l'homme à tous les vieux problèmes (T.H. p. 139).

This is the importance of occupation, "métier". We cannot seize life from nowhere and claim to understand it. We have to live to understand life, and living means being actively engaged in doing something, in practising an occupation. Taking Saint-Exupéry's life as an example, we can affirm that all the time he spent working with the tile manufacturing company and the Saurer lorry company was the "temps mort" of his life. His real existence as a man started in 1926 when he joined the Latécoère air line. Similarly, whatever Guillaumet or Mermoz were before they found their vantage point in aviation is of very little consequence, since it is their career in

aviation that put them in contact with earthly challenges and revealed them as virile, heroic men.

Apart from offering a unique vantage point on life, a vocation roots man, orientates him by linking him to other people. He is salvaged from the aimless roving of the flotsam and the jetsam and is securely anchored in the community of other people of like interests and concerns. He belongs to that group, bonded to its members by indestructible bonds painfully acquired and strengthened by shared struggles, victories and failures. This group becomes one's cherished family. And indeed, it was in this light that Saint-Exupéry himself considered his fellow workers in Latécoère and later his pilot colleagues in the group 2/33 of the military reconnaissance wing during the second world war:

> Je rentre chez moi. Le group 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! (P.G. p. 353).

The topicality and practicability of Saint-Exupéry's thought on the importance of a vocation is that in our modern societies, trade union organisations afford workers the unique privilege

of finding security and protection in an otherwise merciless and unsympathetic world of speculations and recession. It is the bonds that unite members of the same profession that afford them an openness of mind towards one another, renders concret in them what are otherwise hazy theories of fraternity and equality. We must repeat, for the purpose of emphasis, that for a Saint-Exupéryan man, the importance of any community living derives from the possibilities it affords its members for extending their spiritual frontiers, and not at all from the material benefits the members can obtain from it. Viewed in this perspective, for example, such community living can help us understnad notions such as equality and fraternity better. As Saint-Exupéry remarks, for instance, we cannot be brothers or equals just like that out of context. We can only be brothers or equals based on a common identity, "une commune mesure":

> Car on ne peut être égal qu'en quelque chose. Le soldat et le capitaine sont égaux en la nation. L'égalité n'est plus qu'un mot vide de sens s'il n'est rien en quoi nouer cette égalité (P.G. p. 374).

It is precisely this fraternizing and egalitarian function that finally gives guilds their warmth and humanity.

We shall conclude this chapter with what seems to us its logical end: Saint-Exupéry's passionate plea for tolerance and accommodation of divergencies. At first it might seem strange that a person who has strong and clear views on such a wide variety of subjects could as well figure prominently as one of the best known personalities of modern literature not only to tolerate divergent views but to recognize them as healthy for the growth of mankind. Saint-Exupéry recognized that divergencies are healthy individual manifestations which make for unity in Man:

> En l'Homme se retrouvent de même, les Français de France et les Norvégiens de Norvège. L'Homme les noue dans son unité en même temps qu'il exalte sans se contredire leurs coutumes particulières. L'arbre aussi s'exprime par des branches qui ne ressemblent pas aux racines. Si donc, là-bas, on écrit des contes sur la neige, si l'on cultive des tulipes en Hollande, si l'on improvise des flamencos en Espagne, nous en sommes tous enrichis en l'Homme (P.G. p. 372).

Biographers of Saint-Exupéry have, however, found a field day in recounting several incidents in which Saint-Exupéry the man had some uncompromising arguments with his interlocutors. We have a very revealing instance of this in Saint-Exupéry's

letter to Renée de Saussine in which he excuses himself for his violent action in the course of their discussion on Pirandello's dramatic art, during which Renée de Saussine had compared Pirandello with Ibsen. This is how Saint-Exupéry himself explains his attitude:

> On ne joue pas à penser. Alors si la conversation tombe par hasard sur un sujet qui me tient à coeur je deviens intolérant et ridicule et Eusebio dit avec raison que l'on ne peut pas discuter avec moi (L.J. p. 48).

But if Saint-Exupéry became intolerant at such moments, he was always the first, and unsolicited at that, to offer apologies for such behaviour. His letter to his friend, Léon Werth, entitled Lettre à un otage however shows us that what Saint-Exupéry wanted most of all, even in his moments of anger, was not really to convince and win other people to his point of view, but rather a desire to be understood, after which he would welcome you as you were. It is this quality in Léon Werth which made him so dear to Saint-Exupéry:

> Je puis entrer chez toi sans m'habiller d'un uniforme, sans me soumettre à la récitation d'un Coran, sans renoncer à quoi que ce soit de ma patrie intérieure. Auprès de toi je n'ai pas à me disculper, je n'ai pas à plaider, je n'ai pas à prouver ... (L.O. p. 404).

Here, as it is always with Saint-Exupéry, what matters is Man who is above the artificial divisions created by our human imperfections of language and reasoning. So what Saint-Exupéry regards as intolerance is the refusal to accept that differences should exist, the totalitarin tendency which holds any original opinion suspect and any lively, enquiring mind as a social plague. He is therefore definitely against any system or any personal idiosyncracy that favours the creation of radical, artificial uniformity. He affirms:

> Il nous semble, à nous, bien au contraire, que notre ascension n'est pas achevée, que la vérité de demain se nourrit de l'erreur d'hier, et que les contradictions à surmonter sont le terreau même de notre croissance. Nous reconnaissons comme nôtres ceux mêmes qui diffèrent de nous (L.O. p. 403).

And it was precisely because of the intolerance of the Gaullists that Saint-Exupéry fell out with them during the second world war, for as he says, Guallism was simply fascism, and "un fascisme sans doctrine".[13] Gaullism, with its conviction of having a monopoly of good intentions for France was clearly founded on the very premise which would make it revolting to Saint-Exupéry. We find this explanation of his aversion to Gaullism more plausible and more consistent with his advocacy for tolerance than what others see as personality clash

between Saint-Exupéry and hard-core Gaullists. For these words, again in Lettre à un otage, sum up his irrevocable conviction in the relativism of human wisdom and knowledge and the necessity for broadmindedness and tolerance:

> Aucun d'entre nous ne détient le monopole de la pureté d'intention. Je puis combattre, au nom de ma route, telle route qu'un autre a choisie. Je puis critiquer les démarches de sa raison. Les démarches de la raison sont incertaines. Mais je dois respecter cet homme, sur le plan de l'Esprit, s'il peine vers la même étoile (L.O. p. 403).

For purposes of social harmony and progress, tolerance is certainly indispensable. It is therefore as one of the imperative precepts for creating a well integrated personality, and as a vital quality of civilized Man that Saint-Exupéry recommends it to us. With such attributes, Man is definitely socially secure. We shall now consider action as a philosophy geared towards guaranteeing Man's enternity.

CHAPTER III

THE WORTHY COURSE

We have seen in the first chapter that at the origin of Saint-Exupéry's anguish has been the problem of death. His fear of death is not really based on the physical agony of death, or the prospects of the unknown yonder; but rather it is based on the fact that death could make a clean sweep of a man's existence, erasing all traces he might have imprinted on the sands of time. Whereas some others like Paul Claudel or Georges Bernanos might find a solution to this problem in God through christianity, Saint-Exupéry found his solution through the resources of Man in action. For only action, he believes, makes living worthwhile and death tolerable:

> 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 (T.H. p. 256).

In chapter II, we have considered the consequences of action and their effectiveness in establishing Man securely within a social framework. Action in that context serves to give

"un sens à la vie" by enriching it with human bonds and responsibilities. But action also has the added advantage of giving "un sens à la mort" by ensuring the perpetuity of the individual in the things for which he has exchanged himself. Action in this case is creative and preservative. In this chapter we will concentrate on Saint-Exupéry's philosophy of action. By analyzing the dynamics of action we will show how progressively the philosophy of action in Saint-Exupéry's works evolves from primarily heroic action or agitation in his early writings, Courrier sud and Vol de nuit, to a predominantly humanised, constructive and preservative action from Terre des hommes through Pilote de guerre to Citadelle. We have seen this as an evolutionary trend in a young writer towards maturity because action in Courrier sud, for example, seems to us vague as to its goal; it is action rather for the thrill and lyricism of it, and because one is young and has good, robust muscles and because one just hates sedentary life. This is the notion of action carried over in the form of a cult of action in Vol de nuit, except that here it is rather more directed and channelled, for Rivière continuously seeks to justify it. It is from Terre des hommes that we see action given its all-encompassing humanistic dimensions and

culminating in Saint-Exupéry's ultimate search for the permanence of Man in the idea of exchange, "l'échange". This directional movement to attain eternity through Man's sustained efforts in action is what we intend to advance in this chapter as the worthy course to take by a Saint-Exupéryan Man, this is the only course available to take in order to escape the arbitrary and find fulfilment in existence. We shall conclude the chapter by considering whether or not to our mind Saint-Exupéry has succeeded in creating an integral man, a man who, in the words of R - M. Albérès, he has rescued from the "stérilité cosmique"[1] which initially jolts him out of slumber and opens new vistas on the realities of human destiny.

It is evident that Saint-Exupéry is an action writer, and this in two ways: firstly his personal life shows him as a writer who immersed the whole of himself in action both in civil aviation at the dangerous period of pioneer aviation, and as a reconnaissance pilot during the second world war. Secondly, his books, Courrier sud, Vol de nuit, Terre des hommes and Pilote de guerre which are accounts of his experiences, whether in the novel form as in the first two, or as "récits" in the last two, are an eloquent testimony of the fact that Saint-Exupéry's is a literature of action. The other two books,

Le petit prince and the posthumous Citadelle are very much action works, though in a rather less obvious sense. In this regard, therefore, it is common to see his humanism described as a humanism of action.[2] This brand of humanism, or the literary expression of it, conforms to the general literary current of the period between the two world wars. In this wise, one can reasonably classify in the same category as Saint-Exupéry, such writers as Malraux, Drieu La Rochelle and Montherlant, all of them belonging to the same generation "agitée par l'inquiétude et sollicitée par un besoin de grandeur et d'action".[3] But even though the mere fact of action is the underlying common factor among these writers, it can easily be shown however that on the very basis of action, Saint-Exupéry still differs from them all. Action in Saint-Exupéry is clearly much more than merely engaging in this or that adventure in order to fill a vacuum created by an unidentified, imprecise "mal du siècle". It is in fact, as Pierre-Henri Simon puts it in contrasting Saint-Exupéry's notion of action with that of Malraux, "beaucoup plus méthodique et rationnelle [...]; elle accepte des règles, elle choisit ses fins. [...] l'homme d'action ... est un réalisateur, un bâtisseur, un faiseur de

lois"[5]. It is also important to note that in Saint-Exupéry the word action is often interchangeable with "métier" or "oeuvre".

In a letter to his mother in 1925 from Montluçon, Saint-Exupéry made two statements which we intend to take as a realistic self-appraisal of the author, and which can be taken to form the basis of a clear understanding of his notion of action. One of these statements is:

> Je suis resté pour la famille un être superficiel, bavard et jouisseur, moi qui ne cherche même dans le plaisir que quelque chose à apprendre et ne peux souffrir les frelons des boîtes de nuit, moi qui n'ouvre presque plus jamais la bouche parce que les conversations inutiles m'ennuient (L.M. p. 116).

So even if in pleasure Saint-Exupéry looks for lessons, how much more so in action, in adventure? We have already noted that if Saint-Exupéry accepts adventure at all, it is as a privileged way of apprehending the human situation. His, therefore, cannot be gratuitious action, and where it seems to be so, it should be regarded as a stage in the evolution of his thoughts. Here is the second statement:

> Ca m'est si égal un type bon si ce n'est qu'un attendrissement facile. Il faut me chercher tel que je suis dans ce que j'écris et qui est le résultat scrupuleux et réfléchi de ce

> que je pense et vois. Alors dans la tranquillité de ma chambre ou d'un bistro, je peux me mettre bien face à face avec moi-même et éviter toute formule, truquage littéraire et m'exprimer avec effort. Je me sens alors honnête et consciencieux (L.M. pp. 116-7).

Saint-Exupéry, in fact, paid with his own blood so that we might take him for his word, and it is only by so doing that we can fully appreciate the honesty and the generosity of the writer. In 1926, there appeared in the literary review magazine, "Le navire d'argent" directed by Adrienne Monnier, an abridged short story written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The story was originally entitled "L'Evasion de Jacques Bernis" , but when lack of space obliged Jean Prévost to abridge it for the magazine, the story carried the title "L'Aviateur" . This is all that has survived of the original story which Saint-Exupéry later, in his monastic stay in Cap Juby in 1927[5] developed into his first published book Courrier sud. This book takes up the early short story and develops it mainly in two ways: the simple pilot, simply referred to as Bernis the pilot, becomes Jacques Bernis an airline pilot on the France - South America line. This means he has a career and team mates, his "camarades" . The second dimension is the giving of form and active force to what the young pilot is trying to escape

from: life with its customs, conventions and all that the pilot considers as unstable and provisoire :

> Ces coutumes, ces conventions, ces lois, tout ce dont tu ne sens pas la nécessité, tout ce dont tu t'es évadé ... (C.S. p. 33).

All this then, in the novel, takes the form and the psychology of the young lady Geneviève. In the short story the emphasis is clearly on the physical sensation of liberation procured by the action of flying, the feeling of force and strength as the pilot operates the plane's commands: "Le pilote, d'un mouvement de son poignet, déchaîne out retient l'orage".[6] When the pilot starts the plane and caresses the fuselage with the back of his fingers and nothing vibrates, he experiences manifest contentment: "Il jouit de cette énergie si condersée" (Un sens p. 28). In the story, one sees the exaltation of sheer physical sensations in action, and expressions such as "Bernis se saoule" or "ivresse" felt in the force deployed, express this feeling. Basically then, the feeling one gets in reading this story as well as the novel is that action serves only as a refusal of the sedentary life which Saint-Exupéry likes to characterize by life in dancing halls:

> Ils vivent leur nuit dans cette enceinte comme des goujons dans un aquarium, tournent un madrigal, dansent, reviennent boire (Un sens p. 22).

Clearly Saint-Exupéry abhors this kind of life and we are going to see this abhorence become Rivière's leitmotiv in Vol de nuit. But though the refusal of this mediocre life is vehement in Courrier sud, it does not spell out what the ultimate achievement envisaged for action is. This state of affairs is also found in the short story, but it is definitely clearer in the novel which shows the hero Jacques Bernis asking what he is really looking for:

> Mais dis-moi donc ce que je cherche et pourquoi contre ma fenêtre, appuyé à la ville de mes amis, de mes désirs, de mes souvenirs, je désespère? Pourquoi, pour la première fois, je ne découvre pas de source et me sens si loin du trésor? Quelle est cette promesse obscure que l'on m'a faite et qu'un dieu obscur ne tient pas? (C.S. p. 18).

And Bernis himself answers that he has found out:

> J'ai retrouvé la source. T'en souviens tu? C'est Geneviève (C.S. p. 18).

As it turns out however, Genvième is not what Bernis is looking for. She is precisely a representation of what he is running away from.

But when he sets out after the final break between the two of them and carries his mail, defying bad weather and darkness, we still do not see the conviction, the vital position he has taken, that should egg him on. His action then lacks vision, it lacks the substance that should be its guiding principle to self-accomplishment. Action here is negative in the sense that it seeks primarily to flee from, and not to join and enrich, humanity on its onward march. Jacques Bernis has, in fact, used this magnificent achievement of technology which is the airplane for purposes which Saint-Exupéry will later on in Terre des hommes repudiate and warn us against: "L'avion n'est pas un but: c'est un outil. Un outil comme la charrue", (T.H. p. 168). With the airplane Man has found a new, privileged way of coming into contact with human problems, and in this way he rejoins "d'emblée, de plain - pied, la noblesse du montagnard" (T.H. p. 168) or the gardener, or the navigator or the poet. Clearly the emphasis is on joining humanity and not escaping. As Jacques Bernis takes off for the last time, the narrator says:

> Ou vas-tu maintenant chercher le
> trésor, plongeur des Indes qui touches
> les perles, mais ne sais pas les
> ramener au jour? Ce désert sur
> lequel je marche, moi qui suis retenu,

> comme un plomb, au sol je n'y saurais
> rien découvrir. Mais il n'est pour toi,
> magicien, qu'un voile de sable,
> qu'une apparence ... (C.S. p. 68).

His Simoun crashes and Jacques Bernis dies. His friend, the narrator, remembers his confession:

> 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 ... (C.S. p. 76).

Jacques Bernis dies but the mail is delivered intact at Dakar. What does this show? All this clearly means a personal, tragic failure for the hero but shows also the author's conviction in the grandeur of action, action whose effectiveness and scope have escaped Bernis and which we are yet to see in allits diversity as we analyze subsequent books.

In Vol de nuit the cult of action takes on an aspect of what we have already referred to as a reign of terror. This is chiefly because in this book the author has introduced the rôle of a leader in the person of Rivière. In Vol de nuit, then in Pilote de guerre and Citadelle, we are going to see increasingly the rôle of a leader as a co-ordinator of action who directs it and gives it meaning and importance. In Pilote de guerre it is commandant Alias, and in Citadelle,

the Gold whose rôle is to command and direct people to ways leading to their accomplishment. The story in Vol de nuit is quite simple. Three planes are expected to bring in mail to Buenos Aires from Chile, Patagonia and Paraguay respectively. The mail collected will then be forwarded to Europe in another plane destined for that. All this operation is to be carried out in a night of a very destructive cyclone and at a time when the government of France and the general public are very critical of night flights because of the dangers involved. Rivière, the director of airline operations, is determined to see to the success of night flights and make them acceptable. He is therefore determined to subject all other considerations to achieving this objective. By being very severe, even ruthless, with his pilots, he hopes to urge them to overcome their fear of the unknown and thus make them accomplish night flights as ordinary routine duty. Of the three awaited planes, only two arrive. The third perishes with its pilot, Fabien. In spite of this catastrophe, the undaunted Rivière orders the departure of the Europe - bound plane the same night. That is the main story. But there is one aspect of the story which is clearly a carry-over from the story in Courrier sud, and which illustrates Saint-Exupéry's concern for the opposition between demands of action and the false attractions of

sedentary life. In Courrier sud, the sedentary pull is represented by Geneviève, even though in this book, this opposition is not very clearly articulated. In Vol de nuit, it is Fabien's wife who represents the bliss of home life and presents a formidable challenge to Rivière's all-in-the-name-of-action crusade. The outcome of this confrontation however shows clearly Saint-Exupéry's preference for action over sedentary happiness, as Rivière exclaims:

> Aimer, aimer seulement, quelle impasse!
> (V.N. p. 121).

At the moment Fabien's wife withdraws from the scene, our interest is naturally focused on Rivière's philosophy of action. It is by action alone that Man can achieve greatness, so Rivière believes. Action is considered the privileged instrument for forging and fashioning Man. Rivière therefore uses all methods, which we may consider inhuman, to disband fear from his pilots and make them believe unequivocably in the supremacy of their work. Personal interests are cruelly subjected to the greater concern for the flight. When the pilot, Fabien disappears, his wife comes to confront Rivière in the name of her love for her husband. Rivière acknowledges the legitimacy of her claim but considers that action will

necessarily hurt private personal interests, and yet it should not be deferred because of them, since it alone is capable of saving Man by leading him to greater universal accomplishments that transcend the narrow selfish ends. Rivière then is very strict with his men, but he explains:

> Il faut les pousser vers une vie
> forte qui entraîne des souffrances et
> des joies, mais qui seule compte
> (V.N. p. 92).

In fact, with the indomitable will of Rivère, the cult of the "métier" catches on and Rivière's workers, from the pilots to the labourers forsake all other personal interests for the sake of the cult:

> Grâce à Rivière, sur quinze mille
> kilomètres, le culte du courrier
> primait tout (V.N. p. 92).

Rivière's rôle here is comparable with that of Jules Romain's doctor Knock[7] who terrorises the whole of Saint-Maurice into accepting the cult of medicine, and watches with grave satisfaction from his window as lamps are lit at night in numerous houses in strict observance of his prescriptions.

But though in Vol de nuit again we see action essentially as projecting Man to the exterior, keeping him engaged with something else apart from himself, yet action

still lacks that depth which should make it satisfy the yearnings of a Saint-Exupéryan man. Rivière himself, while devoted to fashioning his men for action, continues to wonder precisely in the name of what transcendental value he is sacrificing individual happiness. The death of a man is considered as "un accident de travail", (Un sens p. 28). The question which Rivière has asked himself - "L'action, même celle de construire un pont, brise des bonheurs; Rivière ne pouvait plus ne pas se demander 'au nom de quoi?'" - is not really answered even given the fact that natural death will destroy individual happiness anyway. Rivière, however, has moved farther from the position of Jacques Bernis in Courrier sud, since in his "action titanesque"[7] he envisages the construction of something eternal which could survive Man thus prolonging him, just like the king of the Incas of Peru, whom he invokes, who forced his subjects to construct everlasting temples for their sun god.

Terre des hommes seems to us the book which, coming at a more mature age than the first two, really gives the breakthrough for Saint-Exupéry's quest. Coming after Courrier sud and Vol de nuit it naturally exalts action but also stresses the importance of conscience, as Serge Losic rightly observes:

> Par l'action on façonne l'homme, nous dit Vol de nuit. Terre des hommes ajoute que par l'action on découvre la vraie essence de l'homme. La conscience de l'homme y est examinée et c'est elle qui, selon nous joue le rôle de héros dans ce livre.

Terre des hommes is a collection of eight accounts derived from Saint-Exupéry's various experiences both in aviation and in his stint in journalism. The first story, for example, entitled "La ligne" deals with Saint-Exupéry's early experiences in the "Société Latécoère", the joys and fears in this life of adventure which early aviation really was. But while faithfully recounting the rigours of the profession, one sees already from this first story the care taken by the author to reach out beyond the fact of mere action, action which becomes more clearly a means to an end, and not an end in itself. From this book, we see clearly that dangerous action is as privileged a means as other less dangerous activities:

> 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, mêle l'homme à tous les vieux problèmes. (.T.H. p. 139).

How far we are now from the lyricism of action in Courrier sud or from the heroic attitude that disdains ordinary human concerns like love and friendship as in Vol de nuit when we read these lines in Terre des hommes:

> Mais au coeur de danger on conserve
> des soucis d'homme, et j'avais soif,
> et j'avais faim. Si nous retrouvions
> Cisneros, nous poursuivrions le voyage,
> une fois achevé le plein d'essence,
> et atterririons à Casablanca, dans
> la fraîcheur du petit jour. Fini
> le travail! Nêri et moi descendrions
> en ville. On trouve, à l'aube, de
> petits bistrots qui s'ouvrent déja ...
> Néri et moi, nous nous attablerions,
> bien en sécurité, et riant de la
> nuit passée, devant les croissants
> chauds et le café au lait
> (T.H. p. 151).

We have quoted that piece at length to show how humanised action has become, even dangerous action, which we have seen referred to simply as "travail". The pilot here has obviously come down to earth, considering his occupation as any other occupation requiring a rest and the simple, but vital, things of life such as food and shelter. In all, these stories portray Saint-Exupéry's wide-ranging views on different topics such as life, men, the meaning of destiny and so forth. Underlying all these stories is the exaltation of effort. For us, however, what is of paramount interest in this book is the evolutionary

landmark it creates by definitely humanizing action, giving the participants a conscience of their own to evaluate situations and their rôles. By comparing Vol de nuit with Terre des hommes, one might be tempted to see a contradiction. For example, we have seen that in Terre des hommes, Saint-Exupéry holds high individual human life and admonishes all levity with regard to human life. He makes it clear in the book that adventure for its own sake is simply "signe de pauvreté" or at best sign of "excès de jeunesse" (T.H. p. 167). Serge Losic, for example, while accepting the high premium Saint-Exupéry places on life in Terre des hommes, asks:

> Mais comment réconcilier cet idéal de Terre des hommes avec celui de Rivière qui sacrifie ses hommes au nom de leur propre grandeur?[9]

We shall hasten to say that we believe Rivière's views are indeed Saint-Exupéry's own at a younger stage in his career; and as such we do not see any contradiction in comparing the two books. Rather we believe that this is a significant aspect of his evolution. Saint-Exupéry has progressively moved from the stance of allowing all in the name of action, to a more realistically humane position, not without some hesitations however, as we shall see in the case of Citadelle.

But it is in the vein of the supremacy of human life that we see his main concern in Vol de nuit and in what we may consider his last message to us "Lettre au général 'X'". In the latter work he writes:

> Et la vie de l'esprit commence là où un être "un" est conçu au-dessus des matériaux qui le composent (Un sens p. 226).

What is even more significant in Terre des hommes as an evolutionary point of interest is that here the slave Bark, who before his enslavement was a devoted shepherd, has the same weight in that capacity as the old gardener who, in spite of his rhumatism, would like to "bêcher dans la terre" (T.H. p. 167) and as Guillaumet - the heroic pilot. Saint-Exupéry says of the gardener:

> Il était lié d'amour à toutes les terres et à tous les arbres de la terre. C'était lui le généreux, le prodigue, le grand seigneur C'était lui, comme Guillaumet, l'homme courageux, quand il luttait au nom de sa Création, contre la mort (T.H. p. 167).

Here action is no longer tantamount to heroism, a situation that would threaten, in the words of Pierre-Henri Simon, "la dignité de l'infirme",[10] but could conveniently be called "métier" thus covering any creative and preserving activity.

Here then we are really in a position to appreciate Saint-Exupéry's generosity, and as R. - M. Albérès has rightly observed, it is pleasing to see "dans Terre des hommes un homme humblement et durement se dépasser"[11] without any other external constraint, but relying solely on his conscience and human dignity. We believe, however, that undoubtedly there have been lots of hesitations and oscillations in the thoughts of Saint-Exupéry, and that the attraction of heroic action still remains to be perceived in his later works, but from Terre des hommes through Pilote de guerre and Citadelle emphasis has clearly shifted to creation, participation and sacrifice in more humane activities. His distrust of Man's natural penchant to easy life has however continued to urge him as to the necessity of applying external pressure on some people in order to pull them out of lethargy. It is for this reason, we believe, that he maintains the rôle of a leader in Citadelle to be played by the Berber king. In any case, the ultimate significance of action or creative activity is that it helps Man to exchange his perishable self for something more lasting, something eternal. This is the all-important notion of exchange:

> Civilisé d'abord l'artisan dont je parle et qui se recrée dans l'objet, et en revanche, éternel, ne craignant plus de mourir. Civilisé aussi celui - là qui combat et s'échange contre l'empire. Mais cet autre s'enveloppe sans bénéfice du luxe acheté chez les marchands, même s'il ne nourrit son oeil que de perfection, si d'abord il n'a rien créé. [...]. Je n'aime pas les sédentaires du coeur. Ceux - là qui n'échangent rien ne deviennent rien (Cit. pp. 530 - 1).

With this notion then, the more demanding, the more time-consuming a piece of work is the more one transfers one's perishable self into it and becomes in turn permanent. It is only by so doing that the individual finds peace and happiness. But above all, this exchange is more meaningful, not so much on the level of individual creation, as it is in collective effort, in the building up of civilization. Pierre-Henri Simon defines this position thus:

> Mais surtout, ce qui dure plus que l'homme individuel, c'est ce grand ouvrage collectif qui unit une foule en peuple et rejoint les générations dans le temps: la civilisation.[12]

It is in the light of action favouring creation, and thus exchange, that we are now going to analyze Pilote de guerre and Citadelle. It was on the twenty second of May 1940 that

Captain de Saint-Exupéry undertook his reconnaissance flight over Arras. Pilote de guerre which appears to the reader, in the words of R. - M - Albérès, as "une longue méditation de contemplatif"[13] is the product of that militarily futile mission or "mission sacrifiée" (P.G. p. 271) as the author-pilot himself refers to it. When commandant Alias informs Saint-Exupéry and Duterrre that they are to undertake the mission to Arras, the commandant himself does not hide his embarrassment at the senseless mission. Logically analyzed in terms of military strategy, this mission is most senseless, and it is from the point of view of logic that Saint-Exupéry starts his contemplation. The odds are heavily against France:

> Nous opposons à l'ennemi un homme contre trois. Un avion contre dix ou vingt et depuis Dunkerque, un tank contre cent. Nous n'avons pas le loisir de méditer sur le passé. Nous assistons au présent. Le présent est tel. Aucun sacrifice, jamais, nulle part, n'est suscepitble de ralentir l'avance allemande (P.G. p. 307).

In the face of such an unequal fight, Saint-Exupéry starts his flight by asking:

> 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 (P.G. pp. 277 - 278).

To further compound matters, Saint-Exupéry leaves on this mission not only with a clear picture of the everwhelming strategic advantage the Germans had over the French, but he knows very clearly of the stranglehold the Germans had on the French forces. When missions are described as easy, he says one crew out of three comes back. But this particular mission to Arras has been described even by the taciturn commandant Alias as "bien embêtante", which is really saying that he knows Saint-Exupéry and his crew are being sent to their sure death. And Saint-Exupéry knows this just as clearly:

> Et ici, dans le bureau du commandant, la mort ne me paraît ni auguste, ni majesteuse, ni héroïque, ni déchirante. Elle n'est qu'un signe de désordre. Un effet du désordre. Le Groupe va nous perdre, comme on perd des bagages dans le tohu - bohu des correspondances de chemins de fer (P.G. p. 271).

This is the kind of mission Saint-Exupéry is going to try to accomplish over Arras. And from the meticulous dressing in preparation for the take-off, to the difficulties with frozen equipment in the plane at very high attitudes and finally to

the harassment of German attacks on the plane, Saint-Exupéry reflects on and convincingly accepts, death for the sake of France, in order to save her "communauté spirituelle". What urges him to accept death precisely is not the logic of his action, but rather the spirit of what he is doing. Saint-Exupéry has always been against rationalizing on acts. Acts alone explain themselves. They are not explained by the intelligence of men. This is of course the intuitive nature of Saint-Exupéry and later in Le Petit prince the fox will formulate this into an axiom:

> On ne voit bien qu'avec le coeur.
> L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux.
> (P.P. p. 474).

It is thus with the heart rather than with the head that Saint-Exupéry is going to assess the rightness of his participation in this suicidal war. Pilote de guerre is a sublimation, a consecration of Saint-Exupéry's conviction of the necessity of participation and sacrifice, both of which themes we have treated in the preceeding chapter. It is also, and above all, a consolidation of the notion of exchange.

The problem in Pilote de guerre can be summarised in one question, as Serge Losic has aptly done:

> Mes actes condamnés d'avance à
> l'échec ont - ils un prix?[14]

Pilote de guerre answers yes. Accepting death for the purpose of preserving civilized human values which alone can honour Man, Saint-Exupéry has in fact undergone a personal transformation. He has exchanged himself for the "communauté spirituelle" of France and of entire humanity. His acceptance of death is an act of creation, a creative act in which the operative word is sacrifice:

> Il est beau de se sacrifier; quelques-
> uns meurent pour que les autres
> soient sauvés (P.G. p. 308).

Once again Saint-Exupéry makes it clear that since Courrier sud his concern has been to move away from gratuitous heroism to purposeful creative action. Contrary to what one may like to see as heroism in Pilote de guerre, Saint-Exupéry insists that emphasis is not on heroism but on creativity through sacrifice, through the gift of oneself. The work of a war pilot here is not seen in heroic terms, but simply he is seen as performing his duty correctly: "Je fais correctement mon métier" (P.G. p. 302). In this way, the death that ensues is "une vraie mort d'homme" (T.H. p. 167) comparable with the death of the gardener or the peasant farmer.

Exchange therefore comes to represent the final stage, the ultimate value of action for the Saint-Exupéryan man. It is in exchange that the perpetuity of Man is assured, thus being salvaged from the arbitrariness and the fragility which "toute la stérilité du monde inorganique"[15] promises him. But this idea of exchange, in order to conform to the generosity of Saint-Exupéry, has to be given a sufficiently broad base for it to take in all of humanity. So to begin with, for what should we exchange ourselves? And again, creation is emphasized; but can we all create? Is Saint-Exupéry then favouring a selected segment of humanity?

The question of for what we should exchange our perishable selves is answered in a very clear way in Pilote de guerre. In Vol de nuit, Rivière maintains that his duty is to prepare men for service:"Il faut que je forge les hommes pour qu'ils servent" (V.N. p. 110). His are men who are to devote themselves to superior causes. What these superior causes are, Pilote de guerre and Citadelle will make more explicit. But Rivière the titan, the taciturn, even in Vol de nuit gives us some indications:

> La vie se contradit tant, on se
> débrouille comme on peut avec la vie ...
> Mais durer, mais créer, échanger son
> corps périssable ... (V.N. p. 106).

It becomes clear that the worthy course for Man is that which leads him to contribute effectively in his own way to the pool of human civilization. Finally, it is Man that Saint-Exupéry defends by ensuring the perpetuity of civilization. In Pilote de guerre he fights not so much to save the material things, but rather he fights for the "communauté spirituelle" beautifully exemplified by the "qualité d'une lumière":

> 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 (P.G. p. 363).

From the above quotation, it is clear that what the Saint-Exupéryan man exchanges himself for for the purpose of perpetuity is not mansions and the like, but that precisely which, being more delicate and impalpable, is surer to last longer: that collective work, as we have seen, called civilization:

> Une civilisation est un héritage de
> croyances, de coutumes et de
> connaissances, lentement acquises
> au cours des siècles, difficiles
> parfois à justifier par la logique,
> mais qui se justifient d'elles -
> mêmes, comme des chemins, s'ils
> conduisent quelque part, puisqu'elles
> ouvrent à l'homme son étendue intérieure
> (P.G. p. 314).

But an exchange based on creativity presupposes that each man is capable of creating and not only the geniuses. Saint-Exupéry has shown in Citadelle that what makes a work of art valuable is the amount of time and energy the artist has deployed to create the work, for by so doing he has virtually exchanged himself for the work; and in Saint-Exupéry these articles always have no practical value for immediate consumption, but are rather a luxury, and represent tradition, culture:

> Ainsi ont - ils travaillé toute leur vie pour un enrichissement sans usage, tout entiers échangés contre l'incorruptible broderie ... n'ayant accordé qu'une part du travail pour l'usage et toutes autres parts pour la ciselure, l'inutile qualité du métal, la perfection du dessin, la douceur de la courbe, lesquelles ne servent à rien sinon à recevoir la part échangée et qui dure plus que la chair (Cit. p. 530).

And if one person succeeds in achieving perfection, in creating a beautiful object, it is in fact to the credit of all those whose efforts did not succeed so well, for all the unsuccessful efforts are instrumental to the success of the one. So creativity is no longer confined in Saint-Exupéry to accomplishments only but extends to all the efforts genuinely

deployed in creative activity, be they successful or not. It is once again Man's continuous efforts with a noble vision of humanity in mind that matter:

> ... le geste qui réussit est fait de tous ceux qui manquent leur but, et sachant que pour se grandir l'homme doit créer et non répéter (Cit. p. 586).

So what finally comes out is surely creativity, but again more increasingly a sort of Gidian "ferveur"[16] that Saint-Exupéry insists on:

> Créer, c'est manquer peut-être ce pas dans la danse. C'est donner de travers ce coup de ciseau dans la pierre. Peu importe le destin du geste. Cet effort t'apparaît stérile à toi, aveugle, qui te tiens le nez contre, mais recule-toi. Considère de plus loin le mouvement de ce quartier de ville. Il n'est plus là qu'une grande ferveur et qu'une poussière dorée du travail. Et les gestes manqués tu ne les remarques plus. Car ce peuple penché sur l'ouvrage, bon gré mal gré, édifie ses palais ou ses citernes ou ses grands jardins suspendus. Ses oeuvres naissent comme nécessairement de l'enchantement de ses doigts. Et je te le dis, elles naissent autant de ceux-là qui manquent leurs gestes que de ceux-là qui les réussissent, car tu ne peux partager l'homme, et si tu sauves seuls les grands sculpteurs tu seras privé de grands sculpteurs (Cit. pp. 542 - 3).

The Saint-Exupéryan concept of Man is therefore neither elitist, nor more favourable to the able-bodied with robust muscles. We can all contribute to enrich humanity, and that fervour to participate uninhibited is what Saint-Exupéry invites us to cultivate as our own way to eternity.

In many ways, Citadelle is a book in which Saint-Exupéry has attempted to assemble things together. In this voluminous work which unfortunately he could not complete before his death, Saint-Exupéry has touched on all the themes which are so dear to him: participation, continuous effort, sacrifice, human links, friendship and exchange. In short, Citadelle is a résumé of Saint-Exupéry's reflexions on the human condition and of his beliefs. It is also a synthesis, an accomplishment, of action and thought. In considering Saint-Exupéry's dynamics of action, we have also seen that it is in Citadelle that action has really become simply creativity and fervour, ending with the exchange of Man's "corps périssable" for the everlasting. Through hundreds of pages, the young Berber king evokes the lessons of his deceased father on how to organise men into an empire, thus giving their daily activities "un sens". The men are going to labour and strive continuously without rest: the poets, the artisans, the soldiers, the gardeners, all are going to be

constantly proded on so that they would exchange every bit of their vitality for an empire which alone will survive them. And what is this empire? It is first of all a symbol: not the herds of cattle, the buildings or the monuments. It is the sum total of the collective efforts of a people in collaboration, which arrange these things in one specific way and not in the other - it is civilization:

> La civilisation est un bien invisible puisqu'elle porte non sur les choses mais sur les invisibles liens qui les nouent l'une à l'autre, ainsi et non autrement (Un sens p. 230).

So, the empire is essentially spiritual, well constructed and capable of defending itself against its enemies. In other words, Man is strong and resistant if only the proper values guide his life. Indeed, by directing us to those essential values Saint-Exupéry intends to erect a citadel in our hearts, which by virtue of its strength and indestructibility will enable Man look at life with assurance and optimism. This is the essence of Citadelle.

We have seen the rôle of the Saint-Exupéryan leader in Vol de nuit in the person of Rivière. Since Saint-Exupéry believes that Man can only overcome his situation by fighting first

against himself, by overcoming his natural inclination to easy life and transient comforts, his leaders, be they Rivière or the Caid, the Berber king, are invested with a rôle which appears to be a negation of Saint-Exupéry's oft chanted "Respect de l'Homme, respect de l'Homme".[17] In fact this total lack of sympathy with the corporal situation of Man is really disturbing, especially for us in an age of social welfarism, an age in which "l'homme ... est defini comme producteur et consommateur" (Un sens p. 229). Let us, however, remind ourselves of what Saint-Exupéry offers Man for his salvation:

> Il n'offre qu'un mouvement de transcendance de l'homme vers Dieu au mépris de la possession et de la jouissance statiques (Cit. p. 502).

Rivière is described in Vol de nuit as an eternal traveller, always dressed in his working clothes and pushing pleasure aside with a disdainful wave of the hand. Love? not yet for Rivière, maybe later in life when he will have time. But we know that he will never have time, for symbolically he says that the arrival of one plane means preparing for the next one. There will never be the final arrival:

> Il n'ya pas d'arrivée définitive de tous les courriers (V.N. p. 86).

For most people, even if the human condition is so disastrous with death as the crowning agony, they prefer to live their daily lives as happily as they can. Saint-Exupéry, on the other hand, sees this attitude as Man's principal enemy.

So the Caid in Citadelle is not a surprising figure. We have seen his type before in Rivière. For Saint-Exupéry, he is the lover of Man. For the rest of us opinion differs. Can we not have salvation with less individual pain? With Citadelle we have moved a considerable distance from mere heroism as in Courrier sud, to creative action and fervour. One would expect that with the realization that the world is not only made of heroes, Saint-Exupéry could afford to be a bit more sympathetic in the way most people understand this word. Citadelle refuses us this chance. A Saint-Exupéryan man has remained tense to the end. Earlier at the age of twenty five he had written to his mother:

> Je suis plutôt dur pour moi-même,
> et, j'ai bien le droit de renier
> chez les autres ce que je renie ou
> corrige en moi (L.M. p. p. 14).

He certainly remained severe, most especially with himself, to the end of his days. We also certainly admire his good intentions for Man, but we feel that if his generosity could

place the artisan and the gardener on the same pedestal as the heroic Guillaumet, he could as well soften the iron hand of his leaders of men, especially the Caid. For if the only way to sustain the superior interests of Man is to exert oneself without a moment of relaxation, there is the danger that the human will will collapse in the extreme tension. Most of us would like to attain the great heights Saint-Exupéry points to us but we would like, once in a while, to pause and gloat over what beauty the present life offers, and cast a complacent glance at the green vale below. In this regard we share R. - M. Albérès' view when he makes the following remark:

> Rivière envoyait à la mort un pilote qui avait signé un contrat d'héroïsme le roi berbère fait trancher la tête sans signature à un homme qui ne souhaite que d'aller dîner en famille. Il est certes beau que pour mener la vie aux rivages de la lumière l'homme se dépasse lui-même, comme le font l'aviateur qui tient la ligne contre l'ouragan et le manoeuvre qui dresse sur une montagne des blocs de plusieurs tonnes pour affirmer sa civilisation. Mais cette beauté n'existe que si l'acte est libre et si c'est par lui-même et non par la contrainte que l'homme se dépasse.[18]

Having made our feelings clear on this subject we must, in fairness to Saint-Exupéry, recall that his stand is purely that

of love as he understands that word. It is in this regard that we are not surprised when the severe Caid uses as his refrain these words:"Dans le silence de mon amour". He sincerely believes that he loves all his people including the miserable ones, not in their miseries, but in their latent nobility which he feels is his duty to lead them to realize. The Caid, like Saint-Exupéry himself, does not consider the individual man but fixes his vision on Man with a capital letter, whom he intends to serve. In this perspective men as individuals are cruelly subjected to the ideal which is Man. At best, men are used as ways leading to Man who is thereby deified. The deification of Man marks the end of the spiritual itinerary of Saint-Exupéry as it solves the problem of God and gives ultimate meaning to human life and our daily agitations. This issue is most appropriately treated in Citadelle and we will look at it in greater detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

AN ACT OF FAITH

The notion of God in the work of Saint-Exupéry deserves special attention since his continuous use of biblical imagery and diction may very easily be given a false interpretation. And nowhere has the use of such language in all his writings been as prominent as in Citadelle. The Berber king's meditations on his empire and his rôle as its guide hardly end without a long prayer to God or alternatively the Lord. It is in these long solitary prayers that one can easily establish the similitude in tone, imagery and diction between Saint-Exupéry's writings and the Bible. For example, at the end of this passage where the king expresses his weariness, he solicits

> Apparais-moi, Seigneur, car tout
> est dur lorsque l'on perd le goût
> de Dieu (Cit. p. 682).

At other moments, his quest for God and his interrogations of the divine are clearly evocative of the biblical influences inherited from his christian upbringing:

> Un chemin escarpé et glissant
> surplombait la mer ... Obstiné, je
> montais vers Dieu pour lui demander
> la raison des choses, et me faire

> expliquer ou conduisait l'échange
> que l'on avait prétendu m'imposer.
>
> Mais au sommet de la montagne je ne
> découvris qu'un bloc pesant de granit
> noir - lequel était Dieu (Cit. p. 683)

It is the Berber king who is talking, the king whose rôle is like that of Moses leading his people out of Egypt. Details apart, does the tone of this passage not recall very much that of the biblical account of Moses' mission on the mountain to collect God's commandments for the Jews? Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that passages abound in Citadelle in which the reader very often gets the impression that he is really reading the Bible. In fact, in writing Citadelle, Saint-Exupéry had hoped to give to his contemporaries a book comparable to the Bible,[1] a kind of new Bible which would be more readily acceptable to modern man by not restricting him to codified principles and dogmas, but taking into account our complex world of scinence and technology with its ever increasing possibilities for Man - the phenomenon which André Devaux refers to as the "immensités nouvelles d'un univers dont l'apparition a bouleversé l'échelle de notre pouvoir d'adoration".[2]

Citadelle is the book which Saint-Exupéry hoped would most appropriately redirect modern Man to what his true needs are, while at the same time speaking to him in the language of his time - a book which would arouse "un courant spirituel fort" (Un sens, p. 227). Saint-Exupéry intimately believes that modern Man's thirst is a spiritual one:

> Il n'ya qu'un problème, un seul: redécouvrir qu'il est une vie de l'esprit plus haute encore que la vie de l'intelligence, la seule qui satisfasse l'homme (Un sens, p. 226).

But even though there is undoubtedly this strong religious coloration in the works of Saint-Exupéry, especially in Citadelle, yet the notion of God, whether Saint-Exupéry refers to Him as "Dieu" or "Seigneur" is radically different from the christian one. In all the works of Saint-Exupéry, beginning from Courrier sud, there has been the unrelenting quest for the superior value, that "plus grand que soi" which will give meaning to the life of Man. There has been that constant desire and that sustained urge to rise above the personal and the ephemeral and merge into what is greater than the self. Action per se does not satisfy this craving unless it is performed in the service of this superior value, in which case it becomes a privileged means

to salvation. It is indeed only this superior value, this "commune mesure" for all men that can justify action, sacrifice and abnegation. It is in Pilote de guerre that Saint-Exupéry disoloses this reality in very clear terms in his effort to justify his acceptance of death over Arras. Christian writers such as Francois Mauriac, Marcel Jouhandeau, Julien Green, Teilhard de Chardin and Paul Claudel see and relate every phenomenon to God the creator in whom Man's life is justifiable.[3] Saint-Exupéry, on the other hand, looks to Man himself for the "depassement de soi". Having recognized that Man's true needs are spiritual, Saint-Exupéry still remains convinced that Man can suffice by himself in providing for these needs. For Saint-Exupéry, therefore, again very much unlike an atheist existentialist such as Sartre, there is a human nature. In fact, God for Saint-Exupéry is an exterior projection of the essence of Man, the quintessence of Man which serves as a beacon or as a pole of attraction to draw men continuously to itself. This quintessence of Man is what enkindles, or what should enkindle, in all men efforts to strive on, the hunger for perfection, the sustained and unrelenting desire to ascend.

In his Carnets, Saint-Exupéry gives this graphic definition of his notion of God:

> Dieu est le parfait support
> symbolique de ce qui est à la fois
> inaccessible et absolu (Carnets, p. 20)

This is clearly not the approachable father-figure of the biblical God who answers prayers and cares for the daily needs of His children. For example, when Saint-Exupéry declares, "Mais, il n'est point de jardinier pour les hommes" (T.H. p. 260), how can we fail to see this essential difference? Furthermore, with regard to his use of imagey, and we would add specifically christian imagery, Saint-Exupéry asks: "Que m'importe à moi l'imagrie sinon ce qu'elle charrie" (Carnets p. 16)? Even if Saint-Exupéry thinks of the christian God at all, it seems to us strictly as a rallying point, as a concept that he finds effective in creating his ultimate which is Man (with a capital letter). The only suitable conclusion we can arrive at is that Saint-Exupéry draws inspriation from the christian notion of God, the notion which he assimilated so well in his childhood, but that he aims at projecting Man to the level of God. Clearly, it is the symbolism inherent in the christian God that continues to attract Saint-Exupéry, and not the God Himself.

When we consider Saint-Exupéry's notion of God in this way then his oft-repeated use of the word"gangue" becomes very revealing. This is an imagery borrowed from the mining industry. A precious stone is usually encrusted in a matrix. To extract the precious stone some abrasive force is used. The imagery suggests that the essence of Man in all of us is in its martrix, and it is only through efforts, continuous struggling in whatever liberating vocation we engage that this matrix is progressively removed. This is a continuous process and none of us will attain the apogee of this essence called God or "Homme" as long as we live - hence the permanence of the struggle required of all of us. For, as Saint-Exupéry explains, what counts is the step and not the goal since only the step lasts:

> Seule compte la démarche. Car c'est elle qui dure et non le but qui n'est qu' illusion du voyageur quand il marche de crête en crête comme si le but atteint avait un sens (Cit. p. 636).

This is the reason why Saint-Exupéry hates the sedentary life of the replete bourgeois for, in his view, they do not live.

It is only when we try to understand Saint-Exupéry's ultimate as in fact being Man that his spiritual and mystical concern begins to be clear, even if his doctrine is such as would not carry most people along with him, especially because of its not infrequent ambiguities. Either because of the seduction of Biblical imagery and diction which Saint-Exupéry cannot avoid, or his deep-seated longing for the transcednental which will ultimately guarantee the permancence of Man, one continues to get the feeling, even in Citadelle, that he is inexorably attracted to the christian God-the-Father. What comes out clearly, however, is that a Saint-Exupéryan man does not need to search outside the strictly human for his salvation. The episode of the two gardeners which closes Citadelle illustrates this point clearly. The gardener who leaves their common abode continues tending to his roses, just as the one who stays at home. And in this common effort they are able to overcome spatial separation since they are both enjoined in the service to their God. The departed gardener, after reflecting over things for a long time, writes simply, "Ce matin, j'ai taillé mes rosiers ..." (Cit. p. 990). Overcome by this penetrating message, the second

gardener also writes: "Ce matin, moi aussi, j'ai taillé mes rosiers." (Cit. p. 991). And Saint-Exupéry, or rather the Berber King, concludes:

> Et je me tus, sur ma lecture, méditant sur l'essentiel qui commençait de m'apparaître mieux, car ils Te célébraient, Seigneur, se joignant en Toi, au-dessus des rosiers, sans le connaître (Cit. p. 991).

And so, although this ascensional journey may require different routes, yet there is no contradiction since the goal, which is the human ideal, remains the same for all of mankind. In fact, the last meditation of the Berber King seems to sum up Saint-Exupéry's long quest for the message he wants to leave for mankind, to show men the only God capable of uniting the whole of humanity instead of pitching some people against others:

> Seigneur, ainsi de mon ennemi bien-aimé que je ne rejoindrai qu'au-delà de moi-même. Et pour qui, car il me ressemble, il en est également ainsi. Donc je rends la justice selon ma sagesse. Il rend la justice selon la sienne. Elles paraissent contradictoires et, si elles s'affrontent, nourrissent nos guerres. Mais lui et moi, par des chemins contraires, nous suivons de nos paumes les lignes

de force du même feu. En Toi
seul, Seigneur, elles se retrouvent
[...]

Car Tu es, Seigneur, la commune
mesure de l'un et de l'autre.
Tu es le neeud essentiel d'actes
divers (Cit. pp. 992 - 3).

This last sentence - "Tu es le noeud essentiel d'actes divers" - deserves a closer attention. This God is created by the distillation of human acts since he is the essential knot of diverse acts. This essential knot cannot therefore be made by all kinds of acts but by acts which are themselves also essential. The importance of action through which these "actes divers" are accomplished need not be further dwelt upon here. We may only add that the man of no action or "le sédentaire du coeur" is proscribed in the Saint-Exupéryan system since he does not contribute to the creation of the God that will in turn save him from temporality and at the same time give him meaning for this existence.

This notion of "Dieu - Homme" seems to us the only logical culmination for the spiritualism of Saint-Exupéry. We have seen his disdain for the material, for Man is certainly not a "bétail à l'engrais" to be satisfied with

material comforts. The need for permanence and for finding a sense in life is such that only spiritual life is capable of satisfying it. But the uniqueness of Saint-Exupéry is that he has found his spiritual source, not in the supernatural, but in man himself. It is in this regard that we agree entirely with André Devaux who expresses this point of view most succintly:

> Il faut donc un Dieu, un Concept Dieu, pour que soit diffusée la lumière spirituelle nécessaire à l'élévation humaine: qu'importe si ce Dieu est créé peut-être par nous, il reste vrai dans la perspective Saint-Exupéryane d'une création des valeurs par l'homme. Ce Dieu tout relatif à l'humain demeure nécessaire, d'une nécessité surtout pédagogique et sociale, pour donner à l'homme de la divinité.4

This notion of God and the status of Man which it creates gives Man his true dignity. He is both Man and at the same time a God-head. Man creates, in effect, his God, which God in return gives Man his nobility, his "raison d'être" and his eternity. If christianity installed the respect for Man because each of us was considered created in the image of God, and therefore has become an ambassador of God as Pilote de guerre makes it amply explicit in its

concluding pages, Saint-Exupéry's humanism respects each individual man because he is the way leading to Man (God); and it is only in this way that all men could be regarded as equal and respectable. We shall have to quote all of this canticle from chapter XXVI of Pilote de guerre to illustrate this point:

> Ma civilisation, héritant de Dieu,
> a fait les hommes égaux en l'Homme.
>
> Ma civilisation, héritant de
> Dieu, a fondé le respect de
> l'homme au travers des individues.
>
> Ma civilisation, héritant de Dieu
> a fait les hommes frères en l'Homme.
>
> Ma civilisation, héritière de Dieu,
> a prêché aussi le respect de soi,
> c'est-à-dire le respect de
> l'Homme à travers soi-même-
> (P.G. pp. 374 - 375)

In fact what Saint-Exupéry has done in Pilote de guerre is first of all to appreciate the role christianity played in its time in establishing the dignity of Man through the heavenly God. But then he goes further to enlist humanity to borrow a leaf from christianity and centre its focus on Man, leaving out the God of the scriptures. Since men have become disunited over the question of God, it seems plausible to try to unite them in Man.

Action, therefore, in all its ramifications, gets its meaning and nobility once it is understood as a privileged means to reach out to God, God being we repeat, the inaccessible motive force which draws Man to grow. Such a notion of God helps even the humblest of men to contemplate the same God as the warrior, the airline pilot or the ruler of men because through the effort he is engaged in, it is the same God he is serving, just like the other men. This clearly shows that the Nietzschean superman image of the Saint-Exupéryan Man in Vol de nuit has by now given way to a man who is more humane and infinitely more lovable. Indeed, the immediate activity of any man at all is only a pointer to God, the immediate goal achieved a mere reflection of God:

> C'est alors que je compris que celui-là qui reconnaît le sourire de la statue ou la beauté du paysage ou le silence du temple, c'est Dieu qu'il trouve. Puisqu'il dépasse l'objet pour atteindre la clef, et les mots pour entendre le cantique, et la nuit et les étoiles pour éprouver l'éternité. Car Dieu d'abord est sens de ton langage et ton langage, s'il prend un sens te montre Dieu (Cit. p. 701).

In fact when Saint-Exupéry speaks of Man's empire as being within himself or when he emphasizes the supremacy of what

he calls "l'étendue spirituelle" he is referring to that vast spiritual domain within which all men who serve the cause of Man in their dedicated daily labour, such as the two gardeners we have referred to above, inevitably join one another, as in this revealing passage in Pilote de guerre.

> Dans le dominicain qui prie, il est une présence dense. Cet homme n'est jamais plus homme que quand le voilà prosterné et immobile. Dans Pasteur qui retient son souffle au-dessus de son microscope, il est une présence dense. Pasteur n'est jamais plus homme que quand il observe. Alors il progresse. Alors il se hâte. Alors il avance à pas de géant, bien qu'immobile et il découvre l'etendue (P.G. p. 314).

It is only in the spiritual expanse that all men can commune, and this expanse can only be attained through effort. This, we are convinced, is the sole "raison d'être" of action. In fact the Berber king in Citadelle finds the unifying nature of common effort the bastion of his wisdom, as his late father repeatedly taught him:

> Force - les de bâtir ensemble un tour et tu les changeras en frères. Mais si tu veux qu'ils se haïssent, jette - leur du grain (Cit. p. 541).

Here clearly grain represents material accumulation which only engenders narrow individualism, selfishness, jealousy and hatred whereas the building of a "tour" and the effort it demands forces men to collaborate and unites them spiritually, such an effort having extended their spiritual frontiers.

The symbols of temple, empire and Citadel as used in Citadelle amply emphasize the spiritual concern of a Saint-Exupéryan man. We have seen that the notion of God, His inaccessibility, serves the purpose of uniting men in their various ascensional efforts. Individual lives draw their importance and purposefulness only in this concert of efforts, for it is in this way that such lives take their bearings and situate themselves in a referable context. This passage from Citadelle makes this point clear:

> 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 (Cit. p. 708).

And a bit later, the Berber king concludes:

> Donce moi-même, hors de toutes communautés, je ne suis rien qui compte et ne saurais me satisfaire (Ibid).

United in the service of man, like rocks assembled in the construction of the citadel or cathedral or temple; or trees and rivers in their various functions in the empire, each of us finds his place, his worth and significance. For without the temple, the cathedral and the citadel or the empire, the rocks or the trees and rivers serve no purpose and consequently have no significance:

> Car les pierres sont belles en le temple. Car l'arbre est beau en le domaine. Car le fleuve est beau en l'empire. Et l'on chante le fleuve: Toi, le nourricier de nos troupeaux, toi le sang lent de nos plaines, toi le conducteur de nos navires ... (Cit. p. 709).

In this context, then, Man finds his fulfilment in life, his significance and even his eternity. Man, as we have shown above, is his own beginning and his own end, and therefore does not need any other divinity. The world's established religions such as christianity and Islam preach of God (or Allah) as the heavenly father who will reward the righteous and punish the sinful in the here-after.

This, as we have seen earlier, is clearly not Saint-Exupéry's notion of God. Man's destiny is here on Man's earth ("Terre des hommes") and he can only perceive it and be illuminated by it through his obstinate, sustained effort. In that spiritual expanse which such an effort opens up for Man there is that virile and coherent communion of men that cuts across artificial barriers of creed, race and space. United by one common creed, the cult of Man, we can die for one another or make any other sacrifice for one another and any of such gestures will have a meaning, for it will enrich the maker:

> Tu peux te sacrifier au prince si
> lui-même en Dieu se prosterne.
> Car alor ton bien te revient
> ayant changé de goût et d'essence
> (Cit. p. 711).

It is in the context of assembling all the virtues of Man and consolidating them thereby fortifying him spiritually that we see the use of the images of temple and citadel as significant. "Il faut absolument parler aux hommes", Saint-Exupéry wrote in his famous "Lettre au général 'X'". And as he believes that men are spiritually thirsty he writes Citadelle, "un livre de vie spirituelle qui donne à boire'".[5] The Citadel which Saint-Exupéry has built for Man

is an internal one, which by virtue of its strength protects the only essential part of Man, his spiritual kingdom. The Berber king refers to his citadel as one built in the desert to ward off the destructive desertic elements such as sand storms, excessive heat and cold. This is again symbolical, for Saint-Exupéry constantly refers to modern society as being dry and hostile to spiritual riches:

> Je hais mon époque de toutes
> mes forces. L'homme y meurt
> de soif (Un sens, p. 117).

In his ultimate message to Man,[6] it is no wonder then that he should try to save him from those forces which are inimical to his spiritual fulfilment, for as he puts it:

> On ne peut plus vivre de frigidaires,
> de politique, de bilans et de
> mots croisés ...
> On ne peut plus vivre sans
> poésie, Couleur ni amour
> (Un sens. p. 117).

By his teachings, he has progressively pointed the way to spiritual life which in Citadelle he has fortified and safeguarded:

> Citadelle! Je t'ai donc bâtie
> comme un navire. Je t'ai clouée,
> gréée, puis lâchée dans le temps
> qui n'est plus qu'un vent favorable.
> Navire des hommes, sans lequel
> ils manqueraient l'éternité!
> (Cit. p. 524).

The desert setting of Citadelle is symbolical for it reflects Saint-Exupéry's vision of our present society which he considers terribly bare of essential spiritual values. But his optimism for Man, as usual, continues to his last day, for although he can declare that he hates his age intensively, he never loses sight of Man's possibilities. This citadel in the spiritual desert of our time is once again, and a final testimony of, the hope he reposes in Man. Within the spiritual citadel Man is sure of his salvation, of course on the condition of constant vigilance, continuous effort, which as we have seen is a recurrent theme in Saint-Exupéry.

But the symbolism of a citadel in the desert has another significance. By contrast betwen the life in the citadel and that outside it in the open desert, one clearly sees the richness and the satisfaction obtainable within the citadel. Inside it, as the Berber king is never weary of repeating, each step taken has its significance, every gesture made is charged with meaning. Could one say the same thing of life outside the citadel? Certainly not; and we believe it was with a view to highlighting the tremendous importance of safeguarding a strong spiritual

commitment amidst a ravaged world that Saint-Exupéry thought out this symbolism. It is, as we have mentioned above, a symbolism of hope, for a Saint-Exupéryan Man cannot despair. If the world has gone berserk and hopelessly materialistic, the more tenaciously a Saint-Exupéryan man should cling to the tradition-honoured spiritual values of sacrifice, generosity, and love. It is only by so doing that he can maintain intact the nobility and the authenticity that are his and resist falling prey to the sophisticated propaganda machinery which tends to turn modern men into robots.

Very often in Citadelle one comes across the images of cathedral and temple in place of citadel. Interchanging these images, of course, reinforces the religious tone of the long poem.[7] But whether cathedral, temple or citadel, Man remains the author's central concern, and is often referred to as the "clef de voûte" of his temple. A misunderstanding of the symbolical significance of Citadelle is capable of leading quite a number of readers to wonder how Saint-Exupéry, who claims to be an ardent lover of Man, could be writing of an imaginary Berber king whose concern is flocks of sheep, art works and devotion to one's duty,

just at the time when the whole world was under the shadow of death and when in fact France was being mercilessly bombarded by the invading Germans in the heat of the second world war. We have said this is a result of the misunderstanding of the symbolical import of the book. For how else should a genuine lover of Man react in the face of such a wanton destruction of human life other than alert his generation by proposing a healthy spiritual scale of values? Citadèlle was topical then as it is now even if under different conditions. Now people are running after material things forsaking worthier values. Then they were killing one another out of racial bigotry. In both situations, Saint-Exupéry is telling them that there are more things to unite them than divide them in their common service to Man:

> Ainsi ai-je longtemps médité sur
> le sens de la paix. Elle ne vient
> que des enfants nés, que des moissons
> faites, que de la maison enfin rangée.
> Elle vient de l'éternité ou rentrent les
> choses accomplies. Paix des granges
> pleines, des brebis qui dorment, des
> linges pliés, paix de la seule
> perfection, paix de ce qui devient
> cadeau à Dieu, une fois bien fait
> (Cit. p. 516).

This is, of course, a complete opposite of what was happening at the time when destruction was the keyword. And that quotation is in essence what Citadelle proposes: a look at the other side of what people wrongly cherish these days. We have to embrace spiritual life which is very simple, but all the more satisfying.

Apart from the fact that citadel in the desert is an image of very important contrastive value as we have shown above, it is equally important to consider the spiritual significance of the desert itself to Saint-Exupéry. His first book, Courrier sud was written in the desert outpost of cap Juby. It is about an unsuccessful quest for a spiritual life by a young pilot. Citadelle, begun probably in 1936[8] and still incomplete at the time of the author's death in 1944 was written in several places including the United States of America and France. It is an accomplishment of the spiritual quest begun in Courrier sud. What one is trying to point out is that while one book was actually written in the desert, the other has a desert setting to express firstly, how Saint-Exupéry has been deeply affected by his desert experience, and secondly the

spiritual desert that surrounds him. In between these two books we have other works such as Terre des hommes and Le Petit prince which also depict a desert background. The insistence on a desert environment for spiritual explorations seems to us more than coincidental. We believe that the desert setting has an advantageous spiritual perspective for Saint-Exupéry.

Saint-Exupéry sees in the desert the image of the spiritual pilgrimage a man must undertake in order to reach contentment. The desert is harsh, merciless and very demanding. It does not yield its freshness easily. The desert oasis becomes the most refreshing water spot there is on earth for the caravan that has painstakingly crossed vast stretches of dry dusty dunes of sand. This crossing requires tremendous energy, patience, endurance, and sacrifice. But above all it requires a deep feeling of hope for the inevitable détente and happiness at the end. It is this prodigeous effort one has to deploy that renders the oasis or the water hole in the desert so precious. We have stressed all along this thesis Saint-Exupéry's misgivings for life that is enjoyed without effort, life of ready

made comforts. It is therefore natural to expect that the very local colour of his writings should reflect this insistence on self fulfilment after sustained efforts. For a Saint-Exupéryan man nothing is a gift, everything worth while can only be achieved through effort:

> Car il est bon que tu feignes
> de ne point t'exalter sur ton dieu
> en célébrant d'abord les coupoles
> dorées de la ville sainte, car ton
> dieu n'est point cadeau tout fait,
> ni provision réservée pour toi
> quelque part, mais fête et
> couronnement du cérémonial de tes
> misères (Cit. p. 930).

Here indeed Saint-Exupéry speaks a language that is very familiar with readers of the Bible. For in this quotation, the message we have is similar to that of John the apostle when he says that to prosper the grain of wheat must first of all rot in the ground, or Christ himself when he warns that those who most want to save themselves will surely perish. In Saint-Exupéry's message as well as in the biblical messages, the common theme is sacrifice and forbearance. Saint-Exupéry points a way to Man's salvation that is not an easy one. This is a way far removed from refrigerators and music - halls. It is a spiritual way

that requires abnegation, sacrifice and effort, but which seeks, above all other considerations, the exaltation of Man. Is there any other better image to convey this trying spiritual route than the desert image, with a caravan painfully but ineluctably striving to join and commune with other men beyond the vast stretches of waste land? Is there any other image that can exalt Man as much as the desert image which shows Man as master of his body and soul, creating his own destiny by his unrelenting efforts? Saint-Exupéry clearly does not think so and vicariously, through the Berber king says:

> C'est pourquoi je te dis que
> comptent pour l'homme d'abord et
> avant tout la tension des lignes de
> force dans lesquelles il trempe, et sa
> propre densité intérieure qui en
> découle, et le retentissement de ses
> pas, et l'attirance des puits et
> la dureté de la pente à gravir
> dans la montagne. Et celui - là qui
> l'a su gravir, s'il vient de
> surmonter à la force de ses
> poignets et à l'usure de ses
> genoux une aiguille de roc, tu ne
> prétendras point que son plaisir
> est de la qualité médiocre du
> plaisir de ce sédentaire qui, y
> ayant traîné un jour de repos
> sa chair molle, se vautre dans
> l'herbe sur le dôme facile
> d'une colline ronde (Cit. p. 797).

One other aspect of the desert background which incites the spiritual curiosity of Saint-Exupéry is precisely its being totally bare. The Sahara desert with its endless expanses of sand that favour limitless human view is clearly propitious to inward sight. A desert background to spiritual exploration means a privileged occasion for an uninterrupted concentration on the essence of Man, a favourable moment for self-communion. A desert setting devoid of the usual city distractions (in the pascalian sense of "divertissement") is the most suitable environment in which to focus the human mind on the essence of Man - the spiritual side of Man - for as Saint-Exupéry insists in one of the récits in Terre des hommes entitled "Dans le désert", "l'empire de l'homme est intérieur" (T.H. p. 187). The eternal sands of the desert, as Saint-Exupéry refers to them, allow for the uninterrupted exploration of this internal empire.

We shall now attempt a symbolical interpretation of Saint-Exupéry's passion for flying in order to show how the love for the plane and flight answers his most profound aspirations for Man. In this way we shall also show how he personally drew his spiritual satisfaction from this life -

long passion.

In the first chapter we saw how the plane was instrumental in bringing Saint-Exupéry in contact with the harsh realities of the earth and how it sharpened his anguish for the human condition. But in a rather paradoxical way, the plane also has served to ease this anguish by helping the author to arrive at a spiritual philosophy of love for Man. In the two chapters consecrated to the plane in Terre des hommes, Saint-Exupéry insists that the plane is a means and not an end. Like all other technological inventions, the plane should be seen as an efficient instrument in the service of Man. But what service precisely does Saint-Exupéry mean? His answer to this question is a warning:

> Quiconque lutte dans l'unique espoir de biens matériels, en effect, ne récolte rien qui vaille de vivre. Mais la machine n'est pas un but: c'est un outil. Un outil comme la charrue (T.H. p. 168).

The plane indeed is a tool like the plough, but with an essential difference. Flight is a perfect symbol of the need for human contact, which urges the necessity for men to modify their conception of human interaction, and perhaps

think up a new language to express our newly - found closeness and inter-dependence, for as Saint-Exupéry reminds us:

> Les notions de séparation, d'absence, de distance, de retour, si les mots sont demeurés les mêmes, ne contiennent plus les mêmes réalités (T.H. p. 169).

In other words, the plane has introduced into human life an entirely new dimension of spiritual adventure. It has permitted Man to surprise fellow human beings in their natural settings and in such a rapid succession of settings as to give a more coherent picture of the human condition. Man is no longer seen in isolation from other men. He is seen in a continuous sequence, struggling here against forests as in South America, there against deserts as in North Africa and elsewhere against tornadoes as in the South Pacific. The aviator, relying on the fastness of the plane, sees Man almost simultaneously in all of these places. And in all, the sole picture that comes out is not that of petty jealousies amongst men but that of the nobility of Man in his efforts to assert his supremacy over nature. In this picture Man is seen as courageous and generous, and

indeed as a god-head, even when all he does is to accomplish a simple gesture such as giving water to drink to a fellow man or extending a helping hand to another struggling man, as Saint-Exupéry testifies in the Libyan desert:

> Tu m'apparais baigné de noblesse et de bienveillance, grand Seigneur qui as le pouvoir de donner à boire. Tous mes amis, tous mes ennemis en toi marchent vers moi, et je n'ai plus un seul ennemi au monde (T.H. p. 243).

A simple gesture of giving drinking water to a fellow human being who shares no commonly recognizable ties with one, such as race, creed and tongue assumes a terribly universal import here as Saint-Exupéry and Prévost face the Bedouin. The reality of human fraternity dawns on them in that crucial moment, in that second that decides between life and death. In this moment Saint-Exupéry recognizes in the Bedouin the noble face of Man:

> 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 (T.H. p. 243).

As we have seen in discussing the necessity of vocation in Saint-Exupéry's concept of Man, he does not of course prescribe aviation as the only vocation that affords a clear spiritual understanding of Man. Saint-Exupéry believes, we repeat, that men are all noble and great. It is the opportunity to show this spiritual greatness and nobility that some men lack. And what offers this opportunity is the vocation one chooses. In chapter eight of Terre des hommes, entitled "Les Hommes", the author says:

> Tout au long de ce livre j'ai cité quelques - uns de ceux qui ont obéi ... à une vocation souveraine, qui ont choisi le désert ou la ligne, comme d'autres eussent choisi le monastère; mais j'ai trahi mon but si j'ai paru vous engager à admirer d'abord les hommes. Ce qui est admirable d'abord, c'est le terrain qui les a fondés (T.H. p. 245).

Saint-Exupéry believes that although vocations help Man to liberate his inner being, it is essential for Man also to liberate vocations from the excessive insistence on functionality, for he emphasizes:

> Certes les vocations aident l'homme à se délivrer: mais il est également nécessaire de délivrer les vocations (T.H. p. 245).

For Saint-Exupéry, aviation seems to be one of the few privileged vocations that fully satisfy this spiritual longing:

> Nuits aériennes, nuits du désert ... ce sont là des occasions rares, qui ne s'offrent pas à tous les hommes (T.H. p. 245).

Of course, as a man totally committed to aviation, one is not surprised about Saint-Exupéry's lyrical praise of the airman's opportunities. However, what one must emphasize time and again is not the danger or so much the adventure involved in flight that is attractive to Saint-Exupéry. It is the spiritual leverage aviation offers that appeals to him:

> L'aventure repose sur la richesse des liens qu'elle établit, des problèmes qu'elle pose, des créations qu'elle provoque. Il ne suffit pas pour transformer en aventure le simple jeu de pile ou face, d'engager sur lui la vie et la mort (P.G. pp. 299 - 300).

In this context then, any vocation which satisfies the spiritual yearnings of Man, and does not simply facilitate material accumulation is propitious to a Saint-Exupéryan man.

Apart from the fact that the plane itself is an incontestable evidence of human grandeur, an embodiment of human ingenuity and creativeness, we believe that Saint-Exupéry's passion for flight has another symbolical importance which is less obvious but nonetheless vital. This has to do with his notion of human apprehension and the need for spiritual upliftment.

In Pilote de guerre, Saint-Exupéry talks of knowing:

> Quand une femme me paraît belle,
> je n'ai rien à en dire. Je la vois
> sourire, tout simplement. Les
> intellectuels démontent le visage
> pour l'expliquer par les morceaux,
> mais ils ne voient plus le sourire.
>
> Connaître, ce n'est point
> démonter, ni expliquer. C'est accéder
> à la vision (P.G. p. 287).

It has often been said that Saint-Exupéry is intuitive. The reason, perhaps, is that he is an indefatiguable opponent of intellectualization and rationalization. Saint-Exupéry's view of things is usually global. It is a view which synthesizes rather than analyzes, a view which seizes things in their unity rather than in their separateness. This explains why in his concept of Man, Saint-Exupéry blots out

the vain demarcation lines which divide individuals, but instead insists on the things which unite all men, their common goals and aspirations. This unifying view of things is symbolized by the view from above, view from the cockpit or the port-hole:

> 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
> (T.H. p. 172).

It is a view of things which permits the belief in the fraternity of all men. Fabien in Vol de nuit, irredeemably separated from the earth and turned into a wandering star sees men on earth all united as one family, all bent on exchanging fraternal signals:

> Déjà pourtant s'éclairaient les
> villages, et leurs constellations se
> répondaient. Et lui aussi, du doigt,
> faisait cligner ses feux de position,
> répondait aux villages (V.N. p. 83).

And when he finally knows that he can never rejoin his brothers on earth he feels that it is the entire humanity in union that has lost grip of him:

> Pourtant, mille bras obscurs l'avaient
> lâché. On avait dénoué ses liens,
> comme ceux d'un prisonnier qu'on
> laisse marcher seul, un temps,
> parmi les fleurs (V.N. p. 125).

As we have said, the global view of things as symbolized by the view from the plane unifies all men in one big family and conforms entirely to Saint-Exupéry's belief in the unity of individuals in Man. The very fact of flying requires cooperation among men since the pilot in the sky depends on the crew for safe navigation and even landing. The plane in this aspect can be regarded as a symbol of unity.

But for Saint-Exupéry flight also symbolises physical deliverance from the unnecesary weight of material worries. Flight gives him the exalting feeling of dominating the mediocre lot of Man; and ascension into the sky to him means much more than more physical elevation: it corresponds to the spiritual desire to rise above the ephemeral concerns of men. It is this point of view that makes aviation essential to Saint-Exupéry, as he testifies in the preface he wrote to Maurice Bourdet's Grandeur et servitude de l'aviation:

> L'essentiel? Ce ne sont peut-être ni les fortes joies du métier, ni ses misères, ni le danger, mais le point de vue auquel ils élèvent. Quand maintenant, gaz réduits, moteur assoupi, le pilote glisse vers l'escale, et qu'il considère la ville où sont les misères des hommes, leurs envies, leurs rancoeurs, il se sent pur et hors d'atteinte.[9]

It is the feeling of spiritual purity, the feeling engendered by ascension and physical detachment from the earth that augments the appeal of aviation to Saint-Exupéry. Can we call this a vocation of summits like Camus' Jean - Babptiste Clamence in La Chute? The resemblance is striking. Like Clamence, Saint-Exupéry could as well have said:

> Selon moi, on ne méditait pas
> dans les caves ou les cellules des
> prisons (à moins qu'elles fussent
> situées dans une tour, avec une
> vue étendue); on y Moisissait.[10]

Indeed, one will be right to affirm that the heights with the vastness they open up afforded Saint-Exupéry a unique occasion for contemplation - hence his legendary distractions when piloting. But speaking of the symbolical significance of heights, one cannot but see in Saint-Exupéry's passion for flight a symbolical ascension of Man to attain great spiritual heights. We have seen all along this thesis Saint-Exupéry's urge for Man to ascend, through sustained efforts, to great spiritual heights. His physical craving for heights therefore seems to us a wilful, symbolical exaltation of the flesh to respond to the yearnings of the spirit.

In this chapter we have taken a close look at the notion of God in Saint-Exupéry, and we have analysed his use of the images of temple, citadel and cathedral. We have also considered the spiritual significance of the desert background that predominates in his works and we have attempted a symbolical interpretation of his passion for flight and planes generally. All these are different dimensions of the same concern: Saint-Exupéry's undying faith in Man. They are an eloquent testimony of his faith in the spiritual possibilities of Man.

CONCLUSION

In our research into the concept of Man in the works of Saint-Exupéry, we have studied all his published works, including his letters, diaries, prefaces to people's works, and his journalistic correspondences. Our aim in so doing has been to assess as comprehensively as possible his life - long concern with Man, specifically in Man's spiritual values and goals. In such an exercise we have discovered the liveliness of Saint-Exupéry's intelligence and his uncommon range of interests. We have however tried our best to avoid the temptation of delving into subjects that may carry us away from our specified area of interest. We have therefore confined ourselves to only the themes in his works that are strictly pertinent to our research interest. These themes, treated in four chapters, are arranged in such a way as to show a progressive relationship corresponding to Saint-Exupéry's quest for a spiritual Man. It is with this in mind that from the first chapter which marks an awakening to the frightening, fragile condition of Man on earth we have progressively moved to the final chapter which is the attainment of a spiritual fortress.

This done, we can now draw our own conclusions amidst what we consider as unsatisfactory premises advanced by some students of his writings in assessing his humanism and his literary worth. To begin with, his use of the vocabulary of traditional humanism in an existential context, as Daniel G. Small has pointed out, has caused him to be seen paradoxically as a traditional catholic humanist and also as an existenctialist .[1] We have shown in chapter I that Saint-Exupéry shares some common traits with the existntialists but we contend, as in fact does D.G. Small, that his conclusions, however, reflect his belief in Man's spiritual possibilities:

> The free individual creates not only his own personal essence, but spiritual ties between himself and others as well. For Saint-Exupéry, human existence is a process of becoming ... both for the individual and collectively for all men evolving toward spiritual union.[3]

Those who content themselves with calling Saint-Exupéry existentialist as Everett - Warren Knight does in her Literature considered as philosophy: The French Example seem, to us, to have missed his essential message and have

not given Citadelle the attention it deserves. As we have shown throughout the thesis, but especially in the last chapter, spiritual considerations are clearly the dominant issue in Saint-Exupéry's work.

There is another profusion of very unsatisfactory evaluation of the author, which evaluation by its very nature of being incomplete, is necessarily myopic though to a great extent willy-nilly projecting the author as great, albeit for reasons which to our mind are secondary. So it is that while reading the critics of Saint-Exupéry, one gets impression that he is being recommended to us either because of his courage, or his friendliness, or his perfect gentlemanliness. In this wise, it is very revealing to see how some of his contemporaries regarded his work as good reading material only for the youths. Jean Cau writes:

> Je conseille de mettre Saint-Exupéry (on ne m'a d'ailleurs pas attendu pour le faire) entre les mains des adolescents de quatorze ans. Il est de type même, entre Tintin et Dostoievsky, de l'auteur intermédiaire qui, s'il ne fait pas de bien ne peut pas faire de mal et fabrique des jeunes gens sages.[4]

It is this kind of superficial assessment that has been the

fate, particularly, of Le Petit prince, as witnessed by R.-M- Albérès:

> ... Le Petit prince, dont on a fait trop vite un livre pour enfants et un cadeau d'étrennes [7]5

One of the most myopic criticisms, however, seems to be that of J.-F. Revel whose assessment of the author in fact has really nothing literary in it. He writes:

> Pour comprendre la France, il faut voir que l'écrivain influent ce n'est pas Gide, ce n'est pas Breton, c'est Saint-Ex, qui a révélé aux Français qu'une ânerie verbeuse devient profonde vérité philosophique si on la fait décoller du sol pour l'élever à sept mille pieds de haut le crétinisme sous cockpit prend des allures de sagesse une sagesse que nos jeunes gens ont sucée avec une farouche avidité.[6]

So, on the whole, he is not bad for the young, the grown-ups say. And since these youths seem to like the author of the funny-looking "petit prince", let them read him, since he cannot possibly harm them unlike J.-P. Sartre. This seems to be the verdict on Saint-Exupéry due, we believe to impatient, partial reading. We believe that this thesis has achieved its aim by showing that a patient

study of Saint-Exupéry is much more rewarding than what that verdict stands for. Saint-Exupéry has vigorously shown himself an ardent humanist, a universalist humanist.

What do we mean by saying that Saint-Exupéry is a universalist humanist? By this, we mean that through his preaching on fraternity in collaboration, continuous efforts in creativity and fervour, Saint-Exupéry aims at creating a man who would rise above the particular of the self and speak a universal language, a universal language which cannot but be the language of love. Hitler's rallying of the Nazists was a failure because it negated the conscience of Man which urges him to rise and commune with fellow men in the universal. Peace, and not war, is the right course. And speaking of Hitler's war as the totalitarian upshot, Saint-Exupéry concludes:

> A quoi bon tromper le soutier en le poussant, au nom de Beethoven, contre l'homme d'à côté. Quelle duperie, quand, sur le même territoire, on emprisonne Beethoven dans un camp de concentration s'il ne pense pas comme le soutier. Le but pour celui - là doit être de grandir et de parler un jour, comme Beethoven, un langage universel (Un sens p. 180).

And indeed, all that we have seen in our study shows a passionate effort of a Saint-Exupéryan man to rise to the universal. It is in this regard precisely that a clear awareness of our rôle, in whatever station in life in relationship with all humanity, exalts us and raises us above the mere state of a "boutiquier" . When the gardener, the pilot, the shepherd or the doctor see their function in terms of service to humanity on the whole, then they are all united in the greatness of Man:

> Puisqu'il suffit, pour nous délivrer, de nous aider à prendre conscience d'un but qui nous relie les uns aux autres, autant le chercher dans l'universel. Le chirurgien qui passe la visite n'écoute pas les plaintes de celui qu'il ausculte: à travers celui-là, c'est l'homme qu'il cherche à guérir. Le chirurgien parle un langage universel. De son poignet musclé le pilote de ligne écrase les remous, et c'est un travail de forçat. Mais il sert, en luttant, les relations humaines. La puissance de ce poignet rapproche les uns des autres ceux qui s'aimaient et qui cherchaient à se rejoindre: ce pilote rentre aussi dans l'universel. Et le simple berger lui-même qui veille ses moutons sous les étoiles, s'il prend conscience de son rôle, se découvre plus qu'un berger. Il est une sentinelle. Et chaque sentinelle est responsable de tout l'Empire (Un sens. p. 179).

And Saint-Exupéry concludes:

> Si nous tendons vers cette conscience de l'Univers, nous rentrons dans la destinée même de l'homme (Un sens. p. 180).

It is this humanism which seeks the elevation and salvation of Man in the universal that we refer to as a universalist humanism. We believe that Saint-Exupéry is one of its greatest exponents.

If Saint-Exupéry has been prompted to propose a new concept of Man it is obviously in reaction against the spiritual poverty of modern man. In the course of our research, we have sought to establish that it is above all as a moralist that we find Saint-Exupéry a major figure in modern literature. His writings have been prompted by the persuasion that he has to communicate with fellow men. Has he not repeatedly maintained that one should only write when one has something really worth saying? Saint-Exupéry believed deeply that he had something to say, and of tremendous importance. He felt that Man had lost sight of his greatness and had erred in his pursuit for mirages in place of reality. This being the case, contemporary man has become astonishingly impoverished. Saint-Exupéry felt it

his duty as a lover of Man to recall him to his greatness. It was with this in mind, so we are persuaded, that he put in both his life and talents in order to speak to Man. The method he has used seems to us most honest and commendable. Not relying on mere intellect and speculation to speak to us, but practicalizing his belief by way of his own life in sacrifice, in the continuous gift of himself, in taking risks, in faithfllness to a cause to the end, and in fraternity, he finally procured for himself the right to condemn us and to ask us to re-examine our priorities:

> Ne comprenez - vous pas que le
> don de soi, le risque, la fidélité
> jusqu' à la mort, voilà des
> exercices qui ont largement
> contribué à fonder la noblesse
> de l'homme? (Un sens. p. 173).

Saint-Exupéry felt, especially towards the end of his life, that the spiritual desert in which modern man has found himself results solely from his loss of sense of priority - his placing intellectual life over and above spiritual life. It is in "Lettre au général 'X'" written in July 1943, at La Marsa, near Tunis, that he vehemently expresses his last disgust, at the spiritual poverty of modern man, the disgust

expressed so simply and yet so powerfully at the contemplation of his American room-mates during the war. His two room-mates are physcially marvellous and yet so empty:

> Droits, nobles, propres, fidèles, oui,
> Mais aussi terriblement pauvres. Ils
> auraient tant besoin d' un dieu
> (Un sens. p. 231).

This letter has, as its refrain, these words: "Il faut absolument parler aux hommes". For us, we have discovered that right from the beginning of his literary career, speaking directly to men in what really concerns them has always been Saint-Exupéry's main preoccupation. He has clearly shown by his life and writings his concept of Man, which we believe deserves our attention, especially, in our materialistic world.

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1. "Aux yeux des Vilmorin, comme des Saussine, il était le 'condamné à mort'." See curtis Cate, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, laboureur du ciel, (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1973), p. 85

2. Jean Cau, quoted by Bruno Vercier in his Les Critiques de notre temps et Saint-Exupéry, (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1971), p. 11.

3. Saint-Exupéry, Lettres de jeunesse, (Paris: Gallimard, 1953), p. 77.

4. André Gide, preface to Vol de nuit, (Paris: Gallimard, 1931).

5. Pierre - Henri Simon raises this problem in his book, L'Homme en procès: Malraux, Sartre, Camus, Saint-Exupéry, (Paris: Petite Bibliogthèque Payot, 1950).

CHAPTER I

1 Pierre-Henri Simon, L'Homme en procès, (Paris: Petite Bibliothèque Payot, 1950) p. 6.

2. See, for example, Clement Borgal's Saint-Exupéry; mystique sans la foi, (Paris: Centurion, 1964).

3. Renée Zeller, La Grande quête d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, (Paris: Editions Alsatia, 1961).

4. Pierre-Henri Simon, L'Homme en procès p. 6.

5. Pierre-Henri Simon, p. 6.

6. For example Luc Estang, P-H. Simon and Michael T. Young to name only a few.

7. Curtis Cate, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, laboureur du ciel, pp. 356-7.

8. Bertrand Russel, History of Western philosophy, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1961), p. 735.

9. B. Russel, pp. 729-730.

10. Quoted by B. Russel, p. 730.

11. Curtis Cate, p. 357.

12. Curtis Cate, p. 357.

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Existentialisme est un humanisme, (Paris: Edition Nagel, 1968), p. 94.

14. Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 94.

15. Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 55.

16. Pierre-Henri Simon, p. 128.

CHAPTER II

1. Pierre-Henri Simon, L'Homme en procès, p. 144.

2. See Curtis Cate, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, pp. 163 - 4.

3. Pierre-Henri Simon, op. cit., p. 151.

4. Albert Camus' Les Justes, for example, show this sense of fraternity among terrorists.

5. Saint-Exupéry in fact uses this expression "témoin à charge" several times in his works.

6. See Jules Roy, Passion et mort de Saint-Exupéry, (Paris: René Juillard, 1964) p. 12.

7. See Terre des hommes, p. 164.

8. Among such biographies figure Curtis Cate's book that is full of details, and the exciting book by Pierre Chevrier (see details of these publications in Bibliography).

9. See Curtis Cate's account of Jean Mermoz's celebrity in his book referred to above, pp. 191 - 2.

10. Renée Zeller, La Grande quête d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, p. 18.

11. Jules Roy, op Cit., p. 12.

12. The theme of overlooking petty differences and uniting for the common good is the main subject of "Lettre aux Francais" published in the collection entitled, Un sens à la vie, (Paris: Gallimard, 1956).

13. Curtis Cate, op. cit., p. 489.

CHAPTER III

1. René-Maril Albérès, Saint-Exupéry, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1961) p. 15.

2. Jean de Bourrilly, quoted by Serge Losic in L'Idéal humain de Saint-Exupéry, (Paris: Nizet, 1965), p. 27.

3. Serge Losic, L'Idéal humain de Saint-Exupéry,(Paris: Nizet, 1965), p. 27.

4. P.-H. Simon, op cit. pp. 128 - 9.

5. Writing to his mother in 1927 from Cap Juby, Saint-Exupéry says: "Quelle vie de moine je mène! Dans le coin le plus perdu de toute l'Afrique, en plein Sahara espagnol." Lettres à sa mère, p. 139.

6. This same quotation can either be found in Courrier sud, p. 6, or Un sens à la vie (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), p. 17, in the story entitled "L'Aviateur".

7. Serge Losic, op. cit, p. 52.

8. Serge Losic, p. 34.

9. Serge Losic, pp. 38 - 39.

10. P.-H. Simon, op. cit., pp. 145 - 6.

11. R.-M. Albérès, op. cit., p. 170.

12. P.-H. Simon, op. cit., p. 129.

13. R.M. Albérès, p. 131.

14. Serge Losic, p. 41.

15. R.M. Albérès, p. 139.

16. For example see A. Gide's Les Nourritures terrestres where he says: "Nathanaël, je t'enseignerai la ferveur ."

17. Pilote de guerre. In fact as from page 375 to page 380 (in edition Oeuvres), this phrase has virtually become a refrain.

18. R.M. Albérès, p. 170.

CHAPTER IV

1. "A ses amis parisiens qui, en 1940, le supplient de parler à la radio, Saint-Exupéry oppose le plus net refus, affirmant que pareille démarche est indécente, 'si l'on n'a pas une bible à offrir aux hommes'." A. Devaux quoting from "Lettres de guerre à un ami" published in "Le Figaro Littéraire" no. 27, July 1957, under the heading "Devant la mort". See A. Devaux, Saint-Exupéry, (Paris: Desolée de brouwer, 1965), p. 63.

2. A. Devaux, op. cit., p. 39.

3. A good example of these authors' interpretation of human affairs in terms of God's will is to be found in Paul Claudel's Annonce faite à Marie and Teilhard de Chardin's Hymne de l'univers.

4. A. Devaux, op. cit., p. 40.

5. Renée Zeller, La Grande quête d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry dans le Petit prince et Citadelle, (Paris: Alsatia, 1961), p. 28.

6. The "Lettre au Général 'X'" was written in 1944 just before Saint-Exupéry's death. It is generally considered to be the last complete thing he wrote. Citadelle, published posthumously, does not obviate this claim.

7. Luc Estang tells us that Saint-Exupéry himself referred to the book he was writing as a poem - the book we know now as Citadelle. See Luc Estang, Saint-Exupéry par lui-même, (Paris: Editions du seuil, 1956) p. 155.

8. Luc Estang, op. cit., p. 155.

9. Reproduced in Un sens à la vie, (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), p. 246.

10. Albert Camus, La Chute, (Paris: Gallimard, 1956) p. 29.

CONCLUSION

1. Joseph T. Mokeon, "Saint-Exupéry, the Myth of the Pilot." P.M.L.A. Vol. 89 (1974), p. 1087.

2. Dainel G. Small, "Saint-Exupéry and the Failure of Language: A study of the theme of communication in His literary work" in Dissertation Abstract International. Vol. 35, p. 2300A.

3. Dainel G. Small, op. cit., p. 2300A.

4. Jean Cau, quoted by Bruno Vercier in Les Critiques de notre temps et Saint-Exupéry (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1971), p. 11.

5. R.-M. Albérès, op. cit., p. 13.

6. J.-F. Revel, quoted by Bruno Vercier, op. cit., pp. 11 - 12.

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