ISOLATION AND COMMUNION IN THE WORKS OF ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

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Larry J. Larson

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the course of any civilized country's literary history, there are various trends in the thoughtful writing of its authors, poets, and playwrights. This literature is guided by several different influences which may be present during the life of a particular writer. These influences include the political, economic, and social conditions in his environment, writers of the past, contemporaries, and perhaps his personal vocation. Some writers have attempted to free themselves from all social ties in the world while others have sought to intepret man's condition and possible avenues for the improvement of that condition.

Twentieth century authors have attempted especially to find the solution to the existence of man, his raison d'être, his desires, his hopes for the future. Some say that man has no hope for the future; some very optimistically feel that man's greatest contribution still lie ahead. Some say that man's hopes lie in strong government, others in the complete lack of it. Some scientists conclude that technology will be the key to the future, while others say that it can only lead to man's downfall. Yet one thread remains throughout all of these discussions: men are seeking to explain the nature of man, his relationhips with other men and his hope (or despair) for the future.

The fantastic progress in the area of science and industry seems to be the major factor that marks the difference between this century and the preceding ones. Man now increases his scientific knowledge daily

what would have taken years or decades to accomplish in past centuries. Man now travels in hours to places he would have never seen in a lifetime a century ago.

One of the primary reasons for this new mobility has been the development of the airplane. In just more than a half-century air travel has progressed from a one-minute flight to a trip to the moon and back. The destiny of nations has been altered or ruined by the ability of its pilots and air force. Aviational history is filled with many legendary names, whose exploits will be appreciated and lauded far into the future. The early machines were sporadic in operation and the pilots inexperienced in flight procedures. These heroes met danger face to face each time they went into the air.

Several men have attempted to describe the reactions of the pilots to their experiences. The French aviator, Saint-Exupéry, was certainly one of the most successful in combining the life of a pilot and the descriptive writings of an author. He lived the danger of flight on an every day basis and his impressions are recorded simply and poetically in a small number of works.

He was truly a poet, although he never wrote a poem, if a poet is defined as a man who uses his language to create symbols that bring forth some wider meaning than the words themselves. Most critics refer to him as the "poet of flight" because of a beautiful imagery he has created using the tools of flight as his starting point. He admonished his readers in Le Petit Prince of the fact that he considered his writing as very serious in nature when he said, "Car je n'aime pas qu'on lise

mon livre à la légère."[1] He expected his work to be read profoundly and to be interpreted poetically.

He, too, related to the writers of this twentieth century, for he attempted to analyze Man, his condition, his future. He combined the technology of flight with the beauty of literature. The airplane was his scalpel of analysis, his pen the chart of his findings.

Saint-Exupéry looked at and lived two sides of human experience. First of all he saw man as an individual, isolated from his neighbor by his own unique quality as well as by personal bias and human misunderstanding. Secondly, he saw humanity as a communion of men working together toward a common goal--harmonious co-existence. He sought to bring the two extremes together and explain the establishment of a new order.

The paradox of these two themes will be considered and analyzed in this thesis. Since Saint-Exupéry is regarded as a poet by many, the various discussions will be based on poetic images he has created in his writings, particularly, Le Petit Prince and Citadelle, two of his later works. In this manner it is hoped that the reader will be able to see Saint-Exupéry as both a pilot and a poet.

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[1] Le Petit Prince, educational edition by John Richardson Miller, (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1943), p. 11. Future references to this work will be listed in this thesis as Prince.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Saint-Exupéry was born June 29, 1900, in Lyons, France. He was born into a noble family, whose aristocratic traits he carried with him throughout his entire life. His mother was the daughter of Baron de Fonscolombe from Provence, while his father served as Inspector of Finance in the Limousin. Several of his paternal ancestors had distinguished themselves as military heroes in various wars throughout France's battle-scarred political history. It was not unusual, then, that Antoine chose a career closely associated with the military.

There were five children in the family of Count Jean Marie de Saint-Exupéry; Antoine was the middle child. Count de Saint-Exupéry died when Antoine was four, and his widowed wife continued to support her children despite several financial crises. Antoine himself was a constant drain. The expensive schooling "was obtained for the boys at a cost far beyond Mme. de Saint-Exupéry's means. But she had been brought up in the aristocratic tradition and her family, they said, still managed to maintain their rank."[2]

Despite the financial troubles of the family and the loss of their husband and father, the family matured with a loving fondness for each other and for literature. Three of the children eventually became

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[2]Marcel Migeo, Saint-Exupéry, translated by Herman Briffault, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), p. 19.

writers and François, too, showed such an inclination before his premature death at the age of fifteen.

There seemed to be a special closeness between Antoine and his only brother, François. In at least two excerpts he spoke of this fraternal relationship. In Citadelle he wrote of a lame child who idolized his older brother, who was a captain in the army in some distant part of the country. The others who had mocked him for his physical defect finally accepted him, saying, "Toi qui es de ton frère, viens courir avec nous....Tu es beau en ton frère."[3] This passage seems to indicate the close relationship that existed between the two brothers.

A second reference to François is made in Pilote de guerre when Saint-Exupéry described the death of his brother. François was blushingly making his final testament.

> S'il était constructeur de tours, il confierait sa tour à bâtir. S'il était pere, il me confierait ses fils à instruire. S'il était pilote d'avion de guerre, il me confierait les papiers de bord. Mais il n'était qu'un enfant. Il ne confie qu'un moteur à vapeur, une bicyclette et une carabine.[4]

This calm, valiant acceptance of death was to strongly influence Antoine's later thinking on the subject.

Antoine was an intelligent, sensitive student, but he was more concerned with inventing gimmicks and machines and with poetry than the regular school courses. He and François attended school in LeMans for a time,

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[3] Citadelle, (Paris: Gallimard, "Livre de poche," 1948), p. 284. Further references to this book will be listed in this thesis as Citadelle.

[4] Pilote de guerre, (Paris: Gallimard, "Livre de poche," 1942), p. 171. Further references to this book will be listed in this thesis as Pilote.

later attended a collège in Fribourg and a lycée in Paris. After receiving his baccalaureate at the age of eighteen, he prepared himself for entry into Naval School. He made the highest grade on the mathematics test, but, ironically, he failed the French composition part of the examination. This failure to be admitted to military school was especially difficult because of the long tradition of military involvement in his family.

For the next several years he attempted to find a meaningful vocation. At the age of eleven, he had already flown in the homemade airplane of a neighbor, and the desire to fly became stronger and stronger during this unsettled period of his life. He obtained his pilot's license in Rabat, Morocco, and was later promoted to the rank of Reserve Second Lieutenant. He continued to fly during the next few years, but it was not until 1926 that he received his first chance to fly for a living.

An owner of an automobile factory, M. Latécoère, established a postal airline between Toulouse, Spain, North Africa, and later South America. Saint-Exupéry was accepted as a pilot for the airline, and after several months of flying and studying meteorology, he became one of the members of the "Line." The camaraderie developed here remained with "Saint-Ex," as he was affectionately called, throughout his entire life. He continued to fly this run for several months. During this time he began to take notes for his first novel, Courrier sud.

In 1927, he was transferred to Cape Juby in the Sahara Desert. The airport was protected, so to speak, by a Spanish military post, but there were dangers other than the normal mechanical ones to worry about.

The area was inhabited by various tribes of marauding Arabs. If a plane crashed and the Moors were nearby, the pilot had little chance for survival. Saint-Exupéry's job was as much that of a diplomat as that of an administrator. The Spanish soldiers were reluctant to help the French airline, and the Arabs were eager to attack a helpless pilot for whatever ransom might be obtained.

After eighteen months of rescuing downed pilots, playing chess with whomever he could convince to do so, and working on his manuscript for Courrier sud, he returned to Paris with hopes of getting his first novel published. He was introduced to Gaston Gallimard, who became his French publisher.

In 1929, he went to Buenos Aires to establish an extension of the postal air service. Along with his old friends, Guillaumet, Mermoz, Reine, and Roig, he expanded the line further into South America, as far west and south as Chile. Night flights were established and with the use of newer, faster airplanes, the airpostal service long dreamed of by Latécoère and Didier Daurat, became a reality. Daurat became the model for Rivière in Vol de nuit. Saint-Exupéry's experiences were again dangerous and exciting, but the spirit of togetherness among the pilots and workers further shaped his feelings toward the definition of the "community of man."

Saint-Exupéry returned to France in 1931 and had his novel explaining the establishment of night flights published. Vol de nuit became an instant success and was awarded the Prix Fémina in French and was made a Book-of-the-Month Club selection in the United States. Courrier sud had been a success, but Vol de nuit was to give Saint-Exupéry

new encouragement for continued literary endeavor. André Gide, who wrote the preface to the book, said, "Ce récit dont j'admire aussi bien la valeur littéraire, a d'autre part la valeur d'un document et ces deux qualités, si inespérément unies, donnent Vol de nuit son exceptionnelle importance."[5]

Two major events shaped the next few years of Saint-Exupéry's life, now acclaimed as the "poet of flight." First of all, the publication of Vol de nuit created certain difficulties among his fellow fliers. Some felt his treatment of Rivière was too glorified and some felt it was too critical of pilots, mechanics, and workers of the "Line." Most of his close friends and flying comrades appreciated the sensitive analysis of a man's complete and unselfish dedication to his duty as director of the routing of the airmail service. That he was greatly upset by this reaction can be seen in this letter to Guillaumet, cited by Marcel Migeo:

> Because I wrote that wretched book I have been made to suffer. My comrades have ostracized me....Mermoz will tell you what things have been said about me by those whom I have not seen for ages but whom I once was fond of. They will tell you that I am pretentious! And there's not a soul from Toulouse to Dakar that doesn't believe it.[6]

The second important event was the legal entanglement and subsequent liquidation of the Latécoère firm. The members of the "Line" could not convince the French government of the value of their service

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[5]André Gide, Preface to Vol de nuit, (Paris: Gallimard, "Livre de poche," 1931), p. 15. Further references to this book will be listed in this thesis as Vol.

[6]Migeo, op. cit., p. 153.

and there apparently was a conspiracy involved to bankrupt the company. Saint-Exupéry had recently married Consuelo Suncin, widow of the South American writer, Gomez Carillo. The financial receipts from Vol de nuit had dwindled. These three factors created a financial hardship for Antoine and his new wife.

In 1934, after the demise of Aeropostale, Air France was organized, and Saint-Exupéry leaped at the chance to fly again. However, due to letter strongly slanted against him coupled with the unfavorable attitude of the pilots, radio operators and mechanics toward Vol de nuit, he was rejected for the position. Saint-Exupéry blamed the adverse publicity of the book for his failure to be accepted, but as a pilot, he was sometimes more disposed toward meditation than piloting, and as a result had been involved in a number of accidents due to negligence or absent-mindedness.

As his own sort of revenge, he attempted to break certain flying records to show that he still was capable of good piloting. In attempting to break the Paris to Saigon record he crashed in the Libyan desert--an event that is described in great detail in his third novel, Terre des hommes. He also attempted, in 1937, to fly from Canada to the furthest tip of Patagonia. In taking off from an airstrip in Guatemala, his plane crashed. Saint-Exupéry suffered a broken leg and wrist and remained in a coma for seven days as a result of seven fractures of the skull. This accident impaired his left shoulder for the rest of his life. He was no longer able to wear a parachute and needed assistance to get into his flight gear whenever he did fly.

In the meantime he made lecture tours and worked as a newspaper correspondent in Russia and Spain. Various articles from this period have recently been published in a volume called Un Sens à la vie. He seemed to be especially impressed by the events of the Spanish Civil War of 1937, which he covered for Paris-Soir. He recounted the story of his capture by a number of Spanish soldiers who thought that he was a spy for the enemy. He was watching the unloading of a cargo ship in a Spanish port. He was so intrigued by the action taking place that he forgot to take cover. He was very worried about his safety as he sat in a Spanish jail. In a moment of despair he asked one of the guards for a cigarette. He received the cigarette with a faint hint of a smile from the young man. The tenseness of the situation was immediately relieved and Saint-Exupéry realized that some bond united men although they were enemies in the war.[7]

He ended eight years of literary silence with the publication of Terre des hommes in 1939. As with Vol de nuit success was instantaneous. It was almost immediately translated into ten languages, was made a Book-of-the-Month selection and received the Grand Prix du Roman from the French Academy, an honor given to the best novel of the year in France. As with the other novels, it was not a novel by strict definition, but rather a collection of essays, seeking to answer the problem of man's relationship to the planet he inhabits.

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[7]Alfred Galpin and E. E. Milligan, Intermediate Readings in French Prose, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1962) pp. 5-12.

War was imminent in France, and Saint-Exupéry returned to France, fearing the feverish mood Hitler had created in Germany. After the declaration of war on September 1, 1939, he served as a flying instructor in Toulouse-Montaudran. In November he entered the Reconnaissance Group 2/33. His job, which he described later in Pilote de guerre, was to take pictures of German advances in France. It was a futile effort because the French Army could not use the information tactically, and the French airplanes were too few and too slow and were easy prey for the faster German Messerschmitts.

After the German occupation of France in 1940, Saint-Exupéry was forced into exile in the United States. He brooded at his inability to help and passed his time writing and working on mechanical gadgets to assist pilots and their planes. He was first disgruntled by the lack of American assistance to the French during the early months of the war, but realized later that the responsibility lay with each individual Frenchman. In his controversial newspaper article, he wrote, "It is time to unite, not to divide, for opening wide the arms, not for exclusions.... When a single hostage is shot, his sacrifice shines forth, his death is the cement that binds French unity."[8]

While in the United States, he wrote and published two small works. Lettre à un hôtage was a plea for courage and hope directed to his friend, Leon Werth, who was being held prisoner in France. Le Petit Prince enjoyed critical success but was not as financially rewarding

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[8]Saint-Exupéry, "An Open Letter to Frenchmen Everywhere," New York Times Magazine, November 29, 1942, p. 7.

because the book was referred to as an "adult fairy tale." Consequently it was not read as seriously as his other works.

Impatient to return to active duty, Saint-Exupéry tried to get back into the air in the United States Army Air Forces. He accompanied the first convoy of American troops into the Mediterranean campaign in 1943. He was refused permission to fly because of his advanced age (he was forty-three). Eventually Colonel Chassin of the Thirty-first squadron intervened and Saint-Ex was allowed to fly as bombadier in the unit's Marauder bombers.

Through the intervention of John Phillips, an American photographer and journalist, and General Ira Eaker, commander of the Allied Air Forces in the Mediterranean area, he was finally permitted to fly five reconnaissance missions for his former squadron, 2/33. With renewed vigor and enthusiasm this forty-three year-old pilot undertook missions with men half his age.

On July 30, 1941, he left on his ninth such flight (he had been granted four additional missions). His death was typical of the life he lived. Migeo has rather conclusively determined that Saint-Exupéry was shot down by a German fighter pilot, Hermann Korth.[9] His death, of course, was grieved by millions all over the world. The realization of his death came in a manner similar to that of Fabien, the pilot in Vol de nuit. The time had passed for his return, his fuel was gone, and no radio contact could be made. The command was simply given to his replacement, "You'll take over Major de Saint-Exupéry's missions," and the fight went on.

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[9]Migeo, op. cit., pp. 300-318.

CHAPTER III

SYMBOLS OF SOLITUDE

Solitude is a central part in the life of a pilot. He spends hours alone in the air with only his airplane. To Saint-Exupéry it meant a time for meditation, a sort of an escape from the daily routine into which man lets himself fall. He has the advantage of being able to look down from his cockpit and seek meaning which land locked man cannot see. The hills become flat, the rivers lose their currents, and man's little problems are forgotten. These periods of solitude provide the time for Saint-Exupéry's poetic reflections. The symbols he creates represent, each in its own way, the various types of solitude of the poet and the pilot.

The airplane. The airplane is a concrete representation of the solitude of Saint-Exupéry. Each of his major novels deals with a pilot who meditates upon the condition of man while he flies. The pilot is transferred into a fourth dimension. "Si cette aiguille lâche son chiffre, si la panne livre l'homme au sable, le temps et les distances prendront un sens nouveau et il ne conçoit même pas. Il voyage dans une quatrième dimension."[10]

The airplane is not the goal of, but the means to the goal of human comprehension. Saint-Exupéry stated this opinion several times in Terre des hommes. One of the more lucid passages follows:

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[10]Saint-Exupéry, Courrier sud, (Paris: Gallimard, "Livre de poche," 1929), p. 162. Further references to this book will be listed in this thesis as Courrier.

> L'avion, ce n'est pas une fin, c'est un moyen. Ce n'est pas pour l'avion que l'on risque sa vie. Ce n'est pas non plus pour sa charrue que le paysan laboure. Mais, par l'avion, on quitte les villes et leurs comptables et l'on trouve une vérité paysanne.[11]

The airplane is the instrument of analysis and self-discovery. "Cet instrument nous a fait découvrir le vrai visage de la terre." (Terre, p. 67). Man is no longer restrained by the conventional modes of transportation and interpretation. The airplane has created the straight line. (Terre, p. 68) He continued:

> Alors seulement, du haut de nos trajectoires rectilignes, nous découvrons le soubassement essentiel, l'assise de rocs, de sable, et de sel, où la vie, quelque fois, comme un peu de mousse au creux des ruines, ici et là se hasarde à fleurir....Nous voilà donc jugeant l'homme à l'échelle cosmique, l'observant à travers nos hublots, comme à travers des instruments d'étude. (Terre, p. 68)

Richard Gilman compares Saint-Exupéry to Joseph Conrad in each one's relationship to the airplane and the sea, respectively. "In reality his relationship with the air was like that of Conrad with the sea; the sky was an arena for self-conflict and self-dscovery and one was the delegate of mankind."[12]

Secondly, the airplane represents for Saint-Exupéry the solitude of the poet. Poets have detached themselves from normal society throughout literary history. From their alleged "lofty peaks" they have been able to report and philosophize on their observations. Victor Hugo called himself "l'écho sonore de la France." Alfred de Vigny suggested

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[11] Terre des hommes, (Paris: Gallimard, "Livre de poche," 1931), pp. 197-198. Further references to this book will be listed in this thesis as Terre.

[12] "Saint-Exupéry by Marcel Migeo," Commonweal, LXXII (June 24, 1960), p. 335.

in his poem, "Moise" that certain men, such as Moses (and, by extension, poets) are called to higher posts to survey man and lead him.[13] Saint-Exupéry also felt the isolation of genius and the airplane became his "Bateau ivre." He compared Jacques Bernis to Orpheus, the poet of the Greeks. "Il dut lire enfin en Bernis les trois vertus requises depuis Orphée pour ces voyages: le courage, la jeunesse, l'amour." (Courrier, p. 150)

In his own life Saint-Exupéry was often alone. He demanded a single apartment away from the barracks while he was in military service. He spent several months on an isolated post in the Sahara Desert. Pierre Courtines writes:

> Individualistic as only the French can be, he was a strange contradiction of pioneer adventurer and philosopher-poet. Having tasted literary success and world acclaim, he remained in the midst of friends a genuinely solitary figure.[14]

There are three definitive examples of the isolated genius. In Terre des hommes he devoted an entire chapter to this relationship between the airplane and the planet. While searching for two of his downed pilots in the Sahara Desert, he landed in a region, probably never seen before by man. These were his impressions as he crossed the sands. They may well be interpreted as his poetic philosophy of looking at man's condition:

> (Je suis) le premier à troubler ce silence. Sur cette sorte de banquise polaire, qui, de toute éternité, n'avait

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[13]André Lagarde and Laurent Michard, XIXe siècle: Les Grands auteurs français du programme, V, (Paris: Bordas, 1962), pp. 123-128.

[14]"The Winged Life by Rumbold and Stewart," America, LCIII (April 30, 1955), p. 136.

> pas formé un seul brin d'herbe, j'étais comme une semence apportée par les vents, le premier témoinage de la vie. (Terre, pp. 197-198)

The second example of his solitude appears in Pilote de guerre. During his long meditation on the flight to Arras, he noted the difference in the observations made by himself and Dutertre, one of the members of his flight crew. The following passage shows the broader scope of his genius to be able to look at the world as a whole with the characteristics which truly distinguish the meaning of man as opposed to the superficial presence of military machinery:

> Ça regarde Dutertre, les enseignements de la mission. Il observe à la verticale, Dutertre. Il voit des tas de choses. Des camions, des chalands, des tanks, des soldats, des canons des chevaux, des gares, des trains dans les gares, des chefs de la gare. Moi j'observe trop en oblique. Je vois des nuages, la mer, des fleuves, des montagnes, le soleil. J'observe très en gros. Je me fais une idée d'ensemble. (Pilote, p. 197)

The third example of his isolation is the powerful statement of this solitude. The sultan in Citadelle offers a prayer of solitude. He is weighed down by his solitude which separates him from humanity. He stands as a man alone on a mountain overlooking his people and talking to God:

> Ayez pitié de moi, Seigneur, car me pèse ma solitude. Il n'est rien que j'attende. Me voici dans cette chambre où rien ne me parle. Et cependant ce ne sont point des présences que je sollicite, me découvrant plus perdu encore si je m'enfonce dans la foule. (Citadelle, pp. 350-351)

Therefore the first type of solitude expressed in the works of Saint-Exupéry is the isolation of the poet. Certain talented individuals are seemingly set apart to serve as observers and scribes of their society. The airplane afforded Saint-Exupéry the opportunity to make such perceptive examinations.

The desert. The second symbol of man's solitude is the desert. Saint-Exupéry was always strangely fascinated by the vast, sandy wasteland. He said, "J'ai toujours aimé le désert." (Prince, p. 50) Solitude and desert were closely united for him. In the chapter "Dans le désert" he explained:

> Mais je connais la solitude. Trois années de désert m'en ont bien enseigné le goût. On ne s'y effraie point d'une jeunesse qui s'use dans un paysage minéral, mais il y apparaît que, loin de soi, c'est le monde entier qui vieillit. (Terre, pp. 95-96)

Having known the solitude of the desert so intimately, he chose to use it as the representation of the individual's isolation within the group of men in which he lived. Le Petit Prince provides the key to the symbol. When the prince first arrived on the planet Earth, he fully expected to find men united and happy. "La terre a une bonne réputation." (Prince, p. 39) He landed in the desert, where no men were near. He asked a nearby flower, "Où sont les hommes?" Her response pointed to the barrenness of man's existence.

> Les hommes? Il en existe, je crois, six ou sept. Je les ai aperçus il y a des années. Mais on ne sait jamais où les trouver. Le vent les promène. Ils manquent de racines, ça les gêne beaucoup. (Prince, pp. 41-42)

Men lack roots because they do not have fertile ground in which to grow. The least fertile ground is, of course, the desert.

Saint-Exupéry felt this isolation at several points in his life. In a letter to his mother, written from Paris in 1924, he said, "Il y a bien peu de gens qui puissent dire avoir une confidence vraie en moi et me connaître le moins du monde. C'est presque un manque de dignité de se

donner à tout le monde."[15] He seemed to want to create his own solitude apart from his friends. Later, from Cape Juby he wrote, "Quelle vie de moine je mène!" (Lettres, p. 180)

Saint-Exupéry spoke about this self-made solitude in Terre des hommes. That which distinguishes man from the beast is the solitude which he himself creates.

> Dans un monde où la vie rejoint si bien la vie, où les fleurs dans le lit même du vent se mêlent aux fleurs, où le cygne connaît tous les cygnes, les hommes seuls bâtissent leur solitude. (Terre, p. 71)

Man creates his loneliness in various ways. Once again Le Petit Prince clarifies this statement. The planets visited by the prince were each inhabited by a solitary figure, living alone: (1) a king who had no subjects to rule; (2) a vain man who sought applause from admirers who did not exist; (3) a tippler who drank to forget that he was ashamed of drinking; (4) a businessman who possessed stars merely because he counted them; (5) a lamplighter who worked day and night only because it was his job; and (6) a geographer who had to first judge the morality of his explorers before he could accept their discoveries.

The seventh planet was Earth, and, ironically, it contained several thousand of each of the individual inhabitants of the six preceding planets encountered on his visits. It was not by accident that the Little Prince landed in an uninhabited part of the desert. Saint-Exupéry saw humanity divided by a shallow selfishness which leaves an individual man abandonned on his solitary planet.

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[15] Lettres à sa mère, (Paris: Gallimard, 1953), pp. 154-155. Further references to this book will be listed in the text of this thesis as Lettres.

There is also a solitude created by a man's relationship with his fellow man. The community divorces itself from him because of his seeming elevated position. Such a man was Rivière in Vol de nuit.

He outwardly appeared cruel and without love. His decisions were crisp and clear-cut. He fired Roblet for making one mistake after twenty years of devoted service to aviation. Roblet begged for mercy, but the error he had committed could have proven fatal and Rivière's decision was to release him from his post. In the preface of the book, André Gide explains: "Sa sévérité peut, au premier abord, paraître inhumaine, excessive. Mais c'est aux imperfections qu'elle s'applique, non point à l'homme même, que Rivière prétend forger." (Vol, p. 11)

Rivière was a man who had not known emotional, personal love. At the age of fifty he told a foreman, Leroux, that he had never had the time to be loved or to love. (Vol, p. 31) He was a man of duty. This very duty separated him from the married love of wife and family.

He was respected and feared by his subordinates, but they did not love him as a friend. They found themselves uneasy in his company and sought to separate themselves from his presence. He was not asked to drink with the men, nor was he invited to eat with them, as was his assistant director, Robineau.

However lonely the picture may look, Rivière knew and understood the separation. It was a deliberate isolation to perform his duty to the men. The duty which separated him was not because of a lack of love. On the contrary, it was out of the greatest love and respect for his crews that he made his decisions and held himself aloof from them.

His discussion with Robineau, his bland director-protégé is most revealing on this point:

> Vous devez rester dans votre rôle....Vous commandez peut-être à ce pilote, la nuit prochaine, un départ dangereux: il devra obéir....Vous disposez presque de la vie des hommes, et d'hommes qui valent mieux que vous....Si c'est par amitié qu'ils vous obéissent, vous les dupez. Vous n'avez droit vous-même à aucun sacrifice....Et s'ils croient que votre amitié leur épargnera certaines corvées, vous les dupez aussi: il faudra bien qu'ils vous obéissent....Aimez ceux que vous commandez. Mais sans le leur dire.[16] (Vol, pp. 63-64)

Man's solitude is two-fold. He creates his own alienation by selfishness and misunderstanding. His society creates isolation by an often unfounded fear of an individual and his relationship to that society. The solitude is divisive and sometimes destructive.

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[16] The ellipses in this passage are deletions of extraneous materials, not of parts of his speech.

CHAPTER IV

THE FEELING OF COMMUNION

There existed among the pilots who associated with Saint-Exupéry a strong, intense feeling of comradeship. As with most high-risk operations, the men felt drawn together by some invisible bond which made them one. Saint-Exupéry sought to find this "noeud divin" and then attempted to define this universal tie as it related to man's condition.

Saint-Exupéry defined "apprivoisement" (a child's word meaning "taming" for expressing the adult idea of communion of friends) as the ability to "créer des liens." (Prince, p. 45.) The taming of a friend leads to a mystical celebration, a sort of religious rite with music and symbolic interpretation. The third step involves the reponsibility to the friend. One is no longer "free" (in its most liberal meaning) because new demands are now made on both individuals in the relationship. The fourth step is the separation of the friends and the memory that remains. It can and will be a sad moment. "On risque de pleurer si l'on s'est laissé apprivoiser." (Prince, p. 54) The four symbols used in Le Petit Prince which will be the bases for this discussion are: (1) l'apprivoisement; (2) la marche vers la fontaine; (3) la rose qui est unique au monde; and (4) l'étoile.

L'apprivoisement. It should be stated initially that the taming of small animals was a life-long interest of Saint-Exupéry. He was reputed to have continually tried to tame various wild creatures that he found in and nearby his childhood home. While at Cape Juby he wrote of the desert fox and cameleon he attempted to tame. (Lettres, pp. 183-184) He also made allusion to the taming of gazelles at Cape Juby. (Terre, p. 221) During his march to find water in the Libyan desert, he was led astray by his curiosity for a small desert fox the size of a rabbit, with enormous ears. "Je ne résiste pas à mon désir et je suis les traces d'eux." (Terre, p. 175) This curious little creature later became the fox that solved the dilemma of the Little Prince.

In the writings of Saint-Exupéry this "taming" takes place in several human relationships. The first of these is the friendship between two men of similar interests and backgrounds. The comradeship of the pilots of the "Line" shows this point. Saint-Exupéry was closely bound to the other pilots, such as: Guillaumet, Mermoz, Hochedé, Prévot and Gavoille. They shared the same risks and the same anxieties. In the establishment of some sort of aviational service, either peacetime or wartime, they were bound together by their constant quest of new frontiers in the very face of death. He explained this communion as he prepared to take off on his first mail flight:

> Chaque camarade, ainsi, par un matin semblable, avait senti, en lui-même, sous le subalterne vulnérable, soumis encore à la hargne de cet inspecteur, naître le responsable du courrier d'Espagne et d'Afrique, naître celui qui, trois heures plus tard, affronterait dans les éclairs le dragon de l'Hospitalet. (Terre, p. 19)

He loved this life of togetherness that was created for him by his occupation. In spite of the prison-like life which surrounded him during his military training, he wrote to his mother:

> Je n'ai rien tant aimé que cette vie de soldat de deuxième classe et cette camaraderie sympathique avec des mécanos et des soutenirs. J'ai même aimé cette prison où l'on chantait des chansons lugubres. (Lettres, pp. 131-132)

The experience with Prévot in the desert after their near fatal crash stands out as a prime example of one man's respect and concern for his friend. The two men had attempted every possible means of obtaining water. They had searched for some miraculous oasis in the middle of the desert. They had attempted unsuccessfully to condense the morning dew in their parachutes. They had both been fooled by hallucinatory mirages. Now they were required to set off in a direction, any direction, and they could only hope for the best. There was never a thought of quitting, but a feeling of futile resignation had set in. Their throats were parched by their unbearable thirst when Prévot made the statement that represents the comradeship of the two men. "Et Prévot m'explique d'une voix qui s'étrangle: 'J'aurais tant voulu trouver à boire...Vos lèvres sont tellement blanches.'" The friendship was built on self-sacrifice and personal concern.

There is a second sort of communion that exists among men. For Saint-Exupéry there is a common bond between an individual and his enemy. The enemy, after all, is also a human being; therefore, his goals and aspirations are very similar. This comradeship supercedes all other personal problems that may exist temporarily.

The enemy, in fact, performs two functions: he first unites the attacked men, and then he causes them to regroup and re-orient themselves to take up the fight. This call to unity is especially important in Saint-Exupéry's writing during the war years. He was embarassed and confounded by the speedy, total defeat of the French in the war in 1940. He hoped that the quickness with which the war was consumated would prove to be a uniting factor in the war effort. He eloquently called for French participation in the retaliation against the Germans:

> Let us be infinitely modest. Our political discussions are discussions of ghosts, ambitions among us are cosmic. We do not represent France; all we can do is serve her.[17]

Not only does the impetus for action come from within, but the enemy forces actually forge together the lives and hopes of all Frenchmen. He expressed this thought when he said:

> Comme si ma vie me devinait, à chaque seconde, plus sensible. Je vis. Je suis vivant. Je suis encore vivant. Je suis toujours vivant. Je ne suis plus qu'une source de vie. L'ivresse de la vie me gagne. On dit, "l'ivresse du combat..." C'est l'ivresse de la vie! Eh! Ceux qui nous tirent en bas, savent-ils qu'ils nous forgent. (Pilote, p. 175)

However, the enemy is also a human being. Saint-Exupéry realized this while he and Mermoz sought water and food in the Libyan desert. They were white-lipped from thirst and were at the point of complete resignation to a horrendous death on the sands, when two Arabs appeared, as if by some sort of divine intervention. These men were very

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[17] "An Open Letter to Frenchmen Everywhere," op. cit., p. 7.

possibly men whom Saint-Exupéry had fought earlier when he sought to establish the African line. Yet at this point there was a communion of indescribable proportions. The enemy understood hunger and aided the two downed pilots in an act of true comradeship. The arificial walls of human misunderstanding had fallen down. The differences were minor in comparison to the physical human need at hand. Saint-Exupéry later wrote about the incident:

> Il n'y a plus ici ni races, ni langages, ni divisions....Il y a ce nomade pauvre qui a pesé sur nos épaules des mains d'archange. (Terre, pp. 206-207)

This esteem for his enemy must have greatly impressed Saint-Exupéry, because he later meditated several times about this problem. The sultan discussed his relationship with his enemy in Citadelle. He had attempted to set up an exchange system with some other tribes in his desert kingdom.

> L'échange véritable....c'est le coffret de parfum ou la graine ou ce présent de cèdre jaune qui remplit ta maison du parfum de la mienne. Ou encore mon cri de guerre quand il te vient de mes montagnes. Ou peut-être d'un ambassadeur, s'il a été longtemps élevé et formé et durci, et qu'à la fois il te refuse et t'accepte. Car il te refuse dans tes étages inférieurs. Mais il te retrouve là où l'homme s'estime d'un ennemi. Et l'estime des amis ne vaut que s'ils dominent leur reconnaissance et leurs remerciements et tous leurs mouvements vulgaires. Si tu meurs pour ton ami je t'interdis de t'attendrir. (Citadelle, p. 137)

André Maurois sums up what may be called communion in this diversity of thought:

> He who has formed that relative concept of truth cannot reproach other men for having beliefs different from his own. If the truth for each man is what makes him more

> separated, we can, you and I who do not share the same discipline, feel close to each other through our common love of greatness, through our common love of love. Intelligence has value only in the service of love.[18]

Man, then, communes even with his enemy. Although the differences seem widespread at the moment, they are relatively small if looked at in the complete spectrum of human existence. Man's physical and spiritual needs to far beyond temporary differences in politics or philosophies. The goal of mankind is human understanding, not political conquest.

A third area of man's communion is his relationship with the earth on which he lives. Terre des hommes deals specifically with this problem. The title of the book was meant to show that the book was a definition of man's earth and his relationship to it. Even by flying far above the earth, the pilot feels a communion with the earth below. Jacques Bernis became a proprietor of the land. "Aujourd'hui, Jacques Bernis, tu franchiras l'Espagne avec une tranquilité de propriétaire." (Courrier, p. 18) Fabien considered himself the shepherd of the small towns and villages over which he flew. (Vol, p. 18) Man feels a union with the earth that gave him life and sustains his attempt to find a meaning for that life:

> Ainsi la joie de vivre se ramassait-elle pour moi dans cette première gorgée parfumée et brûlante, dans ce mélange de lait et de blé, par où l'on communie avec les pâturages

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[18] From Proust to Camus, trans. by Carl Morse and Renand Bruce, (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1966), p. 221.

> calmes, les plantations exotiques et les moissons, par où l'on communie avec la terre. (Terre, pp. 29-30)

In his various moments of liberty from the earth in his airplane he still found himself bound to earth:

> De la nuque aux talons, je me découvrais noué à la terre. J'éprouvais une sorte d'appaisement à lui abandonner mon poids. La gravitation m'apparaissait souveraine comme l'amour. Je sentais la terre étayer mes reins, me soutenir, me soulever, me transporter dans l'espace nocturne. (Terre, p. 79)

In return for the earth that gives him life, man must return nourishment to the land. Because this bond exists, man becomes responsible for his "Earth":

> Le blé nourrit l'homme, mais l'homme à son tour sauve le blé dont il engrange la semence. La réserve de graines est respectée, de génération de blé en génération de blé, comme une héritage. (Pilote, p. 217)

There still exists a close relationship between a man and the earth in spite of the new liberty afforded by the airplane. The airplane only allows short periods of isolation, and man is required, by gravity and by his own tie with the earth, to return to the land which gave him birth and now is the place of his existence. Saint-Exupéry felt firmly bound to the earth and responsible to it.

The fourth aspect of this "taming" process was obviously the most important of all. Saint-Exupéry spent his adult life and much of artistic energy seeking to define the relationship of man to mankind. He felt there was some "noeud divin" which bound all men together. There was a common goal that every man sought, no matter what his race, color, political thought, or language. He made constant reference to this community of mankind.

In speaking specifically of his comrades of the air, he said:

> Nous étions de la même substance. Je me sens un peu mort de lui. J'ai fait de Guillaumet un des compagnons de mon silence. Je suis de Guillaumet.
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> Je suis de Guillaumet, je suis de Gavoille, je suis de Hochedé. Je suis du Groupe 2/33. Je suis de mon pays. Et tous ceux du Groupe sont de ce pays. (Pilote, p. 191)

Later, he continued:

> Et ce n'est pas aux seuls camarades que je me découvre lié. C'est à travers eux, à tout mon pays. L'amour, une fois qu'il a germé, pousse des racines qui n'en finissent plus de croître. (Pilote, p. 201)

Saint-Exupéry looked beyond his own country. He considered civilization itself in its broadest sense. The limits of human eccentricities and political differences were put behind Man. His new goal was to seek to align himself with his fellow man:

> Quand l'homme a besoin, pour se sentir homme, de courir des courses, de chanter en choeur, ou de faire la guerre, ce sont déjà des liens qu'il impose afind de se nouer à autrui et au monde. (Pilote, p. 105)

Saint-Exupéry felt that even though differences could exist between nations, there still could and should be harmony, for men were carried by the same ship, his planet Earth. Men could create through their differences a synthesis which would improve both sides. He abhorred a civilization which tore itself apart by internal strife. The common goal of fraternity among nations was a primary one which united humanity. He explained:

> Liés à nos frères par but commun et qui se situe en dehors de nous, alors seulement nous respirons et l'expérience nous montre qu'aimer ce n'est point nous regarder l'un l'autre mais regarder ensemble dans la même direction. Il n'est de

> camarades que s'ils s'unissent dans la même cordée, vers le même sommet en quoi ils se retrouvent. (Terre, p. 225)

In this perfect communion of men, all differences will be swallowed up by and overwhelming feeling of exaltation and joy. Man will once again find happiness. Henri Peyre, in discussing man's unity, best evaluates Saint-Exupéry's call for true comradeship:

> Terre des hommes is in essence a hymn of friendship. Two or three men relish true comradeship. When they know and understand each other without effort, there is dignity and loyalty in their relation, unreserved mutual devotion, tolerance and even admiration for their differences, and an exaltation that comes from pursuing a common purpose together....Love dwindles to a selfish and anarchic or disturbing force when compared to the cool, restrained friendship enjoyed in the midst of ordeals: ...The concluding pages of Terre des hommes sing the unique and well-nigh musical joy of men who, freed in their perilous career from all the false values of life, suddenly become alien to hatreds, jealousies, and desires, and the true fraternity of cooperating, with body and soul, in a disinterested effort.[19]

In the philosophy of Saint-Exupéry, man becomes a "comrade" of everything and everyone on his planet. He is a bundle of relationships. He attempts to understand his friend, his enemy, his earth, and his own civilization. He puts personal pride and selfish motives behind him and works to improve human relations.

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[19] The Contemporary French Novel, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 172.

La marche vers une fontaine. Once man has determined that this relationship can and does exist, the next question to be asked is how does this communion take place. What is the "rite" of communion? This rite is perhaps not religious, in its strictest sense, but is, to be sure, spiritual. Saint-Exupéry used man's thirst as a symbol for this yearning to find communion. Suddenly, in the middle of the desert, the Little Prince experienced thirst. This would not be unusual except for the fact that up until that point in the book the prince had absolutely no physical needs! He was thirsty, but his thirst was spiritual.

> --Tu as donc soif, toi aussi? lui demandai-je.
> Mais il ne répondit pas à ma question. Il me dit simplement:
> --L'eau peut aussi être bonne pour le coeur. (Prince, p. 50)

Because of this thirst, man begins his walk to the fountain, i. e., the rite of communion. This walk is extremely important. The fox explained to the Little Prince: "C'est le temps que tu as perdu pour ta rose qui fait ta rose si importante." (Prince, p. 47) The time spent with a friend is part of the rite. This rite has no meaning unless it involves a passing of time together.

Saint-Exupéry spoke of this "walk" in his other works as well. While flying to Arras with his gunner and radio operator, he was thinking of the other comrades who fought beside him in spirit. As he pondered their unsure return, he said, "Mais il nous est donné de courir vers les camarades, et il me semble que nous nous hâtons vers une fête." (Pilote, p. 198)

The real-life incident upon which the walk in Le Petit Prince was based was the ordeal in the desert with Prévot and Saint-Exupéry. The effects of the arid desert created an incredible thirst in the two pilots. It should be noted that despite his great physical thirst, Saint-Exupéry spoke about a "dry heart." "Il y a ici un coeur sec... un coeur sec...un coeur sec qui ne sait point former de larmes!...En route, Prévot! Nos gorges ne se sont pas fermées encore: il faut marcher." (Terre, pp. 199-200)

In this rite, as in a religious sacrament, there is an earthly element. Saint-Exupéry spoke of "l'eau qui est bonne pour le coeur." (Prince, p. 50) This earthly product satifies not only the physical needs of the individuals involved, but also serves as a symbolic representation of the spiritual exchange that takes place between the two men at the moment of communion.

The most common element used is water. It satifies man's thirst, physical and spiritual. He commented further:

> Eau, tu n'as ni goût, ni couleur, ni arôme, on ne peut pas te définir, on te goûte, sans te connaître. Tu n'es pas nécessaire à la vie: tu es la vie. Tu nous pénètres d'un plaisir qui ne s'explique point par les sens. Avec toi rentrent en nous tous les pouvoirs auxquels nous avions renoncé. Par ta grâce, s'ouvrent en nous toutes les sources taries de notre coeur. Tu es la plus grande richesse qui soit au monde, et tu es aussi la plus délicate, toi si pure au ventre de la terre. (Terre, p. 207)

The symbolic importance attached to water cannot be overstated. Saint-Exupéry felt it represented the very life that flowed in his veins.

The other most common earthly element he used was bread. Saint-Exupéry recounted a similar incident he had experienced while eating with a farm family that had befriended him. He stated, " Nous avons appris

à reconnaître, dans le pain, un instrument de la communauté des hommes, à cause du pain à rompre ensemble." (Pilote, p. 205) The symbol was thus established for the following assertion made later:

> Je me sens lié à ceux de chez moi, tout simplement. Je suis d'eux, comme ils sont de moi. Lorsque mon fermier a distribué le pain, il n'a rien donné. Il a partagé et échangé. Le même blé, en nous a circulé. Le fermier ne s'appauvrissait pas. Il s'enrischissait: d'un pain meilleur, puisque changé en pain d'une communauté. (Pilote, p. 205)

The festival, then, is religious in tone and appearance because of the use of symbolic earthly elements. It is not a religious festival, however, for the communion which takes place is a communion between two men. The march toward the fountain is a very personal experience, accompanied by a concrete element, whose value becomes symbolic in the rite of this union of two individuals.

3. La rose qui est unique au monde. The third step of the "taming" process is the responsibility of one friend for another. The Little Prince had cared for and loved a small, proud rose that had come, by chance, to his planet. He thought the rose was the loveliest that he had ever seen. Upon arriving on Earth he found a garden full of five thousand roses, all just as proud and just as beautiful as his. His shock and disappointment were, of course, overwhelming. How could his rose have lied to him? The fox cleared up the dilemma. No one had "tamed" the five thousand roses. His flower was unique because he had spent time caring for her, protecting her, and loving her. The fox explained thusly:

> Les hommes ont oublié cette vérité, dit le renard. Mais tu ne dois pas l'oublier. Tu deviens responsable pour toujours de ce que tu as apprivoisé. Tu es responsable de ta rose. (Prince, p. 47)

The walk to the fountain creates the festival of communion. The festival consumated, friendship requires a continued sense of dedication to the new friend. Saint-Exupéry believed that man's greatness came from this sense of responsibility:

> 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 et leur joie...Etre homme, c'est précisément être responsable.

This responsibility extends far beyond the individual characteristics of the single man. Saint-Exupéry felt that every individual was responsible for the acts of all men. (Citadelle, p. 445) He felt that no one Frenchman could be blamed for the defeat by the invading German Army. All Frenchmen were responsible for it in some degree. He explained it thus:

> La communauté spirituelle des hommes dans le monde n'a pas joué en notre faveur. Mais, en fondant cette communauté des hommes dans le monde, nous eussions sauvé le monde et nous-mêmes. Nous avons failli à cette tâche. Chacun est responsable de tous. Je comprends pour la première fois l'un des mystères de la religion dont est sortie la civilisation que je revendique comme mienne: "Porter les péchés des hommes..." Et chacun porte tous les péchés de tous les hommes. (Pilote, p. 213)

The essential act of this responsibility is defined as participation and sacrifice. It is an act of giving completely of oneself, even to the point of death:

> Sacrifice ne signifie ni amputation, ni pénitence. Il est essentiellement un acte. Il est un don de soi-même à l'Etre dont on prétendra se réclamer....Un domaine n'est pas la somme des intérêts, là est l'erreur. Il est la somme des dons. (Pilote, p. 233)

This act is the reason that a man, a country, a civilization is unique to an individual. "Le temps perdu pour ta rose" is the sacrifice that each man makes to his comrade. The sacrifice must be complete, even to the loss of one's own life. Man's responsibility to his fellow man was uppermost in the mind of Saint-Exupéry.

4. L'étoile. The final step in l'apprivoisement is the saddest. It is the moment of separation from one's comrade. It may be a temporary separation or a permanent loss. The fox cried at the departure of the Little Prince. The sadness of that moment, however, was lost in the joy of the friendship made. (Prince, pp. 46-47) Had the time not been spent with or for the friend, the moment would have had no importance or meaning.

In Le Petit Prince, as with his other works, Saint-Exupéry placed great emphasis on this moment. It may seem to be the culminating point in the relationship, but one's memory holds the joy of this communion. This memory is symbolically represented in his works by the star. The pilot's last sketch in Le Petit Prince is a barren desert scene with a single star in the distance above the horizon. The countryside is the most beautiful and yet the saddest that he knows, for it is here that the Little Prince arrived and departed. The solitary star remains as a symbol of a friendship that will continue to live in the heart of the pilot. (Prince, pp.62-63)

Although it seems that everything is now changed, Saint-Exupéry states that there is merely a rearrangement of the events into a new order:

> Au cours des corvées de l'enterrement, nous y aimons le mort, nous ne sommes pas en contact avec la mort. La mort est une grande chose. Elle est un nouveau réseau de relations avec les idées, les objets, les habitudes du mort. Elle est un nouvel arrangement du monde. Rien n'a changé en apparence, mais tout a changé. Les pages du livre sont les mêmes, mais non le sens du livre. (Terre, pp.25-26)

The relationship, as it grew and matured, still exists. One of the principals may no longer live, but the happiness of that communion does. The joy is maintained through the memory of the spent together. Absence, therefore, does not separate but actually binds them:

> Car il n'est point d'absence hors de la maison. Ton absence ne te separe point mais te lie, ne te retranche point mais te confond. (Citadelle, p. 613)

This ability to remember the joy of a true friendship renders man unique in the universe. Man must, then, strive toward this goal. Man must discover within himself the process of "taming" in which he becomes intimately aligned on the side of humanity. Saint-Exupéry has attempted to identify this communion through his symbol of apprivoisement.

CHAPTER V

A PARADOX RESOLVED

It may be said at this point that Saint-Exupéry has created a paradox which invalidates his philosophical view of humanity. On the one hand he has praised the isolated human being, the poet, the pilot who has the power to escape the universe. In his own life he had been a solitary figure among his friends. Yet, he has admonished humanity to pull together in an effort to move toward a better understanding among peoples. Is one thought to be voided, if the other is accepted? Since it is well-known that Saint-Exupéry was a fastidious perfectionist, it seems unlikely that he would deliberately maintain such an untenable position. One must this time look at his final work for the answer.

Citadelle is the self-proclaimed "posthumous" work in which he attempted to describe his utopia. The main character is a sultan who meditates over the conditions of his subjects. One of the principal themes of this work is Saint-Exupéry's creation of a magnificent edifice in the desert--a citadel of civilization. In constructing his fortress he explained the position of the individual in the "communauté des hommes." Therefore, in order to continue the form of the previous chapters, the symbolic representation for this chapter will be la citadelle.

La citadelle. Saint-Exupéry used either the citadel or the cathedral as a symbol for the formation of mankind into a composite working unit. A large edifice such as a citadel is, first of all, a formation of rocks or stones into a particular order to serve a specific function. The order into which these rocks are placed together depends on the architect and his imagination. The beauty of the edifice is dependent upon the basic order and scheme of the architectural plans. He explained as follows:

> Car ces pierres-là tu les vois d'abord qui composent un bras et y reçoivent leur sens. D'autres une gorge et d'autres une aile. Mais ensemble elles composent un ange de pierre. Et d'autres, ensemble, composent une ogive. Et d'autres ensemble une colonne. Et maintenant si tu prends ces anges de pierres, ces ogives et ces colonnes, tous ensemble composent un temple. Et maintenant si tu prends tous les temples, ils composent la ville sainte qui te gouverne dans ta marche dans le desert. (Citadelle, p. 266)

It is important to understand the three following points in the building of the citadel. The citadel is formed from individual stones. Through intelligently conceived plan, these stones are placed together in such a way as to create a usable building. The third step is, then, the actual use of that structure for some predefined purpose.

With these three ideas in mind, Saint-Exupéry's philosophy becomes much clearer. Individual, solitary man is the stone with which the cathedral of humanity is created. He has his own unique personality which sometimes will alienate him from his own kind. Just as each stone has its individual differences, so each individual human being has his distinguishing characteristics which may isolate him from certain members of a society. Isolation and individualism are part of the initial stage of the construction of the citadel.

The second stage of development is the amassing of these stones into some semblance of order within a plan. The difference between a pile of stones and a citadel is the order, or lack of it, into which the stones are placed. This plan, or order, is Saint-Exupéry's major concern. The question is one of what is the individual contribution to the whole plan. He wrote:

> L'ordre véritable c'est le temple. Mouvement du coeur de l'architecte qui noue comme une racine la diversité des matériaux et qui exige pour être un, durable et puissant, cette diversité même. (Citadelle, p. 239)

How can a single stone contribute to the overall plan of mankind? The goal of civilization is the synthesis of man's individualism in relation to his common united goal of harmony. This is the third step of the building of the fortress. The goal is an harmonious union of man's quest for solidarity--the communion of humanity. Men may have to lose certain aspects of their individualism, just as a stone is chipped and cut to be able to fit into the architect's plan and the mason's empty space. Man has to look beyond himself to the greater goal of united humanity. Saint-Exupéry alluded to this theory even in his earliest works. He stated that the mail must be delivered at any cost. "La compagnie prêchait: courrier précieux, courrier plus précieux que la vie." (Courrier, p. 31)

His philosophy was not one in which individual man is lost for the common good of all. He, in fact, criticized those who were duped by communism and anarchism. He warned his readers against both:

> L'anarchie se souvient du culte de l'Homme mais l'applique, avec rigueur, à l'individu. Et les contradictions qui naissent de cette rigueur sont pires que les nôtres.

> D'autres ont rassemblé ces pierres répandues en vrac dans le champs. Ils ont prêché 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. (Pilote, p. 239)

What he asked, on the contrary, was individual sacrifice and human understanding from each member of his civilization. He preached an unselfish brotherhood of man. Every man would feel joy at the success of his fellow man:

> L'un de ceux de l'équipe a remporté un prix et chacun de l'équipe se sent enrichi dans son coeur. Et celui qui a remporté le prix est fier pour l'équipe, et il se présente rougissant avec son prix sous le bras, mais s'il n'est point d'équipe mais une somme de membres, le prix ne signifiera quelque chose que pour celui qui le reçoit. (Citadelle, pp. 472-473)

Common good does not dictate his wishes; it is rather an individual decision to contribute in whatever way he can to improve that group of which he is a part. This is the "noeud divin" which binds man to his society. That is the resolution of the paradox. An apparent contradiction is synthesized by the individual stone giving himself into the mason's hand to create with other similar, yet unique, stones, a cathedral.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Saint-Exupéry must be considered along with the great adventure writers of the century. He wrote about action that he had known and experienced first-hand. He was involved in an exciting sort of work. He lived with danger on every flight. He was almost killed several times in his flying career. He wrote graphically of these adventures and made them live in the mind of his reader.

However, it is not the adventure writing that makes Saint-Exupéry popular among contemporary critics. He was a poet in his own right and his poetry sang the virtue and desire of man. Although he never wrote a poem, as such, his prose rings with the symbolism and imagery of any fine poet. From his pen flowed a "poetry of flight." He had attempted successfully to combine the best of these two worlds--aviation and poetry.

There are two major considerations in the works of Saint-Exupéry. First of all, his very life and talent made him an isolated individual. He was a pilot and pilots, in general, fly alone. This solitude gave him a time for meditation--meditation about life, man and humanity. He also was isolated to a certain degree, on the ground. Because of his aristocratic background, he sometimes separated himself from the men with whom he worked. He was, even at his death, a solitary man among his friends.

This solitude is represented poetically in his works by two symbols. A pilot's means of escape was his airplane. Except for gravity which would eventually force him to return to land, the pilot was free of all ties to the earth. No other man before him had experienced such an escape. The airplane represented for Saint-Exupéry the escape of the poetic genius. It gave him a new broader perspective with which to look at man. It freed him from the normal conventions and restrictions that humanity placed on its members. Therefore, Saint-Exupéry, poet and pilot, could make his observations in a much more objective manner.

The second symbol of solitude is the desert. The desert, void of life, represented for him the isolation of man from his peers, here on earth. Although there were millions of inhabitants on earth, the desert showed man's real feelings in relation to the rest of humanity. He separated himself by various personality flaws--pride, selfishness, blindness, prejudice. Men separated themselves from him for the same reasons as well as for jealousy and misunderstanding. The desert was emblematic of this separation.

If the study stopped here, it could be said, and rightly so, that Saint-Exupéry was an extremely pessimistic writer. However, the Little Prince and the pilot found friendship in the desert wasteland itself. It is ironic, and yet symbolic that l'apprivoisement took place in the desert. Set against this background of bleak isolationism is the major theme of the works of Saint-Exupéry. He loved humanity and was very optimistic about its future. He expected men to seek constantly

their true communion with one another. Human understanding was his ultimate goal.

He used various poetic images to express this communion among men. The most elemental one was descriptive of the relationship that existed between two men. In his daily work he and his pilot comrades brushed shoulders with death together, and the common dangers solidified them into a closely knit group. The pilot and his co-pilot each sacrificed himself to the well-being of the other. Saint-Exupéry explored these relationships by discussing the lives of his comrades: Mermoz, Guillaumet, Hochedé, and Prévot. In the air or on the ground their friendships were beyond the realm of human baseness.

The second sort of communion existed between man and his alleged enemy. Saint-Exupéry pointed out that the enemy was also a man with similar hopes and ambitions. Although he may temporarily oppose the present sentiments of Saint-Exupéry, he must be regarded first of all as man. It is, therefore, with respect that Saint-Exupéry discussed his current enemy. As a man, he, too, seeks friendship and attempts to meet and understand death. Even in war, enemies have that goal in common.

A special communion exists between man and the earth he inhabits. The earth has given man a site for the establishment of his civilization. The earth, then, has a very basic part in the life of the individual. In the same way that man has a responsibility to his fellow man, he must care for the earth on which he lives. Earth gives him life, and man is obliged to return that life to his planet.

A final communion is the summary of all the preceding points. It is man's communion with his civilization. Civilization must have one goal--the complete harmony of all men in their ability to co-exist. Thus, this final union involves every aspect of humanity. This relationship goes beyond city, nation, and hemisphere. It is a true friendship that supercedes all personal, selfish objectives.

The establishment of this comradeship is only the beginning. Once the definition has been formulated, man is required to spend some time with his fellow man and is responsible for him. The apprivoisement of the Little Prince and the pilot took several days and a walk to a fountain. The time passed together and the subsequent responsibilities attached to their love cemented the two newly-made friends into one.

The final symbol created is the most beautiful of all. Saint-Exupéry compared humanity to a pile of rocks, scattered helter-skelter in a disorganized heap. This would be the scene if man stopped at the initial stage of solitude. Man would continue on his obscure, selfish way with no apparent goal. The difference between the pile of stones and a beautiful cathedral or citadel is a purposeful order to those stones. Therefore, the final symbol of Saint-Exupéry is the citadel. This fortress shows the strength and harmony that is possible with a defined goal. That definition is within man himself. The plan does not presuppose a divinity. The union comes from within man himself. God is silent in response to man's pleas. Man must find his own existence, his own "divine knot."

Saint-Exupéry felt that that "knot" was individual man's concerted effort to fit smoothly into humanity. It meant personal sacrifice, perhaps death. It meant that despite personal eccentricities, he would work together to understand his fellow man. It meant that he would spend time helping his neighbor, his country, his world. It meant that man would build a citadel to protect future generations from inner conflict. It meant a communion of individual human beings.

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