1971

Man's Transcendence in the Wisdom of the Sands by Antoine De Saint-Exupery

William F. Briel
Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation
MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE

IN THE WISDOM OF THE SANDS

BY ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

by

William F. Briel

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of Loyola University for the
Master's Degree in Philosophy

January

1971
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### INTRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Purpose</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Biographical Sketch</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Flying, Escape, and Transcendence</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Chapter

1. **THE METAPHYSICS OF MAN IN PROCESS: "BECOMING" AS MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE**  
   16
   
   A. Textual Study
   
   1. Process as Growth  
   2. Ends  
   3. Time  
   4. The Creative Act  
   5. Relations

   B. Summary  
   39

   C. Commentary  
   43

   1. Dewey  
   2. Sartre  
   3. Saint-Exupery as Synthesizer

II. **MORALITY AND MAN'S HAPPINESS: "BARTERING ONESELF" AS MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE**  
   58
   
   A. Textual Study
   
   1. Bartering Oneself  
   2. Commitment  
   3. Giving and Receiving  
   4. Love  
   5. Fervor
## Chapter

### B. Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C. Commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Seeking Perfection</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-Love, Self-Acceptance and Finitude</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Autonomous Man and Receiving</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conclusion</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### III. ENVIRONMENT AND THE SOCIAL ORDER:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;STRUCTURING&quot; AND MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### A. Textual Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structuring</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festivals</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order and Life</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leader</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom and Constraint</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Individual and Society</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### C. Commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being Structured</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existentialism, Process Philosophy, and</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neoplatonism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nietzsche's Übermensch?</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggerated Sense of Responsibility</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Feminine: Life as a Value in Itself</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Basic Aspiration</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. KNOWLEDGE: SPIRITUAL VISION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AND MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### A. Textual Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logic and Definitions</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Chapter

## 2. "Contraries" and Their Resolution  
### 173

## 3. "Spirit" and "Intellect"  
### 187

## 4. The "Knot Which Binds Things Together"  
### 191

## 5. "The Meaning of Things"  
### 194

## 6. Silence  
### 197

## 7. The Search for Truth and Suffering  
### 202

### B. Summary  
### 206

### C. Commentary

| 1. Process Philosophy and Existentialism  
| 2. Plotinus  
| 3. Logic  
| 4. Resolving "Contraries"  
| 212 | 212 | 218 | 223 |

### V. GOD AND MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE  
### 225

#### A. Textual Study

| 1. God: An Overview  
| 2. God and Spiritual Vision  
| 3. God and the Brotherhood of Men  
| 4. God as the End of Man's Transcendence  
| 5. God is Transcendent  
| 6. Relative Ends of Man's Transcendence; Participation  
| 7. The God Who Doesn't Answer Prayers  
| 8. Christianity  
| 9. Asceticism  
| 226 | 230 | 233 | 235 | 237 | 240 | 243 | 248 | 253 |

#### B. Summary  
### 255

| 1. God and Spiritual Vision  
| 2. God, Process and Becoming  
| 3. God is Transcendent  
| 4. The God Who Doesn't Answer Prayers  
| 5. The God Who Does Not Reveal Himself  
| 6. Saint-Exupery's God and Religion  
| 255 | 256 | 257 | 259 | 260 | 261 |
Chapter

C. Commentary

1. Plotinus ......... 263
2. The Impassible God ...... 273

CONCLUSION .............. 279

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............. 281
INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

Whence do men draw this passion for eternity, flung by chance as they are upon a scarcely cooled bed of lava, threatened from the beginning by the deserts that are to be, and under the constant menace of the snows?¹

In this passage from Wind, Sand and Stars Saint Exupery presents a view of man such like that proposed by existentialist philosophers.² Man is thrown into existence, his existence is threatened and opposed. Yet he is ever striving to assert himself in the face of the threat and opposition present in the human situation. And he strives not only to preserve himself but to go beyond himself and reach out toward the infinite - to transcend himself. This drive to transcend himself is the motive power of man's creativity and growth; it is the source of man's dignity and hope. Friedrich Nietzsche, who was a prime philosophical influence on Saint-Exupery, writes of this transcendence in Thus Spoke Zarathustra:


Life itself confided this secret to me: "Behold," it said, "I am that which must always overcome itself. Indeed you call it a will to procreate or a drive to an end, to something higher, farther, more manifold: but all this is one."  

The aim of this thesis is to study the idea of man's transcendence presented by Saint-Exupery in *The Wisdom of the Sands*. 

Saint-Exupery's *The Wisdom of the Sands* is a long monologue, a discourse on moral and political philosophy made by a Berber king. The king's discourse is an explanation, often given in reaction to what various people in the kingdom say or do, of how he rules his kingdom, of why he rules the way he does. In giving this explanation he talks of his own life and the lives of his subjects, their happiness and their goals, and is often led into making statements having metaphysical implications, as well as implications in philosophy of man, ethics, and political philosophy. The Berber king is the only principal character in *The Wisdom of the Sands* - with the possible exception of his father. Other characters appear only briefly, are spoken of in the third 


person by the Berber king, and seem to be introduced only as an occasion for making some comment. The Berber king is a fictional character but it is presumed in this thesis that when he makes philosophical statements he is speaking for Saint-Exupery.

Although *The Wisdom of the Sands* is the most philosophical of Saint-Exupery's works, it is not written in technical philosophical language. It is a literary work, Saint-Exupery's Utopia. As a result, part of the task of this thesis will be recasting in philosophical language and systematizing, where possible, ideas expressed in literary form. Each of the five chapters of this thesis will thus contain three sections: the first, a textual study; the second, a summary of the textual study; the third, a commentary on the philosophical implications of the texts studied in the chapter.

The method employed in the section devoted to textual study in each of the five chapters involves frequent quoting of *The Wisdom of the Sands*. This is done so the reader can judge for himself the accuracy of the interpretations made. This frequent quoting is all the more necessary because in *The Wisdom of the Sands* philosophical ideas are often communicated by a certain literary "flavor" rather than directly. Philosophical interpretation thus becomes more difficult and
and indirect, and it is more than ever necessary to show the basis for one's interpretation in the text. The literary nature of the book also means that the text quoted often supports the point being made in a roundabout way - by implication rather than direct statement.

The raison d'être of this particular thesis on Saint-Exupery lies in the following:

1. Previous studies of Saint-Exupery's writings have not considered in detail the idea of man's transcendence in any of his works.

2. This is a specifically philosophical analysis of the philosophically most valuable work of Saint-Exupery. In very little, if any, of the research done on Saint-Exupery has he been considered from a technical philosophical point of view.

The influence of Nietzsche on Saint-Exupery has been noted in various studies. To document that influence in more detail than has already been done by others would require a separate thesis in itself, and is not attempted here.

In this thesis there are noted however: similarities of Saint-Exupery's metaphysical thought to that of John Dewey

---

Jean-Paul Sartre; similarity of Saint-Exupery's philosophy of authenticity to that of Sartre; similarity of Saint-Exupery's philosophy of God to that of Plotinus. These similarities have been noted partially in a search for the vocabulary and systematized ideas with which to express philosophically what Saint-Exupery is saying. They have also been noted as suggestions for possible future research of a comparative nature. But noting these similarities is done in passing and is not considered the primary task of this thesis. The primary task of this thesis is to study the text of Saint-Exupery's *The Wisdom of the Sands*, analyzing the idea of man's transcendence found there.

3. Because Saint-Exupery's mode of expression gives much attention to concrete human experiences, the analysis done in this work provides something of a phenomenology of the human experience of transcendence.

4. A contribution is made to the discussion of whether Saint-Exupery believed in God - and, if so, what kind of God - in Chapter V of this thesis, where his view of God is considered in light of his view of man's transcendence as presented in *The Wisdom of the Sands*. As we shall see, Saint-Exupery in *The Wisdom of the Sands* considers God primarily from the point of view of man experiencing Him as that towards which his (man's) transcendence is directed.
5. Similarly, a contribution is made in Chapters II and III to a discussion of the problem whether Saint-Exupery suggests achieving man's transcendence (his own and others') by force or whether he does actually respect man's freedom. The question arises partially in discussing the nature of the ideal leader as presented in The Wisdom of the Sands.
B. Biographical Sketch

Many of Saint-Exupery's works are to some degree autobiographical. Even in The Wisdom of the Sands, a Utopia, his personality and personal way of viewing things finds much expression in the person of the Berber king. For this reason a short biographical sketch of Saint-Exupery will be provided here as a background to the body of the thesis. 6

Antoine de Saint-Exupery was born on the twenty-ninth of June, 1900, at Lyons, France, the son of Count Jean de Saint-Exupery and Marie Boyer de Fons-Colombe. The family was aristocratic though by the time of Antoine's birth poor. Antoine is said to have carried with him throughout life an aristocratic sense of dignity and the spirit of knighthood: he was chivalrous and adventuresome.

Antoine's father died in 1904 and his mother and the five children of the family lived with various maternal relatives during Antoine's childhood. He seems to have had a happy childhood nonetheless and many of his biographers and critics find this to be a significant influence on his life and writing. As a child he was described as sensitive,

impetuous, enthusiastic; he was an inventor and experimenter at an early age. In 1912 a flying ace called Vedrines came to Amberieu where Antoine was living. Antoine hung around the airfield for several days and eventually persuaded Vedrines to give him a ride. Antoine was very excited by the experience and wrote one of his early poems about the flight.

As a student Antoine was not outstanding. He worked in fits and starts and then only at subjects which struck his fancy, chiefly French and Latin – giving no indication of his later achievements in mathematics. He was sometimes absent-minded and prone to daydreaming. His moods could change quickly from gay and generous to brooding. Saint-Exupéry's performance in school is not a good indicator of his abilities or interests. Later in life he showed knowledge of astronomy, aerodynamics, jet propulsion, nuclear physics, relativity, biology, sociology, Marxism, psychoanalysis, mysticism, the music of Bach, the painting of Van Gogh. A professor of mathematics at the University of Algiers said he could have made a great contribution to mathematics had he devoted his life to it.7

After graduating Antoine took the examination for the

7Cf. WL, pp. 84, 204.
Naval Academy in 1919 but failed. Then he drifted for nearly two years, living in Paris, holding no steady job, not knowing what to do with his life. But in 1921 he entered the Military Service and learned to fly.

In 1926, after having attempted and given up a more settled life, and after a broken engagement which left him quite unhappy, Saint-Exupery joined the pioneering band of airmen depicted in Night Flight. It was dangerous work: they were the first airline to fly at night, and were flying over oceans and mountains and deserts at a time when motors and radio equipment were primitive and unsure. It was while working for this airline in Argentina that he met Consuelo Suncen, whom he married in 1931.

Flying and writing were the two activities which occupied Saint-Exupery most the rest of his life. He was involved in three serious crashes but continued to fly, undaunted. At the outbreak of World War II he volunteered to serve in the French Air Force and, though over-age, was finally accepted. He died in 1944. He never returned to his Corsican base from a reconnaissance mission over France.
C. Flying, Escape, and Transcendence

Flying as was mentioned above was central in Saint-Exupery's experience. Three of his books are written about it. He has been said to be to the air what Conrad and Melville were to the sea.\(^8\) Flying seemed to express a basic drive or aspiration of Saint-Exupery. "'I fly,' he once told a friend, 'because it releases my mind from the tyranny of petty things; it gives me a sense of the wider horizons.'”\(^9\)

Cf. p. 9. This basic drive could be variously described as a drive to ascend, to rise above, to escape.

The relation of flying to this basic drive will be further considered here because it influenced the way Saint-Exupery thought about transcendence, the topic of this thesis.\(^10\)

First, this basic drive was partially a drive to escape. His friend Leon Werth said that Saint-Exupery "had no respect for the hierarchy of the hours."\(^11\) He would call friends in the middle of the night and enthusiastically and

\(^8\)WL, pp. 9, 10; also Jules Roy, Passion et Mort de Saint-Exupery (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), pp. 27ff.

\(^9\)WL, p. 55.

\(^10\)The thoughts expressed in this section C. were suggested partially by WL, pp. 10-14, 19-22.

\(^11\)WL, p. 19.
unselfconsciously read them something he had just written or ask their opinion on a question that had been bothering him. Werth guessed it was partially because of being accustomed to flying over the earth at hundreds of miles per hour Saint-Exupery had acquired a sense of release from the bonds of time and space.

To his friends Saint-Exupery always gave the impression of someone ill at ease in the world as though he resented its confinement. 'He was like the hero of his own fairy story, The Little Prince,' as Princess Marthe Bibesco, who had met him in Rumania, expressed it. 'He seemed not to belong to this earth at all,' she went on, 'but to have dropped on it by chance from Mars or Jupiter or one of the other planets. But that,' she added, 'was the source of his strange and elusive charm; it had a kind of evanescent quality.' 

Even to his own countrymen he was a bit of an enigma. 'Quel garcon extraordinaire,' they always say of him, 'il n'etait pas tout a fait de ce monde!' - implying that he was odd, eccentric, a bit of a fantast, a man with only one foot in the real world. 

\[12\] WL, p. 20. 
\[13\] WL, p. 10.
All of these accounts point to the drive in Saint-Exupery to escape confinement and to escape the ordinary. He expressed this drive physically when he escaped the earth by flying. But this is not the only way one can express such a drive. Walter Kaufmann says in his Critique of Religion and Philosophy: "Philosophy means liberation from the two dimensions of routine, soaring above the well known, seeing it in new perspectives... Philosophy subverts man's satisfaction with himself." Escape of the ordinary can be expressed in many dimensions of man's life. Physically, Saint-Exupery escaped the ordinary by flying; intellectually and artistically, by his creative writing; morally, in his idealism; religiously, in his mystical tendencies. All of these are forms of transcendence: transcendence implies an escape from the ordinary and from limitation to go beyond them.

Second, Saint-Exupery's drive to escape which found expression in flying is also a drive to "rise above." It is a drive to achieve truth by achieving distance, objectivity about things, an "over-view."

In The Wisdom of the Sands Saint-Exupery often speaks, in the person of the Berber king, of seeing the truth as

seeing the interrelatedness of things - the kind of interrelatedness (in a physical sense) a pilot would see from his vantage point between individual things experienced separately on the ground. In *The Wisdom of the Sands*, the Berber king often ascends a mountain to look down on the scene below, to collect his thoughts and pray. In *The Wisdom of the Sands* Saint-Exupéry also urges the necessity of seeing the lived truths of other men in perspective, of being able to rise above one's own truth and be open to the truth of one's enemies. Concretely, he urged expatriate Frenchmen feuding during World War II to rise above factions and work together to free France. Thus the drive to rise above seems to find analogous expressions in flying and the quest for objectivity and seeing interrelations - which is another kind of transcendence: transcendence of a limited point of view.

Third, Saint-Exupéry's drive to escape which finds expression in flying seems to be also a desire to seek the solitude as well as the austere and elemental surroundings (cf. the book title *Wind, Sand and Stars*) which are necessary for contemplation. This kind of escape also seems to be connected with Saint-Exupéry's mystical tendencies. This kind of escape is a transcendence of the ordinary and a search for contemplation and perhaps for that transcendence which is the ek-stasis of mystical knowledge.
Finally, Saint-Exupery's drive to escape which finds expression in flying seems to include a seeking for a sense of power as an escape or a release from the tension between the demands of his idealism and his own or the world's (for which he feels responsible) actual performance. This is an escape from a feeling of powerlessness and frustration, it involves seeking a sense of action and endeavor, driven by a sense of urgency. A sense of power is achieved by having a large machine at one's control, by speed, by vast horizons. Achieving this sense of power seems to be of the nature of recreation (in the literal meaning of that word). But it runs the danger of degenerating into escapism rather than being real escape in the sense of transcending limitations.

To summarize, flying was a life-long occupation of Saint-Exupery and was thus central in his experience of life. Flying seemed to express a basic drive or aspiration of Saint-Exupery to "escape": "I fly," he once told a friend, 'because it releases my mind from the tyranny of petty things; it gives me a sense of wider horizons.'

---

16 Madame Pierre Jean-Jouve, a psychoanalyst who knew Saint-Exupery, thought that his love of flying became in the end a kind of escapism and that Saint-Exupery lived to an abnormal extent in a world of dreams and make-believe. Cf. WL, pp. 20-21.
17 WL, p. 55.
aspiration to escape is a drive to transcendence, to transcend the ordinary and the limited, to go beyond them. The forms this drive takes are: insight and creative writing; moral idealism; a desire for perspective, objectivity and tolerance; a desire for solitude and contemplation; mystical tendencies; seeking a sense of power.
CHAPTER I

THE METAPHYSICS OF MAN IN PROCESS:
"BECOMING" AS MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE

Many of the statements made by Saint-Exupery in The Wisdom of the Sands have metaphysical implications. It is the purpose of this chapter to study these statements. The kind of world-view presented in The Wisdom of the Sands leads us to call Saint-Exupery a process philosopher, with the focus of his attention on man in process.

A. Textual Study

1. Process as Growth

a) In Saint-Exupery's world-view all things are in process. He does not use the word "process" however, but talks about process in terms of change and of growth:

I know that everything . . . must live and grow and constantly transform itself; else it is mere dead matter, a museum piece. (91-92) (numbers given alone in parenthesis after quotations made in this thesis refer to page numbers in The Wisdom of the Sands.)

Perhaps she might regain him by reawakening in him the man he was when he loved her. . . . Then it will be with him as with a tree that grows. (232-233)
You cannot stay unchanging in a world that, all around, is changing. (263)

As is indicated by these examples, Saint-Exupery's model for process is always organic or psychological, never the mechanistic model of physical science which is often used by process philosophers. Saint-Exupery did not seem interested enough in purely physical processes to say anything about them in *The Wisdom of the Sands*. His concern was for life, especially human life, and the increase of that life through growth.

b) Because reality is in process, a static stability and security can never be achieved.

Saint-Exupery brings this out in speaking of the "sedentaries," lazy inhabitants of an oasis whose chief value is a static security. In the following texts the stability and security provided by the sedentaries' home is seen to be constantly threatened by processes going on outside the home and to be maintained only by constant processes inside the home - housework:

Vain is the illusion of the sedentaries who think they can ever dwell in peace; for at every moment men's dwellings are in peril. (33)

When I speak of the "sedentary," I have not him in mind who loves his home above all else. I speak of one who has ceased to love it, or even to see it. For your home, too, is a never-ending victory - as is well known to your wife who remakes it with the dawn of each new day. (275)
Nor is love a static reality, something possessed once and for all. It must grow to remain alive:

Thus, too, love is no sure resting place if it does not transform itself day to day, like a child in the womb... For all that is neither ascent nor a transition lacks significance. (120)

c) In seeing process as organic or psychological, Saint-Exupery sees the dimension of suffering accompanying it:

Life is made of changes, fibres straining and creaking within the cedar tree, painful transformations. (101)

The caterpillar dies when it has made its chrysalis; the plant when it has run to seed. Thus all that is changing its condition travails and suffers. (75)

All ascent is painful, every change of heart has its birth pangs... suffering, too, goes to the making of man's plenitude. (118-119)

2. Ends

a) Many process philosophers hold that process has no goal, no finality. Saint-Exupery however sees all process and growth to be directed towards God as an ultimate end and absolute standard of perfection:

... like the trees in the thick forest, ever thrusting up towards the open day that will never be theirs (for each is smothered by the shadow of the others); nevertheless valiantly they climb aloft, soaring slim and stately as pillars, transmuted into power by their ascent towards the sun whom they will never see. Thus though God is not to be attained, He proffers himself and man builds himself up in Space, like the branches of the tree. (142-143)
A vain woman is satisfied with herself. She has nothing to get from you but your applause. But we despise such cravings, we the eternal seekers, aspiring Godwards; for nothing in ourselves can ever satisfy us. (271)

Both of these texts are rich in significance. Together they are probably Saint-Exupery's most direct statement, in metaphysical terms, of his philosophy of transcendence: Man aspires to be God, is satisfied with nothing less. Yet in some sense he is a "futile passion" for he cannot attain God. But the tension generated by his unfulfilled desire is the motive power behind the growth he does achieve.

b) The nature of God as the ultimate end and absolute standard of perfection is usually described in one of two ways: first, as absolute being or absolute life which things approximate ever more closely as they grow; (this is evidenced by the last two texts cited above) second, as absolute unity, absolute resolution of conflict and opposition which things attain ever more perfectly as they grow:

I make the long ascent leading to God's peace. . . For well, O Lord, I know that thus it is Thou moudest me, according to Thy will, into something loftier than myself, and that apart from Thee I shall never know love or peace . . . for it is in Thy peace alone, O Lord, that love and love's conditions, all conflict stilled, merge at last and are at one. (322)

c) It has been seen that Saint-Exupery saw God as the ultimate end of process. Saint-Exupery will not allow for
any partial achievement of this ultimate end, any intermediate stage of development along the way, to be called an "end." At any stage of development short of God there is always more to be achieved, more to become:

... We the eternal seekers, aspiring Godwards; for nothing in ourselves can ever satisfy us. (271)

For a man is so built that, essentially, love is a thirst for love, culture a thirst for culture, and the joy of the ceremonial quest of the black pearl, a thirst for the black pearl lying at the bottom of the sea. (340) Hence no stage of development short of God is really an end for it is to be transcended if development towards God is to continue. As much as an end, it is also a beginning.

This understanding of what is and is not an "end" is manifested in the following text:

The end to be attained is but the illusion of the climber, as he fares on from crest to crest; and once the goal is reached it has no meaning. (141)

As might be evident from what was said above, "end" in Saint-Exupery's use of the word, necessarily implies finish or final completion. It is for this reason, more precisely, that the word "end" cannot according to Saint-Exupery be used to describe any achievement, any stage of growth. Nothing is ever finally completed. Completion would mean cessation of growth, stagnation, death. Rather, all things must
continue to grow and achieve, "aspiring Godwards":

"But now mark well my words! Once completed, your city will die. . . . But perfection is not a goal we reach; it is a bartering of one's all in God. And never have I 'completed' my city." (69)

No goal is ever attained, no cycle ever completed, no epoch ever ended (save for the historian, who invents these divisions for your convenience.) (154)

Man is in fact dissatisfied with his achievements, and (p. 20) seeks to go beyond them. Saint-Exupery explains this by way of a humorous example:

Thus the man harassed by sleeplessness tosses about on his bed trying to find a coign of coolness, but hardly has he touched it than it grows warm and repels him. So he proceeds to seek elsewhere for a lasting source of coolness; but there is none, for no sooner has he touched it than its source of coolth (sic) is spent. (151)

In order to clarify this discussion of ends we might distinguish between an ultimate end, which implies completion, and intermediate ends which do not. Only an ultimate end would be properly called an "end" by Saint-Exupery.

In the following text intermediate ends are called landmarks - they of their very nature point to something beyond themselves. They should be transcended. The process of man transcending himself, developing towards God, should stop only at man's death.

For "ends" are mere appearances, landmarks strewn haphazard along a path whose issue is hidden from you. Beyond yonder mountain height is another mountain
You can know nothing of the stages on the way . . . only the direction has a meaning. It is the going­towards that matters, not the destination; for all journeys end in death. (150)

The picture of the growth process presented in the above text implies that man does not have a clear understanding of his ultimate end: (your growth lies) "along a path whose issue is hidden from you." Man may set present goals (intermediate ends), know that they are eventually to be transcended, yet he has no clear knowledge of his ultimate end, or even of what lies immediately beyond his present goals. However, when he gets close to the goal he has set, he can see beyond it to a slightly higher goal: "Beyond yonder mountain height is another mountain height." Thus man gropes towards his ultimate end.

d) It was said above that God is not to be attained by man. [Cf. pp. 18-19 and (142-143)] Thus death could not be an attainment of the ultimate end, God, in the sense that God's perfect being and unity are attained. Yet death is a completion and in some sense a fulfillment of man's growth process.

That death is a completion of man's growth process was indicated in the last text cited above: "all journeys end in death." (150) Moreover, only death should be the completion of man's growth process. One who has stopped
growing is like one who is dead:

The vain woman has called a halt within herself, for she believes that her true visage can be achieved before the hour of death. Hence she is no longer capable of receiving or giving, but like one who is dead.

(271)

In several very similar statements Saint-Exupery describes death as a fulfillment:

"The one thing needful for a man is to become - to be at last, and to die in the fullness of his being."

(127)

There came to me a craving for my last end, and I prayed God: . . . Let me now be, having done with becoming. (169)

There is introduced in these texts a term which is used often by Saint-Exupery in The Wisdom of the Sands, often underlined: "become" or "becoming." (French: devenir) Among the terms used by Saint-Exupery this one is the best synonym for the term "transcendence," the topic of this thesis.

In the following text death is described as a freeing experience, a relief from a burden, an attaining of peace:

There befell me, too, the consolation of being at last rid of my shackles; it was as though I had bartered that old, gnarled flesh of mine for a new, winged body soaring in the invisible. And born at last from within myself, I could wander freely in the company of the archangel I had sought so long and vainly. It was as though, by discarding my shell of flesh, I had become amazingly young; yet this youthfulness was not charged with desire or zest but with a shining peace. It was the youth of those who stand on the threshold of eternity, not of those who are entering the tumult of life's dawn; and in it Space
and Time were merged. I had completed life's becoming and become eternal. (133)

Death, in this text, seems preferable to life. Death means:
freedom to soar as opposed to being shackled; youthfulness
as opposed to having "old gnarled flesh"; attaining one's
ideal ("the company of the archangel) as opposed to a vain,
endless seeking for it; peace as opposed to desire (implying
a lacking, an unfilled need); eternity and stability as op-
posed to the "tumult" of life; unity ("Space and Time were
merged") as opposed to complexity.

In the light of what has been said previously in this
chapter, the key to understanding the foregoing text lies in
seeing death as the attaining of one's ideal ("the company
of the archangel") as opposed to a vain, endless searching
for it. Death is seen as a relief, an attaining of peace,
because at death man's becoming is completed: he is freed
of the burden of needing constantly to be dissatisfied with
himself, constantly to transcend himself, constantly to be
striving for a goal he will never reach (his ultimate end,
God.) If at death man does not achieve his ultimate end,
God, (he achieves the level of "the company of the arch-
angel," which is below God) he does at least achieve rest.
And in terms of human feelings he attains freedom, exuber-
ance, youthfulness when he is relieved of the harshness and
self-hatred implied in constant dissatisfaction with oneself - implied at least, we judge, in Saint-Exupery's kind of constant dissatisfaction.

In other texts Saint-Exupery seems to be describing man's fulfillment at death as a kind of union with God in an afterlife:

Thou wilt open the great door of eternity's grange to the garrulous race of men. (129)

Open wide to us Thy portal. . . . He who enters will discover a lake of soft water, vaster than all the seven seas together, of whose existence he had intimations in the low sound of streams. (130)

Such mystical language is hard to interpret; it is difficult to determine how it should be taken. Seeing death as some kind of union with God or participation in God would make sense: becoming ceases at death and man can simply be; thus the change and complexity which becoming implies is replaced by the stability and unity of being; in achieving more stability and unity man comes closer to God, participates more fully in God, who is absolute unity and stability. And in Saint-Exupery's thought absolute unity seems to be God's most important characteristic. Thus though Saint-Exupery felt compelled to urge himself and others on to constant becoming, constant change, yet he felt a nostalgia, a mystical longing, for the stability and unity...
which is represented absolutely by God and is achieved partially in death.

d) The following text, part of which was cited before, provides a synthetic view of process moving towards an end. Many of the ideas already discussed reappear here: God as the ultimate end of process; God as ultimate end is characterized as perfect unity, the resolution of all opposition; only in attaining God would this end be attained. (But man does not attain God.) There is also introduced in this text the idea that suffering or the tension of oppositions is a necessary condition of growth or achievement. Progress made towards God as ultimate end (absolute unity) is not a smooth continuum, a gradual resolution of the tension of oppositions. It involves rather a dialectical movement between tension and resolution. A tension between one set of opposed things may be resolved but then a new tension arises (or at least an already existent one rises to consciousness) and must in turn be resolved:

From reconcilement to reconcilement with my enemies, but likewise from new enemy to new enemy, I, too, make the long ascent leading me to God's peace. For I know there can be no question, for the ship, of humoring the onsets of the sea, nor, for the sea of dealing gently with the ship - for, in the first case the ship will sink, and in the second it would soon degenerate into a mere ungainly barge. But I know, rather, that it behooves us never to flinch or come to terms, out of a mawkish lovingkindness, in this war without respite.
which is the condition of peace, but rather, leaving on the way those who fall (since their deaths are a condition of life), to accept the hardships which are a precondition of the day of festival and of the night of the chrysalis which is a precondition of the wings.

For well, O Lord, I know that thus it is Thou mouldest me, according to Thy will, into something loftier than myself, and that apart from Thee I shall never know love or peace . . . for it is in Thy peace alone, O Lord, that love and love's conditions, all conflict stilled, merge at last, and are at one. (322)

3. Time

a) One way Saint-Exupery views time is as the measure of ongoing process. Insofar as process is a continuous flow of events, time also is a continuous flow:

No goal is ever attained, no cycle ever completed, no epoch ever ended (save for the historian, who invents these divisions for your convenience.) (154)

While Saint-Exupery presumes this view of time, he doesn't consider time from this point of view very often when he speaks of time.

b) Saint-Exupery considers time most often from the point of view of man acting in time and creating. His starting point is present time. Present time is the subjective point of view of man immersed in time. Present time is the moment of commitment, of action, of creating. All other time is viewed in relation to present time - and to the act of creating - as either before or after, past or future. The past is that from which the present has developed, the past has provided the "raw materials" with which man works in the
present when he creates. The future is that which will develop from the present; the future is the fruit that will come from the creative activity man is exercising in the present. (The ideas expressed in "b)" have been gathered from texts cited below)

c) Saint-Exupery's philosophy of transcendence is reflected in his view of time. There reappears here the familiar theme that no stage of development short of God is to be considered an "end"; one should not consider the present (the "Here and Now") an "end" and remain satisfied with it. This is true for two reasons: First, since the world is in process the present is a beginning as well as an end:

\[\text{... The Here and Now, that from which you are ever setting forth. (141)}\]

Second, no present situation can be accepted as satisfactory and final if growth and achievement is to continue:

\"They have split up man's works and days into two periods, which are meaningless: that of conquering, and that of enjoying the fruits of victory. Have you seen a tree growing up, and once it is fully grown, preening itself on its achievement? The tree grows because it must. And this I say to you: 'They are already dead who become sedentaries when the victory is won.'" (40)

d) Man should not remain satisfied with the present and should strive to create a future that is better. Yet in another sense he can only accept the present situation and work with it as it is. For only by taking action in the
"Here and Now" will he ever accomplish anything. And yet he has no control over the bygone past and the "raw materials" (the present) it has given him to work with:

There is no progress without acceptance of that which is, the Here and Now. (141)

Preparing the future is but establishing the present... Never is there anything but the Here-and-Now to set in order... Now then that all true creation is... not a quest of utopian chimeras, but the apprehending of a new aspect of the Present, which is a heap of raw materials bequeathed by the Past, and it is for you neither to grumble at it nor to rejoice over it, for like yourself, all these things merely are, having come to birth. (154-156)

In another text Saint-Exupery calls the whole past "a birth and a becoming" which has resulted in the present:

Bear well in mind that your whole past was but a birth and a becoming, even as was all that has taken place in the empire up to the present day. (154)

e) Seeing the past as provider of raw materials means in human social terms recognizing and accepting the link between generations:

But if you make a rift between generations, it is as if you bade a man start life again in middle age, having stripped him of the knowledge, feelings, comprehension, fears, and hopes that were his. (89)

f) Human unhappiness comes of time flowing to no purpose. It results especially from the coming of a future that is not chosen or created but merely happens:

Grief is ever begotten of Time that, flowing, has not shaped its fruit. Grief there is for the mere flux of empty days. (32)
g) "Festival" is a word which occurs often in The Wisdom of the Sands. According to Saint-Exupery human psychology requires festivals - periodic ritual celebrations of the present both as the fruit of past effort and as expectation of future accomplishments. Festivals with their dialectic of past-present-future thus give a structure to time which reflects the dialectical movement mentioned above [Cf. 2.e] between tension and resolution of tension as things in process make progress towards their ultimate end, God.¹ The tension of worry and work for things yet to be achieved alternates with the resolution of tension in the celebration of accomplishment and hope at a festival. In the following texts Saint-Exupery discusses festivals along with his view of time and "ends":

Thus became clear to me the meaning of the festival, which marks the moment of your passing from one phase to another; when observance of the ceremonial has conditioned your rebirth. . . .

Also have I spoken to you of the birth of your child; likewise an occasion for rejoicing. But you do not continue day after day, years long, rubbing your

¹Time for Saint-Exupery is, or should be, both cyclic and linear. A cycle of festivals seems necessary - thus time is cyclic; yet progress is made towards a goal, God - thus time is linear. Combining two dimensional circle and one dimensional line into a three dimensional spiral, one has the geometrical figure used to describe Teilhard de Chardin's view of time. It seems to describe Saint-Exupery's view also. "Time" with a capital "T", time in which becoming occurs, has overtones of mythical or Christian sacramental time in which salvation and rebirth is achieved.
hands for joy that a child has been born to you. . . .
The reaping of wheat. Then comes the festival of har­
vest home. Then, anew, seedtime. Then the festival
of spring, when the fields shimmer like a lake flooded
with green tree-shadows. Then once more you bide your
time, and comes again the festival of reaping, and
again the harvest home. And so on from festival to
festival; for there can be no storing up of past re­
joicing. And no festival I know save that which you
attain by coming from somewhere, and from which you
go on. . . . I would have you rejoice whenever you
cross the threshold which leads somewhere; and keep
your joy for the moment when you break through your
chrysalis. . . . I reserve it . . . for great occa­
sions of victory. . . . Indeed it is needful that
something should recuperate itself within you; some­
thing that, like desire, calls for recurrent periods
of sleep. (313-314)

"Sometimes," my father used to say, "I am moved to
found a festival; but it is not so much a festival I
found as a set relation between Man and Time." (326)

4. The Creative Act

It was seen above that in The Wisdom of the Sands time
is viewed primarily from the point of view of man acting in
the present to create the future. For Saint-Exupery man as
agent, man as one who has an effect on the course of process,
is man the creator. It is thus important to consider Saint­
Exupery's view of the creative act.

a) The act of creating is that of man imposing a form
on events to procure a desired outcome:

"Thus events," my father said, "have no form save
that which the creative mind chooses to impose on
them." (267)

In the following text Saint-Exupery sees a gardener's
grafting a tree as creative. He calls the gardener "the tree's god" who determines what form the tree is to take:

"But you, as you go your ways, observe with the gardener's eye, and see what is amiss with the tree. Not from the tree's point of view, for from the tree's point of view nothing is amiss; it is perfect! But not so from yours, the point of view of the tree's god who grafts each branch at the point beseeming." (320-321)

Saint-Exupery here compares a political leader to a sculptor, attributing the same creativity to the leader as to the sculptor. The leader imposes a form (visage) on the events occurring during the "age" he is ruling:

If I weld together the diversities of my age into a single, unique visage, and have I the sculptor's godlike hands, my desire will come into being . . . . What I did was to create. Out of the chaos of appearances I shall have fashioned a visage. . . . . . . . Only one task is worthy of the doing and that is to express the Here and Now. And to express means building out of the infinite diversity of the Here and Now, a visage dominating it. (84)

b) The form imposed on events comes from a creative vision which derives ultimately from God:

I step in and mould that clay, which is the raw material, into the likeness of the creative vision that comes to me from God. (21)

The only course of action which has a meaning - though it cannot be expressed by words, being of the nature of an act of pure creation or the repercussion on your mind of such an act - is a course of action leading you from God, the fountainhead, to those objects of the visible world which have been given by Him a meaning, a color and an inner life. (245)
c) Imposing a form in the creative act unifies the thing created: this was indicated in a text quoted just above:

I weld together the diversities of my age in a single, unique visage. (84)

Love is a creative act. The person loved is thus unified. Saint-Exupery says this in speaking of the effect of a wife's love on her husband:

The boy who has grown up and no longer needs his mother's care will know no rest until he has found the woman of his choice. She alone will reassemble his scattered selfhood. (75)

That imposing a form in the creative act unifies is not surprising in light of the fact that the form imposed derives ultimately from God, who is absolute unity.

d) A statement like "events have no form save that which the creative mind chooses to impose on them" [Cf. above 4. a) (267)] seems to present a totally subjectivist view of reality. Yet this statement is balanced by the statement quoted four texts later [4. b) (245)]: "objects of the visible world have been given by Him (God) a meaning, a color, and an inner life." This latter statement implies that meaning is at least partially objective, partially something to be discovered rather than created and imposed by man. We are thus led to believe that the statement "events have no form save that which the creative mind chooses to
impose on them" is to be taken as a hyperbole, an exhortation to creative endeavor.

e) One creates himself by imposing on himself a form derived from creative vision:

Your personality does not consist in your face and body, your chattels or your smile, but in a structure that is built up through you; and it depends on a vision of the world that at once derives from, and establishes you. (292)

f) Being committed to creative endeavor requires patience:

Yet also I know how slow it is, the ripening of fruit. For all creation must first be steeped in Time, and long is the process of becoming. (272)

5. Relations

Saint-Exupery's world view involves seeing reality in terms of the relations between things rather than in terms of the things themselves as "objects."

In putting stress on relations Saint-Exupery is like many others who have a process view of reality. One who talks of process usually thinks of reality as an interacting system of things in relation.

However, as was mentioned above, Saint-Exupery uses an organic or psychological model for reality in process not a mechanistic one. Hence he does not talk about "an interacting system of things in relation" - a phrase with mechanistic overtones. When he speaks of relations Saint-Exupery speaks
of relations between an organism and its environment or between man and his social environment. He is especially interested in the influence of man's environment on his becoming (Cf. Chapter III) and the influence of creative man on his environment (Cf. Chapter I, A. 4).

Saint-Exupery speaks of the internal relations in an organism, especially to point out the organism's complexity or inner conflicts. An organism's internal complexity and the complexity of its relations with the environment cannot be captured with simple, precise logical words (Chapter IV).

The relation which interested Saint-Exupery more than any other is the relation of opposition. Resolution of opposition is, more than anything else, the measure of progress made towards the ultimate end, God, who is absolute unity - the resolution of all opposition (Chapters I, IV, V). Saint-Exupery talks especially of resolving the opposition between logical "contraries," between conflicting aspirations, and between men who are at odds (Chapters IV, V).

Saint-Exupery's stress on relations is also connected with his stress on unity in another way. Seeing the relations between things is seeing reality in a unified way, as opposed to seeing separate, self-enclosed "objects" (Chapter I). Seeing the relations between things is called seeing
"the knot which binds things together"; it is called creative vision, spiritual vision, vision of God (Chapters I – V).

a) Reality is made up of a system of relations:

But I would have you refrain from that language of yours which leads nowhither; which distinguishes cause from effect, master from servant. For only interrelations, structures, reciprocities exist. (138)

"If I ascertain such seasonable relations as, for example, that deriving from my knowledge that the barley ripens before the oats, I can believe in these relations, since they are. But the objects brought into relation mean very little to me; I use them but as a net to snare a prey." (198)

b) Man himself is a "nucleus of relations." Internally he is a system of relations and externally he is linked with his environment by relations with things:

For you are a nexus of relations and your personality does not consist in your face and body, your chattels or your smile but in a structure that is built up through you. (292)

For you are a nucleus of relations and nothing else; you exist by your links, and your links through you. (275)

... Then you are conscious of your link, like a navel-cord, with the world of things. (319)

Life is a network of relations so complex that if you destroy one of your seeming contraries you die. (219)

d) Knowledge consists of capturing or understanding relations between things, the "knots binding things together":

Saint-Exupéry says this of an artist's knowledge. For Saint-Exupéry artistic knowledge is the highest kind, the
prime analogate of knowledge.

"In these matters it is as with the statue. Think you that the sculptor making it seeks merely to reproduce a nose, a mouth, a chin, and so forth? Nay, what he seeks is a correlation between these separate things, a correlation which will (for example) spell grief. And one which, moreover, it is possible to convey to you, for you enter into communication not with things but with the knots binding things together." (198)

This knowledge of the relations between things is needed by man to give meaning to his life:

"For the nourishment of which he stands in greatest need is drawn not from things themselves but from the knot that holds things together. It comes not from a tract of sand but from a certain relation between it and the tribesman; not from the words in the book but from a certain relation between the words in the book - love, the poem, the wisdom of God." (55)

d) Thus language should strive to reflect these relations, and one's language and style, in making one aware of certain relations, influence one's view of reality:

"Few indeed are the words which enable me to conjure up forthwith a whole network of interdependencies. . . ."

". . . . The inflexions of my verb, the interlocking of my clauses, the cadence of my periods, the placing of my complements, the echoes and recalls - these are figures of the dance I would have you dance, and when you have completed it you will have conveyed to others what you set out to transmit. . . ."

Again my father said: "All awareness begins with the acquiring of a style." (240)

Words can have different meanings to different people. This is because each person sees the "object" spoken of as related to different sets of factors in the environment -
each sees it as related to a limited number of factors in comparison to the large number to which it could possibly be related:

But as for "objects" - these have no independent existence; you have only the various meanings given to the same thing according to the language of the speaker. Thus "a black pearl" does not mean the same for the diver, the courtesan and the merchant. (295)
B. Summary

In Saint-Exupery's world-view everything in the universe is in process. However, he uses organic and psychological models to describe process, not mechanistic ones. He focuses on man in process and uses the terms "growth" or more often "becoming" to speak of process. These words mean more than just "process" however; they are both used to indicate progress towards a goal or end.

Saint-Exupery considers God to be the ultimate end towards which growth and becoming are directed; God is the absolute standard of perfection, and absolute unity. Only God is an "end" in Saint-Exupery's use of that word. "End" cannot be used to describe any achievement, any stage of growth short of God, for there is always more to be achieved. "End" for Saint-Exupery implies completion and nothing human is ever finally completed. Completion, for man, would mean cessation of growth, stagnation, death.

This is Saint-Exupery's philosophy of transcendence. Every achievement, every so-called end is to be transcended. Again Saint-Exupery is concerned primarily with man. For man to seek a static security by resting in an end achieved is futile in a changing world. But more important, man will never be happy in attempting to rest in any end achieved for
he has a drive within himself to transcend any proximate or relative end. He always strives to achieve more, to become more, "aspiring Godwards."

Man's acting to achieve more, to become more, is for Saint-Exupery man's creating. Man in creating imposes on things in process, including himself, a form which, in coming from a vision derived ultimately from God, makes them more like God the ideal, more perfect.

To create it is necessary to accept the present situation as it is, for it is no longer possible to change the past out of which the present has developed; on the other hand, one should not remain satisfied with the present but strive to create a future that is better.

Vision derived ultimately from God or creative vision or spiritual vision - whatever it is called - means seeing the relations between things, seeing things in a unified way. This vision both gives man's life meaning (coherence) and is the source of the creative form mentioned above. Imposing a form in creating is imposing a more perfect unity. This more perfect unity is a fuller participation in the absolute unity of God. In The Wisdom of the Sands transcendence is for Saint-Exupery more than anything else unification.
Thus having a vision whose ultimate source is God or creative vision or spiritual vision means not only seeing the unity that is - how things are related - but seeing the fuller unity that could be - how things could be more related (united). Vision is thus a partial glimpse of the perfect unity of God, a glimpse beyond the imperfect unity possessed by the world in process or anything in that world.

Unifying is most often spoken of as resolving the opposition between things. Progress made towards God as the ultimate end is seen as a dialectical pattern of tension of opposition alternating with resolution of tension. This dialectical pattern is mirrored in the alternation between periods of work and festivals, and the dialectic of past-present-future.

Saint-Exupery's stress on relations is not only part of the larger theme of unification. It also introduces an element of relativism into his theory of knowledge. Any "object" is the center of a rich network of relations. To know that object fully would be to know all its relations. However no one does know all its relations. Each man knows a limited number of its relations; and each man knows a different combination of relations. Thus each man's knowledge of the "object" is different.
Death is seen as a completion of man's becoming, and as man's fulfillment. Death means: attaining one's ideal; achieving peace, rest, freedom from the burden of becoming; achieving eternity, stability, unity. Saint-Exupery seems to see at death a kind of union with God in an afterlife.

Many of the ideas to be discussed in the remaining chapters of this thesis have already been introduced, at least in germ, in this first chapter. Chapters II and III discuss the moral dimension of Saint-Exupery's philosophy of transcendence: Chapter II discusses Saint-Exupery's kind of moral authenticity, which allows for no slacking of effort to create and to become; Chapter III the influence of man's environment on his becoming. Chapters IV and V focus on the absolute towards which man's transcendence is directed; Chapter IV besides discussing Saint-Exupery's theory of knowledge explains the process of resolving "contrary" truths by which objectivity is attained. Chapter V discusses God, the absolute, from several points of view.
C. Commentary

In the commentary for this chapter the similarity of Saint-Exupery's thought to that of John Dewey and Jean-Paul Sartre will be studied. This is done partially because the interpretation given Saint-Exupery's thought in this thesis has been influenced by the philosophies of Dewey and Sartre. But also, Saint-Exupery's thought is viewed in this thesis as the beginning of a synthesis of process philosophy and existentialism (as represented by Dewey and Sartre respectively).

There is a third element synthesized in Saint-Exupery's thought: a Neo-Platonic philosophy of God. In his belief in God and in absolutes Saint-Exupery is diametrically opposed to Dewey and Sartre. This Neo-Platonic philosophy of God will be discussed in the commentary for Chapter V, after a more detailed textual study has been made of Saint-Exupery's statements about God in The Wisdom of the Sands.

The study made of Sartre's philosophy of bad faith will also offer a point of view from which Saint-Exupery's philosophy of transcendence can be criticized.
1. Dewey

Saint-Exupery's process view of reality is remarkably similar to that of John Dewey.

a) Dewey's awareness that reality is in process leads him to make this statement in *Experience and Nature*:

That even the solid earth mountains, the emblems of constancy, appear and disappear like the clouds is an old theme of moralists and poets. The fixed and unchanged being of the Democritean atom is now reported by enquirers to possess some of the traits of his non-being, and to employ a temporary equilibrium in the economy of nature's compromises and adjustments. . . . Every existence is an event.

This fact is nothing at which to repine and nothing to gloat over. It is something to be noted and used. If it is discomfiting when applied to good things, to our friends, possessions, and precious selves, it is consoling also to know that no evil endures forever. The eventful character of all existences is no reason for consigning them to the realm of mere appearance any more than it is a reason for idealizing flux into a deity. The important thing is measure, relation, ratio, knowledge of the comparative tempos of change. In mathematics some variables are constants in some problems; so it is in nature and life. The rate of change of some things is so slow, or is so rhythmic, that these changes have all the advantages of stability in dealing with more transitory and irregular happenings - if we know enough.2

b) Dewey's process view of reality leads him to make statements about ends similar to those made by Saint-Exupery. First, there are no ends (in the sense of "endings"): 

---

The thing which is a close of one history is always the beginning of another, and in this capacity the thing in question is transitive or dynamic.³

But there are ends according to Dewey in another sense of "end": a willed outcome of events which man strives to achieve and conserve in existence:

By "ends" we also mean ends-in-view, aims, things viewed after deliberation as worthy of attainment and as evocative of effort.⁴

The terminal outcome . . . becomes an end-in-view, an aim, purpose, a prediction usable as a plan in shaping the course of events.⁵

An end in this sense is the goal Saint-Exupery's creative man has in mind in imposing a form on events. Saint-Exupery, however, does not call it an end but a "form" or "visage."

Dewey would not agree with Saint-Exupery however in calling God the ultimate end towards which process is directed. Dewey holds a more radical relativism than Saint-Exupery and claims there is no one end which is ultimate. Dewey says there is no objective basis for comparing ends, finding some to be "more ends" than others. Only if this were done could there be established a hierarchy of ends culminating in an ultimate end. But if some ends are more

³EN, p. 100.
⁴EN, p. 104.
⁵EN, p. 101.
desirable than others, it is not because they are objectively better than others but because to the human being desiring them they offer more practical utility or esthetic enjoyment.

c) In Dewey's terminology any living body is called an "organism." The term "organism" is used frequently in Experience and Nature and Art as Experience. Although Dewey speaks of organisms more abstractly than Saint-Exupery, his conceiving of reality in organic terms leads him into some of the same problems and same conclusions as Saint-Exupery.

If one conceives of living things as organisms, relations with the environment become very important. That this is true in Saint-Exupery's thought has been seen briefly in Chapter I [Cf. A. 5. b)] and will be seen in more detail in Chapter III. In Dewey's thought relations with the environment are even more important. For example the tremendously important term "experience" is defined by Dewey in terms of an organism's relation to its environment:

Experience is the result, the sign, and the reward of the interaction of organism and environment which, when it is carried to the full, is a transformation of interaction into participation and communication.

---

6 This paragraph is a summary of ideas found on pp. 104-109 of EN.

7 Dewey defines "organism" on p. 254 of EN.

8 John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), [Hereafter referred to as: AE], p. 22.
In *Art as Experience* Dewey describes a dialectical pattern of conflict and harmony in an organism's relation to its environment:

Life itself consists of phases in which the organism falls out of step with the march of surrounding things and then recovers unison with it - either through effort or by some happy chance. And, in a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through which it has successfully passed.9

This dialectical pattern of conflict and harmony is very similar to the dialectical pattern of tension of opposition and resolution of tension described by Saint-Exupery in a text cited above [Cf. A. 2. e)]. Dewey finds, as does Saint-Exupery, that the organism makes progress in going through this pattern of alternating conflict and harmony: "it is enriched." However Dewey does not see the organism progressing towards an ultimate end, God, as does Saint-Exupery. For Dewey there is no ultimate end, as we have seen. Despite this difference both Dewey and Saint-Exupery measure progress by the same standard: the achieving of harmony. Dewey states this in the following texts from *Art as Experience*:

The live being recurrently loses and reestablishes equilibrium with his surroundings. The moment of passage from disturbance into harmony is that of intensest life.10

10AE, p. 17.
If life continues, and in continuing it expands, there is an overcoming of factors of opposition and conflict.\textsuperscript{11}

Saint-Exupery interprets the achieving of greater harmony as a fuller participation in God who is absolute unity, while Dewey treats it as organic and psychological functioning.

e) There are similarities between what Saint-Exupery calls a festival and what Dewey calls an esthetic experience. Both correspond to the harmony phase of the dialectical pattern discussed above. Both help man relocate himself in time and reinforce his creative efforts. Dewey says of the esthetic experience:

The happy periods of an experience that is now complete because it absorbs into itself memories of the past and anticipations of the future, come to constitute an esthetic ideal. Only when the past ceases to trouble and anticipations of the future are not perturbing is a being wholly united with his environment and therefore fully alive. Art celebrates with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is.\textsuperscript{12}

The same harmony of the present with past and future, the same experiencing of past-present-future as coherent and meaningful which Dewey finds in an esthetic experience, Saint-Exupery finds in festivals:

\textsuperscript{11}AE, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{12}AE, p. 18.
... one great yearly festival ... whose purport is the sweetening of your whole year with a savor of happy expectation or of remembered joy. (288)

No festival I know save that which you attain by coming from somewhere, and from which you go on. (313-314)

f) Part of Saint-Exupery's quest for harmony and unity was attempting to resolve opposites, or logical "contraries." [Cf. p. 28 and Chapter IV, A. 2]. To a certain extent this corresponds in Dewey's thought to an effort to eliminate "dualisms," but for Dewey "dualism" involves assertions regarding ontological distinctions. Thus he speaks of the most basic dualism:

... A split in Being itself, its division into some things which are inherently defective, changing, relational, and other things which are inherently perfect, permanent, self-possessed. Other dualisms such as that between sensuous appetite and rational thought, between the particular and the universal, between the mechanical and the telic, between experience and science, between matter and mind, are but the reflections of this primary metaphysical dualism.13

g) Another point stressed by Saint-Exupery in his statements about knowledge is man's inability to know or predict the future. [Cf. Chapter IV, A., I. a)]. Dewey also concludes that the future is not predictable, basing his conclusion on an analysis of process:

13 EN, p. 124.
All prediction is abstract and hypothetical. Given the stability of other events, and it follows that certain conditions, selected in thought, determine the predictability of the occurrence of say, red. But since the other conditions do not remain unalterably put, what actually occurs is never just what happens in thought.14

14 EN, p. 117.
2. *Sartre*

Saint-Exupery's views of transcendence and of moral inauthenticity are similar to Sartre's:

a) Saint-Exupery explained man's transcendence in a text which has been cited before:

A vain woman is satisfied with herself. She has nothing to get from you but your applause. But we despise such cravings, we the eternal seekers, aspiring Godwards; for nothing in ourselves can ever satisfy us. (271)

Sartre expresses a similar view in the following text from *Being and Nothingness*. Man grasps his being as lacking (man is not satisfied with himself) and surpasses himself toward perfect being which is the totality he lacks (man aspires "Godwards"). Sartre, however, does not believe in God and does not identify "perfect being" with God but with "human reality itself as totality":

Such is the origin of transcendence. Human reality is its own surpassing toward what it lacks . . . . In its coming into existence human reality grasps itself as an incomplete being. It apprehends itself as being in so far as it is not, in the presence of the particular totality which it lacks . . . . Imperfect being surpasses itself toward perfect being . . . . But the being toward which human reality surpasses itself is not a transcendent God; it is at the heart of human reality; it is only human reality itself as totality.15

---

b) For Sartre the two modes of "bad faith" (moral in-authenticity) consist of taking wrong attitudes towards transcendence. The first consists of attempting to deny transcendence and identify one's being with the static in-itself of a past state:

... affirming ... that I am what I have been (the man who deliberately arrests himself at one period in his life and refuses to take into consideration the later changes.)

This first mode of bad faith corresponds to what Saint-Exupery finds in the "sedentaries," or in the following text, in the vain woman:

The vain woman has called a halt within herself, for she believes that her true visage can be achieved before the hour of death. Hence she is ... like one who is dead (271)

The second mode of bad faith is the opposite of the first: one attempts to deny one's past and identify one's being completely with transcendence. The object of this mode of bad faith is to escape blame, to elude the possibility of being criticized. In Sartre's philosophy only one's past could be the object of blame or criticism, since only one's past could be described as static, settled, in-itself, thus

16 In Sartre's words bad faith "must affirm facticity as being transcendence and transcendence as being facticity." BN, p. 68.

17 BN, p. 70.
only one's past is definable. If someone escapes his past, he escapes the possibility of either blame or praise, since he cannot be pinned down to being anything specific. In denying his past and identifying his being completely with transcendence, a man is saying that he is not anything definable, anything specific, for he is always transcending definable, specific past states (thus perpetually escaping blame):

... affirming ... that I am not what I have been (the man who in the face of reproaches or rancor dissociates himself from his past by insisting on his freedom and on his perpetual re-creation).18

The moral inauthenticity in this attitude consists in treating transcendence of a specific undesirable quality as a foregone conclusion rather than a change which must be freely chosen - or perhaps freely not chosen if the negative judgment "undesirable" is another's but not one's own. This attitude consists in saying I possess transcendence as would a thing, an in-itself, rather than as a free being, a for-itself:

The ambiguity necessary for bad faith comes from the fact that I affirm here that I am my transcendence in the mode of being of a thing.19

The present is to Saint-Exupery what the past is to Sartre: the no-longer-changeable, the definable, that which must be

18 BN. p. 70.
19 BN. p. 69.
accepted for what it is. In exhorted men to moral authenti-
city Saint-Exupery thus speaks of the present in the same
way Sartre speaks of the past: one must not avoid responsi-
bility for changing things by ignoring or refusing to accept
that which is:

... the Present ... it is for you neither to
grumble at it nor to rejoice over it, for like your-
self, all these things merely are, having come to
birth. (155-156)

There is no progress without acceptance of that
which is, the Here and Now. (141)

While Saint-Exupery speaks of the necessity of accept-
ing the present situation as it is, we suspect him to be
somewhat guilty of Sartre's second mode of inauthenticity
(bad faith) in his inability to accept himself as he is.
Indications of Saint-Exupery's inability to accept himself
are found in the connotations of many statements he makes.
Perhaps the most direct indication lies in a text quoted
several times above:

We despise such (vain) cravings, we the eternal
seekers, aspiring Godwards; for nothing in ourselves
can ever satisfy us. (271)

It is not completely clear how this text is to be inter-
preted. But if glorying in transcendence is a way of not
facing one's limited reality, motivated by fear of criticism
or disapproval, it is evasive and not constructive. More will
be said of this in the commentary section of Chapter II.
3. **Saint-Exupery as Synthesizer**

Saint-Exupery's quest for unity expresses itself in the very nature of his writings - he is a synthesizer. In *The Wisdom of the Sands*, Saint-Exupery presents in his basic philosophical awareness of reality a synthesis of three diverse points of view: process philosophy, existentialism, and neo-platonic mysticism. Saint-Exupery's similarities to Dewey and Sartre have been documented above. (His similarities to Plotinus will be discussed in Chapter V.) At this point a few brief comments will be made on the significance of Saint-Exupery's synthesis of process philosophy and existentialism.

Saint-Exupery brings to his synthesis a process and a relational, system view of reality similar to Dewey's. He brings a process view of ends, time, and the dialectic of harmony-disharmony; he brings a relational, system view of knowledge\(^ {20} \) (epistemological relativism\(^ {21} \)); he brings a relational, system view of reality as organism-environment.

In his organism-environment view of reality Saint-Exupery sees man to be related in a positive way to his environment (physical and social environment). He had a

\(^{20}\text{Cf. Chapter I, A., 5. c).}\)

\(^{21}\text{Cf. Chapter I, A., 5. d).}\)
deep sense of the continuity of man and nature,\(^\text{22}\) and the brotherhood of man. In this respect he differs considerably with Sartre who sees man as basically cut off from and opposed to things around him. For Sartre man (pour-soi) is opposed in his very being to nature (en-soi); and each man is opposed in his individuality to every other man.\(^\text{23}\) For Sartre relationship of man to nature or other men cannot be important for each man is radically free and being radically free must choose himself apart from the influence of nature and other men.

If Saint-Exupery sides with Dewey against Sartre in stressing man's relations to his physical and social environment as constitutive of man, yet in other ways he is more like Sartre and the existentialist tradition than Dewey. Saint-Exupery brings to his synthesis an existentialist view of man's moral dynamism, of transcendence, freedom\(^\text{24}\) and


\(^{24}\)Saint-Exupery does not attempt to resolve the problem of freedom-determinism. He simply makes side-by-side statements implying man's freedom and the influence of the environment on man. He is confident that they both describe existential man and he treats any contradiction between them as not unexpected in light of the unfinished nature of man's knowledge.
moral authenticity. He also avoids Dewey's tendency to reduce mysteries to problems (to borrow Marcel's terminology). Saint-Exupery, as we shall see, puts great stress on lived, intuitive, truths which are not reducible to concise, logical, scientific explanation.

Saint-Exupery differs from both Dewey and Sartre in his belief in God and thus in an absolute truth (even though this absolute truth cannot be known by man). Thus there can be for Saint-Exupery an absolute being which is the ultimate end towards which man, in growing, transcends himself; and there can be an absolute truth towards which man's truth grows in transcending opposites or logical "contraries." In contrast Dewey and Sartre, as we have seen before, believe there is no ultimate goal for man's transcendence and are left in ultimately relativist positions. More will be said of Saint-Exupery's Absolute and how man approaches it in Chapters IV and V below.
CHAPTER II

MORALITY AND MAN'S HAPPINESS

"BARTERING ONESELF" AS MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE

Saint-Exupery defines his ultimate moral good in The Wisdom of the Sands in his many exhortations that man "become" - that he transcend himself by the inseparable creating of nature, others and the self. "'The one thing needful for a man is to become - to be at last, and to die in the fullness of his being.'" (127) Saint-Exupery is concerned for man's happiness - not the illusory static happiness of the sedentaries, but the true happiness that comes from accomplishment and growth. "Grief is ever begotten of Time that, flowing, has not shaped its fruit. Grief there is for the mere flux of empty days." (32) The purpose of this chapter is to further develop the central theme of this thesis, man's transcendence, by an exposition of Saint-Exupery's ideas on morality and happiness, which are intricately related to the central theme.
A. Textual Study

1. Bartering Oneself

Saint-Exupery uses the term "barter" at least thirty-eight times in The Wisdom of the Sands. (The English "I barter myself for" is a translation of the French "je m'échange en" or "je m'échange contre".) As he uses the term, "to barter oneself" means to exchange oneself and one's life energies for that which one can create by devoting oneself to the work involved. But since man "becomes" in creating, to barter oneself is to barter oneself for a new and better self - it is to grow or transcend oneself. Thus to barter oneself means to transcend oneself or grow; it means to create; it means to give oneself. And since this self-giving is giving oneself to creative activity - to love and to work - it means particular concrete commitment.

a) Man's happiness lies in bartering himself; he needs to create (transform) something, he needs to use his talents; only thus will he become something great and have reason to be rightly happy with his life:

To become greater man must create, and not repeat himself. (91)

You will not find peace if you transform nothing according to the light that is yours. . . . You will get nothing for you are nothing. And you scatter your gifts and talents pell-mell in the cesspit. (285)
To be happy man needs, besides, something for which to barter himself, a goal to which he can devote his creative energies.

"We were discovering that life has a meaning only if one barters it day by day for something other than itself. Thus the death of the gardener does not harm the tree; but if you threaten the tree the gardener dies twice. (26)

Happiness is a reward consequent upon bartering oneself and the becoming that results. It is not an end to be sought in itself; it has no meaning apart from that for which it is a reward, becoming:

"For rightly to understand that word you must regard happiness as a reward and not an end in itself, for as such it is meaningless." (174)

Happiness is thus the sense of fulfillment which is achieved when man becomes. Man's drive to transcendence demands of him that he ever surpass himself and become greater. If this drive is not fulfilled man will not be happy.

Happiness is consequent, thus, upon what one is, not upon what one has. Seeking happiness in possessions, as do the sedentaries, is futile. Seeking happiness in possessions is futile both because it focuses attention on having rather than becoming, and because it presumes a man can be static and still be happy:

"Thus they stagnated in that false happiness which comes of great possessions; whereas true happiness comes from the joy of deeds well done, the zest of creating things new. (37)
If happiness cannot be directly had neither can it be directly given. Since happiness is a reward consequent on a man's bartering himself and becoming, it cannot be given ready-made to another. The other must barter himself—no one else can do that for him. One can only help another gain happiness by helping make him great:

"Ask not, then, of me, the ruler of an empire, to procure happiness for my people... Ask me only to build up souls in men, wherein these fires can burn." (175-176)

b) Man barters himself to create something eternal—an image of himself which will outlast himself—and thus in some way escapes death. Saint-Exupery speaks in the following text of the craftsmen's artifacts "absorbing" something eternal in the craftsmen. These craftsmen devote their labors to:

... their carvings, to the unusable virtue of chased gold or silver, the perfection of form, the grace of noble curves—all of which served to no purpose save to absorb that part of themselves they bartered, and which outlasts mortality. (29)

Other texts indicate that what is "absorbed" by the artifacts is an image of the artisan. These texts also indicate that the artisan is transformed in the process of creating the artifact:

His (a cobbler's) happiness came of his trans-figuring himself into golden slippers. (33)
... That craftsman I have spoken of, who remakes himself in the thing he works on, and, for his recompense, becomes eternal, no longer dreading death. (30)

Thus creating for Saint-Exupery has a dual nature: the self and the object of work (or love) are created simultaneously. Self-creation results in the becoming which is the source of man's true happiness. But self-creation is not achieved in a vacuum; it is achieved in the process of directing creativity outward towards nature and other persons, in the attempt to leave one's mark on the world and escape death. Saint-Exupery has no kind words for those who do not make the attempt:

Called on to barter himself, he (a miser) preferred being provided for. And when such men depart, nothing remains. (29)

Those who have ceased to barter anything of themselves and draw their nourishment, be it the choicest and most delicate, from others - aye, even those men of taste who listen to strangers' poems but make not their own poems! - all such do but prey on the oasis without adding to its life. (37)

c) To barter oneself means to sacrifice oneself. Devoting oneself to creative endeavor exacts its toll in time, energy, attention, suffering, discipline, self-denial.

Since you barter yourself for it (that which you transform), you die a little day by day. (293)

Saint-Exupery's Berber king speaks of this sacrifice of oneself for that which one creates especially when speaking of
his soldiers, who sacrifice themselves for the empire they are creating. Asking himself why they would sacrifice themselves, he says:

A man does not lay down his life for sheep or goats, for dwellings or for mountains. Such things will go on existing though nothing be sacrificed to them. A man lays down his life to preserve the unseen bond which binds them together, transforming them into a domain, an empire — that becomes to him like a familiar face. A man will barter himself for that unity, for even in the act of dying he is building it up. By reason of his love his death is worth the dying. (57-58)

The man of whom the Berber king speaks here has a vision of that which he is creating. It is a vision which sees the relations between things, which sees unity. This vision, as well as providing the form which the creative mind imposes on events (which unifies them), gives the man a vision of his place in reality — how he is related to things, how he fits in — and thus gives him a sense of purpose.

The sacrifice involved in bartering oneself is not just an exercise of pure will power, a Prussian devotion to duty. Born of vision it will be done gladly, a labor of love. Sacrifice without vision would be reduced to a labor of pure will and duty. The Berber king speaks in the following text of some of his soldiers who faced death without vision. Most fled the battle, a few stayed to die — purely out of duty:
They (some singers sent to the soldiers' camp) were unable to conjure up for them the visage that would have stirred their hearts. To die in love - that happy death was not vouchsafed my men; why then give up their lives?

Some few there were, steeled by their devotion to a duty blindly accepted and ensued, who gave up their lives; but they died sadly, their eyes grim and set, in stubborn silence. (58)

2. Commitment

Bartering oneself, devoting oneself to creative endeavors, requires commitment to a particular concrete situation. Saint-Exupery speaks of human commitment especially from the point of view of creating. He speaks of the "injustice" of creating. It is "unjust" because one must choose - choose to create one thing and leave other possibilities which are equally as good behind, choose to become one kind of person, and not other kinds which are just as good - and one cannot ultimately justify the choice:

The only injustice known to me is the injustice of creation. Yet in creating you did not destroy the juices of the earth, which might have nourished brambles, but you built up a cedar which took these juices for itself - unjustly if you will - thus the brambles came not into being.

Once you become a tree of a certain kind, never can you become a tree of another kind; and thus you have been "unjust" towards the others. (220-221)

This choice is necessitated by the fact that man must commit himself to a particular situation to create. One who does not choose will not create:
... The poet full of love for poems, who writes not his own; the woman in love with love yet, lacking skill to choose, unable to become. (102)

For wishes to blossom into deeds, for the life force of the tree to become a branch, a woman to become a mother, a choice must be made. It is from the injustice of all choice that life springs. ... And I understood that cruelty lies at the heart of all creation. (102)

He who never says "no" is no true man, but worthy of the anthill wherein God (vision of God: creative vision) has ceased to have a place. A man without leaven. (106)

3. Giving and Receiving

As was noted above, one aspect of bartering oneself is giving oneself. Saint-Exupery speaks often in The Wisdom of the Sands of giving and receiving.

   a) Man becomes, grows greater by giving. Receiving cannot directly contribute to man's becoming. Saint-Exupery says this many times in many ways in The Wisdom of the Sands, for example:

      The more you give, the greater you become. (74)

      When you give yourself, you receive more than you give. For after being nothing, you become. (222)

      I bid you live not by what you receive but by what you give for that alone augments you. (160)

      It is giving alone that nourishes the heart. (43)

Saint-Exupery's idea that man becomes by giving rather than receiving is parallel to his idea discussed above that man becomes by bartering himself rather than amassing possessions.
When men turn their attention to possessions rather than to giving themselves, they will degenerate into sub-human beings:

Once completed your city will die. For these men live not by what they receive, but by what they give. When provisions have been laid up, they will fight over them and become more like wolves in their lairs. (69)

b) For giving to be meaningful there must be someone who receives what is given. Saint-Exupery brings this out in the following text in speaking of one of his favorite subjects of scorn, a vain woman - in this case a courtesan. She treats any gift as something she has won for herself by her charms, not as something the giver decided to give her. She takes the gift without much awareness of the giver or his intentions. Receiving the gift would imply recognition that it came from someone else. Hence giving to her is not meaningful.

To give to the courtesan you would need be richer than a king; for, whatever you may bring her, she thanks herself first, flattering herself on her adroitness and admiring her skill and her beauty, which have won from you this tribute. You might pour a thousand caravan-loads of gold into that bottomless pit, and yet you would not have even begun to give. For there must be someone to receive. (163)

Saint-Exupery treats the same problem from a different point of view in speaking of a dying soldier. Lacking vision, the soldier dies bitterly because he does not see that anyone is
I came upon a sorely wounded man, and bitter was his heart. "Sire," he said, "I am dying. I have given my blood, and got nothing in exchange. But the enemy whom I laid low with a bullet in his belly, before another could avenge him - I watched him dying. And methought in death he was winning the crown of life, for he was possessed by faith. Thus, rewarding was his death. But not so mine; it is merely because I obeyed the orders coming to me from my corporal, not from some other whose gain would have recompensed my loss, that now I die; with honor, but despite." (74)

c) Though receiving cannot directly contribute to man's becoming, Saint-Exupery does see a place for it in man's life. This is true in two ways: First, man has needs, and must satisfy them. He must receive what is necessary to live; this is a precondition of his giving himself to creative endeavor. Saint-Exupery speaks here of the vital necessity, water:

"My men are drinking, glutting their bellies. . . . But when that water is poured on the dry seed - which of itself knows nothing save its pleasure in the contact of the water - it awakens a secret power, which is the motive power of cities, temples, ramparts, and great hanging gardens." (256)

Second, receiving "the good things of the world" can increase man's ability to give and increase the value of what he gives and thus make him happier. But this can occur only if man keeps it clear that receiving them is not an end in itself but a means for enriching his giving and his becoming:
A greater proportion of happy men is to be found in deserts, monasteries, and conditions of self-sacrifice . . . .

... Being without possessions, those of the desert and the monastery can make no mistake as to whence their joys derive; and thus it is easier for them to keep unscathed the source of their fervor.

But . . . . if, perceiving the true source whence it springs, you can preserve your fervor in the happy isle or the rich oasis, the man born within you of this fervor will be still greater; even as you may hope to obtain richer sounds from an instrument with many strings than from one with but a single string. (235-236)

It might be noted that Saint-Exupery uses the word "receive" in a different sense in one of the texts cited above ["When you give yourself, you receive more than you give. For after being nothing, you become." (222)] The meaning of "receiving" in this text is not getting (having) more but becoming more - which is the opposite of its ordinary meaning for Saint-Exupery.

d) A criticism of Saint-Exupery's ideas on giving and receiving will be noted here and developed more fully later. Saint-Exupery has said that man becomes by giving not by receiving. Insofar as this statement is directed against a materialistic mentality it is valid. But is all receiving the receiving of material goods? Saint-Exupery seems to have forgotten about (or at least not to have expressed) the possibility of man's receiving something (spiritual) from another - an affirmation or an insight - which would help
him become. Saint-Exupery's creative, self-giving man seems
alone, autonomous, in his efforts to become, driven by an
intense moral idealism, but preoccupied with proving himself.
Admitting help from others (receiving from them) seems almost
like admitting weakness.

The following text manifests preoccupation with proving oneself (morally), with self-justification:

"It is meet that I should receive, even as I give; so that I may be able to continue giving." (43)

Receiving, in this text, seems justifiable only if it is
clearly a means to more giving. Another text seems to imply
there is something wrong with receiving a response to one's
giving and accruing any benefit thereby:

I bid you live not by what you receive but by what
you give for that alone augments you. But this means
not that you should despise what you give; you must
shape your fruit, and it is pride that sponsors its
permanence. . . . But, for you, your fruit serves
nothing; it acquires value only if it cannot be given
back to you. (160-161) (italics mine)

In the following section of this chapter (4. Love) and in
Chapter V [Cf. V, A. 7.] some texts are discussed which repeat roughly the same idea: True love and true prayer are a
constant striving which expect no response.

4. Love

a) Love is a communion which affirms the other person
for what he (she) is. In the following texts Saint-Exupery
speaks of what it means to love and be loved:

Love is, above all, a communion in silence, and to love is to contemplate. ... And comes an hour when you meet your beloved - and its import lies not in one gesture or another, in one expression or another of her face, in one word or another that she utters, but in her. (306-307)

... To be received in silence; not for the merit of this gesture or another, this quality or another, this word or another - but because, with all your unworthiness, you are what you are. (307)

Love cannot be reduced to anything more fundamental. It is a spontaneous response to another, not done for a prior reason:

"Thus you love - because you love. There is no reason for loving." (141)

Nor shall I enumerate the reasons you have for loving me; for you have none, and the only reason for loving is - love. (233)

As a response to another love reaches out "across the chasm" that separates one individual from another in their otherness. It is a pure, uncalculated gift which does not look to what can be gotten in return. Saint-Exupery is speaking here of love:

Beware of parsimony in this respect, for where the heart is in the giving, there is no question of goods that are being traded thriftily. In giving you are throwing a bridge across the chasm of your solitude. (146)

One can see that Saint-Exupery's stress on the importance of giving rather than receiving reappears here in his treatment of love.
Giving oneself in love leads to commitment within a particular concrete situation ("the real."). This situation challenges one's creative powers, and calls one to barter himself (herself):

... (a girl's) lover who, though she knows it not, serves as a secret path towards the real - the kettle singing on the hob, the well-shut house, the babe nuzzling her breast. (32-33)

Also, giving oneself in love leads, concretely, to working together on common tasks:

"To love me is, above all, to collaborate with me." (153)

"Charity, as my empire understands it, is cooperation." (40)

Giving oneself in love, since it is giving, leads one to become. This becoming is indicated in the following text by the image of rousing the sleeping archangel. An angel is above man in perfection, even more so an archangel. To rouse the sleeping archangel in human love is to stimulate man to go beyond himself, to grow greater, to become.

When you are all aflame to hasten to the help of your beloved, your love is charged with gratitude because the archangel sleeping in it has been roused up by you. (162-163)

Most of Saint-Exupery's statements about love in The Wisdom of the Sands develop various implications of the basic idea that love is giving and not receiving. The rest of the
section on love will be devoted to studying these various implications.

b) Saint-Exupery's Berber king often distinguishes love from possessiveness. He is adamant in his condemnation of possessiveness. Love is giving oneself to others, not having or possessing them.

The greediness, the destructiveness, the futility and eventual weariness of using others sexually is expressed in the following text. Women were reduced to objects to be had and used rather than treated as human persons:

I made blind haste to go among women. . . . I sought for a treasure hidden there, as for an object to be discovered amongst other objects. . . . I measured the perfection in their eyes. Familiar to me was the grace of their young limbs, the soft curve of an elbow like the handle of a ewer wherefrom one fain would drink. . . . But I had taken the wrong road.

For I was like one of those madmen whom we see prowling at night amongst the ruins of an old castle, carrying a spade, a pickaxe, and a crowbar. We watch him dismantling walls, upending stones, thumping great flags to find if they ring hollow. For, possessed by a black fervor, he desperately hunts for a legendary treasure that has slumbered for centuries in its hiding place. . . .

I, too, even I, like that madman plying his pick by night, have got nothing of my sensual pleasures but the morose and futile satisfaction of a miser's greed. Seeking, I found but myself. And I am weary of myself; the echo of my own pleasure rings hollow in my ears.

(310-311)

Women are, not objects to be used, but growing beings who can be given help to bear the fruits of growth - as can arable
A man should give himself in love to a woman and with his art and his faithfulness help her to grow and so reap the harvest of her and his own becoming ("receive . . . that which is for me").

But now, O Lord, I see my error. I failed to regard them (women) as arable land to which year-long I must betake myself before daybreak, my boots caked thick with mud, my plough, my horse, my harrow, my bag of grain, my lore of husbandry, my prescience of storms and showers, and above all my faithfulness, so as to receive from them that which is for me. (309)

This is a task which could absorb a lifetime of effort, and leading a man to barter himself and become, help him find his true, better self.

These young girls, too, are arable lands with vast horizons, in which perhaps, did you but know the way of access, you might lose - and find - yourself for ever. (309-310)

Another kind of possessiveness is jealousy - wherein one tries to have the loved one all for oneself. Anyone else's interest in him (her) is seen as a threat. Saint-Exupery compares this attitude to that of a snarling dog:

You wrap yourself up in a certain man or woman on whom you batten as on a stock of food laid by and, like dogs snarling at each other round their trough, you fall to hating anyone who casts even a glance at your repast. You call it love, this selfish appetite. . . . You convert this free gift into servitude and bondage. (153)

The loved one could gain a richness by relating to others besides the jealous lover, and the lover in turn could share
in the richness thus gained:

Thus the woman will ever be reproaching you for what you dispense otherwise than with her. For, to the mind of the majority, whatever is given in one place is stolen from elsewhere; it is their dealings in the marketplace . . . that have thus shaped their minds. Yet, in reality, what you give does not lessen your store; far otherwise, it augments for you the riches you can distribute. Thus he who loves all men . . . loves each man vastly more than he who, loving but one of them, extends merely to his partner the paltry field of himself. (146)

Jealousy is based on a misconception about the nature of love. Love is not like e.g. a pie bought in the marketplace, which, if it is given to person A to eat, cannot also be given to person B to eat. If I give person A the pie, I cannot give it to person B; but if I give love to person A I will be richer for the experience and even more able to give love to person B.

True love is inexhaustible: the more you give, the more you have. And if you go to draw at the true fountainhead, the more water you draw, the more abundant is the flow. (222)

c) Looking on love as receiving can lead to waiting for the perfect partner to come along who will meet all one's needs, and need only what one can easily give, and bring a supremely happy glow to one's whole life - hoping to be "vanquished" by love so that no adjustment or effort will be required. But this is misconceiving the nature of real love, in which the focus is on giving, not receiving.
And the "perfect partner" is nowhere to be found. Any two human beings are separated by their unique individualities and love must actively reach "across the chasm" that separates them. Bonds of love between people must be created, they cannot be happened upon ready made. Happiness in love can occur only when one has bartered oneself to create those bonds; having created those bonds and become, one has real reason to be happy.

That man hoodwinks himself who drifts through life hoping to be vanquished by love... ever thinking to encounter that supreme fever which will enkindle his whole life. (119)

Thus one cannot rightly claim that love has failed him if love has not "vanquished" him. One may not have received what he hoped for, but receiving is not love. Love is giving oneself, and opportunities for giving oneself will never be lacking:

When a man complains that love has not given him his heart's desire, it means that he is mistaken as to love - which is not a gift to be had for the asking.

Opportunity of loving does not fail you... The stars may lack their astronomer, and the flowers a gardener. But you will never lack stars, nor gardens. (304)

In fact, having too perfect a loved one, with few needs, may make real love less possible, by providing less of an opportunity for giving oneself. The focus would be thrown
on receiving so much from such a perfect loved one, and make of the "love" an egoisme a deux:

A woman who is perfection's self, fairer, nobler than the mean of women, may nevertheless fail to give you a nearer glimpse of God. In her there is nothing for you to solace, to bind together and reunite. And when she asks you to give your time wholly to her and immure yourself in her love, she is inviting you to that selfishness of two-in-one which in their blind­ness men call the light of love, though it is but a sterile glaze. (151-152)

In contrast, an imperfect loved one may provide more opportunity for giving, becoming, and thus for happiness:

But sleep untroubled in your imperfection, imperfect wife. . . . For, though you be not a fulfillment, a reward, a jewel venerated for itself - of which I would soon grow weary - you are a vehicle, a pathway, and a portage. And I shall not grow weary of becoming. (313)

If one thinks happiness in love comes from receiving, and is dissatisfied with love, he may seek for a new partner from whom to receive something better. But the change re­quired to bring happiness is not the change to a new partner, but a change in attitude towards one's partner - seeking to help one's partner grow beyond himself (herself) ("loving not so much the woman herself as what lies beyond the woman").

Then he puts away the woman; or else, now that her hopes are frustrate, she takes another lover. Yet the folly of their comportment was the sole cause of their failure. For there is but one way of loving, and that is loving not so much the woman herself as what lies beyond the woman. (150-151)
Since loving is bartering oneself to help the other become, love is of its very nature a dynamic reality. The very nature of the activity implies that the two partners are growing and the relationship between them is growing.

I build her (my beloved) up before me like a temple. . . . Thus I can love her beyond herself, beyond myself. (106)

Love is no sure resting place if it does not transform itself day to day, like a child in the womb. . . . For all that is neither ascent or a transition lacks significance. . . . You will discard the woman; whereas you should have begun by discarding your old self. (120)

This growth of the partners and their relationship is the basis for happiness in love:

. . . the weariness of spirit love can bring, unless it barter itself for something vaster than itself (100)

d) Saint-Exupery says not only that it is giving, rather than receiving, that is essential to love, but even that one should not expect to receive anything in response to one's giving:

True love begins when nothing is looked for in return. (152)

The focus of one's attention should be on giving, not receiving. One should give unconditionally, out of concern for the other, not because a response is hoped for.
Once one gets in the habit of expecting to receive something in response to what he gives, he has no ability to love - which would be to respond to the other simply for what he is, to help him grow beyond himself:

The fruit that truly nourishes lies ever beyond the individual and no being can move you once you have warmed your hands at his flame and taken the measure of what he has to give. It is at the moment when you give up hoping aught from him, and only then, that he moves your heart.

Accordingly Saint-Exupery fears one's love will decay if one receives too much in response to one's giving. One can too easily acquire the habit of expecting to receive something and lose one's ability to love.

But if your love is accepted and her arms open to welcome you, then pray God to save your love from over-ripeness and decay; for I fear for hearts that have their utmost desire. (195)

Hence Saint-Exupery sees the ideal situation for loving and learning what love really is to be an ascetical situation in which one receives nothing in response to one's loving.

In a love that vainly yearns from behind prison bars you have perchance the love supreme. . . . And it is on the flints and stones of the wilderness that love thrives. (145)

"Oh, stay with me, beloved! For when you are afar you lead a brutish life that teaches no caresses and your heart's yearnings are like a sand-choked spring that has no green fields on which, flowing, to become." . . . . Nevertheless, the truth is that you learn the lore of love only when your love is out of reach. (145)
Basically the same criticism will be offered of Saint-Exupery's ideas on love as his ideas on giving and receiving; he leaves man alone, giving all, receiving nothing, striving mightily to love, expecting a minimal amount of help from others. This picture of man is even more questionable in the case of love, which of its very nature must be a mutual relationship.

5. Fervor

Fervor is a generous giving of oneself to work, born of vision. Saint-Exupery's Berber king often speaks of it as the basis of civilization:

A civilization does not rest on the using of its inventions, but solely on the fervor that goes to the making of them. (150)

The quality of my empire's civilization rests not on its material benefits but on men's obligations and the zeal they bring to their tasks. It derives not from owning but from giving. (30)

The Berber king often speaks of fervor and love together. From the texts below it can be seen that fervor is like true love in many ways: fervor is giving; fervor is not possessiveness; fervor expects no response; by being fervent one creates and becomes; hence happiness lies in being fervent.

... Fervor, which gives all and takes nothing; for fervor seeks neither ownership nor even the presence of its object. (223)
"You have no right to shirk an effort, save in the cause of another effort; your life's work is ever to greaten yourself." (111)

He (an unspecified man) desired to acquire. He has acquired. And has he now achieved happiness? But happiness lay in the effort of acquiring. (104)

The opposite of fervor is laxity. This laxity leads to more laxity and eventually to despair. It is a failure to create and to become:

Thus in her laxity I saw but anguish and despair. For when you let all things slip through your fingers, it means that you no longer try to grasp. And laxity is but a giving-up of being. (150)

Laxity comes of the anguish of having failed to be. (151)

This is not to say anyone can be highly enthusiastic all the time:

Far be it from me (the Berber king) to claim that all my sentries are fervent when they go their rounds; many are listless, their minds full of their next meal. . . . I simply claim . . . that now and then one of them feels his heart beating faster, and conscious of his vastness drinks in the starshine, while, like a shell full of the murmurs of the sea, he enfolds within him the uttermost horizons of his world. (205)
B. Summary

This chapter has explored the moral dimension of Saint-Exupery's philosophy of transcendence. The texts studied in this chapter can be seen as Saint-Exupery's answer to the question: how does man transcend himself; how does man become? The answer given is: by bartering oneself; by commitment; by giving oneself; by loving; by fervor in one's work. Bartering oneself is the most comprehensive of these terms which would include all the rest. "Barter oneself" might be called Saint-Exupery's moral imperative.

To barter oneself is to exchange oneself and one's life energies for that which one can create by devoting oneself to the work envolved. Only if one barters himself can he transcend himself, can he become. Only if he barters himself can he have happiness, which is the sense of fulfillment that is achieved when man becomes. Seeking happiness in possessions is futile both because it focuses attention on having rather than becoming, and because it presumes man can be static and still be happy.

In bartering himself man creates something eternal. This means both that man in creating makes an image of himself which outlasts himself and thus in some way escapes death; and it means that man makes himself more perfect.
Bartering oneself is self-creation; but self-creation is not achieved in a vacuum, it is achieved in the process of directing creativity outward towards nature and other persons.

To barter oneself is to sacrifice oneself. A certain measure of time, energy, attention, discipline, and suffering is exacted by devotion to creative endeavors. But vision gives a sense of purpose to creative endeavors and makes one willing to sacrifice gladly. Without vision sacrifice is reduced to an exercise of pure will power, a Prussian sense of duty, and is not really bartering.

If one is to create he must decide which particular concrete situation he is going to work with and commit himself to that situation. Otherwise nothing will ever be accomplished. But in thus choosing one particular situation one leaves many other equally good possibilities behind. Thus creation is "unjust."

To barter oneself is to give oneself. Man becomes, grows greater by giving. Receiving cannot contribute directly to man's becoming. Only the active man, who gives himself to creative activity, achieves greatness. When man rests passively in having possessions he becomes stagnant and degenerates to a sub-human level. In order for giving to be meaningful there must also be someone to receive what is given - to receive the benefit of one's creative activity.
Though receiving cannot contribute directly to man's becoming, it is true: first that man has basic needs and he must receive what is necessary to fill these needs; second that receiving "the good things of the world" can enrich man's life and his giving if he can keep it clear that receiving them is not an end in itself.

One form of bartering, of creating, of giving, is love. The object of creating and giving is in this case another person. A spontaneous response to another person is the root of love. This response reaches out "across the chasm" that separates one individual from another in their uniqueness. The other's uniqueness is respected - love accepts the other person for what he or she is. In this way and in others love is a pure uncalculated gift which does not look for what can be gotten in return. Love is giving and not receiving.

Giving oneself in love leads to commitment within a particular concrete situation. This in turn leads to working together on common tasks.

The challenge of loving another leads one to grow greater and become. Since love is a form of bartering and giving it leads to becoming in the same way as bartering and giving do.
Using others, possessiveness and jealousy all involve a misconception about the nature of love. They all look on love as having and receiving from another, not as giving oneself to another. Saint-Exupery's imagery conveys in a striking way the greediness of possessiveness and, alternatively, the concern, patience, and faithfulness required in the art of love - the art of helping another become. A jealous lover seeks to have the beloved's love all for himself because he thinks if love is given to a third person it is lost to himself, whereas in reality it enriches the beloved and in turn the beloved's love of him.

Looking on love as having and receiving from another leads also to the deluded expectation that one can find "the perfect partner" who will meet all one's needs and make one happy without any adjustment being required. But happiness is the sense of fulfillment which results from having become, and this is achieved by giving, not receiving. And further, bonds of love must be created, they are not found ready-made.

Saint-Exupery says not only that it is giving, rather than receiving, which is essential to love, but even that one should not expect to receive anything in response to one's giving. One should give unconditionally, out of concern for the other, not because a response is hoped for.
fears one's love will degenerate if he receives too much re-
response to his giving because he will get in the habit of ex-
pecting to receive something. Hence "it is on the flints and
stones of the wilderness that love thrives."

**Fervor**, just as love, is a form of bartering, of self-
giving. Fervor is a generous giving of oneself to creative
work. Fervor is like love in many ways; fervor is giving
rather than receiving; fervor is not possessiveness; fervor
expects no response, by being fervent one creates and **becomes**
hence happiness lies in being fervent.

In his exhortations to barter oneself, to commitment,
to giving oneself, to loving truly and to fervor Saint-
Exupery's ultimate concern is always that man **become**, that he
transcend himself. Saint-Exupery's treatment of all these
themes constitutes a phenomenology of the moral dimensions of
man's transcendence which is rich and valuable, the work of a
man of deep moral concern and sensitivity.
C. Commentary

Our general judgment of Saint-Exupery's moral philosophy is that it is rich and noble. It is a synthesis of diverse lines of thought. The process view of reality continues to show itself in Saint-Exupery's basic conception of moral value as transcendence (becoming) and in the fact that he views the creating of self, nature, and other persons as dialectically related. The existentialist view of reality continues to show itself in Saint-Exupery's concern for moral authenticity and in his conception of moral authenticity as transcendence and self-creation. The stress on love and self-giving introduces the spirit of Christianity or humanism; the stress on self-sacrifice and asceticism manifests the spirit of the monk. Saint-Exupery's moral philosophy as proposed by the Berber king in The Wisdom of the Sands is quite idealistic and is pursued with an intensity which amounts to heroism.

The moral intensity of the Berber king is quite striking. But one wonders at times if it is not fanatical, if it is not misdirected. This question will now be considered.

1 This view is reminiscent of Marx's view of the relation between self-creation and creativity directed outward towards nature.
along with the Sartrean criticism of Saint-Exupery's thought mentioned in the commentary section of Chapter I and the criticism of Saint-Exupery's view of giving and receiving raised in the textual study section of this chapter.

1. Seeking Perfection

The basic problem is outlined by Karen Horney in the first few pages of her book *Neurosis and Human Growth.* What Saint-Exupery speaks of as becoming (transcendence) she speaks of as "self-realization" or "growth." She views self-realization as follows:

Under favorable conditions man's energies are put into the realization of his own potentialities.

The human individual, given a chance, tends to develop his particular human potentialities. He will develop then the unique alive forces of his real self: the clarity and the depth of his own feelings, thoughts, wishes, interests; the ability to tap his own resources, the strength of his will power, the special capacities or gifts he may have; the faculty to express himself, and to relate himself to others with his spontaneous feelings. All this will in time enable him to find his set of values and his aims in life. In short, he will grow, substantially undiverted, towards self-realization. And that is why I speak now and throughout this book of the real self as that central inner force, common to all human beings and yet unique in each, which is the deep source of growth.

---


3Ibid., p. 13.

4Ibid., p. 17.
However in a neurotic personality energy can be diverted from being employed in effective self-realization and turned towards a desperate, compulsive pursuit of impossible ideals which is bound to failure:

Under inner stress, however, a person may become alienated from his real self. He will then shift the major part of his energies to the task of moulding himself, by a rigid system of inner dictates, into a being of absolute perfection. For nothing short of godlike perfection can fulfill his idealized image of himself and satisfy his pride in the exalted attributes which (so he feels) he has, could have, or should have. 5

The neurotic may come to identify himself with the "being of absolute perfection" which he has created in his mind:

Eventually the individual may come to identify himself with his idealized, integrated image. Then it does not remain a visionary image which he secretly cherishes; imperceptibly he becomes this image: the idealized image becomes an idealized self. And this idealized self becomes more real to him than his real self. 6

But the neurotic is not identical with his idealized self-image; he is deluded, he has lost contact with who he really is and with his real feelings:

... his beginning alienation from self. Not only is his real self prevented from straight growth, but in addition his need to evolve artificial, strategic ways to cope with others has forced him to

5 Ibid., p. 13.
6 Ibid., p. 23.
override his genuine feelings, wishes, and thoughts. . . . He no longer knows where he stands, or "who" he is.7

This loss of contact with his real self means not only that the neurotic's knowledge of himself has become distorted, but that he has lost contact with "the real self as that inner force, common to all human beings and yet unique in each, which is the deep source of growth." He no longer realizes what his real desires, his real feelings, and his real capabilities are. He has lost contact both with the normal indicators of the direction of growth and with the resources he has to draw on. His efforts to realize himself become inefficient and impractical. He is less able to deal with the real order because his attention is focused to such a great extent on the ideal order that he loses touch with reality. He dreams grandiose dreams, but is very lacking in prudential judgment and effectiveness:

The needs for the absolute and the ultimate are so stringent that they override the checks which usually prevent our imagination from detaching itself from actuality. For his well-functioning, man needs both the vision of possibilities, the perspective of infinitude, and the realization of limitations, of necessities, of the concrete. If a man's thinking and feeling are primarily focused upon the infinite and the vision of possibilities, he loses his sense for the concrete, for the here and now. He loses his capacity for living in the moment. He is no longer capable of

7Ibid., p. 21.
submitting to the necessities in himself, "to what may be called one's limit." He loses sight of what is actually necessary for achieving something.\(^8\)

But it is important to note that not all striving for perfection is an unrealistic, compulsive, pathological phenomenon. A realistic striving for perfection is at the base of man's best religious and moral ideals:

This trend in neurotic development (which is presented in detail in this book) engages our attention over and beyond the clinical or theoretical interest in pathological phenomena. For it involves a fundamental problem of morality - that of man's desire, drive, or religious obligation to attain perfection.

... Should we not, in accordance with the Christian injunction ("Be ye perfect . . ."), strive for perfection? Would it not be hazardous, indeed ruinous, to man's moral and social life to dispense with such dictates?\(^9\)

The problem, then, is to distinguish realistic from unrealistic striving for perfection. Horney offers a criterion:

The criterion for what we cultivate or reject in ourselves lies in the question: is a particular attitude or drive inducive or obstructive to my human growth? As the frequency of neuroses shows, all kinds of pressure can easily divert our constructive energies into unconstructive or destructive channels.\(^{10}\)

But this is only a very general norm requiring a great deal of prudential judgment in practical application. The art of living involves the difficult task of setting one's idealized

---

\(^8\)ibid., p. 35.
\(^9\)ibid., p. 14.
\(^{10}\)ibid., p. 15.
self-image high enough to offer a real challenge, but not so high as to be unrealistic and lead one's efforts into non-constructive channels.

2. Self Love, Self-Acceptance, and Finitude

We might push the question back a step farther and ask why anyone would want to idealize himself so unrealistically in the first place. Basically, it is someone's inability to love himself, to accept himself for what he is.

Erich Fromm makes the point, in Escape From Freedom, that self-love is quite different from selfishness. If it is good to love, it is just as good to love oneself as any other person:

The basic affirmation contained in love is directed toward the beloved person as an incarnation of essentially human qualities. Love for one person implies love for man as such. . . . From this it follows that my own self, in principle, is as much an object of my love as another person.11

It is the person who is not able to love himself who is selfish. He is so insecure he must become greedy or narcissistic to allay his anxiety, to "overcompensate" for his "lack of fondness" for himself:

Selfishness is not identical with self-love but with its very opposite. . . . Selfishness is rooted in this very lack of fondness for oneself. The

person who is not fond of himself, who does not approve of himself, is in constant anxiety concerning his own self. He has not the inner security which can exist only on the basis of genuine fondness and affirmation. He must be concerned about himself, greedy to get everything for himself, since basically he lacks security and satisfaction. The same holds true with the so-called narcissistic person, who is not so much concerned with getting things for himself as with admiring himself. While on the surface it seems that these persons are very much in love with themselves, they actually are not fond of themselves, and their narcissism—like selfishness—is an overcompensation for the basic lack of self-love.12

The basic need to overcompensate for one's lack of self-love generates various artificial sub-needs. These needs—such as the need to amass possessions, to get attention, to be highly intelligent, or even to be supremely altruistic—all go towards reassuring oneself that one does have significance. There is one general mechanism at work here: self-glorification through imagination:

There is only one way in which he can seem to fulfill them [his artificial needs], and seem to fulfill all of them at one stroke: through imagination. Gradually and unconsciously, the imagination sets to work and creates in his mind an idealized image of himself. In this process he endows himself with unlimited powers and with exalted faculties; he becomes a hero, a genius, a supreme lover, a saint, a god.

Self-idealization always entails a general self-glorification, and thereby gives the individual the much-needed feeling of significance.13

12 Ibid., pp. 136-137.
13 Horney, p. 22.
such a person basically needs to prove his own value to himself, and by extension to others. He does so by trying to become a superman in ways that are very important to him. He creates in his mind an "idealized self-image"; and then follows the desperate, compulsive attempt to make himself into that idealized self-image.

But this process has a certain vicious circularity to it. The attempt to prove one's loveableness to oneself actually results in generating further self-hatred and feelings of failure. For one's idealized self-image is so far beyond human achievement that one could not possibly measure up to it and one finds this out sooner or later:

The glorified self becomes not only a phantom to be pursued; it also becomes a measuring rod with which to measure his actual being. And this actual being is such an embarrassing sight when viewed from the perspective of godlike perfection that he cannot but despise it. Moreover, what is dynamically more important, the human being which he actually is keeps interfering - significantly - with his flight to glory, and therefore he is bound to hate it, to hate himself.\textsuperscript{14}

This self-hatred is wasteful of human energy, causes great pain, and if carried far enough can split and destroy the personality. More precisely to the point here, this self-hatred stunts growth, for growth can result only from love of the good (as possible to and an extension of

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 110.
oneself) not from hatred of an artificial evil.

This somewhat extended digression into the findings of psychiatry is meant to insert into the discussion of human transcendence a statement of a very simple but very important philosophical truth: human finitude. Man's reality is limited and he must be able to reconcile himself to the fact. This discussion of the significance of finitude in psychiatric terms is offered to criticize and balance Saint-Exupery's statement of transcendence in this chapter. He seems sometimes to have little compassion for human limitation - especially in himself. He seems sometimes unmerciful in driving man (especially himself) on to the achievement of glorious ideals:

... We the eternal seekers, aspiring Godwards; for nothing in ourselves can ever satisfy us. (271)

Man lives in the tension between the ideal and his limited reality. This idea is as old as Plato: Eros is the son of Plenty and Poverty. Saint-Exupery urges man never to forget the ideal - to strive for the heights. But neither must man forget his limited reality nor scorn it. Neither the ideal nor the real can be ignored if growth is to be achieved - if man is to transcend himself.

---

To ignore one's reality and identify oneself with transcendence toward an ideal is Sartre's second mode of bad faith, referred to in the commentary section of Chapter I (Cf. pp. 52-53). In identifying his being completely with transcendence, a man is saying that he is not anything definable, anything specific, for he is always transcending definable, specific past states (thus perpetually escaping blame).

... Affirming ... that I am not what I have been (the man who in the face of reproaches or rancor dissociates himself from his past by insisting on his freedom and on his perpetual re-creation).\textsuperscript{16}

The ambiguity necessary for bad faith comes from the fact that I affirm here that I am my transcendence in the mode of being of a thing.\textsuperscript{17}

Because he sees his reality as so shameful the neurotic tries frantically to keep it at a distance behind him. But it pursues him inexorably wherever he goes.

3. Autonomous Man and Receiving

Another facet of the neurotic personality which Dr. Horney speaks of is his sense of aloneness. His basic insecurity leads him to see the world he lives in as threatening:

\textsuperscript{16}Sartre, \textit{Being and Nothingness}, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 69.
The child does not develop a feeling of belonging, of "we," but instead a profound insecurity and vague apprehensiveness, for which I use the term basic anxiety. It is his feeling of being isolated and helpless in a world conceived as potentially hostile.\textsuperscript{18}

The neurotic needs to prove himself, yet the world around him often shows him that he is not the glorious figure he imagines himself to be. It thwarts the fulfillment of his false but deeply felt need. It thus threatens him. And other people, generally, do not share his glorious idea of himself. They are a sign of contradiction to his delusions of grandeur, and though they may be kind, they pose a threat, for he "needs" to have his delusions.

But the fact that other people, generally, have a more realistic idea of the neurotic than he does of himself means also that they do not make the extreme demands on him that he makes on himself. He is probably oblivious of this latter fact, however, and tries to prove himself to them just as much as to himself. Since he presumes he is not loveable, he would not expect others to love him. He must prove himself to them if he is to win any response from them.

When giving and receiving were treated in the textual analysis section of this chapter, it was noted that in \textit{The Wisdom of the Sands} Saint-Exupery most often views moral man

\textsuperscript{18}Horney, p. 18.
as an autonomous giver. To receive anything was suspect, justifiable only as a means to fuller giving. This theme re-occurs both in Saint-Exupery's treatment of love and of prayer, e.g.:

True love begins when nothing is looked for in return. And if the habit of prayer is seen to be so important for teaching a man to love his fellow man, this is because no answer is given to his prayers. (152-153)

Saint-Exupery seems to be viewing man's really important giving as one-directional: from the self outward. But man does not exist as an isolated Cartesian ego. He is mutually related to other men in the world. They can contribute to his becoming just as he can contribute to theirs. Saint-Exupery seems to view man's becoming as an autonomous self-initiated and self-generated activity. His starting point seems to be the isolated self who experiences a drive to transcend himself, to become, and in searching for a means he finds that giving himself to creative endeavor is that means. But this isolated self seems to forget that others can - with profit to both sides - direct their creative activity towards him, and help him become.

Not only does Saint-Exupery's autonomous man seem to be working under the presumption that no help is to be expected from others, but others become incorporated into his efforts
to prove himself. In relationships with others the focus is on oneself: I will give myself to them so that I can transcend myself and become. There seems to be a subtle narcissism involved here in which one treats others primarily as a means to one's own growth. There is evidence of this attitude in the following texts:

I build her up before me like a temple. . . . Thus I can love her beyond herself, beyond myself. . . . She is but one step more on my upward climb to God. (107)

Imperfect wife. . . . though you be not a fulfillment, a reward, a jewel venerated for itself - of which I would soon grow weary - you are a vehicle, a pathway, and a portage. And I shall not grow weary of becoming. (313)

Thus I [the Berber king] would lie, were I to say I had a friend in him [his enemy]. Nevertheless, always we met with deep-felt joy - but here words would lead astray by reason of men's pettiness. My joy was not for him, but for God; he was a bridge leading towards God. (113)

If proving oneself by seeking moral perfection is neurotic, it is a rather noble way of being neurotic. Yet moral perfection can be sought in a more healthy way where one is not so anxious that he is largely not aware of others in any other way except as a means of proving himself.

But Saint-Exupery's autonomous man is not just oblivious of receiving anything from others, he is positively opposed to it:
Your fruit ... acquires value only if it cannot be given back to you. (161)

No being can move you once you have warmed your hands at his flame and taken the measure of what he has to give. It is at the moment when you give up hoping aught from him, and only then, that he moves your heart. (151)

But if your love is accepted and her arms open to welcome you, then pray God save your love from over-ripeness and decay; for I fear for hearts that have their utmost desire. (195)

First, these texts seem to presume a view of man as highly susceptible to corruption! This is a rather pessimistic and one-sided view of man.

Second, if two lovers both decided they wanted to give to, but not receive from the other, there would be a conflict of the first order in their relationship. The conflict would be solvable by saying one does not give love because one expects to receive; but Saint-Exupery does not make this clear. There seems little sense of one's need for others. There seems little sense of the mutuality of love.

There remains the basic question: What is wrong with receiving? The dependence of human beings on what they receive from others in physical, psychological, and spiritual ways is a primary fact of human community. Perhaps if one is out to prove himself, to receive from others would be a sign of weakness, an admission that he is not the god-like figure
he would like to be.

Dr. Karl Stern, in *The Flight From Woman*, says the fear of receiving can be a pathological phenomenon, amounting even to the fear that one will be destroyed if he receives:

The man of restless energy . . . is a figure familiar to the popular imagination. . . . Whenever we psychiatrists have an opportunity to observe this kind of person as a patient, we find at the bottom of it all a maternal conflict and a rejection of the feminine. The observation was first made in a peculiar and unexpected context - patients suffering from peptic ulcer of the stomach. Many of these ulcer patients were found to be hard-working and spartan in their habits; they shied away from any pleasure of "receiving," from accepting tenderness, from all forms of passivity, even healthy ones. Yet deep down there persisted an extraordinary need to be mothered, to be fed. "Deep down" is the right term, because the conflict manifests itself literally deep down in the body, on an organic level. The patient protests in his life against "being fed," while his stomach revolts against "not being fed." However, feeding here means much more than the intake of nourishment; it means receptiveness in a large sense, receptiveness to love, and openness in a childlike attitude of trust.

Precisely the same attitude towards life occurs in many people who do not suffer from stomach ulcers, but whose underlying conflicts are the same. . . . There is an air of restlessness about such men - not necessarily the tension of subjective anxiety, but the tension of energy - an air of endless drive and ambition for which someone once used the term, "flight into work." On getting to know these persons more intimately, one notices an extraordinary denial of feeling, a shying away from tenderness, and a fear of dependence or passivity. . . . The kind of individual I am talking about here is really in terror of dependence. The very possibility of being in the least dependent or protected, or even being loved, amounts to nothing
less than a phantasy of mutilation or destruction. 19

In terms of Dr. Stern's analysis the attempt to prove oneself would be a masculine, aggressive, conquest-oriented attitude towards reality, towards others, even towards oneself. This is to be contrasted with the feminine, receptive attitude. These "masculine" and "feminine" attitudes towards life are at their deepest two complementary aspects of any human being, man or woman. 20 The "man of restless energy" in attempting to adopt a completely masculine attitude towards life and to reject the feminine is humanly unbalanced.

In rejecting the feminine and receptivity he is cutting off the possibility of receiving unquestioning love from others or even from himself. This is the kind of love which would accept him for what he is, without asking that he prove himself. In cutting himself off from receiving this unquestioning love from another or from himself, he is perpetuating his inability to love himself - which is the reason the whole neurotic process gets started in the first place!

The neurotic who cuts himself off from receiving unquestioning love and attempts to replace it with an ersatz


20 Ibid., pp. 9-39.
loveableness won by proving himself godlike is bound to fail on two counts: (1) To prove himself loveable would mean for him to become the godlike figure, his idealized self-image. Since he is only human he will never succeed. (2) The whole attempt is misconceived in the first place. One is not loveable because he is a godlike figure without reproach but because he is what he is. He has a certain goodness simply because he is what he is. *Omne ens est bonum*: goodness is convertible with being.

The roots of feeling oneself to be unloveable and of rejecting the feminine and receiving go deep into the history of the person involved and are too complex to treat here.\(^{21}\)

4. **Conclusion**

First it is important to note that the psychological analysis presented here is not intended to be an analysis of the person Saint-Exupery. That would be both out of place and highly conjectural. Rather the object is an analysis of the issues discussed in *The Wisdom of the Sands*, and, to a certain extent, the attitudes manifested by the fictional character, the Berber king.

The basic aim is to raise the question whether all intense pursuit of moral ideals will lead man to transcend himself - lead to real growth. To achieve real growth a man must pursue ideals but he must also take into account his limited reality and choose humanly possible ideals. The pursuit of ideals which are too high leads to neurosis and self-hatred which are destructive or at least wasteful. Growth is sidetracked into pursuing "phantoms." Transcendence is blocked. Unless man can love himself he cannot love what is beyond himself. Nothing is said directly about human limitation in The Wisdom of the Sands, but one gets the impression in various places that by implication human limitation is not accepted.

The aim was also to show the connection between the inability to accept human limitation, harshness towards self, aloneness, and opposition to receiving, all of which are manifested in The Wisdom of the Sands. All of these are rooted in an inability to love oneself, and all indicate a sidetracking of human energies into destructive or wasteful channels.

These questions are at base metaphysical questions: finitude; the convertibility of being with good. If man cannot accept finitude, if he cannot see the goodness of his
being, limited as it is, he is not living the truth of his being. If he does not live the truth of his being, he cannot transcend himself, for he is out of touch with his own nature. And all of these inabilities can be traced to an absence of love. The metaphysical questions raised here are the most basic and important ones raised with regard to Saint-Exupery's philosophy of transcendence in this thesis.

But despite the critical nature of this commentary, Saint-Exupery's basic moral view is accepted. It is a morality of growth, of becoming: "Virtue is perfection in man's being and not the absence of vices." (68) The criticism given here presumes this basic view as a starting point, and offers refinements, clarifications concerning how one best achieves becoming.
CHAPTER III

ENVIRONMENT AND THE SOCIAL ORDER:

STRUCTURING AND MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE

In texts quoted in Chapter I [Cf. I. A. 5.b)] we saw that man for Saint-Exupery is internally a system of relations and he is linked with nature and others outside himself by relations: "For you are a nucleus of relations and nothing else; you exist by your links and your links exist through you." (275) "Then you are conscious of your link, like a navel-cord, with the world of things." (319) One important implication of this fact is the influence of the environment - the natural and social environment - on man's being and his becoming. The triple creation of nature, others, and self by which man transcends himself is a complex interaction of man and his environment.

Describing the environment within which man could best create and become is the goal of Saint-Exupery's philosophy of culture and society. Providing that environment is the goal of Saint-Exupery's leader. The Berber king of The Wisdom of the Sands, being something of a philosopher-king, attempts to achieve both of these goals. The purpose of this
chapter is (1) an exposition of the Berber king's (Saint-Exupery's) ideas on how one best gives a structure to man's transcendence (and it must be structured) by structuring his environment, particularly the social order; (2) an exposition of Saint-Exupery's idea of the ideal leader - an important question in the secondary literature on Saint-Exupery's writings - and a critical discussion of Saint-Exupery's view in light of the commentary section of Chapter II and the article by Pierre-Henri Simon, "Saint-Exupery entre la force et l'amour."¹

A. Textual Study

1. Structuring

We are using the word "structuring" to try to capture a central idea running through various texts in The Wisdom of the Sands. Saint-Exupery himself has no specific terminology for expressing this idea. The basic idea is that the structure of man's environment gives a certain structure to his being and becoming. Man in turn can re-structure the environment to a certain extent.

a) Man does need to have a structured environment. There must both be a stable order of things and man must

commit himself to this stable situation in order that he

\[\text{become:}\]

"Surely a man needs a closed place wherein he may
strike root and, like the seed, become." (77)

I am a builder of cities. It is my purpose to
lay well and truly, here and now, the foundations of
my citadel. For here I have halted the progress of
the caravan, which was but as a seed borne in the
wind's lap. The wind wafts like perfume the seeds
of the cedar tree, but I withstand the wind, burying
the seeds in the earth, so that cedar trees may rise
in their beauty for the glory of God. (12)

It is in this context that the Berber king says that
he abhors change, though he says in many other places that
"everything . . . must live and grow and constantly transform
itself" (91-92):

I abhor that which changes. I will away with him
who rises in the night and strews his prophecies upon
the winds, like the tree smitten by a lightening flash
when it splits and blazes up and fires the forest.
. . . There is a time for beginnings, but there is a
time, a thrice-blessed time, for use-and-wont. (14)

And the kind of change described here is drastic, destructive
change - upheaval - not the slower change which is growth,
becoming.

Such drastic change is evil insofar as it does not
allow man to become and thus the flow of Time is meaningless:

I went down amongst my people, musing on the
barter that can no longer be, when nothing remains
stable from generation to generation; and on Time's
river flowing to no purpose, like the sand in an
hourglass. (27)
b) The structure of the environment within which a man lives moulds him: "'The only rampart that can never fail you is the might of the structure that moulds you and which you serve.'" (264)

In one place, besides saying the structure of one's environment moulds him, the Berber king talks of this structure as creating "the lines of the field of force that animates you." This image seems to convey the idea that this structure gives both a certain power of life ("field of force," "animates you,") and an orientation and directionality ("the lines of the field of force.") The full quotation follows:

The rites and customs of your community are an aspect of its being, moulding you into the man you are and not another, causing you to savor the evening meal amongst your kinsfold and not another; for they are the lines of the field of force that animates you. (236)

In another text, structuring is done by the rules of a children's game. The children's lives are structured in such a way that they become:

Walking amongst my people in the silence of my love, I have seen the children of whom I spoke obeying the rules of their game and blushing for shame if they cheated. For they knew the visage of the game (and by "visage" I mean what emanates from the game, its aura). To its shaping go their fervor, the joy of solving problems, and the glad temerity of youth — and all these things have a special savor deriving from the game alone and, as it were, a
certain god presiding over it, who thus makes them become. But if it happens that, though proficient at the game, you take to cheating, you will soon find that you have lost those very things which held your interest in it - your excellence and probity and skill. Thus the love of a visage acts on you as a constraint. (194)

Things take on a meaning within a certain environment which they take on nowhere else:

Wherever the good things of the world are most abundant men have more chances of deceiving themselves as to the nature of their joys, for these seem to emanate from those good things, though in reality they derive solely from the meaning those things acquire in a certain empire or domain or dwelling place. (235-236)

The structure of a man's environment can open his mind to "a fullness of understanding," to "the language of the spirit," and gives him ideals to work for ("gods"):

What I name "conquest" is building up for you the structure that befits you, and opening your mind to a fullness of understanding. For lakes there are to slake your thirst, so but you be shown the way to them. Thus will I install in you my gods, so that they may enlighten you.

And assuredly it were best that in your childhood and betimes you should be conquered; else we shall find you casehardened and no longer capable of learning the language of the spirit. (210)

In the following passage the Berber king talks of the necessity of committing oneself to a structured situation; he speaks of the structured environment created for a wife by her household utensils, her child, her work, and how these shape her:
Either I draw together, or blog out, the wife who, when night is falling, drifts asunder. I erect barriers around her: the tray of gleaming bronze, the stove, the kettle; so that day by day each of these common things may come to wear for her the look of a familiar friend, with a smile belonging to this place alone. And thus it will be as if, little by little, God's presence were being revealed to her. Then the child will cry for her to feed it, and the carding wool tempt her fingers; the embers will call on her to be fanned. Thus from henceforth she will be inured, schooled to the task assigned. For I am her who builds the urn around the perfume that it may be preserved. I am the use-and-wont that ripens the fruit. I am he who constrains the woman to take shape and being, so that in the fullness of time I may confide to God on her behalf, not a mere wistful sigh borne on the evening breeze, but an ardor, love, and sorrows that are her own. (13)

This passage brings out the fact that the structure one's environment will have depends on the situation to which he commits himself. It brings out the necessity of such commitment, for one must "take shape" in order to become and can take shape only by committing himself to a particular situation.

The sentence "Thus it will be as if, little by little, God's presence were being revealed to her" may seem somewhat mysterious. But it takes on meaning in light of the fact that man's transcendence has its finality in God. [Cf. I. A. 2. a) and b).] The structure of one's environment, in "revealing God's presence," reveals the goal and meaning of life. Thus this statement corroborates others made
immediately above which state that the structure of one's environment gives "orientation and directionality" to life, or gives meaning to life, or gives ideals to work for, or opens man's mind to fullness of understanding.

c) Outside of a structured environment life loses meaning. The vision of God giving meaning and direction to one's life is lost. The anguish of not being committed, of not being shaped - of "not-being" - begins.

For I perceived that man's estate is as a citadel: he may throw down the walls to gain what he calls freedom, but then nothing of him remains save a dismanted fortress, open to the stars. And then begins the anguish of not-being. Far better for him were it to achieve his truth in the homely smell of blazing vine shoots, or of the sheep he has to shear. Truth strikes deep, like a well. A gaze that wanders loses sight of God. And that wise man who, keeping his thoughts in hand, knows little more than the weight of his flock's wool, has a clearer vision of God than the unfaithful wife, laid bare to the witcheries of the night. (13-14)

Even within a structured environment, if one is not in touch with it and committed to it, he is not shaped by it and does not become:

"Thus it is with the sedentaries of the oases, clinging like limpets to the hoards they have amassed. . . .

"They do not perceive that they are wilting, draining themselves of their substance, and depriving all things of what gives them worth, when they lose touch with the meaning of the empire. . . .

". . . . And what is the child if there be no empire; if you dream not of making of him a conquerer, an architect, the lord of a domain? If he is abased to being a mere lump of flesh?
"They disregard the breast unseen that suckled
them night and day; for the empire nourished your
heart as your beloved nourishes you with her love,
changing for you the whole meaning of the world."
(53-54)

True egoism exists not; only abstention. He
who goes his solitary way, mouthing "I . . ., I . . .,
I . . .," is as it were an absentee from the kingdom.
Like a loose stone lying outside the temple, or a
word of the poem stranded high and dry, or a morsel
of flesh not forming part of a body. (180)

Man is unhappy when he loses meaning and vision, when
he is no longer committed. He needs to have his life struc-
tured:

Thus, if you see a group of children growing
listless, you need but impose on them constraints -
the rules of a game - and presently you will see
them playing merrily together. (192)

2. Festivals

Festivals were discussed above in Chapter I. [I. A.
3. g).] They were seen as reflecting the dialectical move-
ment between tension and resolution as things in process
make progress towards their ultimate end, God. Festivals
represent resolution of tension, alternating with work peri-
ods, representing tension. And at the time of festivals the
meaning of the whole dialectic is recalled. It can now be
said, in the terms introduced in this chapter, that the
cycle of festivals in the Berber king's empire give a setting
in Time and a structure to time. Thus it could be called
the empire's temporal environment:
And our immemorial rites are in Time what the dwelling is in Space. For it is well that the years should not seem to wear us away and disperse us like a handful of sand; rather they should fulfill us. It is meet that Time should be a building-up. Thus I go from one feast day to another, from anniversary to anniversary, from harvestide to harvestide; as, when a child, I made my way from the Hall of Council to the rest room within my father's palace, where every footstep had a meaning. (16)

In temporally structuring it, festivals give meaning to man's life:

Sacrifices and festivals are bound up together. For in them the meaning of your deeds and efforts is displayed. (213)

"Sometimes," my father used to say, "I am moved to found a festival; but it is not so much a festival I found as a set relation between Man and Time." (326)

Festivals give time meaning by structuring it in such a way as to reaffirm the basic nature of process, time, and man's becoming. This was indicated by the reference in the text immediately above to "Man" and "Time." ("Man" is the ideal man towards whom man's transcendence is directed; "Time" is time within which man becomes and time flows to a purpose.)

2 The meaning assigned to the term "Man" (with a capital "M") here is based on Saint-Exupery's use of the term in Flight to Arras. This term is used much more often in Flight to Arras than in The Wisdom of the Sands. [Antoine de Saint-Exupery, Flight to Arras, trans. Lewis Galantiere (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1942)].

3 The meaning assigned to the term "Time" (with a capital "T") here is based on Saint-Exupery's use of the term in The Wisdom of the Sands, pp. 32, 133, 272, 326.
It is also indicated by the following texts:

... One great yearly festival, whose significance lies not in its rejoicings, for these are fleeting ... but whose purport is the sweetening of your whole year with a savor of happy expectation or of remembered joy - for only that road is beautiful which leads towards the sea. (288)

No festival I know save that which you attain by coming from somewhere, and from which you go on. (313-314)

Time without festivals is time without celebration of commitment; it is time without the structure it needs to give shape to man, to give him meaning; it is time without becoming.

Men will become like cattle in the marketplace and to beguile the tedium of their days they will invent new, foolish pastimes. ... but they will be devoid of grandeur. ...

Thus is it with the man lost in a drab week of indistinctive days, of a year that has no festivals, no form or visage. (17-18)

3. Order and Life

In some places in The Wisdom of the Sands Saint-Exupéry talks of structured environment and life in terms of "order." The order which the Berber king would have in his kingdom is a living, growing order. It is one that creates conditions in which man can create, barter himself and become. He carefully distinguishes this living order from the rigid order of the policeman - which is sterile of itself:
For his [the policeman's] function is not to point to any higher way of living, but only to forbid certain acts, without knowing why. (237)

If you summon your police officers before you and bid them build up a world for you, that world, however desirable it be, will never come into being; for it lies not with the police officer, nor is he qualified, to sponsor the faith that is yours. His function is not to weigh men in the balance but to enforce enactments, duly codified, as to the punishment of theft, the payment of taxes, or compliance with such or such a regulation. (236)

The policeman's order is a minimal factor in the environment. It cannot give meaning (vision) to man's life. Further, imposing the policeman's order can be carried to an extreme. The rigidity of a police state and its demands for uniformity stifle the freedom needed for man to create and become:

Were I to begin by rejecting Life, and did I align men like posts along a roadside, then I might well achieve an order perfect of its kind. Likewise, if I reduced my people to the condition of ants in an ant-hill. But what love could I have for human ants? Rather I love that man whom his religion sets free and whose life is quickened by intimations of divinity within him: the kingdom of God, the empire, the domain, his home - so that day in, day out, he barters himself for something vaster than himself. (91)

Put succinctly: life can create order, but order cannot create life. Order is a condition of life but not a cause:

Yet order is an effect of life and not its cause; a token of a city's strength, and not its source. Life and fervor and tendencies toward a certain end create order; but never does order create life, or fervor or such tendencies. (237)
These ideas of Saint-Exupery's about order and life reflect his negative reaction to the totalitarian forms of government he experienced. He went to Moscow as a reporter for *Paris-Soir* in May, 1934. He was disturbed by the rise of Nazism in the 1930's and later was a pilot in the French Air Force during World War II. And *The Wisdom of the Sands* was being written during the late thirties and early forties.

4. **Hierarchy**

a) One concrete structural feature of Saint-Exupery's ideal state is that it is hierarchical. Men are not in all respects equal, or uniform, and the structure of the ideal state should reflect this. A naive or simplistic egalitarianism ("leveling out" men) misses this important truth:

I dissuade you from leveling out at the behest of an impracticable "justice"; for never will you make an old man equal to a youth, and your equality will always be a cumbersome makeshift. (288)

This "leveling" of men could result from the demand for uniformity in a police state - the life of the ant-hill, as Saint-Exupery describes it elsewhere. To demand this kind of uniformity would be to misconceive the nature of the unity of men in a state:

All that the rigors of law can do is to make you resemble your neighbor. How indeed could the policeman look beyond this? . . . But I do not base the empire on your being like your neighbor, but on the merging of your neighbor and yourself into a unity which is the empire. (194)
Or, this "leveling" of men could result from the opposite extreme of a police state - from an excess of freedom and absence of structure wherein all are equally unchallenged, uncommitted, uncreative:

Freedom leads to equality, and equality to stagnation - which is death. Were it not better for you to be ruled by life; to endure the lines of force of the growing tree, like so many obstacles to overcome in a day's march. (192)

The basic problem is to create a hierarchy which will foster becoming in men. Some hierarchies are unjust and will not do so. On the other hand an unstructured situation will not foster becoming either. Both the correct kind of hierarchy and the correct kind of equality are achieved when the kind of structure is created wherein all serve the empire, each in a way suitable to himself. When they give themselves this, men will become:

Unjust indeed is the hierarchy which thwarts you and prevents you from becoming. Nevertheless when you take arms against this injustice, you will proceed from destruction to destruction of what has been established, until all is leveled out like the stagnant lake into which the glory of a glacier is melted. You would have men be like each other, confusing the "equality" you seek with sameness. But I would call them equal when all alike they serve the empire. Not when they merely resemble each other. (323)

Competition ("envy," "jealousy") according to Saint-Exupery, fosters becoming ("it is the sign of a line of force" [Cf. p. 80; V.A. 8. a]) because it challenges men
to achievements:

Make no mistake regarding envy; it is the sign of a line of force. Suppose I found an order of merit. You will see those on whom it is bestowed flaunting, proud as peacocks, the bauble on their chest. Then the others wax jealous of those whom I have decorated. And now you step in with your justice, which is a spirit of compensation, and enact that all men shall wear these baubles on their chests. And, thereafter, who will trouble to bedeck himself with a thing so trivial and meaningless? For it was not the bauble itself, but its significance that counted. (323-324)

b) But not all men are challenged and inspired by seeing others' achievements. What Saint-Exupery calls "the mass" feels resentment at others' achievements. They would pull down to their level the creative man who excels rather than trying to rise to his level. They would create a false equality to hide their lack of achievement:

To their mind, justice meant, above all, equality, and anyone who excelled in any way was crushed out ruthlessly.

"The mass," my father said, "hates the sight of one who proves himself a man; for it is formless, strain­ing in all ways at once and tramples on the creative impulse. True, it is evil that a single man should crush the herd, but see not there the worst form of slavery, which is when the herd crushes out the man." (52)

Thus it is with the man without hierarchy, who envies his neighbor if his neighbor excels him and fain would pull him down to his own level. But when all are leveled out into the flatness of a stagnant lake, what joy would they have of it? (18)

Rather the creative man must pull them up towards his level, he must lead them to create:
Thus I learned also that we must not subject him who creates to the desires of the multitude. It is, rather, his creation that must become the multitude's desire. The multitude must accept the mind's gift and transmute it, once received, into emotion; for the mass of men is but a belly whose function is to transmute the nourishment it receives into grace and light. (92)

The Berber king has no kind words for the "rabble," the "herd," the "mass":

Them I call the rabble who hang on others' words and gestures, and, chameleon-wise, take their color from them, truckling to their benefactors, relishing applause, and making themselves the mirror of the multitude. Never do you find such men faithful wardens of their heritage, like a citadel; nor do they hand down their password from generation to generation; but rather let their children grow at random, without moulding them. And everywhere they breed, like fungus, on the face of the earth. (109-110)

Perhaps their worst fault is that they lack ambition to become:

"Natural enough!" my father said. "For these men justice means the perpetuation of that which is."

. . . .

"Why should I take sides with that which is, against that which will be? With that which vegetates, against that which promises better things?" (38)

The creative man who excels should not attempt to be understood by the "mass." He will never be understood by them; and if he receives too much praise, he may become corrupted and start seeking praise for its own sake rather than seeking to create:
"Seek not," I said, "to have your deeds understood. Never will they be understood. Never will they be understood, and therein is no injustice. . . . Then 'bitter is the lot,' they say, 'of him who is not judged by his deserts.'

"But I make answer: 'Bitter, rather, is the lot of him who is understood and borne aloft in triumph, thanked, honored, and enriched. For soon he is puffed up with vulgar self-esteem and barters his starry nights for things which can be bought and sold.' . . . The veteran carpenter finds his work's reward in a well-planed plank." (125)

If what the creative man creates has value in itself, he should not need the praise of the mass to convince him of its worth:

Vanity bespeaks a lack of pride, a truckling to the mob, ignoble humbleness. For you woo the populace so as to convince yourself your fruit is good. (161)

The creative man will lead a quiet, unheralded life lacking in "show";

He reveals himself only by his quiet power and in so far as his work is done. For thus it is with every life that counterbalances the world. Only against the madman who dins your ears with his projects for a new world can you contend effectively; but not against him who thinks and builds up the Here and Now, for the Here and Now is none other than as he renders it. (259)

c) On the other hand the Berber king is not proposing an elitist society. There is a place for all degrees of skill and competence. Saint-Exupery (through the Berber king) speaks of this most often in saying that there is a place for bad sculptors as well as good sculptors in his
empire. (The sculptor is taken here as a symbol of creative man in general - the sculptor directly and obviously imposes a form. Thus we are treating here of creative, talented people and of not-so-creative, not-so-talented people.) The following text, speaking of good and bad sculptors (Cf. also pp. 45, 217, 280, 327), makes these points: (1) creative activity (e.g. sculpture, dancing) is a value in itself and thus has worth apart from the degree of competence with which it is executed. (2) Fear of making mistakes does not foster creativity; it is rather a spirit of freedom and "zest" for one's work, however good or bad it may be, which does so. (3) Good sculptors can learn from poor sculptors, as well as from their own mistakes; poor sculptors can improve themselves also by learning from others. So the art of sculpture in general can be advanced by tolerating bad sculptors:

"For you cannot divide men up, and if you will have none but great sculptors, you will soon have none at all. . . . The great sculptor springs from the soil of poor sculptors. . . . Likewise the best dances come of a simple zest for dancing; that fervor insists that everyone, even if he have no skill in dancing, shall join in the dance. Else you have but a joyless, pedantic exercise, an idle show of skill. "Condemn not their mistakes as does an historian judging a bygone age. . . .

"Mark well my words! One may hit the mark, another blunder; but heed not these distinctions. Only from the alliance of the one, working with and through the other, are great things born. The vain effort furthers the successful, and the successful reveals the goal they both are seeking. One man
who discovers God, discovers Him for all. For my empire is as a temple: I have mustered my people and they are ever building it at my behest. Yet it is their temple. And the rising of the temple spurs them on towards their best." (44)

Finding place for all kinds and degrees of people in the empire is related to the problem of resolving conflicting truths - which will be treated in detail in the next chapter. Both problems are a matter of unifying and reconciling differences.

Thus, to summarize Saint-Exupery's ideas on the hierarchical nature of the ideal state: in the Berber king's empire there is not a false equality, but a hierarchy which recognizes the differences in people. Yet all are united "when all alike they serve the empire." There remains however outside of this unity an intransigent group, "the mass," who refuse to barter themselves, and who, given the chance, would drag down to their level anyone who does barter himself and excells.

5. The Leader

Within the hierarchical structure of society the leader is the most important figure. Through his influence on creating the structure of the social order, he strongly influences men's becoming. The Wisdom of the Sands is a first person discourse made by a Berber king and any comment on
the social order is made from his point of view: how should I, the king, rule my empire? This question is the starting point of any philosophizing that is done in the book.

a) The Berber king has a great concern for his people and wishes to unite them in himself:

"Grant me, O Lord, a fragment of thy cloak whereunder I may gather in my soldiers, my tillers of the soil, my sages, and the husbands and wives of my people, that all may be enfolded, even the little ones who cry at nightfall." (68)

The best way to unite them is to get them to work together for a common goal. He repeats one saying at least three times in The Wisdom of the Sands, e.g.:

And I remembered my father's words. "If you wish them to be brothers, have them build a tower. But if you would have them hate each other, throw them corn." (52)

"You would have them love each other? Then fling not down before them the grains of power for them to share and peck at. Let one serve the other, and let that other serve the empire. Thus because each seconds each and they build conjointly, they will live in amity." (66-67)

True unity among men must be based on mutual respect. There is a true basis for respect only if men barter themselves and become something great, something worthy of respect. If they barter themselves and become, men will be happy, both with themselves and with each other. Therefore the leader's task is to find that for which men can work
together so that, bartering themselves and becoming, they can create a true basis for mutual respect and happiness:

"O Lord, thou seest how these men are at enmity because they are no longer building up the empire. It were mistaken to believe that they cease to build because of their dissensions. Enlighten me as to the tower I must have them build, enabling them to barter themselves for it and fulfill in it their aspirations. A task which will absorb the best in each and, calling forth the greatness in him, rejoice in his heart.

... And because they are cold they hate each other. For hatred is but dissatisfaction. ... Thus clustering weeds hate and devour each other, but it is not so with the solitary tree, whose every branch thrives on the welfare of the rest." (67-68)

The leader's search to find that for which men can work together, has the ultimate goal of helping them become:

"Wherefore it is our bounden duty to quicken whatever is great in man, and to exalt his faith in his own greatness." (55)

The purport and the purpose of my decrees is the man to whom they will give rise. (20)

When men are united a fuller participation in God, who is absolute unity, is achieved; thus a kind of social transcendence or becoming is achieved. When unity is achieved among men, bonds of love are created between individuals and they thus become as individuals. If they are working together, men must barter themselves, and thus they become. The two kinds of becoming - becoming through achieving unity and becoming through bartering oneself - are intertwined.

The second last text above (67-68) implies (especially the
(last sentence) that men cannot become alone as individuals, only together. (Although in other places Saint-Exupery treats becoming as a very autonomous thing — especially when speaking in the first person rather than the third person.)

b) The ideal leader must be creative: he must create a social structure within which men can become. To be creative he must be a man of vision. By communicating his vision to his people, he will be able to give them goals and rouse their fervor:

"O Lord," I prayed, "impart to me the vision for which they will barter themselves with all their hearts, and all through each, will wax in power. Then virtue will shine forth, betokening the men they are." (60)

From the leader's vision comes the form or "visage" which he, in creating a political and social structure, imposes on events:

If I weld together the diversities of my age in a single, unique visage, and have I the sculptor's god-like hands, my desire will come into being. . . . What I did was to create. Out of the chaos of appearances I shall have fashioned a visage and made it good, and it will rule over men. As does the domain, which sometimes claims even their lifeblood. (84)

It is through me and the vision within me that is achieved the unity which I . . . have summoned forth from my flocks and herds, my dwelling places and my mountains. (22)

"I am their keystone; it is I who hold them together and shape them into the likeness of a temple." (139)

c) Another sense in which the leader should be a man of vision and a unifier of his people is that he possesses and ever seeks further in spiritual vision for a higher truth which unifies conflicting truths, i.e., the conflicting points of view of his various subjects:

Disdaining alike the music and the flattery of the great, the hatred and the plaudits of the crowd, and serving God alone, beyond and through them, I am lonelier on my mountainside than the wild boars of the caves, and firmly rooted as the tree whose life's work is to transmute the rocky soil into a cluster of flowers . . . . For in my ineluctable remoteness I stand aloof from all their futile controversies, being neither for one group against the others, nor for the inferiors against the superiors, but overruling classes, factions, parties, I fight for the tree itself against its component parts, and for the components for the tree's sake. (282)

Compromise means being contented with a tepid brew in which iced and scalding drinks are feebly reconciled. But I wish to preserve for men their fullest savor. For all they seek after is desirable; all their truths are valid. And it is for me to create the vision, the pattern which embraces them all. (272-273)

The leader, then, is something of a philosopher-king - though his "philosophy" is more the monk's contemplative wisdom. He mediates God's wisdom to his people - for it is in God that all "contrary" truths are unified.

d) The Berber king manifests a great deal of concern and compassion for his people [Cf. especially p. 123, (68)]. He is greatly concerned to understand the point of view of
each of his subjects, to understand what good each is seeking in his life. (Cf. above, p. 126) Yet there are times when he deals rather tyrannically and arbitrarily with some of his subjects. The most extreme example recounted in The Wisdom of the Sands is an action taken by the Berber king's father, at that time the king. It is true that the Berber king himself was not acting here, yet he does not criticize his father's action; he seems, rather, to have quite enjoyed it:

I remember that miscreant who visited my father and said: "You bid your household pray with rosaries of thirteen beads. Why thirteen? May not salvation be had as well with a different number?"

Then he advanced subtle reasons why men had better pray with twelve-bead rosaries, and I, who was then a child, was taken by his cunning arguments. Anxiously I gazed at my father, doubting if his answer would outshine that specious brilliance.

"Tell me," the man continued, "wherein the rosary of thirteen beads weighs heavier. . . ."

"The rosary of thirteen beads," my father answered, "has the weight of all the heads I have already cut off in its defense."

God enlightened the miscreant, and he repented.

This answer may simply have been meant to shut up a man who was talking on long-windedly about a relatively trivial matter. Yet there are other occasions when the Berber king seems quite willing to go to extremes in the use of power to compel compliance with his orders. For example, he is willing to condemn to death sentries who sleep at their posts:
Therefore will I send my men at arms to arrest you, and you shall be condemned to that death which is the death of sentries who sleep at their posts. All that remains to you is to take heart of grace in the assurance that, by the example of your punishment, you are bartering yourself for something greater than yourself, the vigilance of my sentinels keeping watch and ward over the empire. (208)

In a text which overlaps the cited above [p. 110, (13)] the Berber king seems willing to "blot out" an unfaithful wife if she will not commit herself to a particular situation and barter herself:

Her I protect who does not love the spring in its diversity, but one particular flower in which all springtime is incarnate: a woman who is not in love with love, but with that one and only form which, for her, love has made its own.

That is why either I draw together, or blot out, the wife who, when night is falling, drifts asunder. (13)

The Berber king has a great deal of love for his people. Yet he is also driven by an intense moral idealism. And when his people do not live up to his ideals a kind of desperation grips him and he turns towards them the same harshness that he turns towards himself when he feels himself to be failing morally. (Cf. pp. 93-94.) He tries to force them to meet his ideals, or in extreme cases, eliminates them as a bad influence, or executes them as a symbol.

There occurs a strange sentence in The Wisdom of the Sands: "In the silence of my love I (the Berber king) had many of them (false prophets and revolutionaries) executed."
The phrase "in the silence of my love" is used a number of times in *The Wisdom of the Sands*. The phrase is usually used to introduce the statement of some wisdom that came to the Berber king while contemplating on the mountain top or while walking among his people. This phrase usually has the emotional connotations of compassion and the quiet of contemplation. Thus a certain shock effect is achieved by juxtaposing it with "I had many of them executed." But this juxtaposition also establishes a context for the act of executing: It was done out of deep thoughtfulness and concern for his people—concern for their moral excellence.

But it seems that the desperation that grips the Berber king when his people do not measure up to his ideals blinds him in certain ways. He does not always respect the freedom of his subjects or their right to intelligent difference with him. He seems blinded to a truth he himself enunciated in another context: the policeman's order cannot lead people to a higher way of life.

Saint-Exupery's ideal state is not elitist in the sense that there is place in it for people with all degrees of talent. But it does seem to be elitist in the moral sense. Those who are not willing to barter themselves are to be forced to comply, or "blotted out," or at least
disdained as "the mass," as "fungus."

The attitude manifested here and elsewhere by the
Berber king raises the very basic question whether one can
force another to work fervently, to love, to become. This
question will be taken up again in the commentary section of
this chapter.

6. Freedom and Constraint

A problem which faces anyone who takes responsibility
for others is: Just when do I stop letting my charges freely
decide their own actions and start issuing commands? As an
influence in the social environment one will structure the
lives of one's charges differently according to one's answer
to this question. We remarked above that the Berber king
does not seem to respect his subjects' freedom at times. A
consideration of giving freedom and its opposite, constrain-
ing, is thus important. A presentation of the Berber king's
(Saint-Exupery's) ideas on freedom and constraint follows:

a) A certain freedom is necessary in order that man's
creative spirit is not oppressed. The constraint exercised
by certain social structures is oppressive, as was noted
above: "Unjust indeed is the hierarchy which thwarts you
and prevents you from becoming." (323) "Were I to begin by
rejecting Life, and did I align men like posts along a road-
side, then I might well achieve an order perfect of its kind." (91) (italics mine) In reaction to oppressive constraint Saint-Exupery has said:

"Set man free and he will create." (64)\(^5\)

b) Yet Saint-Exupery is wary of the wrong kind of freedom, which can lead to dissipation; it leaves man unstructured and he does not become:

For I perceived that man's estate is as a citadel: he may throw down the walls to gain what he calls freedom, but then nothing of him remains save a dismantled fortress, open to the stars. And then begins the anguish of not-being. (13-14)

"Yet he who is blind to this havoc of his life (his wife has left him) grieves not for his bygone plenitude, but is contented with his new-won freedom, which is the freedom of having ceased to exist.

"Thus, too, it is with the man in whose heart the empire has died." (54)

... sunk in that inordinate freedom which often saps the vitals of the rich. (51-52)

For license whittles you down to nothingness, and, as was wont to say my father: "Not-being is not freedom." (190)

Man must accept challenges and meet resistance in carrying them out before he can grow greater. But he cannot meet resistance if he is not in motion! He must commit himself to achieving something definite and particular - thereby limiting his freedom of action:

\(^5\)In this case the oppressive constraint involved is that of logicians (Cf. Chapter IV) on an artist.
"You cannot satisfy yourself with dreams, because dreams offer no resistance. Even thus it is with youth's callow flights of fancy, which bring but disillusion. That alone is useful which resists you. The misfortune of that leper is not that he is rotting, but that nothing resists him. He dreams his life away, a sedentary, amongst the provisions he has laid up.

"... That man would come to life again, could he whip up his cart horse, transport stones, and join in building the temple. But, as things are, all is given to him. (97)

c) A synthetic view of the relation of freedom and constraint is given in the long text cited below. A man defending the value of freedom is debating with another man defending the value of constraint. Saint-Exupery, in the person of the Berber king, is arbitrating the debate, playing the role of the ideal leader in seeking to bring forth the higher truth which will resolve and unify the two apparently conflicting points of view of his two subjects. This is a good example, in the context of Saint-Exupery's social thought, of resolving "contrary" truths. (Cf. Chapter IV, A. 2.)

"It may be said, 'Fertile is that freedom which permits a man to come into his own, and encourages the contradictories on which he thrives.' 6 Whereunto another may retort; 'Freedom spells decay, but fertile is constraint, which is a driving force within, the secret of the cedar's growth.' Then lo, they fall

6This note concerns the meaning of "encourages the contradictories on which he thrives." Cf. IV. A., 2.a) and 7.b).
wrangling, even to shedding each other's blood! Yet regret not overmuch; for these are birth pangs, a wrestling with the angel within - and an appeal to God's arbitrament. Therefore say to each man, 'You are right.' For they are right. But lead them higher on their mountain, for the effort of climbing (which, left to themselves, they would shirk, as asking too much of their hearts and sinews) - lo, their very suffering will constrain them to it, and hearten them for the ascent! . . . Freedom and constraint are two aspects of the same necessity, the necessity of being the man you are and not another. You are free to be that man, but not free to be another. You have the freedom of a language, but are not free to mix another with it. You are free within the rules of the game of dice you elect to play, but not free to spoil it by importing the rules of another game. . . .

"And all know this; for those who extol freedom insist also on obedience to the voice of conscience - the policeman within us - so that a man is always ruled by something, however 'free' he seems. Whereas those who speak for discipline assure you that it spells freedom of the mind. . . .

"When all is said and done, the city of their dreams is the same for all. Only some there are who claim for man the right of acting as he chooses; while others claim the right of molding him so that he may be, and become capable of action. And both are extolling the same man.

"Nevertheless both are mistaken. The former thinks of man as if he were eternal and existing in himself. Failing to understand that twenty years of teaching, of constraints, and activities have founded within him the man he is and not another. And that your faculties of love come to you above all from the practice of prayer and not from any inner freedom. Thus it is with an instrument of music, if you have not learned to play it; or with a poem, if you know no language. And the latter, too, are mistaken, for they believe in the walls and not in the man; in the temples but not in prayer. For it is only the silence latent in the stones of the temple that avails; not the stones themselves. And that same silence in the souls of men; and the souls of men wherein that silence
dwells. Such is the temple before which I bow down; but those others make of the stones their idol and bow down before the stones as such. (136-138)

Saint-Exupery's basic ideas in the preceding text are these: man needs the constraint of social structuring; he needs the constraint of self-discipline; man must narrow down his freedom by choosing to commit himself to a particular situation, and leave others behind. Freedom which lacks these three necessities "spells decay." Yet within the limitations imposed by social structure, self-discipline, and choice, "fertile is that freedom which permits a man to come into his own and encourages the contradictories on which he thrives." Constraint is not an end in itself, but a means, through discipline and choice, of giving man "shape" so that he becomes.

b) The object of any constraint on the part of the Berber king is that his people create and be "greatened":

As for me, I constrain them to create, for were they to receive all from me, they would become poor and paltry. It is I who receive all from them; and thereby they are greatened, because they have in me, whose greatness they have enhanced, an expression of their creative brotherhood. And even as I fold in my arms their flocks and herds, their seed-grain and the very walls of their dwellings, and, having made them mine, restore these things to them, as gifts of my love - even so is it with the sanctuaries they build. But just as liberty is not license, this order is not the lack of liberty. (128)
The subject who realizes the goal and effect of his having been constrained, is grateful to the king. But he may not realize this and thus not profit from the experience:

Once he [a soldier] has thus become, since, now that his eyes are opened, he abjures the undeveloped self that formerly was his, then he is astonished, nay ravished by this sudden splendor and is henceforth my ally, a soldier schooled by my severity. . . . Yet it is not true that such men are compelled; they are converted.

But severity or discipline fails of its end if, once he passes through the gate, the man who has been stripped of his old self, and released from the chrysalis, does not feel his wings unfolding, and if, instead of glorifying the pangs which brought this new self into being, he feels maimed and bereft, and struggles back to the farther bank of the river he has crossed.

. . . .

That I had been unable to convert those men whom I put to death proved that I had fallen into error.

(60-61)

The last sentence of this text offers a modification (at least in theory) of the extreme attitude mentioned above (pp. 126-130): the Berber king's willingness to "blot out" intransigent subjects.

In one place the Berber king distinguishes conquering from constraint (though he continues to use "constraint" elsewhere for "conquer"):}

Thus, too, I saw that we must distinguish between conquest and constraint. To conquer is to convert; to constrain is to imprison. If I conquer you, I set a man free, but if I use constraint on you, I crush you out. For my conquest is a building up of yourself, through you and within you. Constraint is but the
heap of stones aligned and all alike - from which nothing will be born. (210)

And he urges respect for an individual's integrity while "conquering" him:

Desire not to change a man into something other than he is, for it is certain that good reasons, against which you can do nothing, constrain him to be thus and not otherwise. But you can impart a change to that which he is already; for a man has many parts, he is virtually everything, and you are free to select in him that part which pleases you. And to limn its outline, so that it is evident to all, and to the man himself. Then, once he perceives it, he will accept it. . . . And likewise once, by dint of having fixed his attention on it, it has been integrated within him, and indeed become a second nature, it will live the life of all beings which seek to perpetuate and augment themselves. (269)

7. The Individual and Society

Finally, Saint-Exupery considers in The Wisdom of the Sands the question of the relationship of the individual and society. Again, one's answer to this question will determine the way one structures society. Saint-Exupery's answer involves a tension between concern for the individual and concern for the "empire" and all that it means - tension which can never, perhaps, be resolved in the abstract.

a) At times Saint-Exupery, in the person of the Berber king, seems to go to extremes in his concern for individuals. Saint-Exupery's great degree of sensitivity to people as individuals is shown in the following texts:
The ramparts are also . . . a shelter for individual destinies. And I believe above all in the destiny of the individual, which is nowise to be scorned for being so limited. A solitary flower can be a window opening on the vision of spring, and a springtime that brought no flowers would mean nothing to me. (85)

"I bid my surgeon spare not himself when he is called in haste across the desert to succor a wounded man; to repair the damaged instrument. No matter if the man be but a humble stonebreaker; he needs all his strength to break the stones. No matter, likewise, if the surgeon be most eminent. For herein is no question of paying tribute to mediocrity, but of repairing the damaged vehicle. And both have the same driver." (40)

"O Lord, I fain would safeguard the nobility of my warriors and the beauty of our temples, for which men barter their all, and which give meaning to their lives. But, walking tonight in the desert of my love, I came on a little girl in tears. Gently I drew her head back so as to see her eyes, and the grief I read in them abashed me. If, O Lord, I give no heed to this, I am excluding a part of love, and my task is incomplete. Not that I turn away from any of the lofty goals I set before me - but that little girl must be consoled. Thus alone will all go well with the world; for in her, too, the meaning of the world is manifest." (62)

Yet at other times the Berber king seems equally willing to sacrifice individuals for the good of the empire:

Therefore will I send my men at arms to arrest you, and you shall be condemned to that death which is the death of sentries who sleep at their posts. All that remains to you is to take heart of grace in the assurance that, by the example of your punishment, you are bartering yourself for something greater than yourself, the vigilance of my sentinels keeping watch and ward over the empire. (208)

My father said to me [the Berber king]: "Do not give thanks to him who saves your life, nor overdo your gratitude. . . . For the essential thing that
he has saved is not your petty, precarious life, but
the work in which you share and which needs your aid."  
(39)

And yet - why need I be concerned for their
[soldiers] "fragility"? Was I not knotting them
together into a wholeness that would save them
from dispersal and destruction? (34)

b) Another way of expressing the tension at the heart
of Saint-Exupery's view of the individual and society is
that, on the one hand, the raison d'etre of the empire is
ultimately the good of individuals:

"But I establish the empire so as to fulfill men
and inspire them with it, and for me the empire counts
less than the man. It is in order to establish men
that I subordinate them to the empire; I do not sub-
ordinate men so as to establish the empire." (138)

The purport and the purpose of my decrees is the
man to whom they will give rise. (20)

Yet, on the other hand, it may be necessary to sacrifice
some individuals for the empire, and through the empire, for
the good of all other individuals. For individuals have no
meaning apart from the empire:

True egoism exists not; only abstention. He who
goes his solitary way, mouthing "I . . ., I . . .,
I . . .!" is as it were an absentee from the kingdom.
Like a loose stone lying outside the temple, or a word
of the poem stranded high and dry, or a morsel of
flesh not forming part of a body. (180)

" . . . And what is the child if there be no
empire; if you dream not of making of him a conquerer,
an architect, the lord of a domain? If he is abased
to being a mere lump of flesh?" (53-54)
"The empire nourished your heart as your beloved nourishes you with her love, changing for you the whole meaning of the world." (54)

Thus I compel my priests to make sacrifice, even though the sacrifice has no longer any meaning; and my sculptors to carve figures, even though they be unsure of themselves, and my sentries to go their rounds on pain of death; for else, having cut themselves off from the empire, they would be dead men already. And so by my severity I save them. (207)

He who separates himself from the empire has no meaning, he is not. So revolt has to be punished; soldiers have to die to protect the empire. But killing sleeping sentries seems to be a bit extreme. While one could agree with the Berber king's principles, he seems extreme and arbitrary in his concrete applications of his principles at times.

All are responsible to the empire, which gives them meaning:

If you love the woman of your house, your wife, and if she sins, you will not join with the crowd in judging her. She is yours and you will begin by judging yourself, for you are responsible for her. Has your country fallen short? I bid you condemn yourself; for you belong to it. (276)

When the empire is decaying, all have contributed to its decay. (326)
B. Summary

In looking on the world as a system of things in relation, Saint-Exupery sees man linked, as with a "navel-cord," to the persons and things in his environment. His environment is thus important - within a proper one man will "take shape" and become.

Man needs a stable, structured environment; he needs to be structured by it in order to become. From his side man must commit himself to a structured situation in order to be affected by it. Things take on a meaning within a certain environment which they take on nowhere else; and the structure of a man's environment can open him up to "the language of the spirit"; it can reveal to him the goal of his transcendence; it can animate him.

In the texts cited in this chapter, a wide variety of things were mentioned as factors in the environment which structure a man: kitchen utensils, carding wool, vine shoots and flocks and their call to work, rites and customs, the rules of a game, a dwelling, an empire.

The cycle of work-festivals in the Berber king's empire give a setting in Time\(^7\) and a structure to time - it is

\(^7\) Cf. p. 83 for the meaning of "Time."
the empire's temporal environment. Festivals give meaning to time by structuring it in such a way as to reaffirm the basic nature of process, time, and man's becoming. The Here and Now is that "which you attain by coming from somewhere and from which you go on." Festivals celebrate the present as fruit of past accomplishment and hope for the future. Without festivals time is shapeless or meaningless.

One way Saint-Exupery talks of the structure of the environment is by using the word "order." There must be a living, growing order which creates conditions in which man can create and become. Living order is distinguished from the policeman's order which is - of itself - rigid and sterile. If it is carried to an extreme in a police-state, the policeman's order can stifle the freedom necessary to creativity.

Saint-Exupery's ideal state would be hierarchical in structure, with place for all kinds of people with all levels of talent. Saint-Exupery is opposed to that false equality which would "level" men, make them all exactly the same. "Leveling" men would kill ambition. The Berber king has no kind words for the "mass" who lack ambition to become and who would pull the creative man down to their level. Rather, the creative man must try to pull them up to his
level; he must not expect them to appreciate what he is and is trying to accomplish. Within the hierarchical structure Saint-Exupery proposes all are equal "when all alike they serve the empire."

The leader is the most important figure in the hierarchy. His goal is to unify his people and to lead them to barter themselves so that they become. This he does by getting them to work together to recreate their world - to impose on events a form which is born of his creative vision. By thus leading his people to commit themselves to a particular situation, to barter themselves in work, and by giving them a goal, he leads them to take shape and become. Saint-Exupery implies that this will not occur unless they are united. Another way in which the leader is a man of vision (besides being the source of the form imposed on events) is that he seeks in spiritual vision a higher truth which unifies the conflicting lived truths of his subjects.

The idea of man's transcendence is expanded by the study done in this chapter. In Chapter II it was stated that man transcends himself (becomes) by bartering himself - by commitment, giving himself, loving, and by fervor in his work. In Chapter III the social and environmental dimensions of transcendence have been discussed. (1) First, the unifying
of men into a community constitutes a kind of social transcendency, a more perfect participation in God, the final end of process, who is absolute unity. The other side of this same transcendency is resolving in a higher truth the apparently conflicting lived truths of men with opposed points of view. This is a precondition of true unity.

(2) Second, man needs to be committed to a structured environment. He needs to be structured by it, to "take shape," in order to transcend himself. An environment that is too free - lacking in structure - will lead to dissipation of creative energies. But some social and political structures are more conducive than others to man's becoming.

In leading his people to "take shape," Saint-Exupéry's Berber king seems quite willing to go to extremes in the use of force. He does not seem always to respect the freedom of his subjects or their right to intelligent difference with his opinions. When he talks of giving others freedom, and its opposite, "constraining" them, the Berber king enunciates the following principles: Man must narrow down his freedom of choice by particular commitments; he needs the constraint of a social structure; he needs the constraint of self-discipline; freedom which lacks these three necessities "spells decay." Within the limits of discipline and choice,
however, freedom is needed to foster the spontaneity and individuality of creative expression. The object of any constraint on the Berber king's part is that men "take shape" and become by creating.

One final question concerning man's relationship with the environment and how both are to be structured is the relation of the individual and society. At times the Berber king seems to go to extremes in his concern for individuals; yet at other times he seems equally willing to sacrifice individuals for the good of the empire. The reason for this basic tension is that although the empire exists for the good of individuals, yet it may be necessary to sacrifice some individuals for the empire, and through the empire, for the good of all other individuals - for individuals have no meaning apart from the empire. Thus all are responsible to the empire.

While one could readily agree with the Berber king's principles with regard to freedom and constraint and sacrificing individuals for the empire, he seems extreme and arbitrary in making concrete applications of them at times.
C. Commentary

1. Being Structured

Saint-Exupery proposes the idea that man must be structured in order to *become*. Just why it is better to be structured than not to be structured has not been clearly explained and calls for further discussion. This is true especially if "structured" is taken in a metaphysical sense.

a) The most basic meaning of the necessity of man's being structured is that man must be something definite if he is to be anything at all:

"You are free to be that man, but not free to be another. You have the freedom of a language, but are not free to mix another with it. You are free within the rules of the game of dice you elect to play, but not free to spoil it by importing the rules of another game." (137)

Man's *definiteness* is partially chosen by him - by his self-creation; it is partially predetermined by such factors as his nationality, his race, the language he speaks, his economic position, his sexual role, the personality of his parents, his body chemistry. Saint-Exupery is interested in the latter (the predetermined) insofar as he is interested in creating a better political and social structure. He is interested in the former (the chosen) insofar as he urges commitment.
b) That some social and political structures better foster man's **becoming** is clear. Why self-chosen definiteness is better follows from the logic of commitment, the logic of moral experience: To accomplish anything of worth and to develop himself and his capabilities man must commit himself to the achievement of some definite task:

```
... The poet full of love for poems, who writes not his own; the woman in love with love yet, lacking skill to choose, unable to become. ... The fool who thinks fit to blame that old woman for her embroidery on the pretext that she might have wrought something else - out of his own mouth he is convicted of preferring nothingness to creation. (29-30)
```

Saint-Exupery seems to presume that, although in taking on a particular task man develops only the particular capabilities needed to handle that task, yet in taking on any task at all he comes to face the same basic human problems and challenges that anyone taking on any other task comes to face. And it is in meeting these basic human problems and challenges that man's moral development takes place.

This point is more clearly stated in Saint-Exupery's earlier works than in *The Wisdom of the Sands*. In *Terre des Hommes* he says:

```
The world teaches us more about ourselves than any number of books, because it resists us; a man discovers himself only when he
```
faces up to its challenge.⁸

This idea is similar to the one expressed above (p. 98) that man's dreams are made more realistic when they meet the resistance of the real order. And in *Flight to Arras* Saint-Exupery says:

> There is no growth except in the fulfillment of obligations.⁹

c) One might take "structure" in our phrase "being structured" or "shape" in Saint-Exupery's phrase to "take shape" as meaning, metaphysically, form or essence. (It is doubtful whether Saint-Exupery himself would consider its meaning on this level.) If so, Saint-Exupery, in saying that man must be structured and become something definite or particular to become, would seem to be in agreement with ancient philosophers who say that the more definite, the more formed, is the more perfect. Whereas if one takes form or essence as limitation of pure *Esse* (as in certain schools of Thomism), therefore as limitation of perfection in the

---

⁸This is an English translation of the first sentence of *Terre des Hommes*, which was not included in the English translation *Wind, Sand and Stars*. This sentence was quoted in: Richard Rumbold and Lady Margaret Stewart, *The Winged Life: A portrait of Antoine de Saint-Exupery* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1953), p. 27. (hereafter WL)

⁹*Flight to Arras*, p. 199.
order of existential act the more definite, the more “formed”
in the sense of essentially more circumscribed) would be the
less perfect. Perhaps Saint-Exupery is not completely in
agreement with the ancient view because structuring might be
only a precondition of becoming, not identical with it. For
as we said above, (p. 134) within the limitations imposed by
social structure, self-discipline and choice, freedom (inde-
termination - lack of structure) fosters becoming. Yet
Saint-Exupery does not explicitly speak of freedom as some-
thing achieved but only as a condition, so becoming cannot
be identified either with attaining freedom as lack of de-
termination (therefore openness) or with attaining freedom
as lack of limitation (therefore fullness of being.) In
short, the metaphysical status of “structure” is not clear
in Saint-Exupery’s thought.

2. Existentialism, Process Philosophy and Neoplatonism

The synthetic nature of Saint-Exupery’s thought is
once again in evidence in this chapter. The existentialist
view of reality continues to show itself in Saint-Exupery’s
concern for moral authenticity, commitment, and man’s tran-
scendence. The process view of reality shows itself in
Saint-Exupery’s view of man as an organism within an en-
vironment. On the whole there seems to be more awareness
manifested in The Wisdom of the Sands of the influence of the physical environment and the social environment (other men as group) on man than the personal environment (other men as individual persons.) A Neoplatonic trend shows itself in the value given to spiritual vision and in the quest for unity.

3. Nietzsche's Übermensch?

In Saint-Exupery's view of the creative man relative to "the mass," and in his view of the aloofness, superior point of view, and self-justified autocracy of the ideal leader there seems to be something of Nietzsche's Übermensch ("over-man" or superman.) Commentators on Saint-Exupery's writings find Nietzsche's influence to be especially strong in his early works. For example Saint-Exupery thought of the pioneering band of pilots to which he belonged - who braved night flying when it was still new and dangerous - as heroes, a cut above ordinary men:

That morning pilot and navigator take their last stroll, from their car to the aeroplane, surrounded by proffers of advice, publicity-agents, and non-entities, a whole crowd of people who . . . believe that, in congratulating them or joking with them or tapping them on the shoulder, they become their equals. . . . But already the two kinds of men are distinct and apart, like two races. There are those who elect to stay and those who elect to leave.10

A particularly Nietzschean figure was Didier Daurat, the leader of the pioneering band of pilots (corresponding to Riviere in Night Flight,) who combined a deep concern for his men with a severity born of determination to make them transcend themselves:

An idealist and an ascetic, he (Didier Daurat) was primarily interested in human nature and the forging of men's minds and characters according to his own severe principles; and the perils and hardships of the Line (the Latécoère airline) gave him the perfect opportunity to put those principles into practice.11

Didier Daurat (Riviere) and the Berber king are closely alike in being leaders who are Nietzschean figures yet deeply concerned for their fellow men, although severe towards them.

4. Exaggerated Sense of Responsibility

Yet the figures of Riviere and the Berber king seem to have an exaggerated sense of responsibility for others. In their moral ardor and desire to lead men they seem to forget that other men must freely cooperate with their leadership. They tend to use force to achieve absolute compliance with their high ideals, forgetting that men can be forced to go through the motions of being moral but cannot be forced to really grow morally. Real moral growth can only result from those others' free decisions.

11 WL, p. 44.
a) The strongest and most direct statement of an exaggerated sense of responsibility in *The Wisdom of the Sands* is made by the Berber king's father, the previous king (with whom the Berber king generally agrees):

"I," said my father, "am responsible for the deeds of all men in my empire."
"Yet," one who heard him said, "some of them play the coward, and some the traitor. How can you be to blame for this?"
"If a man plays the coward, it is I. And if a man betrays, it is I playing traitor to myself."
"How could you play traitor to yourself?"
"I," answered my father, "endorse certain patterns of events, in terms of which they serve me. And for each pattern I am responsible, since I enforce it. . . ."

This exaggerated sense of responsibility for others is coupled with a rather naive view of how easily men could be led to moral greatness:

"When I wish to found a city I gather together the thieves and the lowest of the low, and I uplift them by the grant of power, offering them joys far other than the squalid thrills of plundering, ravishing, money-snatching. Then you will see them fall to building manfully, their pride becoming towers, battlements, and temples, and their cruelty grandeur and discipline. They are serving a city of their own begetting, for which they barter themselves wholeheartedly. They will die on the battlefield in its defense. And now you will find in them the gold of virtue without dross." (68)

These two texts remind one of the phenomena described by Dr. Horney in passages we quoted in the commentary section of Chapter II: having a glorified self-image, living in
imagination, so that one "loses sight of what is actually necessary for achieving something."12

The last two texts of Saint-Exupery quoted above are extreme statements and are at times moderated by other, more realistic ones (though the tendency to exaggeration remains):

When the empire is decaying, all have contributed to its decay. (326)

b) The smallness and simplicity of the Berber king's empire makes his exaggerated sense of responsibility feasible. The empire is small and simple enough to be ruled by an autocrat. Life seems about as complex and technologically advanced in the empire as it was in medieval Europe, and the empire is small enough to be enclosed in ramparts. Thus the Berber king is able to be perpetually hovering over his people, fretting, fearful they will make a "wrong" move. This method of ruling would be completely impracticable in a complex, pluralistic, technologically advanced society ruled by representative government. Writing a Utopia such as The Wisdom of the Sands makes it possible to get quickly and directly to real issues by reducing life to its simple, essential elements. Yet it also makes possible the oversimplification of problems which, in the real order, are

quite complex. This, we suggest, Saint-Exupéry has done in his treatment of responsibility for others and exercise of authority.

c) It was noted above (p. 128) that when the Berber king's people do not live up to his ideals, a kind of desperation grips him and he turns towards them the same harshness that he turns towards himself when he is failing morally. The Berber king's exaggerated sense of responsibility for others helps explain this phenomenon: since he feels so responsible for his people he feels their "failure" as his own failure, and reacts to their "failure" as to his own: harshly.

It was noted in a) above that the Berber king has a glorified self-image of himself as moral leader. Dr. Horney notes that one trying desperately to prove himself by moulding himself into his glorified self-image experiences "the frantic impatience to remove imperfections by magic."\footnote{Horney, p. 364.} That is to say his efforts become compulsive: he takes drastic, sweeping measures, and expends large amounts of energy. This is what the Berber king seems to do when his people's not living up to his high ideals leads him to see
himself to be a failure as a leader - i.e. a failure when judged by the glorified self-image. He forces others to act "correctly," he punishes some individuals as examples for all the rest, he "blots out" the worst offenders, he disdains the intransigent "mass." Horney says that one acting thus compulsively experiences "fear of not being able to cope with life without his neurotic props" (compulsions, among other things).\(^\text{14}\)

The desperation of some of the Berber king's actions apparently blinds him to the fact that other person's moral growth cannot be forced - a fact which he himself states above (p. 135) when he distinguishes converting or constraining from conquering and when he urges respect for the other person's integrity when constraining him. The fact of other people's freedom can be frightening - they can so disappoint us. The temptation to force them to fit our expectations in order to relieve our anxiety can be great. Being limited beings, men escape the temptation only partially.

\textbf{d)} Saint-Exupery's call to severe discipline can perhaps also be understood as a projection of his own need for discipline onto others. His biographers note a daydreaming

\(^{14}\text{Horney, p. 363.}\)
quality in his personality, a tendency to escape into fantasy, and a consequent need for the discipline of a work routine. Fantasy and creative imagination are closely allied. Saint-Exupery's highly active imagination must have been the source of his creativity, yet at the same time it apparently required the discipline of a work routine if it was to remain realistic. For if one does not commit himself to some task, fantasy remains daydreaming because it is not modified and made more realistic by meeting resistance from the real in one's attempt to impose it on reality. However, if one does not have the same tendency to escape into fantasy, it would seem that he would not need the same degree of discipline. And most men are not as imaginative as Saint-Exupery was.

5. The Feminine: Life as a Value in itself

Riviere, in Night Flight, is the leader of the group of pilots who are pioneering night flying. He is a figure parallel to the Berber king in being a severe leader who demands moral greatness of his men.

One of the men Riviere sends out into the night, Fabien, crashes in a storm and is killed. Riviere must then face Fabien's wife, who calls the airport to ask why her husband

\[15\text{Cf. WL, pp. 12-13, 19-21, 23-24.}\]
is not in yet. Riviere is forced to confront not just Fabien's wife but a whole other philosophy of life which is opposed to his:

Not so much Fabien's wife as another theory of life confronted Riviere now. Hearing that timid voice, he could but pity its infinite distress - and know it for an enemy! For action and individual happiness have no truck with each other; they are eternally at war. This woman too, was championing a self-coherent world with its own rights and duties, that world where a lamp shines at nightfall on the table, flesh calls to mated flesh, a homely world of love and hopes and memories. She stood up for her happiness and she was right. And Riviere, too, was right, yet he found no words to set against this woman's truth.16

Madame Fabien represents a world wherein life is affirmed and nurtured as a value in itself, where a man is accepted for what he is, not incessantly driven beyond himself to attain a value outside himself. Madame Fabien represents feminine receptivity as opposed to masculine challenge.17 In terms of Dr. Karl Stern's analysis in *The Flight From Woman* Riviere would seem to be unbalanced, a "man of restless energy" who can only challenge himself and others, who seems to have no place for being receptive to life as it is,

---


affirming it for what it is. Human fullness involves a balancing and complementing of the masculine and the feminine, of challenge and receptivity.

Pierre-Henri Simon, in "Saint-Exupéry entre la force et l'amour" comes to the same general conclusion about Rivière:

We are disturbed to see the individual always treated as the tool of something which is beyond him, and so little as one's fellow man, as the precious and unique being who merits being loved and saved for his own sake.\(^{18}\)

Simon adds a very striking statement:

In the gaze of Rivière there burns a terrible flame: the frenzy of the princes of the earth, ready to crucify humanity on the idea they have formed of its grandeur.\(^{19}\)

This whole critique of Rivière would seem to apply equally well to the Berber king. Simon's last statement raises a further question. The Berber king is rather self-satisfied about his view of men and what they need. He presumes himself to have a kind of omniscience which gives him the right to send down orders from Mount Olympus and manipulate others' lives. But even the greatest of geniuses - moral geniuses or otherwise - have their blind spots. The

\(^{18}\)Simon, p. 104.

\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 104.
presumption of omniscience is a dangerous step for any man

to take.

6. The Basic Aspiration

The criticism offered in 4. and 5. above must not make

us lose sight of the positive nature of the basic aspirations

of Saint-Exupery's ideal leader and the perceptiveness of

Saint-Exupery's analysis of social goals. Any harshness that

exists is, even if misdirected, rooted in a deep and intel-

ligent concern for others.

And the harshness of the Berber king does not appear in

the personal life of Saint-Exupery. (That is, he did not

show harshness towards others, though he may have towards

himself.) He rose to positions of authority in the airline

for which he flew and had to deal with the Spaniards and

later the Arabs who owned the land on which the airports of

the company were located. He was quite a successful diplo-

mat. He made friends with local groups of Arabs, ventured

into their camps - which most Europeans feared, quite real-

istically, to do - learned their language and even sat in on

their councils. His success in dealing with many different

kinds of people led him to a belief in a common humanity

basic to all men which could be appealed to in bringing them

into a unity:
This personal triumph in his relationship with the Spaniards was probably the first of the many experiences which were later to confirm his belief that deep in men's hearts there lies a common humanity only to be found, perhaps, when some profound mutual experience in danger or isolation breaks through the division of interest, class, race, religious faith or political creed.\textsuperscript{20}

Saint-Exupery had deep experiences of "moments of fusion" with other men:

During the rest of his life Saint-Exupery was to experience again and again these moments of fusion; moments in which there sprang up a joy which he believed to be 'the most precious possession of our civilization'; moments in which, the barriers of separation between man and man broken down, he suddenly became conscious of the spark and flame of our common humanity; moments in which he felt himself united to others, as others were united to him, by invisible ties in the depths of the heart; moments in which, as though merged in some deeper, wider whole, he seemed to sense the great refreshing winds of a universal life blowing about him. And these moments were one of the springs of the humanistic outlook which irradiates his work.\textsuperscript{21}

Thus the emotional quality of Saint-Exupery's relations with other men was basically quite different from the harshness sometimes shown by the Berber king.

The harshness of a Riviere and a Berber king is thus a literary and theoretical phenomenon in Saint-Exupery's writing, but is not to be met with in his personal life. This

\textsuperscript{20} WL, pp. 68-69.

\textsuperscript{21} WL, p. 11.
would seem to imply that in his final judgment it would not
be true or desirable.

This harshness seems to arise primarily in Saint-Exupery's imagination, perhaps touched off by his concern
about the future of civilization (Cf. the end of this chap-
ter). In imagination or fantasy there is a kind of freedom
wherein people and things more easily become oversimplified,
extreme, symbolic rather than real. People and situations
are terribly complex in the real order and resist such over-
simplification. Simon says of Riviere and Madame Fabien
that they represent extreme and symbolic points of view
which, in the abstract are radically opposed, but which in
the concrete are reconcilable:

Are the truth of Riviere and the truth of the wife
of Fabien, the happiness which is action and power,
and the happiness which is tenderness and justice, two
worlds which are radical enemies, two incommunicable absolutes? Yes, if, as Riviere, one poses the con-
flict abstractly between the morality of creative ac-
tion on the one hand and the morality of compassion
and love on the other. But one can begin to see a
solution, if one poses it concretely, between the
means and the end of action, that is, between the
sacrifices it costs humanity and the services it
renders to it.22

We suggest that the Berber king represents an extreme and
symbolic masculine point of view, consequently appearing

22Simon, p. 103.
harsh for his extreme of masculine challenge to life and demand that it prove itself, and his lack of feminine receptivity to life. But the real person Saint-Exupery did not lack receptivity to other human beings. On the contrary, he experienced a kind of pantheistic feeling of union with them, "moments of fusion" with them.

Saint-Exupery himself was aware of a tendency in himself to escape into the abstract which created problems for him:

"I have an appalling tendency towards the abstract. It comes perhaps from my eternal lineliness."\(^{23}\)

He took measures against this tendency. His call to the discipline of a concrete work routine was noted above. (pp. 154-155) He distrusted logic and abstract language, as will be seen in the next chapter. He did not want to be an "intellectual." The idea of looking on at life from a distance - which is how he thought of intellectuals - was abhorrent to him:

The notion of looking on at life has always been hateful to me. What am I if I am not a participant? In order to be, I must participate.\(^{24}\)

For as he said in a text cited above:

\(^{23}\) Quoted in WL, p. 78.

\(^{24}\) Flight to Arras, p. 195.
The world teaches us more about ourselves than any number of books, because it resists us; a man discovers himself only when he faces up to its challenge.  

Reality in its complexity resists the attempt to impose on it oversimplified dreams and abstractions. And Saint-Exupery valued the friendship of simple people with very concrete concerns because they balanced his tendency to the abstract:

All his life he was conscious of a dangerous tendency in himself to escape into the abstract; and these artisans, these simple truck-drivers and mechanics, with their concrete problems and preoccupations, gave him a sense of his own reality.

Thus the exaggerated sense of responsibility and the harshness of Riviere and the Berber king is partially a false problem, a problem only on the abstract, theoretical level. Saint-Exupery himself did not act as they are described as acting. And anyone attempting to so act would soon meet quite definite resistance from the real, except perhaps in very special limited circumstances. However, since Riviere and the Berber king have been proposed on the theoretical level as possible ideal leaders, they have been criticized on the theoretical level.

To round out the picture it must be said that despite Saint-Exupery's faith in man's common humanity which can be

\[25\] WL, p. 27 Cf. note 8 this chapter.

\[26\] WL, p. 36.
appealed to bring them into a unity, he became pessimistic about the future of civilization towards the end of his life (the time when The Wisdom of the Sands was being written).

He wondered if increasingly mechanized society had any place for man's spiritual life, which for him is both the basis and goal of civilization. Such pessimism might also partially account for the Berber king's desperation in seeking man's moral growth. In his Letter to General X (1943) Saint-Exupery said:

I am sad for my generation, empty as it is of all human content . . . a generation which thinks of bars, Burgattis, and calculating machines as forms of the spiritual life. . . . Ah, General, there is only one problem, one alone in all the world: to awaken in man a sense of spiritual values, of his spiritual significance. Pour down on him something that resembles the sweetness of Gregorian chant. 27

Saint-Exupery's biographers explain further:

(This) is indeed a far cry from the Saint-Exupery who once believed that the advent of the new mechanical age, and particularly the aeroplane, would lead to peace and understanding among men. 28

Saint-Exupery who loved gadgets with almost child-like glee was nevertheless alarmed by the increasing mechanization of our modern age and its disastrous effect upon the spirit of man. . . . If our spiritual life along with the spirit of religion has vanished to make way for our strange submission to material

27 Quoted in WL, p. 194
28 WL, p. 194.
objects, the reason according to Saint-Exupery is largely to be found in the noise which surrounds us and makes silence and prayer impossible, the new means of communication such as newspapers, the radio (luckily he did not live to confront modern television) the telephone, and the resulting craze for publicity and commercial advertising. 'An industry based on the profit motive tends to create - by education - man for chewing gum and not chewing gum for man.'

Concern for man's spiritual life was one of Saint-Exupery's central concerns. The meaning of "spirit" and of "spiritual vision," which has come up in so many contexts so far in this thesis, will be explored in Chapter IV, which follows.

CHAPTER IV

KNOWLEDGE: SPIRITUAL VISION

AND MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE

In Chapter I we pointed out that spiritual vision for Saint-Exupery is the source of the form imposed in and through the creative act. (Cf. pp. 24-25) In Chapter II we noted that spiritual vision is that which, according to Saint-Exupery, leads man to barter himself. (Cf. p. 49) And in Chapter III we saw that Saint-Exupery's ideal leader should seek in spiritual vision the unification of the conflicting lived truths of his various subjects. (Cf. p. 94) Thus a discussion of spiritual vision is an important element in the development and integration of the idea of man's transcendence presented in The Wisdom of the Sands.

Resolving partial, conflicting truths is perhaps the most important way of measuring progress in knowledge for Saint-Exupery. Unifying conflicting truths is an important aspect of man in process making progress towards God, who is absolute unity, absolute resolution of conflict and opposition. (Cf. p. 14) It is thus an important aspect of man's transcendence.
The similarity of Saint-Exupery's thought to Neo-platonism begins to show itself more clearly in this chapter: "spirit" is superior to "intellect"; spiritual truth is to be sought in contemplation; most generally the similarity shows itself in Saint-Exupery's quest for ultimate unity.

Studying Saint-Exupery's view of spiritual vision and resolution of conflicting truths is, accordingly, the object of this chapter. This study will lead us, in turn, to examining Saint-Exupery's view of: logic and definitions; "spirit" as opposed to "intellect"; meaning; silence and contemplation.

A. Textual Study

1. Logic and Definitions

   a) The Berber king has no use for "logicians" and "historians." The reason "logicians" and "historians" are lumped together is that the Berber king is thinking of those who would predict the future by analyzing the past. They would predict what the future will be by logical extrapolation of the past into the future:

      There came to me the logicians, historians, and pundits of my empire, and waxed great in argument, each deducing by dint of a long chain of causes and effects his favorite system. And all in it was rigorously precise. Vying with each other, they drew diverse pictures of forms of society, civilizations, and empires which, according to them, would foster, nourish, and enrich the human race.
Only they are going nowhere!
Such persons do not indulge in these feats
so as to be of service, but to be seen, heard, or ad-
mired for their fine horsemanship. (268)
"You fools!" he said. "You gelded cattle!
Historians, logicians, pundits - you are but vermin
battening on corpses, and never will you grasp any-
thing of life." (268)

The Berber king calls "historians" and "logicians" vermin
because they feed on what is dead and gone (analyze the past)
and contribute nothing to actually achieving the future.
Their effort is useless. For the future cannot be logically
predicted.¹ New organisms which grow and new events which
occur do not repeat old ones except in the most general way.
Therefore analysis and knowledge of past things can give
only very minimal knowledge of future things:

But I knew that only that which repeats itself can
be grasped by study. The man who plants a cedar tree
can foresee the rising of a cedar tree, just as he who
flings a stone foresees its fall. . . . But who can
claim to foretell the destiny of the cedar, ever and
ever transforming itself from seed to tree and from
tree to seed, from chrysalis to chrysalis? Therein
is a genesis for which I have no precedent to go on,
since each cedar tree is a new growth which perfects
itself without repeating anything I wot of. And I
know not whither it is going; even as I know not
whither men are going. (81)

One can work backwards and find causes for effects which
have already occurred; but it is not possible to go forward

¹John Dewey would agree, in general, with this state-
ment. (Cf. p. 50 of this thesis.)
and deduce effects from causes, i.e., deduce the future from the past and present:

True they make great play with logic, do my generals, when they seek out and detect a cause for each effect that is pointed out to them. Every effect, they tell me, has a cause and every cause has an effect; so from cause to effect they go blundering on towards a false conclusion. For to go back from effects to causes is one thing, but to go forward from causes to effects is another. (81-82)

Historians may reflect on what has occurred in the past, but what brings about the future is of a different order than historical reflection:

"Your army is like a sea that does not chafe its dykes. . . . Later, of course, historians yet stupider than you will explain the reasons of our downfall, and attribute our enemy's success to his superior prudence, foresight, and calculations. But I tell you that when a flood breaks through the dykes and engulfs a city of men, it owes nothing to foresight or prudence or calculation." (64)

Trying to predict the future could be seeking security - security from making mistakes, avoiding the self-commitment that actually brings about the future:

"You will never win battles," I told them, "because you seek perfection. But perfection is a museum piece! You rule out mistakes. You never move until you are fully justified by precedent. But where have you ever seen the future proved by dialectics?" (62)

Achieving the future calls for the intervention of the creative act of man, who barters himself; the Berber king says of himself:
I cannot predict, but skilled am I to found. The future is what we build; and if I weld together the diversities of my age in a single, unique visage, and have I the sculptor's godlike hands, my desire will come into being. But I would be wrong were I to say I had been able to forecast, when what I did was to create.

... Giving much thought to the future is vain. Only one task is worthy of the doing, and that is to express the Here and Now. And to express means building, out of the infinite diversity of the Here and Now, a visage dominating it. (84)

To achieve the future the creative man imposes on events a form derived from a creative vision which is

**spiritual** not intellectual or logical:

I find there are two kinds of men who speak to me of a "new empire" that should be founded. Of the one type is the logician who builds with the bricks of intellect. But such activity I call utopian, and nothing will be born of it, for it is nothing in itself. Thus is it when a professor of sculpture shapes a face. For though a creator may be intelligent, creation is not a matter of intelligence. Moreover, such pedagogues ineluctably develop into tyrants.

Then there is that other type of man who is actuated by a passionate faith to which he cannot give a name. Such an one may well be, like a shepherd or a carpenter, lacking in intelligence, for creation calls not for intelligence. (245)

It is in this context that the Berber king makes statements like the following:

"'Tis the art of reasoning that leads men to make mistakes." (73)

Nothing is truer or less true, but only less or more efficacious. (57)

Thus a statement's importance rests not in its logical truth
so much as in its orientation towards action and its helpfulness in creating the future.

b) Another reason the Berber king distrusts logic and definitions so much is that they are empty and so little capable of capturing the reality of things.

To express this the Berber king uses in two places the image of a mountain:

When some busybody comes forward, claiming to expound man with his logic and neat definitions, I liken him to a child who has settled down with spade and bucket at the foot of Atlas and proposes to shovel up the mountain and install it elsewhere. Man is what he is, not that which can be expressed. True the aim of all awareness is to express that which is, but expression is a slow, elusive task, and it is a mistake to assume that anything incapable of being stated in words does not exist. (107)

Those others thought words can cover everything; that with words men express the universe, happiness, stars and the sunset, love and silence, architecture, the domain. But I knew better, I had seen man face to face with the mountain it devolved on him to grasp, spadeful by spadeful. (85)

In another place he says that a real thing is to its verbal formulation as a tree is to its shadow:

Thus yet again I learned that logic is the death of life, and avails nothing in itself. For all those makers of formulas err when they speak of Man; they confuse the formula, which is the flat shadow of the cedar, with the tree itself. To convey its weight and mass, its colors and its freight of birds, far more is needed than a mere covey of words that weave the wind. (90)
part of the difficulty is trying to capture with static words a dynamic reality which is in process:

"Nevertheless," the man replied, "if you, the ruler of our empire, take no thought for men's happiness..."

"I take no thought," my father said, "for capturing the wind, so as to store it up; for once I hold it motionless, the wind ceases to be." (173-174)

Another example the Berber king uses is the difficulty one would have expressing verbally all that is handed down when one generation hands down its traditions and heritage to the next:

Thus it was clearer than ever to me that, had I to start with a mankind not yet fully conscious, had I to train men and instruct them and stock their minds with all these infinitely various emotions, the bridge of language could not have sufficed thereto.

Though words suffice for daily intercourse, our patrimony cannot be comprehended by the words used in our books. . . . True, my men are trained by their corporals, and obey their captains' orders; yet the words that corporals and captains dispose are but counters, utterly inadequate to convey from one to the other a sum total which cannot be assessed or stated in set phrases. A trust that no word, no book can transmit. For it concerns attitudes of mind and personal views, impulses and antipathies, the relations between thoughts and things. Would I expound these and make them plain, I should be constrained to tear them to pieces - and then nothing would be left. So it is with the domain, which calls for love... for its secret treasure is not transmissible by words, but by the bond of love lengthening down from generation to generation. A love that dies, if once you break a link between generations. . . .

... But if you make a rift between the generations, it is as if you bade a man start life again in middle age, and, having stripped him of the knowledge, feelings, comprehension, fears, and hopes that
were his, you sought to replace, by the meager precepts of a book, this sum of experience enfleshed. But then you would have checked the flow of sap rising within the trunk and robbed him of all the endowment of the past, save that which can be modified. And since words simplify to teach, falsify in the imparting, and kill in the understanding, you would but dam the stream of life within men. (88-90)

In another place the Berber king says of a man's creative vision:

 Rarely can you speak of this vision; there are no words to convey it to another person. (292)

Abstract language is especially incapable of capturing the reality of things:

 No one in the world but is absolutely right. Save those who argue, chop logic, demonstrate, and, by dint of using abstract language that has no content, are incapable of being either wrong or right. (172)

c) Words have a richness of meaning to individuals using them; but this richness cannot be fully conveyed to others. When words are used in a purely logical sense (used "for purposes of argument"), the meaning assigned to them lacks this richness and complexity and thus oversimplifies them:

 Thus now, in the ripeness of my knowledge, when I use the word "city" it is not for purposes of argument, but simply to express all that "the city" conjures up in my heart and what I have learned of it by experience, by lonely wanderings in little streets and the breaking of bread in its dwellings, by its glory seen in outline across the plain and its gracious symmetry viewed from
the mountain-top. And much else which I have no words for and cannot clearly recall. So how could I use that word for purposes of argument, since what is true of one sign is false of another? (87)

2. "Contraries" and Their Resolution

a) According to Saint-Exupery the use of human language forces one to divide reality into apparently opposed aspects:

To make my meaning clear, and illustrate it, I use words that seem to stick out their tongues at each other, like quarrelling children. (214)

When you give yourself, you receive more than you give. For after being nothing, you become. And little care I if these words seem at cross purposes with each other. (222)

An example of this division of reality into apparently opposed aspects is the apparent opposition between freedom and constraint discussed above (pp. 132-133)

"It may be said, 'Fertile is that freedom which permits a man to come into his own, and encourages the contradictories on which he thrives.' Where to another may retort: 'Freedom spells decay, but fertile is constraint, which is a driving force within, the secret of the cedar's growth.' Then lo, they fall to wrangling, even to shedding each other's blood!"

There is a problem with what one calls these apparently opposed aspects of reality - a problem of terminology. In The Wisdom of the Sands they are called interchangeably "contradictory" (usually from the French "contradiction", "contra-
dictoire", or "contredire"), "contrary" (from "contraire"),
or "conflicting" (usually from "litige" or "contradiction"). Conflicting is a very general term; contradictory and contrary have specific meanings in logic. We have used "conflicting" in this thesis where a more general, all-encompassing term is wanted. Where opposition on the level of concepts is involved, we have used the term "contrary."

In a strict logical sense neither "contradictory" nor "contrary" expresses precisely the relation between opposed concepts which Saint-Exupery has in mind here. For both contradictory concepts and contrary concepts are mutually exclusive - if one is true, the other cannot be. For example, if freedom and constraint were either contradictory or contrary in the strict sense, if man were free he could not be constrained or if he were constrained he could not be free. But Saint-Exupery wants to say that he can be both - both free and constrained: "Say to each man, 'you are right.' For they are right." (137) Therefore, since both are true, the terms are not mutually exclusive; therefore they are, strictly speaking, neither "contradictory" nor "contrary."

---


3 Cf. also (61), cited below in IV, A. 2. e).
However, "contrary" is a better term than "contradictory," since it allows for a third alternative besides the two opposed concepts, whereas "contradictory" does not. For example: the contradictory terms equal-unequal allow for no third alternative. Two quantities are either equal or not equal and there are no other possibilities.4 Whereas the contrary terms black-white do allow for a third alternative, such as red or grey.5 It seems, therefore, that "contrary" is a better term to use here, since for Saint-Exupery there is a third alternative. For example, in the freedom-constraint controversy there is, besides the freedom and constraint positions, a "higher viewpoint"6 which encompasses the partial truth in each of the two original points of view. (The higher viewpoint would be a view of man's becoming wherein one could see the function of each apparent opposite in fostering man's becoming. Neither freedom nor constraint is an end in itself but a means to becoming.) Bittle, in The Science of Correct Thinking: Logic, notes that contraries

4Cf. Bittle, p. 37.

5Cf. Bittle, p. 38.

are like the extreme poles of a continuum, with the possibility of intermediate stages existing along the continuum. Such would be grey between the extreme poles black and white. This scheme would seem to fit the freedom-constraint controversy as Saint-Exupery views it: The pure freedom position and the pure constraint position are extremes at opposite poles; the truth, the higher viewpoint, would lie somewhere in the middle, somewhere in between them, as grey is between black and white.

Attempting to keep Saint-Exupery's terminology as much as possible, we have settled upon "contrary" to denote the opposed concepts spoken of in The Wisdom of the Sands. "Contrary" is enclosed in quotation marks to indicate the departure from the usual meaning of the term, i.e., the "contrary" concepts are not considered mutually exclusive by Saint-Exupery - both are true.

When speaking of the freedom and constraint positions Saint-Exupery says not only that both are true, but also: "nevertheless both are mistaken." (138) When he says "true" therefore he means partially true. For Saint-Exupery it is part of the human condition to possess only partial

7 Bittle, p. 38.
truths, and, for lack of a "higher viewpoint," one partial truth seems opposed to another:

"I accept, O Lord, as partial and provisional truths (though it is not of my present estate to discern the keystone linking them together), the contradictory [strictly speaking, "contrary"] truths of the soldier who seeks to wound and the physician who seeks to heal." (335)

When we speak thus of partial truth and partial falsehood, we are using "true" and "false" in an analogical sense. The univocal sense of "true" and "false" are not applicable here and thus, strictly speaking, neither are "contradictory" and "contrary."

While in one sense this clarification of terminology is necessary, it does not fully come to grips with the problem of understanding Saint-Exupery's thought. For these definitions of contradictory and contrary come from traditional logic, ultimately from Aristotelian logic, and this logic is static. But Saint-Exupery cannot be understood from a static point of view. What Saint-Exupery is speaking of is a process of resolving an opposed thesis and antithesis into a synthesis.8

We must distinguish two separate moments in discussing contradiction and contrareity in Saint-Exupery's thought:

8Discussing the similarity with Hegel would carry us too far afield.
In the first moment we have only thesis and antithesis; in the second, the synthesis has been arrived at. Perhaps we could characterize the first moment by saying that contraries (such as freedom-constraint) are experienced by man as contradictory. The contraries seem contradictory because they are mutually exclusive, and there seems to be no third alternative to them because the synthesis has not yet come into being. Thus in one sense to "resolve contradictories" is to see that they are only contraries. But one cannot see that they are only contraries until one realizes that there is a third alternative - which occurs only when the synthesis is arrived at.

Thus we can raise the question again: are freedom and constraint contradictories or contraries? In the first moment they are experienced by man as contradictory. In the second moment they are seen to be only contrary, in the light of the third alternative, the synthesis which has now been arrived at, the higher viewpoint which shows how freedom and constraint are related.

In deciding to call opposed concepts, such as freedom-constraint, "contraries," we have decided to take the ultimate point of view, the point of view of the second moment; we have sided with the "real" as opposed to the "apparent."
But Saint-Exupery calls them contradictory more often than contrary. This too is quite valid: from the point of view of the first moment, they are experienced as contradictory.

Saint-Exupery is here, as always, taking the point of view of man in process. Any individual man, with his limited understanding and limited point of view, experiences concepts to be contradictory which are only contrary; or perhaps he can synthesize the opposition only partially and thus can resolve the contradiction only partially; or perhaps having resolved the contradiction in theory, he does not know exactly how to apply his theory in a practical situation - he does not know exactly where the proper balance between polar opposites lies in a particular case. This is true even if he realizes that the difficulties he is experiencing are only apparent and not real. He can never fully escape his limited point of view. Thus the problems of apparent contradiction and lack of a higher viewpoint will always be with man, and bring him the suffering of inner conflict.

b) Another reason why Saint-Exupery distrusts logic is that, at the first moment of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis process, when contraries appear to be contradictory, if one were strictly logical he would deny one or other of the apparent contradictories. Rather, what one should do is hold
both in mind, despite their apparent contradiction, and search for the relationships that exist between them, so as to build up a synthesis, a higher viewpoint (a "keystone.") Neither one of the contraries (apparent contradictories) is totally true or totally false. Each has some truth to contribute to the final synthesis, the higher viewpoint. But if one or the other is denied, the truth it would have contributed to the synthesis is lost. (The very possibility of a synthesis, a higher viewpoint, is precluded as a matter of fact. If there is no antithesis, there can be no synthesis.):

It is not that you choose one or other alternative (as the logic that concerns itself would have it); what you are devising is a keystone that will link together your conflicting truths, so that nothing may be lost. (157)

Truths may clash without contradicting each other. . . . My order . . . compels me to build up a language which, ever fusing contradictories [strictly speaking, "contraries"] into one, is itself a living entity. To create it is never needful to reject. . . . Everything . . . must live and grow and constantly transform itself. (91)

Previous to attaining the final synthesis one does not know in what respect each of the two contraries (apparent contradictories) is true and in what sense false. One must simply be patient. But to pretend that one of them is all true and the other all false - and deny it - would certainly be incorrect.
In the last text cited above, Saint-Exupery says that man's truth must "live and grow and constantly transform itself." To prematurely demand logical coherence of truths—which would imply choosing between contraries (apparent contradistinctions)—could be disastrous and impede this growth, impede reaching a more subtle and complex truth. The Berber king's generals do not understand this:

It became clear to me that to rule out contradictions [to deny one of each set of apparent contradictions] is no less rash than futile... My generals... confused the order wherein power is immanent with the layout of museums. As for me, I say that the tree is the very embodiment of order. But its order is that of unity overriding diversity. Thus on one branch birds have made a nest; another branch has none. One branch bears fruit, another is barren. One points to the sky, another droops earthwards. But haunted by their habits of parades, my generals hold that those things only are in order which have ceased to differ from each other.

. . .

How, then, could they countenance that which may not be formulated or has not yet matured? Or conflicts with another truth: How could they know that in a language which describes but fails to grasp, two truths can be at variance? (90-91)

The living order of the tree is the order Saint-Exupery proposes for knowledge. It is a growing order, power is immanent within it, yet there is place for "diversity," "difference," "variance."

c) Examples of unifying and resolving contrary truths occur in the following text:
For though each man loves in a different way, the vision is the same. What sets men at variance is the treachery of language, for always they desire the same things. . . . One thinks that Freedom will enable man to fulfill himself; another, that strict discipline will lead him on from strength to strength - but what both desire alike is greatness. This one thinks that charity will unite men; another scorns charity as pandering to the ulcers flaunted by the beggar, and constrains his people to build a tower whereat they will work together for the good of all, each establishing the other. And both alike work in the cause of love. Some think that prosperity solves every problem; for, once freed from the thrall of daily cares, a man finds time to cultivate his heart and mind and soul. But another believes that the quality of men's hearts and minds and souls is nowise affected by the food and comforts provided for them, that it depends on the gifts that are asked of them. To such a man's thinking there is beauty in those temples only which are born of God's behest and are made over to Him as men's ransom. Yet both alike desire to beautify the heart and mind and soul - and both are right. For who can better himself in an atmosphere of cruelty, of thralldom, or soul-deadening toil? Yet likewise who can better himself in an atmosphere of license, of esteem for what is rotten to the core, and futile activity that is a mere pastime for idlers? (71)

d) Saint-Exupery's thinking on logical contraries is connected with his view of the world as a network of relations. In a pair of logically contrary concepts such as freedom-constraint or cause-effect, neither concept has meaning apart from relationship to its opposite. Language may force one to divide reality into opposed aspects, but it is a mistake to isolate one of the opposed aspects (deny the other apparent contradictory) because the two aspects are in reality united by a complex network of relations:
"I would have you refrain from that language of yours which leads nowhither; which distinguishes cause from effect, master from servant. For only inter-relations, structures, reciprocities exist." (138)

Misled by reasoning run wild, these numbskulls believed that contraries [contradictories, strictly speaking] exist. Whereas life is a network of relations so complex that if you destroy one of your two seeming contraries [contradictories], you die. (219)

True knowledge consists in grasping the relations between things, in seeing unity (including unity between logical contraries), not in dividing reality into isolated aspects:

"In these matters it is as with the statue. Think you that the sculptor making it seeks merely to reproduce a nose, a mouth, a chin, and so forth? Nay, what he seeks is a correlation between these separate things, a correlation which will (for example) spell grief. And one which, moreover, it is possible to convey to you, for you enter into communication not with things but with the knots binding them together. (198)

For . . . to divide you up would mean I had not understood you - you have slipped through my hands. (215)

e) The same problem of resolving apparent contradiction between contrary things faces man in the realm of human aspirations and of lived truths, as well as in the realm of concepts. Saint-Exupery's attitude is basically the same in this second realm: one must not prematurely eliminate one or the other of the apparent contradictories, for each has something good, something true about it:

"I know that all aspirations are alike to be commended: the yearning for freedom no less than
the cult of discipline. The desire to get the children's bread, and the desire to sacrifice bread. The thirst for knowledge which weighs things in the balance and the craving for submission which accepts and establishes." (61)

To eliminate either of the contrary aspirations or lived truths would be to lose the good, the truth, it has to offer to the final synthesis. As a matter of fact, it would preclude the possibility of reaching a synthesis, since it would (prematurely) eliminate the conflict, the problem which leads one to see the necessity of a synthesis. This eliminating of one of the contraries (apparent contradictions) relieves pain since it relieves conflict. But at what a price! For it also eliminates the possibility of moral and intellectual growth:

When a man is in an agony of indecision, caught in a dilemma, it is ill for him to seek a makeshift, precarious peace of mind by blindly choosing one of the two alternatives. . . . Life's lesson is, above all, man's need to fulfill himself, and not to gain the spurious peace that comes of sterilizing conflicts. If something opposes you and hurts you, let it grow; for this means that you are taking root, engendering a new self, and welcome are these pangs if they enable you to bring yourself to birth. (141-142)

In the above text the conflict described is between two aspirations within an individual man. Saint-Exupery's attitude is the same when the conflict is between men rather than within an individual man. There is goodness and truth on both sides:
Now and again false prophets arose and won over some of them. And, though few in numbers, those who believed in them took heart and were ready to die for their faith. But their faith meant nothing to the others. Thus all these diverse faiths set them at odds, and many small sects sprang up, each hating all the rest, since it claimed alone to know what was truth and what was error. . . . Yet well I know that error is not the opposite of truth, but a different arrangement, another temple built with the same stones - neither truer nor falser, but unlike. And when I saw them ready to die for their phantom truths, my heart bled, and I prayed to God. (59)

(The Berber king prayed to God especially because it is in God, ultimately, that all apparent contradiction is resolved.)

This latter text amounts to a plea for tolerance among men - a plea which the historical Saint-Exupery often voiced. This plea is rooted in Saint-Exupery's belief, mentioned above (p. 158-159), in the common humanity basic to all men which can be appealed to as a basis for uniting them. It is perhaps this belief in man's common humanity which underlies Saint-Exupery's belief in an objective truth, an ultimate higher viewpoint, a divine point of view, which could, at least hypothetically, resolve all of the apparent contradictions in man's knowledge and aspirations.

Applying this plea for tolerance to oneself demands that one be open to another's truth and seek to resolve one's differences with him and arrive at a higher viewpoint ("climb the mountain together"):
"Thus would I have you refrain from wranglings - which lead nowhere. When others reject your truths on the strength of facts averred by them, remind yourself that you, too, on the strength of facts averred by you, reject their truths, when you fall to wrangling with them. Rather, accept them. Take them by the hand and guide them. Say, 'You are right, yet let us climb the mountain together.'" (136)⁹

Conversely, Saint-Exupery respects the man who is open to his (Saint-Exupery's) truth. This man grasps the essential problem of human relations:

The man who hears me out and with whom I can converse on an equal footing, and who does not seize on my truth merely to make it his and use it against me when this serves his purpose - such a man I might call thoroughly enlightened. . . .

Herein lies indeed the problem of my relations and my converse with others; of bridging the gulf between that ambassador of a cause other than mine and myself. And of the meaning of the language we use. (196)

Nevertheless it may be necessary to take a stand for one's own truth against others, for one is not always able to communicate with others and resolve differences:

Some of the men before me were not convinced - even by the subtlest arguments, the most impressive proofs. "No doubt," one of them would say, "you are right. But all the same I think otherwise." Such men passed for stupid. Yet I knew they were not stupid; rather the wisest of all. For they revered a truth that words could not convey. (85)

⁹Cf. all of (135-136)
3. "Spirit" and "Intellect"

a) Saint-Exupery speaks often of "spirit" and "intellect" in The Wisdom of the Sands. Both are some sort of knowing faculty in man. Their difference lies in the fact that spirit knows things by seeing them as a whole, whereas intellect knows them by analyzing them into parts:

"Well, O Lord, I know that the spirit rules the intellect. For the intellect studies the material parts, but the spirit alone perceives the ship. Thus, once I have envisaged the ship, they will lend me their intellects for the carving and adorning, strengthening, and bodying forth of the visage I have created." (274)

Herein, I learnt, intelligence can serve you not at all . . . . You may discuss the lips and eyes and nose of the statue, yet you will not light on that essential thing which lies beyond them. (178)

Spirit is thus synthetic; intellect is analytic. From these and other texts it seems we could also conclude that spirit is intuitive whereas intellect is rational. For spirit grasps things in concrete wholeness; it is the kind of knowledge the artist (sculptor) has; it is the kind of knowledge the creative man has; spiritual knowledge is to be sought in contemplation (Cf. IV. A. 6.) Thus spirit seems to be intuitive. Intellect grasps things by parts, by abstract aspects; it analyzes; it is said in various texts to reason and calculate [Cf. (21), (63)]; it is associated with logic [Cf. (21).] Thus intellect seems to be rational.
b) Saint-Exupery sees spirit to be superior to intellect. This is so for several reasons. The most general reason is that spirit, in seeing things and situations as wholes, brings unity to man's knowledge, whereas intellect, in analyzing into parts, brings fragmentation. Unity is desirable in knowledge on the metaphysical level as a fuller participation in God, the ultimate end of man, who is absolute unity. Unity is desirable in knowledge on the level of human experience because it brings coherence and meaningfulness to man's knowledge:

Thus if a man pulled his house to pieces, with the design of understanding it, all he would have before him would be heaps of bricks and stones and tiles. He would not be able to discover therein the silence, the shadows, and the privacy they bestowed. Nor would he see what service this mass of bricks, stones, and tiles could render him, now that they lacked the heart and soul of the architect. (21)

As can be seen from this text, Saint-Exupery speaks somewhat disparagingly of intellect at times, with an aversion akin to his aversion to logic.

In particular, the way spirit brings unity to knowledge is by seeing relations. In seeing things as wholes, spirit sees the relations between the parts, whereas intellect sees the parts individually and separately. Since knowledge has been defined above as grasping relations (Cf. p. 29) it would
seem that the understanding spirit gives is more properly knowledge than the understanding intellect gives.

Another way spirit brings unity to knowledge is by resolving contraries (apparent contradictories). It was said above (p. 94) that spiritual vision was the source of the resolution of conflicting truths. Spirit, in seeing things as wholes, would see the relation between contraries - opposed aspects of things - whereas intellect would tend to isolate them as separate parts. Spirit is synthetic: it builds syntheses of contrary aspects of things by coming to see the relations which exist between the contraries.

c) Spiritual knowledge is often referred to as spiritual vision, or simply vision. It thus becomes more familiar to us - spiritual vision was mentioned above as the source of the creative form (pp. 31-32), and as that which will lead a man to barter himself (p. 63). The relation between spiritual vision and bartering will be treated especially in the two subsections immediately following: 4. The "Knot Which Binds Things Together" and 5. "The Meaning of Things". The relation between spiritual vision and creating will be treated in the following paragraphs.

The following text specifically contrasts spirit with intellect as the source of creating. Creative men determine how the world is to be. Thus spirit, which inspires them,
"rules the world":

The face of clay shaped into a semblance that no words can define is charged with the power of transmitting to you that self-same nameless thing which inspired the sculptor. . . . For this man's creation came not of the intellect but of the spirit. Therefore I tell you it is not intellect but the spirit of man that rules the world. (246)

Intellect can understand and help execute a creative vision, once it is born; but intellect could not, of itself, have brought it to birth:

The city is immanent within him, a vision cherished in his heart, as the tree is immanent in the seed; and all his reasonings and calculations serve but to give form to his heart's desire, to make it visible. . . . If the town is to come into being, you will always find calculators, who handle figures skillfully. But these are mere menials. (63)

To create something is to unify it. This is expressed in the following oft-quoted text which speaks of the leader's creative activity:

If I weld together the diversities of my age in a single, unique visage, and have I the sculptor's godlike hands, my desire will come into being. . . . What I did was to create. Out of the chaos of appearances I have fashioned a visage. (84)

That to create is to unify is also seen in the context of love. Saint-Exupery, who speaks of loving as bartering, and thus creating, (Cf. pp. 73-74, 77) also speaks of it as unifying. Loving is seen as unifying in the following text which speaks of the effect of a woman's love on a man:
The boy who has grown up and no longer needs his mother's care will know no rest until he has found the woman of his choice. She alone will reassemble his scattered selfhood. (75)

Loving is creating unity between persons as well as within them:

Love is, above all, a communion in silence. (306)

I have sought to establish within you love for your brethren. And, in so doing, I establish sorrow for separation from your brethren. (342)

If to create is to unify, it would stand to reason that spirit, which sees things as wholes, would be the source of creative form.

4. The "Knot Which Binds Things Together"

The Berber king speaks of the "knot(s) which binds (bind) things together" at least seventeen times in The Wisdom of the Sands. Knowledge of it is knowledge of the relations between things, hence this knowledge is spiritual knowledge. A study of the use of the phrase "the knot which binds together" is presented here to develop more fully the meaning of spiritual knowledge for Saint-Exupery.

a) Knowledge of the "knot which binds things together" is knowledge of the relations between things. Thus it brings unity and coherence to man's life, it brings meaningfulness. Insofar as it brings a vision of the whole, it shows man his place in things - where he "fits in" - and
thus gives him a sense of purpose, and his fervor grows. Saint-Exupery expresses these thoughts most often by making a negative judgment: he who has lost vision of (or never had vision of) the "knot which binds things together," will lose the sense of his place in reality and lose his sense of purpose. The following text says that such a man is "drowned . . . in the futile diversity of things":

For true indeed it was that I had lost my keystone, and nothing within me could serve a purpose any more. Yet surely, I told myself, I am the same man, having the same knowledge, stocked with the same memories, watching the same scene - only drowned henceforth in the futile diversity of things. Thus even the noblest fane, if there be none to view it as a whole, to bask in its silence, and to build up its significance in his heart, is a mere aggregate of stones. Thus was it with me, with my wisdom, memories, the perceptions of my senses. I was like a scattered heap of cornstalks, not a sheaf. . . . 

. . . "Would that my fervor might return to me!" I sighed. For I knew that fervor comes only from that heaven-made knot which binds things together. (176-177)

The next text expresses a similar idea: the knot which binds things together is "the mystic bond that held together their diversity".

The vision of the empire had lost its efficacy. For visions wither like flowers of the field when their life force is spent, and then they are mere dead matter, leaf mold for another sowing. Therefore I withdrew to a lonely place to ponder on this riddle. . . . The mystic bond that held together their diversity had slipped from my hands, and the empire was disintegrating from within. (57)
Another text says that when one loses vision of the knot binding things together, the object of one's commitment to create is "dispersed into fragments." When the source of unity is gone, one can no longer see or bring unity (create):

But that which should have been the object of your love is dispersed into fragments strewn at random, and you know it no more. Unloosed for you is the God-made knot that binds all things together. (204)

The vision of the knot which binds things together leads men to see their unity with each other and their common goals. Moreover it gives them fervor, which leads to the giving of themselves to working together on common tasks, which is what actually achieves unity among them:

"It is our bounden duty to quicken whatever is great in man and to exalt his faith in his own greatness.

"For the nourishment of which he stands in greatest need is drawn not from things themselves but from the knot that holds things together..."

"And when I bid you join together and build in fellowship a mighty whole whereby every man will be the richer, each sharing in all and all in each; and if I enfold you in the kingdom of my love, how can you fail to be the greater for it, how can you nay-say me: The beauty of a face lives but in the interplay of the features, each with each. Yet the sight of it may overwhelm you with joy. (55)

b) The vision of the knot which binds things together cannot be gotten from books. (As we shall see later, it is arrived at in contemplation.)
I say that your chief aim in the building up of Man is not to give him learning, which serves no end if he be but a walking book, but to lift his eyes and point to those higher levels on which there are no more things-in-themselves [isolated objects], but only aspects of that divine bond which binds all things together. For material things have nothing to give you unless, reverberating on each other, they yield the only music that can touch the heart. (187)

c) In the vision of the knot which binds things together lies man's true happiness. Since it leads man to barter himself and become, it leads to a sense of real accomplishment and fulfillment, which is happiness:

As for those whose happiness you envy, what more than you have they, save a knowledge of that divine knot which binds all things together? (285)

... the miracle of that knot celestial which binds things together (and alone can quench the thirst of heart and mind) (280)

5. "The Meaning of Things"

Another way spiritual as opposed to intellectual knowledge is described in The Wisdom of the Sands is as seeing "the meaning of things" rather than the "things" themselves. A study of the phrase "the meaning of things" is thus offered to develop further the meaning of spiritual knowledge, especially to show how it is affected by language, society, and environment.

a) Human life, as human, man's sense of purpose, is built on the meaning of things:
My beloved people, you have lost your honey, which is not distilled from things but from the meaning of things, and though I see you eager as ever for life, you can no longer find the way of life. (279)

Your life goes to the rhythm of an empire built not of things but of the meaning of things. (240)

Hope is founded in seeing the meaning of things:

Nothing have you to hope for if yours is the misfortune of being blind to that light which emanates not from things but from the meaning of things. (284)

Love is "made ... of the meaning of things":

This is why prison walls cannot confine him who loves, for he belongs to an empire that is not of this world, being made not of material things but of the meaning of things; and thus he mocks at walls. Even though you build them thick as the walls of strongholds and though he knows she is sleeping, dead to the outside world and for the moment unavailing for him, nevertheless in the secret places of his heart she nourishes him. And no man-made thing can sunder them. (184)

b) The meaning things have for someone is conditioned by the structure of the environment within which he lives.

10Emanation is a very important idea in the philosophy of Plotinus. Therefore the use of "emanates" in (284) and "emanates" in (186) attracted our attention. But the word emanate (emaner) does not appear in Saint-Exupery's French, only in the English translation. In (284) "Emanates ... from the meaning of things" translates "est ... du sens des choses." In (186) "the nuances they emanate by way of language" translates "la couleur de l'objet selon un language." Besides, for Plotinus, emanation has to do with the ontological constitution of beings proceeding from the One, not with knowing or being known.
This is in agreement with what was said above in Chapter III (p. 109): things take on a meaning within a particular natural and social environment which they take on nowhere else. For man lives within a world which is a system of relations; and spiritual knowledge is a knowledge of the relations between things. Thus spiritual knowledge of an "object" is knowledge of it as related to various factors in the environment. But if the environment to which it is related changes, the "object's" meaning changes. For change of one term of the relations (the environment) changes the relations themselves, so the content of knowledge (=meaning) is changed. For example, the social structure and natural environment influence the meaning things take on:

These (joys) . . . derive solely from the meaning those things acquire in a certain empire or domain or dwelling place. (235)

I cannot feel sure of you when you cut loose, for in so doing you run the risk of losing your most precious possession - which is not things in themselves but the meaning of these things. . . . Thus ever have I seen that emigrants were sad. (275)

Other persons, insofar as they touch our lives, change the meaning of things for us:

"For greatest of all truths is this - that you exist not alone. You cannot stay unchanging in a world that, all around, is changing. I can act on you without touching you for, whether you wish it or not, it is your very meaning that I change, and this you cannot bear. . . .
"Whether you wish it or not, your meaning is made of others' meanings, and your taste of others' tastes. Each act of yours is a move in a game and a step in a dance. When I change the game or the dance, I change your act into another. For you live not by things but by the meaning of things." (263)

The meaning of things is embodied in language, and is passed on from generation to generation in passing on a language:

"Nevertheless," I mused, "these men live not by things, but by the meaning of things, and thus clearly is it needful that they should transmit the passwords to each other, generation by generation.

"That is why I see them, no sooner a child is born, making haste to inure him in the usage of their language, as in the usage of a secret code; for truly it is the key to their treasure." (249)

Language gives man access to the meaning of things which an animal does not have:

"The animal has access only to material things, and not to the nuances they emanate by way of language. But, being a man you are nourished by the meanings of things and not by the things themselves." (186)

6. Silence

For the Berber king spiritual knowledge is to be found in contemplation. He often speaks of escaping the crowd and ascending the mountain to pray and reflect. He most often speaks of this in terms of seeking or finding silence. Silence is "the domain of the spirit." It is in silence..."
that one grasps the meaning of things, the knot which binds things together. The Berber king often uses the phrase "in the silence of my love" to speak of his creative, loving concern for his people which has matured and grown rich in contemplative silence. In fostering the growth of spiritual knowledge silence fosters resolution of contraries, creative vision, love, fervor, and, ultimately, becoming.

Silence is "the domain of the spirit." In contemplative silence "new, pregnant words" are born - silence fosters creative vision and increase of life:

He who has scaled these heights (of a mountain) comes back refreshed by the honeydew of the Gods. But only he to whom the right of escape from the crowd has been accorded can bring back that golden dew. And it will seem bitter on the tongue; for all new, pregnant words seem bitter, inasmuch as none has ever undergone a change of heart without suffering. . . . Likewise a people that forbids one of its number to break free from the herd and isolate himself on the mountain-top - surely they are murderers of the spirit. For the domain of the spirit, where it can spread its wings, is - silence. (92-93)

Contemplative silence gives rise to creative vision which allows one to "impose order" [impose a creative form] on events. Spiritual vision cannot be acquired "once for all" but must be continually fostered:

What would remain to spur you on to seek after God, to indite your own hymn and climb ever higher up the mountain, so as to impose order on the scene below and to preserve that inner light which cannot be acquired once for all, but is an endless striving sunwards? (143)
It is in contemplative silence that man attains the spiritual vision which gives meaning and coherence to his life. This contemplative knowledge is intuitive and cannot be fully captured in words. The peace and unity attained in silence can only be disrupted by a flurry of words. Complexity can only be grasped meaningfully if it is resolved into a unity. It is also in silence that one achieves the vision which resolves the conflict of one's truth with other men's truths:

"But engage not in controversies on such matters, for they lead nowhere. Nor on controversies regarding men and their ways. For always you confuse effects and causes. How should men know what is coming to pass within them, when there are no words to grasp it? How should the drops of water know themselves to be a river? Yet the river flows on. Or how could each cell of a tree know itself in terms of the tree? Yet the tree grows. How should each stone be conscious of the temple? Yet the temple enshrines its silence, like a granary.

"And how could men know the purport of their deeds if they have not made, each for himself, the toilsome ascent of the mountain, so as to seek to become in its high silence? It may well be that God alone can know the true form of the tree. But all that men know is that one man presses to the right, another bears to the left, and each would like to kill that other who molests him and jostles him off his path - though neither knows whither he is going. Thus in tropical lands the trees war on each other, each jostling the other, filching its share of sunlight. Nevertheless the forest spreads till it covers the mountain with a close black pelt, sending forth its birds at daybreak. How, then, should the words of men's daily use grasp the infinite complexity of life?" (139)

Ascending the mountain seems to be a physical analogy for what is achieved in spiritual knowledge - a point of view
is attained (Compare: going up the mountain, "higher viewpoint") from which one can see the relationships between things experienced previously on ground level as isolated "objects." Apparently another physical analogy for the same thing for Saint-Exupery was flying - in which he achieved escape from the crowd, a vantage point from which relationships are seen clearer, and the silence of all but the drone of an engine which must have faded into the background of consciousness for being so monotonous.

In The Wisdom of the Sands is found a long hymn to silence in which the Berber king reveals, besides the above mentioned meanings of silence, some of the mystical significance of silence to him. Part of this hymn follows:

I will endite a hymn to thee, O Silence! . . . The stillness of the great sea-spaces.
In thy embrace I fold the city viewed from the mountain-top, whenas night has stilled its rumbling wheels and clanging anvils and the tumult of its streets, and all things float becalmed in a bowl of shadows. For silence is God's cloak spread out upon man's restlessness, and in silence He steeps and soothes their fretful hearts.
I will hymn the silence of the woman who has become the pulp wherein a fruit is ripening; the silence of a woman beneath the plenitude of her heavy breasts; and that silence of woman which is the silence of the day's vanities, and of life which is a sheaf of days: a sanctuary and a preparation. Silence, wherein moves from dawn to dawn and from dusk to dusk the one voyage leading somewhere, when she feels the child stirring in her womb. . . .
I will hymn the silence of him who muses, gazing into the middle distance, receiving without expending, and distilling the elixir of thought. The silence that enables him to know and also not to know — for it is sometimes well for him not to know. The silence that keeps mental tares and parasites afar, and shelters the unfolding of your thoughts.

. . . . The silence of thoughts shaping their wings in tranquility; for any unrest of the heart or mind is evil.

Silence of the heart and silence of the senses. Silence even of the still, small voice within yourself; for it is good that you should be atoned with God, whose silence is the silence of eternity; all having been said, all done.

. . . .

O Lord, I pray that some day in the fullness of time, when all things are being garnered in, thou will open the great door of eternity's grange to the garrulous race of men and, like a good physician healing them of their sickness, expunge all meaning from their questions.

For it has been brought home to me that man's "progress" is but a gradual discovery that his questions have no meaning. Thus when I consult my learned men, far from having found answers to last year's questions, lo, I see them smiling contentedly to themselves because the truth has come to them as the annulment of a question, not its answer.

. . . . Indeed that is what love means: an end of questionings.

Thus, overruling seeming contradictions one by one, I make my way towards that silence wherein all questions have died away, in a bliss that passes understanding.

. . . .

When comes the day, O Lord, of garnering in all that Thou hast created, open wide to us Thy portal and let us enter that good place where there will be no more answers, but only bliss, keystone of questions and supreme content. Then he who enters will discover a lake of soft water, vaster than all the seven seas together, of whose existence he had intimations in the low sound of streams. . . .

Silence, the haven. God's silence, haven of all wave-worn ships. (128-130)
It can be seen that "silence" is rich in meaning. Silence stills man's restlessness. Silence is fertile, fruitful - conducive to creativity. Silence enables man to know and to know when it is better not to know, shelters the unfolding of thought. In the silence of eternity all questioning and all answers will die away; for seeming contradictories will be resolved, and the false questions to which they give rise will die away; answers will die away for all will be seen as one. And man will find rest. Viewing this hymn to silence in the light of the fact that process has finality in God and only in God, one can anticipate Saint-Exupery's central concept of God as the one in whom all the contradictories, opposites, disharmonies in process are resolved. One can also see why attaining spiritual truth - seeing unity - has the religious overtones connoted by use of "contemplation," "silence," "ascending the mountain."

7. The Search for Truth and Suffering

   a) Truth is to be sought in contemplation, not in logical analysis alone:

   "So, to begin with, I practice contemplation. After that, if I am able, I analyze and explain. Thus I have never scorned love." (318)

   The one thing needful is to weigh the facts and let the truth mature in silence. (216)
b) Accepting and living the truths found in contemplation will lead to suffering:

And he who has scaled these heights (of a mountain) comes back refreshed by the honeydew of the gods. . . . And it will seem bitter on the tongue; for all new, pregnant words seem bitter, inasmuch as none has ever undergone a change of heart without suffering. (92-93)

Suffering also comes from the tension of living with unresolved contradictories. One must not deny one opposite or the other in a pair of seeming contradictories, but search for a higher truth which includes them both. Refusing to oversimplify and living with the unresolved complexity will lead to suffering. This is the price of the search for truth:

No faith have I in repose. When a man is in an agony of indecision, caught in a dilemma, it is ill for him to seek a makeshift, precarious peace of mind by blindly choosing one of the two alternatives. . . . You go seeking for a meaning in life, when life's lesson is, above all, man's need to fulfill himself, and not to gain the spurious peace that comes of sterilizing conflicts. If something opposes you and hurts you, let it grow; for this means that you are taking root, engendering a new self, and welcome are these pangs if they enable you to bring yourself to birth. For no truth is proved, no truth achieved by argument, and the ready-made truths men offer you are mere conveniences or drugs to make you sleep. (141-142)

The same holds true for one's own conflicting aspirations:

I scorn those who deliberately dull their wits so as to forget, or by diminishing themselves stifle an
The refusal to deny a contradictory or stifle one of two conflicting aspirations is the price of becoming, itself.

If neither of one's own conflicting truths or aspirations should be denied, neither should the truth or aspiration of another which is in conflict with one's own:

I do not serve the cause of truth if I execute every man who makes mistakes, for truth is slowly come by, error by error. . . . I do not establish a truth by executing him who practices another truth; for my truth is a growing tree. And I deem the soil which has not yet nourished my tree none the less arable for that. (327)

In another place the Berber king states the same idea, but adds that if the detachment and objectivity of the tolerant individual is the detachment of not being attached to anything - of not being committed, of not bartering oneself - it is sterile; for the man who is not committed, who does not barter himself, will not create anything:

The man who hears me out and with whom I can converse on an equal footing, and who does not seize on my truth merely to make it his and use it against me when this serves his purpose - such a man I might call thoroughly enlightened. Yet this is all too often because he neither works nor acts; neither struggles
nor solves problems. Like a lamp pinkly gleaming in a garden as a mere adornment, such a man may well be the finest flower of an empire, yet sterile for being too pure. (196)

The individual described here is also avoiding the suffering which comes from living unresolved contradictories, for he is not really committed to either. But until he does accept and live them he will not become. Suffering seems inevitably connected with a life lived authentically.
B. Summary

The Berber king has no use for "logicians" and "historians" - those who would predict the future by analyzing the past and logically extrapolating the past course of events into the future. He objects to what such men do: (1) Because the future cannot be predicted logically. New events do not repeat old ones except in the most general way. Therefore logical analysis of the past gives only minimal knowledge of the future. (2) Trying to exactly predict the future could be seeking security, security from making mistakes, from taking risks. But what actually brings about the future is creative self-commitment, which can never be made without risk-taking and facing the possibility of making mistakes. (3) To achieve the future the creative man imposes on events a form derived from creative vision, which is spiritual, not logical or intellectual.

The Berber king distrusts logic and definitions because they, being abstract and general, have such minimal content, and are thus incapable of reflecting the richness of reality. Another difficulty is that logic and words are static and unable to capture reality which is dynamic, which is in process.
Words have a richness of meaning to each individual which cannot be fully communicated to others. In contrast with this richness, the logical meaning of words is minimal.

Another reason the Berber king distrusts logic is that using it forces one to divide reality into contrary (apparently contradictory) aspects and isolate them - which falsifies reality. Neither contrary can be denied if one is to know reality in all its richness. Rather, one must unify and resolve contraries in a higher truth. One must see relationship between rather than isolate different facets of reality.

To prematurely demand logical coherence of truths - which would imply choosing between logical contraries, apparent contradictories - could be disastrous and impede reaching a more subtle and complex truth.

In parallel with the necessity of unifying and resolving contrary truths is the necessity of seeking unity among men of conflicting beliefs and convictions. This ideal applied to ourselves demands that we be open to others' truths. (Yet our inability to communicate with others and resolve our differences with them may make it necessary to take a stand for one's own truth against others.)

Saint-Exupery speaks often in The Wisdom of the Sands of "spirit" and "intellect." Spirit knows things by seeing
them as a whole whereas intellect knows them by analyzing them into parts. Spirit is synthetic and intuitive, intellect is analytic and rational. Saint-Exupery sees spirit to be superior to intellect because it brings unity to man's knowledge whereas intellect brings division into parts.

Spirit brings unity by seeing the relations between things. By seeing relations between contraries it builds up the syntheses that resolve them. Spiritual knowledge is often referred to as spiritual vision or simply vision. Spiritual vision in giving unity to man's knowledge, gives coherence to man's life, thus gives purpose to life and rouses fervor. Spiritual vision, in which things are seen as wholes, is the source of the unity imposed on a thing in creating it.

Spiritual knowledge is also spoken of as knowledge of the "knot which binds things together." This image conveys the idea of the relations between things and of unifying things separate - both of which are involved in spiritual knowledge.

Another way spiritual knowledge is spoken of is as seeing "the meaning of things" rather than the "things" themselves. Human life is built on the meaning of things. The meaning things take on depends on the society and the environment in which they occur; for spiritual knowledge is
knowledge of relationships, and if that to which things are related (their environment) changes, the relationships change and thus spiritual knowledge or "the meaning of things" changes. This meaning is embodied in language and is passed on from generation to generation in passing on a language.

Spiritual knowledge is to be found in silence and contemplation. Silence is "the domain of the spirit." The Berber king often uses the phrase "in the silence of my love" to speak of his concern for his people which has matured and grown rich within contemplative silence. Silence is fertile, conducive to creativity. Silence, in fostering spiritual knowledge, fosters, ultimately, becoming.

The Berber king speaks of ascending the mountain to find silence. Ascending the mountain seems to be a physical analogy for what is achieved in spiritual knowledge - a point of view is attained from which one can see the relationships between things experienced previously on ground level as isolated "objects."

Silence stills man's restlessness. In the silence of spiritual knowledge the tension and disharmony of unresolved contrary truths and impulses dies away. In the silence of eternity all questioning and all answers will die away for in God all contraries are resolved and thus also all partial,
imperfect points of view from which questions and answers arise. All answers to questions are partial.

The search for truth will lead to suffering, both in accepting and living newly found truths and in refusing to oversimplify reality by denying either one in a pair of contraries. Until a higher truth is found which unites and resolves the contraries, one must live with the tension of unresolved complexity.

Saint-Exupery does not use the term becoming in the texts studied in this chapter as much as he did in the texts studied in previous chapters. However his ideas on knowledge are, nonetheless, closely related to the central theme of this thesis, man's transcendence.

For Saint-Exupery sees man's language, his logic, his definitions, and his isolated concepts opposed to other concepts to be quite lacking. He is concerned, in the texts discussed in this chapter, with describing the ways man transcends the limitedness, the partiality of his truths. This is a particular manifestation - in the realm of knowledge - of Saint-Exupery's general view of man. As we expressed it above (p. 94), this view is that "man lives in the tension between the ideal and his limited reality." Saint-Exupery, as always, urges man never to forget the ideal, to strive for the heights.
Saint-Exupery defines the ideal in knowledge primarily in terms of two things: richness and unity. He tends to judge logic and rationality negatively in light of both ideals: Words used in a purely logical sense have a minimal content and lack richness of meaning. Rationality understands by dividing reality into isolated opposed aspects. He opts rather for spirit over intellect. Spirit grasps individual things as wholes thus has richness; it grasps the relations between things and thus brings unity to knowledge.

Spirit fosters becoming in bringing unity to knowledge—thus fuller participation in God, man's final end, who is absolute unity. Spirit fosters becoming by bringing coherence, meaningfulness, purpose, fervor to man, and by being the source of creative vision. Spirit achieves unity within and among men by being the source of creative form in love.

---

12 Cf. below where concrete richness and unity (coherence) are discussed as polar opposites. [IV, C. 3. b]
C. Commentary

1. Process Philosophy and Existentialism

The point of view of process philosophy continues to show itself in this chapter: Knowledge is seen to be in process. And man’s knowledge reflects the dialectic of tension-resolution as process makes progress towards its ultimate end, God. (Cf. pp. 19-20) There is a dialectic of thesis-antithesis (tension) and synthesis (resolution) as man’s knowledge makes progress towards final unity.

The existentialist point of view shows itself in Saint-Exupery’s reaction against abstract, rationalistic thought. Saint-Exupery demanded – to borrow Newman’s terminology – real assent rather than just notional assent to the truths one proposes. To him real understanding was achieved only in existential experience. As he said in a text cited above (p.146): “The world teaches us more about ourselves than any number of books, because it resists us; a man discovers himself only when he faces up to its challenges.”

2. Plotinus

It is our purpose in this sub-section to start the study of the similarities (and dissimilarities) of Saint-Exupery’s

13 From Terre des Hommes; see note 8, Ch. III.
thought to that of Plotinus, the foremost representative of Neoplatonism. We will discuss here their respective ideas about knowledge and leave the study of their philosophies of God for Chapter V.

a) Both Saint-Exupery and Plotinus were engaged in a search for ultimate unity. For both, the end of the search, the highest reality, was absolute unity (Saint-Exupery's God and Plotinus' One).

For both Saint-Exupery and Plotinus spiritual knowledge is to be found in contemplation. The word contemplation has a much wider meaning for Plotinus than for Saint-Exupery; but Saint-Exupery's meaning could be included in Plotinus' wider meaning. And Plotinus could accept Saint-Exupery's statement that the spiritual life is to be pursued through contemplation.

For both Saint-Exupery and Plotinus intellectual intuition is superior to rationality. Saint-Exupery expresses this by saying "spirit" is superior to "intellect." Plotinus would express it by saying that "intelligence" (the nous) is

---

superior to the "reason"\textsuperscript{15} possessed by the soul. (N.B.: Plotinus' "intelligence" is the opposite of Saint-Exupery's "intellect"). In both cases the superiority is based on the greater unity to be found in intellectual intuition.

Plotinus' intelligence is remarkably like Saint-Exupery's spirit in many ways: in being contemplative; in seeing unity while preserving richness; in being contrasted with abstractive reason; and in doing what reason cannot do - i.e., seeing unity and preserving richness. The following describes Plotinus' intelligence:

The intelligible world is precisely this inner aspect of things, the knowledge of which appears to be a sort of deepening of sensation, rather than merely an abstraction. . . .

. . . What the expression is to the face, the whole of intelligible reality is to the whole of the sensible world. . . . To think, for Plotinus, is then to comprehend the unity of a composition of which sensations acquaint us only with the dispersed elements - the intention of the dancer in the multiplicity of movements in a dance figure, the living unity of the circular course of a star across the infinity of positions it occupies successively. It is to proceed toward a reality which, far from losing anything of the richness of sensation, quite to the contrary goes beyond it and uncovers its depth.

The contemplation of the intelligible proceeds along the same line as the contemplation of the sensible directly without passing in any way through the intermediary of logically connected ideas; for it is not through reasoning and induction that one ascends from the first to the second but only through a more collected and intense contemplation.\(^{16}\)

The image of the expression on the face used here is also used by Saint-Exupery to help explain spirit. [Cf. (198) cited on p. 183; (178) cited on p. 187.]

b) But in Plotinus' philosophy there is something even beyond intellectual intuition: mystical union with the One. Plotinus systematically pushes the search for ultimate unity to its logical extreme: Even within intellectual intuition there is a duality - the duality of knower and known. To escape this duality the soul leaves its ordinary intellectual operations behind, and, standing outside itself in mystical ecstasy, is united with the One. In this union there is no longer the duality of subject-object but complete identification of the soul and the One.

The closest Saint-Exupery comes to speaking of mystical union of any sort is when he speaks of death (Cf. p. 25) and silence (Cf. pp. 197-199). But even then his language is so vague that it prevents us from drawing any definite conclusions.

\(^{16}\) Brehier, pp. 10-11.
c) There is another very important difference in the way Plotinus and Saint-Exupery conceive of knowledge.

Plotinus' view of knowledge seems strange, at least to contemporary Western man. For Plotinus the ideal of knowledge is self-knowledge because the identification, the assimilation of knower and known is complete:

All knowledge rests upon a more or less complete assimilation between the knower and the known . . . .

Intelligence denotes properly a state in which this assimilation is complete, in which object is not different from subject. It is the knowledge of self to which all other knowledge tends, as towards an ideal.\(^{17}\)

But how can this be an ideal for knowledge? The assimilation may well be complete but does not a man pursuing this ideal cut himself off from most of reality - from everything except himself? Plotinus' answer would be "no"; for he views man as a microcosm\(^ {18} \) - a world in miniature. Thus to know man is to know, somehow, the whole world.

On the level of intelligence, the level of nous, all beings are seen to be basically similar to each other:

\(^{17}\) Brehier, p. 96.

There, [in the intelligible world] every being is manifest to every other being even in its inmost depths; for light is manifest to light. Every being contains all things within itself and sees all things in the other. All is everywhere. All is all. Every being is all. 19

Because man is a microcosm, because he is basically similar to all other beings, he can know them in the most important way by knowing himself on the level of intelligence, the level of nous:

Fundamentally, the individual is all things. The soul of an individual contains the same reasons as the universe. . . . The individual may find both his real being and the universal being through thought directed toward itself. 20

Thus the individual finds both real self-knowledge and real knowledge of other beings through knowledge of self on the level of intelligence (nous). This knowledge is attained through contemplation, also called "concentration" or "conversion" 21 to oneself. The latter two terms emphasize the focus on oneself involved here.

The search for knowledge directed outward rather than inward is called by Plotinus dissipation or distraction. To turn oneself outward is to become involved in the world of

19 Plotinus, The Enneads, V. 8, 4; cited in Brehier, p. 93.
20 Brehier, p. 105.
21 Again, we are using Brehier's terminology.
sense - which has roughly the same overtones for Plotinus as for Plato. Knowledge cannot be found there. It is only on the level of intelligence that the similarity between things (which is the basis for knowledge) is seen and the unity of all things is seen. Besides, when the soul turns to the world of sense it is lowering itself; rather, it should rise. (The scale of rising levels is: sense-reason (the initial level of soul) - intelligence - mystical union).

Plotinus' call to contemplation and the search for spiritual knowledge and the search for ultimate unity would find resonance in Saint-Exupery's soul. But when Plotinus would say that one will only find what one is searching for by turning inward, Saint-Exupery would stand aghast. Saint-Exupery distrusted his own inner world of abstractions and fantasy. He was enough of an existentialist to believe that man can only understand his existence by participating in life, and that man can only grow by committing himself to some life-situation.

3. **Logic**

a) Saint-Exupery was a bit hard on "logicians" and "historians." He condemned them for seeking to predict the

---

future. It should be pointed out that: (i) Predicting the future is not the only function of logicians and historians—Saint-Exupery conceives of them rather narrowly and uses them as symbols of those who would attempt to deduce the future or attempt a deductive metaphysics. (ii) Attempting to predict the future is bad only if it is used to escape commitment. This does not have to be the case. Attempting to predict the future can rather be a part and an expression of a commitment: for example, in city planning, or in the environmental and ecological studies done to help predict and control the level of pollution.

b) The charge has been made that when words are used in an abstract logical sense their content is minimal. That is true, and yet that is the price of their universality and precision—which can be quite useful at times.

Saint-Exupery demands both concrete richness and unity (coherence) of knowledge. These qualities are polar opposites—they are "contraries"! If one's ideal is concrete richness, he will have to use words whose particularity of content militates against a wide, much less a universal, application. On the other hand, if one's ideal is systematic unity and logical coherence he will have to use words whose universality militates against richness—these words can
have no content except that which is common to all the wide variety of particulars covered. In philosophy these two contraries are represented by Empiricists or Existentialists as opposed to system builders. It is practically impossible for a finite human being to meet both of these contrary ideals at once, as is brought out in this discussion of Nietzsche's aphoristic style - in the spicy prose of Walter Kaufmann:

If Nietzsche's aphorisms reflect the experimentalist's determination to remain unprejudiced by any system, critics still feel that the power is lacking to fashion a comprehensive image. Even at his best, the aphorist seems a literary miniaturist.

What condemned Nietzsche to writing long aphorisms, however, was an excess rather than a deficiency - perhaps even two excesses. The first was a superabundance of insights. Homer, being blind, can organize what he has seen and fashion it into a comprehensive epic. The philosopher who has gone blind has all his life to create his system. Nietzsche was a writer who kept seeing things while writing.

The other excess was in penetration. To cover an outline, neatly taking up each topic in turn, one must not see too deeply anywhere. In fact, it helps if one sees next to nothing: then one can apply a single insight - either one's own of many years ago or even that of another man who never thought of applying it in this manner - to one topic after another till the book is long enough or the system complete. If one sees deeply, a passage originally intended for one section will suddenly appear to be no less relevant to several other topics; and as this happens to passage after passage, the outline disintegrates, any hope of a system evaporates, and a series of long aphorisms appears.\textsuperscript{23}

Given this difficulty, Saint-Exupery seems a bit extreme in the kind of demand he makes for both concrete richness and unity (coherence) in man's knowledge. These two qualities are contrary and should be resolved into a synthesis. But man's ability to resolve and synthesize is only finite. Once again Saint-Exupery seems to have focused on the ideal much more strongly than on the real possibilities. And he himself did not escape the dilemma. He opted for richness - which is his privilege - but lacks logical coherence and certainly precision as a result.

Perhaps spiritual knowledge represents for Saint-Exupery the synthesis of concrete richness and unity (coherence). Both of these qualities are attributed to spiritual knowledge. As a matter of fact, both Saint-Exupery and Plotinus attribute both of these qualities to intellectual intuition (= spirit for Saint-Exupery, intelligence for Plotinus) (Cf. above, p. 214.) Intuition does seem to join these two qualities somehow: artists and writers, for example, are said to express universal themes or truths in the way they treat particular subject matter; they are also said to be intuitive.

c) Saint-Exupery's reaction against logic is a reaction against rationalistic logicians - those who think that
everything can be reduced to logic. But not all logicians are of this kind. In light of this, Saint-Exupery's rejection of logic, as stated, seems extreme. To reject logic completely would be to reject the very structure of our thought.

The charge that logic divides reality into isolated aspects is partially true. Yet what is the alternative? A completely simple and unified intuition of all of reality has been ascribed only to God. A human being, in not being able to see all at once, must see only a part at a time, and must therefore divide reality into isolated aspects. To demand more than this would be to demand more than man is capable of doing. Man's condition is that of one making his way from partial understanding towards more whole and unified understanding but never arriving at the absolute.

(Besides, in the syntheses man does arrive at, thorough logical analysis of a problem can lead to a richer unity in the final synthesis when that is attained.)

There seems to be lurking in Saint-Exupery's attitude toward logic an inability to accept human limitation. This unwillingness to accept limitation is at the basis of Saint-Exupery's drive to transcendence - to transcend limitation. But this drive can at times take extreme, unrealistic, destructive forms as well as constructive ones. The complete
rejection of logic would be destructive.

d) Perhaps Saint-Exupery's strong reaction against logic and abstract thought can be partially explained by a fact mentioned above (pp. 161-162): He was very aware of his own tendency to escape into the abstract: "I have an appalling tendency towards the abstract." And he took measures against this tendency. Perhaps Saint-Exupery presumed too readily that other men had this same tendency and need for corrective measures.

4. Resolving "Contraries"

The discussion of terminology above (pp. 173-178) of contraries and contradictories — was placed in the textual analysis section of this chapter rather than the commentary section because it was thought necessary to clarify the terms of the discussion at that point.

Two other points will be discussed here: (a) The first is a suggestion: Giving and receiving (Cf. Chapter II) could be treated as a pair of contraries needing to be resolved. Saint-Exupery's strong insistence on giving and almost rejection of receiving could be criticized from within his own system as a premature denial of one of two apparent contradictories, destroying the possibility of a synthesis, a higher viewpoint, a more subtle and complex truth.
Concretely, giving and receiving are very hard to separate. For example, if one gives something to another to fill their need, one receives a boost to his own ego - the feeling of being needed.

b) A qualification is needed for Saint-Exupery's call to bear the pain that results from the conflict of unresolved contraries. Each individual must know the level of pain he can bear and make choices about what to take on himself accordingly. Even from a purely pragmatic point of view too much pain can block the possibility of growth.
CHAPTER V

GOD AND MAN'S TRANSCENDENCE

Saint-Exupery's thought about God is very complex. Many strains of thought treated in earlier chapters will reappear in this chapter. Moreover, these strains of thought are unified in this final chapter: all process, and man's becoming in particular has its finality in God and only in God (Chapter I); God is the source of resolution and synthesis of "contrary" truths, the source of spiritual vision (Chapter IV); God as the source of spiritual vision is the source of creativity (Chapters I and II) and the source of bartering oneself, love and fervor (Chapter II); God as the end of man's becoming is the goal of the growth of oneself and others sought in bartering oneself, love and fervor (Chapter II); the creative leader, in structuring man's environment in such a way that he becomes, needs the spiritual vision which comes from God (Chapter III); God is the ground of human brotherhood, which the leader is trying to realize (Chapter III).
Most of this can be summarized in terms of transcendence, the central idea of this thesis: All transcendence has its finality in God. Transcendence includes in general all process towards an end, and in particular the growth of persons and the growth of truth towards fullness and unification.

A. Textual Study

1. God: An Overview

In order to initiate the reader into Saint-Exupéry's complex thought about God in The Wisdom of the Sands, the following passage is presented as an overview. In this passage one finds various views of God already discussed directly or seen in passing in the first four chapters of this thesis. Besides, this passage introduces the idea of God as: the God towards whom man grows; the God who is constantly sought but never attained; the "God who doesn't answer prayers"; the God who doesn't choose to reveal himself. The paragraphs are numbered for later reference.

Thereafter, having withdrawn from men's sight, I prayed to God.

(1) "I accept, O Lord, as partial and provisional truths (though it is not of my present estate to discern the keystone linking them together), the contradictory truths of the soldier who seeks to wound and the physician who seeks to heal. I do not try to reconcile, in a lukewarm potion, drinks
that are ice-cold and others scalding hot. For, whether it be a case of wounding or healing, I would not have it gone about half-heartedly. I punish alike the physician who declines to minister to a sick man, and the soldier who refuses to deal blows. Little care I if certain words may seem to shoot their tongues out at each other! For often it so happens that this trap alone, made of seemingly incongruous elements, can capture my prey in its wholeness — meaning a certain man, of a certain personal quality, and not another.

(2) "Thus, gropingly, I seek to discover thy divine lines of force and lacking those proofs which it is not of my present estate to discern, I maintain that the rites of my ceremonial are well chosen, if so be that therein I can breathe freely and fulfill myself. Is it not thus, O Lord, with my sculptor when a certain thumb-stroke on the left gives him — though why he could not say — exactly what he wanted; and it seems to him that in no other manner could his clay have been charged with power?

(3) "I go towards Thee like the tree developing according to the lines of force implicit in its seed. The blind man knows nothing of the nature of the fire. But fire has lines of force to which the palms of his hands are sensitive. And he gropes his way painfully through the briars, for painful is all sloughing off of one's old self. By Thy grace, O Lord, I fare towards Thee, ascending that long upward slope, which is the slope of my becoming.

(4) "Thou dost not deign to come down to this world of Thy creation, and I can hope for nothing other to enlighten me than the heat of the fire or the tension of the forces implicit in the seed. Even as the caterpillar knows nothing of wings. Nor have I any hope of being enlightened by some celestial puppet-show of archangels descending in a cloud of glory; indeed such a show could tell me nothing of advantage. For it is as useless to talk of wings to the caterpillar as of the ship to the nailsmith. Let it suffice that by virtue of the shipwright's conception, the ship's lines of force exist. And, owing to the chrysalis, the wings' lines of force. And owing to the seed, the tree's lines of force. And, as for Thee, O Lord, quite simply, that Thou art."
"Ice-cold sometimes in my loneliness, and in the
desert of my dereliction, sometimes I pray that a sign
may be given me. But in a dream, Thou didst reveal to
me the folly of my prayer. And I thus learned that no
sign could help me, for wert Thou on my level, Thou
wouldst not constrain me to rise above myself. And how
small, how unworthy is the man I now am!

Thus ever I go forward, shaping prayers to which
no answer is vouchsafed, and so blind that all I have
to guide me is a faint warmth on my wasted hands
nevertheless, praising Thee, O Lord, for that Thou
dost not answer; for did I find that which I seek, I
would cease becoming.

"Wert Thou to take, of Thy good pleasure, the
step, that is the visitant archangel's, towards Man,
Man would be fulfilled, his task accomplished. No
longer would he saw his planks or hammer nails for
the ship in the making; no more would he fight the foe
or tend the sick. No longer would he sweep his room
or cherish his beloved. How, O Lord, could he wander
through the world, seeking to honor Thee through his
fellow men by acts of charity, did he see Thee face to
face? For, once the temple is built, I see the temple
only, not the stones.

"O Lord, Thou seest me, that I am old and weak as
is a tree before the fury of the winter gales. Weary
of my foes, weary of my friends. Troubled in mind by
the compulsion to kill and to heal, as it were, in the
same breath - for Thou hast given me that craving to
master and to reconcile such contradictions, which
makes my lot so hardly to be borne. Yet this it is
that urges me upon my upward way, through ever fewer
questionings, towards Thy silence, in which all ques-
tions have an end." (335-336)

Comments on this text will be made by its numbered para-
graphs:

(1) God is the keystone who ultimately resolves and
unifies "contrary" truths. Also, the direct address to God
found here and elsewhere indicates that the Berber king con-
siders God in some sense or other to be personal.
(2) and (3) In the absence of that complete knowledge of God, the keystone, which would make all things clear, man must gropingly seek his end - gropingly discover where truth lies, and gropingly discover the direction in which growth lies. These ends are discovered in two ways: (a) according to one's own laws of life and growth ("the rites of my ceremonial are well chosen if so be that therein I can breathe freely and fulfill myself." "I go towards Thee like the tree developing according to the lines of force implicit in its seed." "O Lord, I fare towards Thee, ascending that long upward slope which is the slope of my becoming.") This growth or becoming implies and reveals a direction and an end. This end is in some sense God. (b) by some kind of sensitivity to this end, which is beyond oneself and unknown. ("The blind man knows nothing of the nature of fire. But fire has lines of force to which the palms of his hand are sensitive. And he gropes his way painfully.")

(4) God has not deigned to reveal himself. (This is a clear denial of a central tenet of Christianity - of which more later.) Man could not understand revelation even if it were given to him: "such a show could tell me nothing of advantage ..." As a result man is left with seeking his end by following the lines of force of his laws of growth.
and of the fire beyond him.

(5), (6) and (7) Would God reveal himself, Man would already possess his end and would cease becoming. This will be discussed later.

(8) Lacking knowledge of God the keystone which would resolve "contrary" truths, man yet has a craving to resolve them. He must bear with the painful tension of their being unresolved, and the pain of the effort to resolve them. For only by doing so will he grow and attain his end, and the silence of God.

These observations have served as a general overview of Saint-Exupery's thought about God. The following sections develop some of these ideas in more detail.

2. God and Spiritual Vision

a) In some places in The Wisdom of the Sands spiritual vision is described as a vision of God or a revelation of God's presence. Gaining spiritual vision is described as discovering God or attaining God. This is seen in the following texts. The first speaks of a woman's contemplation of the familiar surroundings of her kitchen:

The tray of gleaming bronze, the stove, the kettle... day by day each of these common things may come to wear for her the look of a familiar friend, with a smile belonging to this place alone. And thus it will be as if, little by little, God's presence were being revealed to her. (13)
A second text speaks similarly of the familiar surroundings of a shepherd:

Truth strikes deep, like a well. A gaze that wanders loses sight of God. And that wise man who, keeping his thoughts in hand, knows little more than the weight of his flock's wool, has a clearer vision of God than the unfaithful wife laid bare to the witcheries of the night. (14)

b) Thus man in need of spiritual vision is man in need of vision of God:

"Reveal Thyself to me, O Lord; for all things are hard to one who has lost touch with God." (169)

c) Vision of God is needed because God is the keystone - that in light of which all things "fit together" (to continue the physical analogy of "keystone.") Vision of God gives unity and order to the world, thus one can find his place, see how he fits in. Without this vision is "drowned . . . in the futile diversity of things":

A great weariness descended on me. And simpler it seemed to say that I was forsaken of God. I felt as though my keystone were lacking; no longer anything resounded in me; hushed was the voice that speaks in the silence of the soul . . . .

. . . . For true indeed it was that I had lost my keystone, and nothing within me could serve a purpose any more. Yet surely, I told myself, I am the same man, having the same knowledge, stocked with the same memories, watching the same scene - only drowned henceforth in the futile diversity of things. Thus even the noblest fane, if there be none to view it as a whole, to bask in its silence, and to build up its significance in his heart, is a mere aggregate of stones.
Thus was it with me, with my wisdom, memories, the perceptions of my senses. I was like a scattered heap of cornstalks, not a sheaf. And I knew the weariness of spirit that comes of being estranged from God.

... "Would that my fervor might return to me!", I sighed. For I knew that fervor comes only from that heaven-made knot which binds things together. (176-177)

The following passage reiterates the idea that meaning is based on vision of God:

Then it was I perceived that when a man truly comprehends the statue's smile, the temple's silence, or the beauty of the landscape, it is God he is discovering. Since he then is going beyond and behind the thing itself, so as to reach the key; beyond the words, so as to hear the hum; beyond the star-hung curtains of the night so as to commune with eternity. For God is the supreme meaning behind men's language, and your words take meaning only when they show you God. ... .

... And it became clear to me that God is pertinently revealed by His very absence, when He withdraws himself. ... And then the world seems empty, and life a tedious tale. Nothing is lacking but that divine knot which holds things together — and then all is lacking. (177)

d) As was indicated in the last two texts quoted, the "knot which binds things together" is also somehow identified with God. In three places in The Wisdom of the Sands the phrase "divine knot . . ." is used (pp. 177, 184, 285). In another place "divine bond . . ." is used (p. 187).

But Saint-Exupery's Berber king contradicts himself on the meaning of "divine" here. In some places he defines it
as "made" by God: "heaven-made knot" (p. 177); "God-made knot" (p. 204); "God made knots" (p. 205). Yet the last sentence of *The Wisdom of the Sands* states that the "divine knot" is God himself: "For Thou, O Lord, art the common measure of us twain. Thou art the knot supreme, binding all things together." (350)

The thought of the Berber king seems unclear on whether the "knot which binds things together" is God or is simply "God-made." (We suspect this ambiguity basically concerns the question whether God is immanent or transcendent - which is a difficult question to speak of clearly. Saint-Exupery's deep sense of communion with things and his seeing God as absolute unity indicate pantheistic tendencies and an immanent God. Yet he does state clearly in some places that God is transcendent. [See section A. 5. of this chapter.])

If this latter point is unclear, the central point is clear, however: vision of God makes all other things clear.

3. **God and the Brotherhood of Men**

Just as God is the keystone resolving "contrary" truths, so in Him alone are resolved the conflicting lived truths of men's loves. God grounds the brotherhood of men, because only in him do their different truths, desires, causes find resolution into a unity.
First, Saint-Exupery's Berber king speaks of God grounding the common brotherhood of his enemy and himself that could be the basis of their being reconciled:

Within Thee alone can he who reigned beyond the northern marches of my empire, my well beloved enemy, and I find our reconcilment, because we both shall have been fulfilled; even as in Thee alone will the man whom, much as I respected him, it behooved me to chastise, and I become at one, because we both shall have been fulfilled; for it is Thy peace alone, O Lord, that love and love's conditions, all conflicts stilled, merge at last and are at one. (322)

Again the Berber king speaks of being united with others—this time with other men in general. In God's unity are resolved their differences:

Herein lies indeed the problem of my relations and my converse with others; of bridging the gulf between that ambassador of a cause other than mine, and myself. And of the meaning of the language we use.

For there is no true converse between men save by way of the god who is revealed to them, their mediator; even as I can communicate with my soldier only by way of the vision of the empire which has meaning for both of us. (106)

People are alone in their otherness. Thus the need to resolve their differences in God's unity:

This multitude, I told myself, for all the glory it is showering on you, leaves you utterly alone. Even those who seem most lavishly to give themselves remain aloof from you; for there is no bridging the gulf between man and man save by way of God. They alone are my true companions who bow down with me in prayer; grains of the same ear of wheat and mingled in the same measure of flour for the making of bread. (169)
In the last sentences of *The Wisdom of the Sands* the Berber king, returning to the familiar image of the knot, says of himself and his enemy:

For Thou, O Lord, art the common measure of us twain. Thou art the knot supreme, binding all things together. (350)

4. God as the End of Man's Transcendence

Saint-Exupéry's Berber king does not often use the word "end" of God, but if the word is not used, the idea is there. God is the end of various aspects of man's transcendence.

a) God is the end of the transcendence of man's knowledge towards unity and the resolution of "contraries":

Bear in mind that every conflict of ideas without solution, every irreconcilable dilemma, forces you to wax greater so that you may absorb it within yourself. . . . That you may have life more abundantly, submit yourself unflinchingly to the wear and tear of inner conflicts, for they lead Godwards. (142)

"And so, from death to death of questionings and problems, I slowly make my way towards God, in whom all questionings cease. (321)

b) God is the end of transcendence in the sense of becoming or personal growth. This was indicated in the second last text cited above. It is also indicated in the following:

For well I know that thus it is Thou mouldest me, according to Thy will, into something loftier than myself, and that apart from Thee I shall never know love or peace. (322)
c) Love achieves transcendence (growth) of lover and beloved towards God:

I build her up before me like a temple: I build her in the light, and the fields and woods are comprehended in her silence. Thus I can love her beyond herself, beyond myself. . . . She is but one step more on my upward climb to God. (107)

Similarly the Berber king says of an enemy with whom he sought to be reconciled:

He was a bridge leading towards God. (113)

d) Saint-Exupery offers an explanation of God as the end of man's transcendence by means of an analogy between man growing toward God and trees growing towards the sun:

The divers particles of earth do not amalgamate as chance has brought them together and, rising upwards, build a tree. To create the tree, you had first to cast the seed in which it lay dormant into the earth; and the life force came from above, not from below. . . . Your pyramid has no meaning unless it culminates in God. (182)

. . . the trees in the thick forest, ever thrusting up towards the open day that will never be theirs (for each is smothered in the shadow of the others); nevertheless valiantly they climb aloft, soaring slim and stately as pillars, transmuted into power by their ascent towards the sun whom they will never see. Thus, though God is not to be attained, He proffers himself, and man builds himself up in Space, like the branches of the tree. (142-143)

God is seen in these texts as the source of life, from which growing things draw more life, toward which they are attracted. This could be restated in metaphysical terms:
God is the source of being from which beings in transcendence draw increase in being, towards which they are attracted.

5. God is Transcendent

If God is the ultimate end of man's transcendence, he is not, on the other hand, ever attained by man.\(^1\) God is completely beyond man - He is transcendent. God is absolute - absolute unity and immutability. By comparison, man's existence involves unresolved complexity and never-ending process directed toward resolution of complexity.

a) That God is transcendent was already stated in the last text cited above in section 4., where man growing towards God is compared to a tree growing towards the sun:

"Thus though God is not to be attained, He proffers himself, and man builds himself up in Space, like the branches of the tree." (143)

b) Saint-Exupery implies that God is transcendent in his admonition not to seek a false peace by denying one of two "contraries." The implication is that unresolved complexity is part of the human condition, so it can never be

\(^1\)At least God is never attained by man in ordinary experience. All the texts cited in this section "God is Transcendent" (Ch. V, A. 5) refer to ordinary human experiences and prayer and knowing. There is some indication, however, that Saint-Exupery thought God (union with God) is attained in death and perhaps in mystical experience. But the degree and mode of attainment of God in this union with God is not at all clearly defined. (Cf. Ch. V, A. 6 and C. 1.)
Whereas God, by comparison, represents perfect resolution and unity (towards which man is heading, but which he will never attain):

I scorn those who deliberately dull their wits so as to forget, or by diminishing themselves stifle an aspiration of the heart so as to live in peace. For bear in mind that every conflict of ideas without solution, every irreconcilable dilemma, forces you to wax greater so that you may absorb it within yourself. . . . That you may have life more abundantly, submit yourself unflinchingly to the wear and tear of inner conflicts, for they lead Godwards. There is no other road. (142)

c) The contrast between perfect unity and unresolved complexity extends also to the contrast between God's perfect knowledge and man's imperfect knowledge:

It may well be that God alone can know the true form of the tree. But all that men know is that one man presses to the right, another bears to the left, and each would like to kill that other who molests him and jostles him off his path - though neither knows whither he is going. (139)

The imperfection of man's knowledge compared to God's perfect knowledge leaves him in uncertainty, as the man described below has discovered:

For him alone I have compassion who wakes in the great ancestral night, thinking himself sheltered under God's canopy of stars, and suddenly feels himself a wayfarer - whither bound he knows not. (11)

The fact that perfect knowledge resides in God, who is transcendent, means that man's search for truth is an endless striving:
But then what would remain to spur you on to seek after God, to indite your own hymn and climb higher up the mountain so as to impose order on the scene below, and to preserve that inner light which cannot be acquired once for all, but is an endless striving sunwards? (143)

Thou hast given me that craving to master and to reconcile such contradictions, which makes my lot so hardly to be borne. Yet this it is that urges me upon my upward way, through ever fewer questionings, towards Thy silence, in which all questions have an end. (336)

The search for love is an endless striving also. Man is by nature dissatisfied with his limited, imperfect existence; he reaches out for infinity and attempts to transcend himself. Saint-Exupery talks of this when he speaks of man's thirst:

Well your heart may bleed for this thirst for love unsatisfied, if you forget that love is, in its essence, but a thirst for love. (145)

For a man is so built that, essentially, love is a thirst for love, culture a thirst for culture, and the joy of the ceremonial quest of the black pearl, a thirst for the black pearl lying at the bottom of the sea. (340)

d) In a somewhat enigmatic sentence Saint-Exupery's Berber king makes a statement (expresses a wish?) that God is transcendent:

When God moves, I tremble; for I would have Him, the Immutable, reseated in Eternity! (14)

e) In a dream he is recounting the Berber king saw God in a way which indicates He is transcendent:
When I reached the summit of the great crag all I found was a huge block of black granite - which was God. Was it not thus indeed, I asked myself, that I had prefigured him: immutable and incorruptible. (170)

In the same dream the Berber king asked for a sign in prayer.

But God gave none. The Berber king concludes that not responding is fitting to a transcendent God:

Such a sign was one I could have received only from an equal - and therefore, yet again, from myself; as being but once more a reflection of my desire. . . .

. . . . True, I had no access to God, but a God who suffers access to Him is God no longer. Nor if he is swayed by prayer. (171)

6. Relative Ends of Man's Transcendence; Participation

God, we have seen, is the ultimate end of man's transcendence. However God is transcendent and man will never be able to attain to Him. As a result man's life is a never-ending striving to transcend himself - for there is always more to achieve. Saint-Exupery does allow for a certain attainment of relative ends, even if he does not allow attainment of the ultimate end, God.

a) The primary attainment of a relative end is in death:

The term "intermediate end" was used above in Chapter I (p. 21) for what is here called a "relative end." "Intermediate" brings out better the contrast with the ultimate end - which was the point at issue in Chapter I. "Relative," however, better connotes the positive sharing in the ultimate end which participation involves; besides, calling death an "intermediate" end would be awkward.
"The one thing needful for a man is to become — to be at last, and to die in the fulness of his being."

(127)

It is almost as if Saint-Exupery does not attribute being to man until he has died (ceased becoming).

b) In the attainment of the relative end, death, man somehow participates in the fulness of the ultimate end, God. This is indicated in the following text by use of the ideas of eternity, peace, completion, and cessation of striving to describe what is attained in death:

It was as though . . . I had become amazingly young; yet this youthfulness was not charged with desire or zest but with shining peace. It was the youth of those who stand on the threshold of eternity, not of those who are entering the tumult of life's dawn; and in it Space and Time were merged. I had completed life's becoming and become eternal.

(133)

This participation at death in God's fulness is indicated in the next texts by the ideas of cessation of questioning, bliss, and the image of the lake:

Thus overruling seeming contradictions one by one, I make my way towards that silence wherein all questions have died away, in a bliss that surpasses understanding. (130)

When comes the day, O Lord, of garnering in all that Thou hast created, open wide to us Thy portal and let us enter that good place where there will be no more answers, but only bliss, keystone of questions, and supreme content. Then he who enters will discover a lake of soft water, vaster than all the seven seas together, of whose existence he had intimations in the low sound of streams. (130)
c) Another relative end which can be attained is silence. That it is an end to be attained is shown by the fact that its achievement results in a spirit of peace and cessation of striving. Just as at death, in silence a participation in God's fulness is attained:

Silence of the heart and silence of the senses. Silence even of the still, small voice within yourself; for it is good that you should be atoned with God, whose silence is the silence of eternity; all having been said, all done. (129)

Silence of God, like a shepherd's sleep than which no sleep is softer, though threatened seem the lambs and ewes; when both flock and shepherd cease to be, for who can tell one from the other in the starry night, when all is at rest, and a wan glimmer of sleep-bound wool? (129)

d) Any real achievement is a relative end similar to death and silence which participates in God's fulness:

For a long time I pondered on what is meant by "peace." It comes only from garnered harvests, from children, a house at long last set in order. It issues from that eternity into which return all things that are fulfilled. It is the silence of full granaries, of sleeping flocks, of folded linen, of the perfected thing; of that which, well and truly done, becomes a gift to God. (13)

That such achievements are relative ends was said equivalently when Saint-Exupery talked of the festivals which celebrate them. (See p. 30 of this thesis) That such achievements are relative and not absolute ends is seen also in what is said about festivals: "No festival I know save that . . . from which you go on." (313-314)
e) Death or silence or achievement as a participation in God is not equivalent to becoming God, however. Returning to the analogy between a tree growing towards the sun and man growing towards God, Saint-Exupery indicates in the last sentence of the following text that even at death there is still more growing left to be done. The implication seems to be that God is transcendent, and death only a relative end and an imperfect participation in God's fulness:

There came to me a craving for my last end and I prayed God: Grant me that peace which dwells in garnered harvests, in things finally set in order, in folded flocks. Let me now be, having done with becoming. Weary am I of my heart's bereavements, and too old to put forth branches anew. (169)

7. The God Who Doesn't Answer Prayers

A very important and frequently repeated idea of God found in The Wisdom of the Sands is that of the God who doesn't answer prayers.

a) An incident which occurred in a dream of the Berber king best illustrates the meaning and significance of the phrase "the God who doesn't answer prayers." The Berber king seeks a sign from God in prayer to enlighten him and manifest the presence of God to him. No sign is given - God did not answer the prayer. But the Berber king in reflecting on the incident decides it is fitting that God not answer his prayer.
"O Lord," I said . . . seeing a black crow perched on a branch nearby, "well I understand that silence befits Thy Majesty. Nevertheless, I seek a sign from Thee. When I end my prayer, bid that crow take wing, and this will be as it were a nod from another man than myself and I shall no longer feel alone in the world. I ask nothing save that a sign may be given me that there is perhaps something to understand."

And I watched the crow. But it moved not. Then I bent towards the looming blackness.

"Lord," I said, "Thou art right. It would ill befit Thy Majesty to hearken to my bidding. Had that crow taken wing I would have been yet sadder. For such a sign was one I could have received only from an equal - and therefore, yet again, from myself; as being but once more a reflection of my desire. Thus again would I have been thrown back on my solitude."

Therefore, having bowed down, I retraced my steps.

But now a strange thing befell me; my despair gave place to an unlooked-for tranquility. Though I sank deep into the mire on the downward path, tearing myself on brambles and buffeted by the storm, a light serene flooded my whole being. I had learned nothing, but there was nothing I could have learned without regret and disillusion. True, I had had no access to God, but a God who suffers access to Him is a God no longer. Nor if he is swayed by prayer. And for the first time I perceived that the whole greatness of prayer lies in the fact that no answer is vouchsafed it, and into this exchange there enters none of the ugliness of vulgar commerce. And that the lesson of prayer is a lesson of silence; and love begins there only where no return may be expected. Thus love is, primarily, the practice of prayer, and prayer the practice of silence. (171)

Various ideas expressed here will be taken up in the rest of this section.

b) The fact that prayers are not answered has great significance to Saint-Exupery. There was a period in his personal life during the 1930's when he went through a religious crisis and prayed fervently for faith but received no
answer to his prayer. Saint-Exupery began to write *The Wisdom of the Sands* shortly after this religious crisis occurred. This may help account for the importance of the "God who doesn't answer prayers."

c) In the text last quoted above Saint-Exupery concludes, first, that responding to prayer is not in accordance with God's nature - that he would not be God if he did. Second, he also finds human significance in the fact that God does not answer prayers: man in finding that prayers are not answered learns something about love - he learns not to expect a response. This idea is expressed more clearly in another place:

> True love begins when nothing is looked for in return. And if the habit of prayer is seen to be so important for teaching a man to love his fellow men, this is because no answer is given to his prayers. (152-153)

The same parallelism between unanswered prayer and love which receives no response is repeated in the context of an imprisoned man's love:

> In a love that vainly yearns from behind prison bars you have perchance the love supreme. Prayer is fruitful so long as God does not answer. And it is on the flints and stones of the wilderness that love thrives. (145)

The same parallelism is expressed in the context of love felt by a man in the desert away from his wife:
Nevertheless, the truth is that you learn the lore of love only when your love is out of reach; and the lore of the blue landscape seen from your mountain-top only when you are struggling up a rock wall on your long ascent; and you learn of God only in the exercise of prayer that remains unanswered. (145)

This last test states that not only does one learn of love only when no response is given, one also learns of God only when no response is given (prayer is not answered).

d) This last text also reiterates the necessity of constant striving. The implication (which is questionable) is that if a man received a response he would cease striving. Saint-Exupery is very concerned that man continually strive in order to become or grow. In the following text he states directly what was implied in the previous text:

I have spoken to you of prayer which, by reason of God's silence is an exercise of love alone. Had your prayer availed, and had you discovered God, you would have merged yourself in Him, having fulfilled yourself, and then what need were there for you to grow in stature, so as to become? (148-149)

Saint-Exupery seems to think that if man "discovered God" the experience would be such as to deter any further growth.

(Though would not having "merged yourself in Him" be a kind of mystical transcendence or becoming?)

e) Saint-Exupery seems to be fearful that discovering God would drain away man's energies into an ineffectual other-worldly cult, rather than directing them to this-worldly
becoming or growth. Only becoming is a real achievement, and only becoming would be rewarded in an afterlife ("when you enter his Presence"), although it is only in an afterlife that it is rewarded (a response is given). Saint-Exupery says this in making an analogy between a dancer and one who prays:

She knew well that a dance is a prayer tempered to win the hearts of kings, though in the harsh life of the desert it can hope for no response. (Thus with your prayer, so long as life is yours; it is a dance you learn to dance so as to win God's favor, when you enter his Presence.) (148)

f) This whole detailed development of the human significance of the God who doesn't answer prayers is basically a repetition of the theme: the primacy of giving over receiving. Giving and Receiving were discussed in Chapter II of this thesis (pp. 65-69, 95-102) in connection with bartering oneself, love (pp. 69-79), and becoming. Prayer or love must be primarily giving, for only if one gives oneself, barters oneself, can he become:

I know but one act which is fertile, and that is prayer; and I know also that every act is a prayer if it be a free gift of oneself in order to become. (164-165)

Insofar as the "God who doesn't answer prayers" theme is a repetition of the primacy of giving theme, the same criticism must be offered: why the absolute exclusion of receiving or response? And relationship that is personal...
must be mutual if growth is to take place. But perhaps man's relationship with God is not mutual if God is not personal! However, although Saint-Exupery's God is transcendent and seems in some ways to be an impersonal principle of absolute unity, insofar as one attributes to Him the capability of responding the way Saint-Exupery does, he is considered, at least in that respect, personal.

8. Christianity

Some have tried to make of Saint-Exupery a covert Christian. In some senses of the word he is very Christian: His God is like the Christian God in being the Absolute Being in whom all participate and towards whom all are developing. Saint-Exupery's sense of the brotherhood of men, of charity, and of sacrifice is very Christian. In his sense of asceticism, silence, prayer, and contemplation he has the spirit of the monk about him. The influence of the Bible and his Catholic background can be seen in the phrases and imagery he uses when speaking of religion and of God.

---


However it could not be said Saint-Exupery has the Christian Faith, if we can judge from *The Wisdom of the Sands*. For in this, his philosophically most important work, Saint-Exupery denies a central tenet of Christianity: God's revelation of Himself to men.

a) This denial is indicated in the following text by a denial of the Incarnation ("Thou dost not deign to come down to this world of Thy creation") and of another possible mode of revelation - phrased in a rather derogatory manner ("being enlightened by some celestial puppet-show of archangels descending in a cloud of glory");

"Thou dost not deign to come down to this world of Thy creation, and I can hope for nothing other to enlighten me than the heat of the fire or the tension of the forces implicit in the seed. Even as the caterpillar knows nothing of wings. Nor have I any hope of being enlightened by some celestial puppet-show of archangels descending in a cloud of glory; indeed such a show could tell me nothing of advantage. For it is as useless to talk of wings to the caterpillar. (335-336)

Revelation is also directly denied in the following text (the step by the visitant archangel towards man):

"Thus ever I go forward, shaping prayers to which no answer is vouchsafed, and so blind that all I have to guide me is a faint warmth on my wasted hands - nevertheless, praising Thee, O Lord, for that Thou dost not answer; for did I find that which I seek, I could cease becoming.

"Wert Thou to take, of Thy good pleasure, the step, that is the visitant archangel's, towards Man, Man would be fulfilled, his task be accomplished. (336)
b) Saint-Exupery not only denies revelation as a fact, but denies for theoretical reasons that God could reveal Himself. Saint-Exupery seems to be bothered by the question which has traditionally been stated: how can a God who is infinite and immutable have any real relation to man?

True, I had had no access to God, but a God who suffers access to Him is a God no longer. Nor if He is swayed by prayer. (171)

c) The three texts cited above indicate that Saint-Exupery offers the same objections to Revelation as to God's answering prayers: It is not in accordance with God's nature. Secondly, if God revealed himself man would cease striving to become, e.g., "did I find that which I seek, I could cease becoming." (336)

A reason is given in the following text why man would cease striving to become if God revealed himself: "Once the temple is built, I see the temple only, not the stones."

"Wert Thou to take, of Thy good pleasure, the step, that is the visitant archangel's, towards Man, Man would be fulfilled, his task accomplished. No longer would he saw his planks or hammer nails for the ship in the making; no more would he fight the foe or tend the sick. No longer would he sweep his room or cherish his beloved. How, O Lord, could he wander through the world seeking to honor Thee through his fellow men by acts of charity, did he see Thee face to face? For once the temple is built, I see the temple only, not the stones." (336)
Having a vision of God would make man lose interest in earthly things, which are yet unachieved and paltry by comparison. (This seems to be a contradiction of something said elsewhere: that spiritual vision [also called vision of God] is the source of creative ideas [Cf. pp. 32, 138-139 of this thesis] and is that which leads a man to barter himself [Cf. p. 63 of this thesis].)

d) Since He does not reveal Himself the God of The Wisdom of the Sands is not Christian, not even Biblical. The Biblical God takes the initiative in communicating with man, in showing concern for man. In Saint-Exupery's religion man without revelation is left alone groping towards God as a blind man groping towards a fire by feeling its warmth with the palms of his hands. In Saint-Exupery's religion man is left alone to strive mightily to grow towards God without expecting any response, much less initiative from God - any help or show of concern. Although Saint-Exupery's Berber king addresses God as one who is concerned for him, God does nothing on His part which might show us he does have concern for the Berber king. (The Berber king seems to have a certain blind faith in God's fatherly concern.)

e) Saint-Exupery's religion seems to be a Neo-Platonic mysticism: a search for unity in the One, a return to the
Source. At least two interpreters of Saint-Exupery agree with our calling him non-Christian and a mystic. Luc Estang has coined the phrase *Mystique sans la foi* (mystic without the faith) to describe Saint-Exupery. Clement Borgal has adopted this phrase as the subtitle of his book on Saint-Exupery.\(^5\) Saint-Exupery's Neo-Platonic mysticism will be discussed later in this chapter.

Saint-Exupery's religion is a religion of man's brotherhood and of man's transcendence. His God is defined primarily as being the ground of man's brotherhood and the ultimate end of man's transcendence. Men are separated and alone in their individualities. Yet they have a common brotherhood and unity grounded in that Absolute Being in which they all participate and towards which they all are growing – each from his own starting point and by his own route.

Of this Absolute Being little is known except what can be gathered from reflecting on the human phenomena of brotherhood and transcendence. This Absolute Being is known as the ground of man's brotherhood in which all participate. It is known as that absolute upon which various men's transcendence is converging (though what that point of convergence is like is not very clear). It is known as absolute unity, which

\(^5\)Cf. Borgal, p. 114.
unity is recognized in human terms as resolution of "contraries," source of spiritual vision, cessation of striving. It is known to be transcendent and therefore far beyond man's attainment and largely unknowable. It is known to be immutable and silent. Beyond having these attributes, Saint-Exupery's Absolute Being is largely unknown.

9. Asceticism

Saint-Exupery was said to have had the spirit of the monk about him. In his writing we find discussed the desert, silence, prayer, contemplation, spiritual knowledge, self-agnegation, religion, and God. Religion was quite important to him and he pursued his religion of transcendence with great effort and demanded of himself an asceticism fitting his religion and its goals.

a) Discipline and asceticism are necessary, first, because the search for truth requires effort:

Wherefore I have never been impressed by the reasonings of those miscreants and sophists who came to me and said: "Pray, show us the domain, the empire and the God of which you tell us. For stones and solid matter we can touch, and only in what we touch can we believe." . . . Even as some men seek for a woman who will bestow love ready-made on them, so such an one (sic) comes to me seeking to learn effortlessly. But this is not within my power to grant. (120)

b) Asceticism is necessary to gain the strength to bear suffering. For suffering necessarily accompanies
becoming or growth:

But all ascent is painful, every change of heart has its birth pangs; and I cannot force the secret of this music that I love unless, first, I have put forth a painful effort. . . . Not love alone but suffering, too, goes to the making of man's plenitude. (118-119)

c) The discipline of prayer establishes true love in man's heart: (The king is speaking to teachers.)

"And, given such a youth, if I wish to kindle the true flame of love within him, I must establish love in his heart by the discipline of prayer." (121)

d) A certain self-denial is necessary in Saint-Exupery's religion:

To enter into the House of God, I must first divest me of myself. Thus they who glorified me made me sad at heart. (170)

The Berber king explains that a leaving of self behind is necessary in the process of becoming - of "bartering myself for something other than myself":

When I laugh, they laugh; when I keep silent, they are glum. They are hollow men whom my words fill with a semblance of life, like a gust of wind swelling out the branches of a tree. Thus I am no longer bartering myself for something other than myself, for in all that teeming concourse I now hear only my own voice, which they cast back at me like the defunctive echoes of a temple. What can I hope to get from a love like this, which is but a multiplication of myself?"

And it is true that:

"Painful is all sloughing off of one's old self." (335)
B. Summary

Saint-Exupery's thought about God is very complex. Many lines of thought treated in earlier chapters - dealing with various aspects of man's transcendence - reappear in this chapter, discussed in relation to God. These lines of thought take on a new unity seen in relation to God. Besides treating of all this, we see in this chapter that the God of The Wisdom of the Sands is absolutely transcendent: He is the God who doesn't answer prayers; He is the God who does not reveal Himself. Seeing these latter two statements we are led to discuss how Saint-Exupery's God differs from the Biblical God, and what the nature of Saint-Exupery's religion is.

1. God and Spiritual Vision

Spiritual vision is often described in The Wisdom of the Sands as a vision of God or a revelation of God's presence. Gaining spiritual vision is described as discovering or attaining God. Since God is absolute unity it would stand to reason that God would be the ultimate source of the unity which spiritual vision brings to man's knowledge. Vision of God is a glimpse of final unity.

Since God is the source of spiritual vision, various metaphors used in talking about spiritual vision are
associated with Him: the "keystone"; "the meaning of things”; "the knot which binds things together.” Similarly all the functions attributed to spiritual vision are also ultimately attributed to God: giving coherence and meaningfulness to knowledge; giving purpose; being the source of the creative form; being the source of bartering, love, and fervor; resolving contraries; being the source of the vision from which the leader draws the creative form which he imposes to structure the social environment and in which he resolves men's conflicting truths in his attempts to unify them. In all of these functions God fosters man's becoming.

2. God, Process, and Becoming

God, and only God, is the ultimate end of all process in general and of man's becoming in particular. God, as Saint-Exupery's absolute, represents absolute being - as absolute fullness of life and vitality - and absolute unity. The meaning of God as absolute unity can be seen especially as the absolute of what is sought in spiritual vision - in all its ramifications - and as the absolute of what is sought in resolving inter- and intra-organic conflict to achieve harmony. The meaning of God as absolute being or vitality is explained primarily metaphorically, especially
by reference to trees, as in this text:

The trees in the thick forest, . . . valiantly they climb aloft, soaring slim and stately as pillars, transmuted into power by their ascent towards the sun they will never see. Thus though God is not to be attained, He proffers himself, and man builds himself up in Space, like the branches of the tree. (142-143)

This text also brings out, in a spatial metaphor, the fact that man will never attain God, his ultimate end. Thus man's life is a ceaseless striving. He may attain intermediate or relative ends, but these are to be transcended, for there is always more to achieve and become.

Saint-Exupery discusses death, silence, and achievement as relative ends. All are participations in God's fullness. Death as a relative end is characterized by eternity, peace, completion, cessation of striving and of questions. At death one achieves being and ceases becoming. Silence as a relative end is characterized somewhat similarly by completion, cessation of striving, peace, rest. Any achievement is a relative end, and many achievements are celebrated as relative ends as festivals.

3. God is Transcendent

When Saint-Exupery's Berber king speaks of the "keystone" and "the knot which binds things together" - images which imply spiritual vision and resolution of conflicting
truths - it is often unclear whether God is to be identified with them or is distinct from them. This raises the question whether Saint-Exupery's God is immanent or transcendent, whether He is to be identified with the whole, or is apart from and beyond it. Some of Saint-Exupery's statements could be taken pantheistically; and his experiences of "moments of fusion" with other men (Cf. above, p. 159) come through when he speaks of the brotherhood of men. Yet the transcendence of God is both implied in many texts and explicitly stated in a few.

In the text cited four paragraphs above, man growing towards God was compared to a tree growing towards the sun. The transcendence of God seems to be implied by the fact that the sun is tremendously far above the tree, compared to the highest the tree will grow in its lifetime. The sun is completely beyond the kind of world in which the tree lives, and is tremendously powerful.

The transcendence of God is also implied by the contrast Saint-Exupery makes in speaking of knowledge. It is part of the human condition to have unresolved complexity in knowledge, whereas God represents perfect resolution and unity. Man's knowledge is imperfect, causing him to live in uncertainty, causing him to search endlessly, whereas God's knowledge is perfect.
The transcendence of God is stated directly when God is called "immutable and incorruptible." (170) Saint-Exupery also says that God, in order to be God, must be impassable when he explains why God does not answer prayers and why He does not reveal Himself.

4. The God Who Doesn't Answer Prayers

The Berber king speaks several times in *The Wisdom of the Sands* of his prayers not being answered by God. This may correspond to a period in the 1930's - shortly before *The Wisdom of the Sands* was started - when Saint-Exupery himself went through a religious crisis and fervently prayed for faith but received no answer to his prayers. But whatever the roots of his conviction, Saint-Exupery states it as a fact in *The Wisdom of the Sands* that God doesn't answer prayers.

Reflecting on this fact, Saint-Exupery's Berber king finds it to be quite fitting. God must by nature be impassable, and thus could not answer prayers: "A God who suffers access to Him is a God no longer. Nor if He is swayed by prayer." (171)

It would also be bad, from the human point of view, for God to answer prayers. For "did I find that which I seek, I would cease becoming." (336) Saint-Exupery seems
to fear that discovering God would drain away man's energies into an ineffectual other-worldly cult, rather than directing them to this-worldly becoming. A third reason why it is fitting that God not answer prayers is that man learns something about love when he receives no response in prayer: He learns not to expect a response when he loves. Saint-Exupery also says that one learns of God only when no response is given in prayer.

5. The God Who Does Not Reveal Himself

In some ways Saint-Exupery seems very Christian: His God is like the Christian God in being the Absolute Being in whom all participate and towards whom all are growing as their ultimate end. Saint-Exupery's sense of the brotherhood of men, of charity, and of sacrifice are very Christian. In his sense of asceticism, silence, prayer, and contemplation he has the spirit of the monk about him. Yet Saint-Exupery cannot be Christian because he denies a central tenet of Christianity: God's revelation of Himself to men.

Besides stating the experiential fact that God does not reveal Himself to men, Saint-Exupery offers theoretical objections. These are similar to his objections to God answering prayers: From the side of God: If God is impassible, how could He be concerned for men? If He is immutable, how
could He act in any way? If He is infinite, how could His self-revelation be understood by men? As the problem has traditionally been stated: How can a God who is infinite and immutable have any real relation to man? From the side of man: If God revealed Himself man would cease becoming. If man could see God, he would be satisfied, and would not try to accomplish anything.

6. Saint-Exupery's God and Religion

It seems Saint-Exupery's religion could best be characterized as a Neo-Platonic mysticism. It is not Christian, not even Biblical, yet it is quite Western. Saint-Exupery seems closer to Plotinus than to any other Western thinker in his philosophy of the relation between God and man.

Saint-Exupery's God is passive and detached. He does not reveal Himself. Man could not understand revelation even if he did receive it. Hence man has no clear knowledge of God. He is left to his own powers to gropingly discover his End. Man discovers his end, God, according to his laws of life and growth. Man is sensitive to the "lines of force" leading to God as the blind man is sensitive to the direction of the fire by feeling the warmth of the fire on the palms of his hands.
Man's knowledge of God is thus derived from his experience of himself and his own transcendence. God is known as the ultimate end of man's transcendence, as fulness of life, and unity. He is known as the ground of man's brotherhood, in Whom all participate and in Whose fulness all men's transcendence converges via different routes. God is known as transcendent - beyond man's attainment and largely unknowable. He is known as immutable and silent.

There is an inconsistency in the Berber king's attitude towards God. Despite the fact that he says directly in some places that God is impassible, in other places he addresses God in the second person, as one who has concern for men. He starts prayers with "O Lord" or "Thou."

Saint-Exupery saw asceticism to be necessary to the pursuit of his religion and its goals. Discipline and asceticism are required in the search for truth. The discipline of prayer establishes true love in man's heart. Perhaps most importantly: transcending oneself means leaving one's old self behind - and this is always painful. One must be willing and able to bear with this pain.
C. Commentary

1. Plotinus

When one starts talking of Saint-Exupery's philosophy of God, one can no longer find similarities with the thought of Dewey or Sartre, for neither believes in God or in an absolute truth. Both of these thinkers are ultimately relativist while Saint-Exupery believes in an Absolute - one remarkably similar to that of Plotinus. The major part of the Commentary section of this chapter will be devoted to studying this similarity.

a) The Absolute or First Principle of Plotinus is called "the One." It is absolute unity. It is beyond being, beyond the intelligible realm (the nous). Because it is absolute unity, our minds cannot grasp it, for our minds can grasp things only in multiplicity. We can grasp the One only by getting beyond knowing, and being united with it in mystical ecstasy. Plotinus is speaking in the following texts about the One ("the Unity"): 

What then must the Unity be, what nature is left for it?

... ...

The soul or mind reaching towards the formless finds itself incompetent to grasp where nothing bounds it or to take impression where the impinging reality is diffuse; in sheer dread of holding to nothingness, it slips away. The state is painful;
often it seeks relief by retreating from all this vagueness to the region of sense.\(^6\)

The main source of the difficulty is that awareness of this Principle comes neither by knowing nor by the Intellection that discovers the Intellectual Beings but by a presence overpassing all knowledge. In knowing, soul or mind abandons its unity; it cannot remain a simplex: knowing is taking account of things; that accounting is multiple; the mind thus plunging into number and multiplicity departs from unity.

Our way then takes us beyond knowing; there may be no wandering from unity; knowing and knowable must all be left aside; every object of thought, even the highest, we must pass by.\(^7\)

In his Hymn to Silence, Saint-Exupery speaks about God in much the same way as Plotinus speaks about the One. In this hymn, Saint-Exupery is describing the "Silence of God," a state that is achieved by some kind of union with God. His descriptions of the "Silence of God" thus give us some idea of the God with whom man is being united. The next four texts are from the Hymn to Silence and are presented to show the similarity between Saint-Exupery's God and Plotinus' One.

The first text gives the impression that the Silence of God and union with God are achieved in an afterlife.


\(^7\)Plotinus, The Enneads, VI, 9, 4; MacKenna, p. 617.
In other texts the Silence of God and union with God seem to be only a deep state of earthly contemplation. Perhaps either case may be true - with greater intensity characterizing the former. At any rate, the God with whom man is being united represents absolute unity, and is beyond knowledge:

When comes the day, O Lord, of garnering in all that Thou hast created, open wide to us Thy portal and let us enter that good place where there will be no answers, but only bliss, keystone of questions and supreme content. Then he who enters will discover a lake of soft water, vaster than all the seven seas together, of whose existence he had intimations in the low sound of streams. (130)

The God with whom man is being united here is represented as "bliss, keystone of questions," and by the lake. He can be seen to be absolute unity in two senses: (i) as expressed in the image of the lake: The lake is vast, boundless, and it is undifferentiated. (The water of the lake is undifferentiated - it is even "soft" water - formless water.) The boundlessness and indifferentiation and formlessness of the One is the reason given by Plotinus for the human mind's inability to grasp the One. (ii) God is absolute unity as the "keystone," in light of which questions and answers (man's ordinary way of knowing) become unnecessary - they are seen as embodying imperfect understanding and are thus useless at best. In leaving questions and answers behind,
what is achieved is of a different order than knowledge: bliss, content, the formless lake. "Bliss" and "content" imply the cessation of desire, which is one of the things that happen in mystical union with the One for Plotinus.8 The clause "of whose existence he had intimations in the low sound of streams" implies that man can have a knowledge of God by analogy with creatures and that lower beings participate in God.

In the second text we see again that what is encountered in the Silence of God is undifferentiated, and that experiencing the Silence of God brings deep content:

Silence of God, like a shepherd's sleep than which no sleep is softer, though threatened seem the lambs and ewes; when both flock and shepherd cease to be, for who can tell one from the other in the starry night, when all is at rest, and a wan glimmer of sleep-bound wool? (129)

That the God with whom man is united is undifferentiated is conveyed by the lack of distinction between flock and shepherd and by the visual blurring conveyed by the "wan glimmer of sleep-bound wool." Contentment is conveyed by the soft sleep and by everything being at rest.

---

The third text again gives the impression that the Silence of God is achieved in an afterlife (It is "the silence of eternity"; it is achieved "all having been said, all done."): 

Silence of the heart and silence of the senses. Silence even of the still, small voice within yourself; for it is good that you should be atoned with God, whose silence is the silence of eternity; all having been said, all done. (129)

This text gives the impression that at least some of man's ordinary operations must cease in order for him to be united ("atoned") with God. ("Silence of the heart," "silence of the senses," "silence of that still, small voice within yourself" could be silence of the active side of man's knowing, so that man could become pure passivity in mystical union.

The final text from the Hymn to Silence shows that God represents the absolute unity which resolves "contraries." Thus the Silence of God is also the silence that comes of having resolved the inner conflict of contraries. This text also indicates that man is beyond knowing ("understanding") when he attains this silence and resolution of conflicts:

Thus overruling seeming contradictions one by one, I make my way towards that silence wherein all questions have died away, in a bliss that passes understanding. (130)
To summarize: Saint-Exupery’s God is like Plotinus’ God in being: absolute unity; undifferentiated; able to be grasped only on a level beyond knowing (though what that level is is very vague); that which absolutely and finally satisfies man so that desire ceases.

b) Saint-Exupery and Plotinus share an idea that is usually associated with Medieval Theology: God (the One) is the beginning and the end of all things; we have come from God (the One) and we are going back to Him. Saint-Exupery states this directly:

God encompasses your birth and growing up; He fills you, turn by turn, with longings and regrets, joys and griefs, angers and forgivings, and then He draws you back unto Himself. (10)

For Plotinus the idea of the One as our origin and our end is even more important than for Saint-Exupery. The sole concern of Plotinus’ spirituality is withdrawal from all things and return to our source, the One (= "The Father"): 'Let us flee then to the beloved Fatherland': this is the soundest counsel. But what is this flight? How are we to gain the open sea? . . . The Fatherland to us is There whence we have come, and There is the Father.9

Plotinus uses the image of going to the sea to explain returning to our origin. Saint-Exupery uses this image also:

---

9Plotinus, The Enneads, I, 6, 8; MacKenna, p. 63.
"only that road is beautiful which leads to the sea." (288)

The sea is, in both Biology and Mythology the source of life. In this context to return to the sea would be to return to the source of life.

c) For both Saint-Exupery and Plotinus the motive force of the return to the source is the same: a kind of attraction of all things towards God (the One). Saint-Exupery expresses this in imagery when he compares man growing towards God to trees "soaring . . . towards the sun" (142-143), growing in the direction of the source of light. In another text using the tree imagery he says explicitly that "the life force came from above":

The divers particles of earth do not amalgamate as chance has brought them together and, rising upwards, build a tree. To create the tree, you had first to cast the seed in which it lay dormant into the earth; and the life force came from above, not from below. (182)

And in a text already cited, speaking directly of man, Saint-Exupery says "God . . . draws you back unto himself." (10)

Father O'Brien explains the meaning of the attraction of all things towards the One in Plotinus' thought:

Effect is drawn towards cause. Image tends towards prototype. There is at the core of every existing thing an ontic desire for what is lacking to its perfectness, and this perfectness it can find in its fulness solely within that which initially engendered it. Indigence is the root of this ontic desire. But not merely indigence. There is as well the drive to
make up for this indigence. It is a commonplace in Plato that Desire is the child of Penury and Plenitude, and here Plotinus agrees with him.\textsuperscript{10}

There seems to be a similar "ontic desire" in man as Saint-Exupery sees him, as is evidenced by the familiar text:
"... we the eternal seekers, aspiring Godwards; for nothing in ourselves can ever satisfy us." (271)

d) Saint-Exupery's God and Plotinus' One are reminiscent of Aristotle's unmoved mover. This is true for two reasons: (i) The unmoved mover moves all other things by attraction, as final cause, as object of love and desire. We have just finished discussing how Saint-Exupery's and Plotinus' absolutes draw things by attraction. (ii) Nevertheless the unmoved mover himself remains unchanging, impassible, and has no concern for anything outside himself. Saint-Exupery's God is similarly immutable and impassive. He does not answer prayers nor does He reveal Himself. Plotinus' One is no different. The One fits the general principle enunciated by Father Paul Henry: "The higher reality in its existence and activity is, at every level, completely independent of and unconcerned for the lower."\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10}O'Brien, p. 21.

The One, being unconcerned, does not offer revelation or grace, so man is left to his own unaided powers to reach his end:

[Plotinus] stands with the Gnostics against the Christians in maintaining that the soul must rely on its own unaided efforts to reach the goal of its destiny.12

'Prayer' is a tension of the soul, the final leap in the dialectical process; it is not an appeal, not an expectation; it is neither the effect nor the occasion of a movement of grace or inclination on the part of God.13

Yet despite their strong statements of God's (the One's) impassibility and unconcern, Plotinus speaks of the One as "the Father" and Saint-Exupery addresses God as "Thou" or "Lord." It is hard to think of a father as unconcerned with his offspring. It is hard to think of anyone addressed as fervently as Saint-Exupery addresses God to be completely unmoved and unconcerned — how could a man continue praying so fervently when he gets no sign of anything from the other side? The problem is not so great for Plotinus: He always speaks in the third person of the Father, and with a good deal of detachment. The word "Father" could be used simply to denote origin and "Fatherland" to connote nostalgia for one's origin — which is a reaction coming purely from man's side.

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
But Saint-Exupery's fervent prayers addressed directly to God - implying God's concern or providence - contrast sharply with his explicit statements of God's impassibility. In his personal life Saint-Exupery felt a nostalgia for the secure and orderly world of his childhood, including the Catholic religion, and he respected many of the values of that religion. But he simply could not accept Catholicism's dogmatism and conservatism. It may be that this conflict has worked its way into *The Wisdom of the Sands*.

Perhaps the conflict between God's being concerned and His remaining impassible is a false problem, though. A statement made by Father Henry gave us a hint at a way of resolving the conflict:

"[Plotinus] has no use for a Savior who 'comes down' to liberate man, or even for a Supreme Being which would in any way concern itself with man or with the world except by remaining apart as the ultimate goal of man's or the world's desire."  

The question raised is this: Could God best show concern for man by remaining the transcendent, inaccessible Being He is - so as not to cheapen man's efforts to become by giving man a lower goal to aim for? This seems to be Saint-Exupery's

---


15 Henry, p. lviii.
attitude. God does show concern (of a sort) by remaining transcendent. Saint-Exupery says of a sign he had asked for in prayer: "Such a sign was one I could have received only from an equal." (171) And he says elsewhere: "Wert Thou on my level, Thou wouldst not constrain me to rise above myself." (336)

2. The Impassible God

Finally, we would like to review the lines of thought by which Saint-Exupery arrives at the conclusion that it is fitting that God be impassible and then raise a question about the third of these, which deals with God as impassible in relation to man's transcendence.

a) The first reason is that God would not be God if He could be affected by men:

True, I had no access to God, but a God who suffers access to Him is God no longer. Nor if He is swayed by prayer. (171)

The basic argument here seems to be the traditional difficulty that God could not be perfect and be affected by us. If He were affected by us He would have to change; but if He would change, He would have to change either to or from being imperfect. But to be imperfect at any time would be impossible to God. Therefore for God to be God He must be immutable. But if He is to be immutable He cannot be
affected by us. [Saint-Exupery explicitly states in two places that God is immutable: (14), (170).] This is a real problem, especially if one adopts the Aristotelian philosophical framework, although thinkers such as Aquinas have adopted this framework and still worked out a solution to the problem.

b) The second reason why it is fitting that God be impassible is that even if God did reveal Himself, man would not be able to understand Him. God is infinite but the capacity of man's intellect is finite. Saint-Exupery seems to think that man now has as much understanding of God as his present stage of development will allow, and that man will always gain on his own as much knowledge of God as he is capable of grasping:

Nor have I any hope of being enlightened by some celestial puppet-show of archangels descending on a cloud of glory; indeed such a show could tell me nothing of advantage. For it is as useless to talk of wings to the caterpillar as of the ship to the nailsmith. Let it suffice that by virtue of the shipwright's conception, the ship's lines of force exist. And, owing to the seed, the tree's lines of force. And, as for Thee, O Lord, quite simply, that Thou art. (335-336)

God is revealed to man as the ultimate end towards which his growth (transcendence) is directed. Saint-Exupery seems content with the knowledge of God revealed to him by his own laws of growth. What these laws of growth reveal to
him about God seems enough to prove to Saint-Exupery that God exists.

c) The third reason why it is fitting that God be impassible is that if he answered prayer and if He revealed Himself, man would cease becoming:

Had your prayer availed, and had you discovered God, you would have merged yourself in Him, having fulfilled yourself, and then what need were there for you to grow in stature, so as to become? (148-149)

It is not clear to us why man could cease becoming if he "discovered" God and "merged" himself with God. (i) If merging oneself with God means actually becoming God, there would be no problem - man would not need to become any longer, he would already have attained his ultimate end. But Saint-Exupery probably does not mean this. (ii) If discovering God and merging oneself with Him does not mean becoming God then it probably means either having a very perfect vision of God or being mystically united with God. (iii) If discovering God and merging oneself with Him means having a very perfect vision of God or being mystically united with God, but not becoming God, it seems that the contrast between God's perfection and one's own imperfection would lead one to strive even harder to become. For as Plato said, Eros is the son of Poverty and Plenty; as Plotinus said "ontic desire" - the desire in every thing for what is lacking in its
fullness - is the motive force of the return to the One; as Saint-Exupery said, man is dissatisfied with himself and "aspires Godwards." It would seem, therefore, that if the contrast between one's imperfect self and God is increased by having a more perfect knowledge of God, then "ontic desire" would be increased, the drive to transcendence would be heightened. In support of our point: Ordinarily for Saint-Exupery spiritual vision, also called vision of God, leads men to barter themselves, not to remain passive. (iv) Perhaps, however, if one has perfect vision of God or mystical union with God in such a way as to lose consciousness of one's own being, then the perfect God-imperfect self contrast would be destroyed, and thus the drive to become. If this happened then religion would become the "opium of the people," leading them away from efforts to achieve human transcendence, giving them a false sense of well-being achieved by psychologically attaining God, their end, while ontologically remaining far from Him.

The following text indicates that seeing God "face to face" would make man forget his former concerns - which might mean losing consciousness of himself. If it does not point to losing consciousness of self, however, this text still does indicate that the objectionable part of seeing
God "face to face" is that it distracts man from this-worldly concerns and becoming:

"Thus ever I go forward, . . . praising Thee, O Lord, for that Thou dost not answer; for did I find that which I seek, I would cease becoming.

"Wert Thou to take, of Thy good pleasure, the step, that is the visitant archangel's, towards Man, Man would be fulfilled, his task accomplished. No longer would he saw his planks or hammer nails for the ship in the making; no more would he fight the foe or tend the sick. No longer would he sweep his room or cherish his beloved. How, O Lord, could he wander through the world, seeking to honor Thee through his fellow men by acts of charity, did he see Thee face to face? For, once the temple is built, I see the temple only, not the stones. (336)

d) We suspect that Saint-Exupery's objection to man's receiving an answer to his prayers or receiving revelation from God is rooted in his objection to receiving in general. (Cf. Ch. II, pp. 68-69, 95-102) Saint-Exupery does not clearly state anywhere exactly why man would cease becoming if he received answers to his prayers or revelation from God. We suspect it is because Saint-Exupery unconsciously presumes that if a man receives help in accomplishing something, then the accomplishment is not really his - he has not done it, it has been given to him. It is not really his if he has not been totally responsible. Thus if man received help from God in his becoming, the becoming would not really be his - it would not really be at all. There is a certain truth in this: moral growth cannot be given us by others,
it can only result from our own inner decisions and efforts. However - and this is the point Saint-Exupery seems to miss - inner decision does not exclude help from others. When help is offered, we take a stance with regard to it - we decide to accept or reject it, or something inbetween. We can even have a moral obligation to seek help when we need it. Without help from others, without others to learn from, our moral lives would be greatly impoverished.

Saint-Exupery seems to be projecting an attitude he has towards "other person" in general onto relationship with God. Not expecting to receive anything, not expecting help in becoming, man is as autonomous with respect to God as with respect to human persons. Saint-Exupery himself is aware of this parallel in attitudes: He says not receiving an answer in prayer teaches us not to expect a response in love. If this attitude is questionable with respect to other human persons (Cf. Commentary, Chapter II) it would seem to be questionable also with respect to God.
CONCLUSION

We have come to the end of this thesis, and accomplished the goal that was outlined in the Introduction. The central aim was to develop the idea of man's transcendence found in The Wisdom of the Sands. In five chapters we have discussed man's transcendence from the metaphysical, moral, environmental-social, epistemological, and theological points of view.

We have also carried out the comparisons promised in the Introduction between Saint-Exupery's thought and that of Dewey, Sartre, and Plotinus (odd bedfellows!). Saint-Exupery was a synthesizer of great ability. For a man not trained in philosophy not only to be aware of issues raised by men of such divergent schools of thought but also to synthesize them is truly remarkable! Saint-Exupery commands great respect for his rich humanity and his perceptive mind.

In the course of carrying out this synthesis, Saint-Exupery also had to synthesize the relativism of process philosophy and existentialism with the Neoplatonic belief in absolutes. He ended up with an epistemological relativism but a metaphysical belief in absolutes as a kind of a priori
condition of being able to define progress (and a direction for man's transcendence in particular).

The third objective mentioned in the Introduction was making a contribution to the discussion of two issues which come up often in the secondary literature on Saint-Exupery's writings: the ideal leader and the quality of his belief in God. The former was treated in the Commentary section of Chapter III; the latter was treated in both the textual analysis and commentary sections of Chapter V.

We raised a very basic question in the commentary section of Chapter II: Will all intense pursuit of moral ideals lead man to transcend himself? The answer given was that only that pursuit of ideals which also takes into account concrete human reality and possibilities will lead man to transcend himself. If concrete human reality and possibilities are not taken into account, striving to transcend oneself will become neurotic and ineffectual. And a complexus of harmful attitudes will follow as a logical consequence: inability to accept oneself, harshness towards self, aloneness, and opposition to receiving. All of these attitudes appear at times in The Wisdom of the Sands, as well as the basic lack of recognition of man's concrete reality and possibilities. This criticism has far reaching
implications as far as one's attitude towards oneself, other men, and God is concerned. It enters into our dis-
cussion of the ideal leader (his attitude towards other men and his own ideals; his harshness) and our discussion of God (receiving from God).

The style of The Wisdom of the Sands is much like Nietzsche's style. The book is sprinkled throughout with aphorisms and striking imagery. It is written with the experimentalist's disregard for systematic coherence which finds contradiction not unexpected. It is thus very rich.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

1. Direct Object of Study in this Thesis


2. Others


B. Secondary Sources

1. Of Greatest Use in Preparing this Thesis


2. Others


Lemaire, Frans C. "Le quete de spirituel dans l'oeuvre se

Losic, Serge. L'ideal humain de Saint-Exupery. Paris:
This work contains a 29 page bibliography.

Romane, Jacques. "Saint-Exupery, ou le gout de l'eternite." 

Roy, Jules. Passion et Mort de Saint-Exupery. Paris:
Gallimard, 1951.

Simon, Pierre-Henri. L'Homme en Proces: Malraux, Sartre, 
Camus, Saint-Exupery. Neuchatel: A la Baconniere, 
1950.

Smith, Maxwell A. Knight of the Air: The Works and Life 
of Antoine de Saint-Exupery. London: Cassell and 

Sonet, Jean, S.J., "L'Humanisme d'Antoine de Saint-Exupery: 
evolution et qualite." Les Etudes Classiques, 19 
(1951), 344-365.

Wadsworth, Philip A. "Saint-Exupery, Artist and Humanist." 

Zeller, Renee. La Grande Quete d'Antoine de Saint-Exupery 
dans Le Petit Prince et Citadelle. Paris: Editions 

C. Other Books Referred to in this Thesis


Arnou, Rene. "La contemplation selon Plotin." in vol. II, 
part 2 of Dictionnaire de Spiritualite. ed. by 
Charles Baumgartner, S.J., et. al. Paris:
Beauchesne, 1953.

Le desir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin. 


The thesis submitted by William F. Briel has been read and approved by members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

October 31, 1970

Date

Walter J. Bade, S.J.

Signature of Advisor