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THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF AGUSTÍN CUZZANI.

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1975
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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF AGUSTÍN CUZZANI

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

DANA PATRICIA NAIMI

Norman, Oklahoma

1975

THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF AGUSTIN CUZZANI

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THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF AGUSTIN CUZZANI

CHAPTER I

CUZZANI AND THE ARGENTINE THEATRE

The contemporary Spanish American theatre has reached a level of sophistication which closely parallels that of the European avant-garde movement. Borrowing particularly from Pirandello, Brecht, Camus, Sartre, Beckett, and Ionesco, Spanish American dramatists have incorporated many of the ideas and techniques of the European writers into their works.[1] However, it is not merely an imitative theatre, for these new influences have been adapted to the Spanish American context. Since the mid-fifties theatrical activity throughout the Latin American countries has been characterized by experimentation and a resulting new vigor. This has been particularly true of Argentina, for during this period she has produced a number of first-rate playwrights whose works reveal a high level of maturity and a perfection of technique that not only serves to present new concepts, but also results in a very theatrical drama.

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[1]George Woodyard, "The Theatre of the Absurd in Spanish America," Comparative Drama, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Fall, 1969), p. 183.

One of the most important writers of the new theatre in Argentina is Agustín Cuzzani, who combines in his plays all the values of an enduring drama.[2] His works are representative of many of the new trends and techniques of the contemporary Latin American theatre. Cuzzani has been characterized as a "Dramaturgo comprometido,"[3] who is concerned with social criticism, believing with Brecht, that drama should serve a didactic purpose, "Creo que el teatro es el modo de conocer los conflictos de una sociedad dividida en clases--agregaba en la misma ocasión--y en este, medio popular para plantear los conflictos del avance humano."[4] He belongs to the generation of playwrights that emerged after Perón left Argentina in 1955, and which was primarily concerned with current social issues, tending towards the political left.[5] In addition to Cuzzani, this group included Carlos Gorostizo, Osvaldo Dragún, and Andres Lizarraga. The political and social commitment of these writers results in a prejudgment of issues with the subsequent danger of sacrificing artistry for propaganda purposes. Although Cuzzani is always concerned with the social and political aspects of his plays, he rarely subordinates the artistic element to didacticism. His is a rare blend of ideas and

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[2]Carlos Solórzano, Teatro latinamericana en el siglo XX (Mexico: Editorial Pormaca, 1964), p. 142.

[3]Raul Hector Castagnino, "Tendencias actuales del teatro argentina," Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía, Vol. 20 (1970), p. 448.

[4]Cuzzani, interview in Lyra as quoted in Hebe Campanella. "El Hoy y el aquí en el teatro argentino de los últimos veinte años," Cuadernos Hispanos Americanos, Vol. 78, No. 234 (June, 1969), p. 686.

[5]John E. Lyon, "The Argentine Theatre and the Problem of National Identity: A Critical Survey," Latin American Theatre Review, Vol, 5, No. 2 (Spring, 1972), p. 11.

artistry. He adopted the technique of expressionist farce as a vehicle for his social criticism, thus avoiding the pitfall of trying to be convincing on two levels into which Gorostiza, Dragún, and Lizarraga have fallen. "Cuzzani does not have the problem of harmonizing abstract rationalizations with realism because he abandons the naturalistic level altogether."[6] The basic situations in his dramas are irrational fantasies, farsátiras, as Cuzzani calls them. The audience is not asked to view the situation as real or logical. Instead, the fantasies represent ideas, both visually and impressionistically. Due to his artistry, technique, and relevance, Cuzzani has come to be one of the outstanding Argentine dramatists of the present period.

Although Agustín Cuzzani was born on St. Augustine's Day, August 28, 1924, he points out that he was not named for the saint, but after his father, grandfather, and numerous other antecedents who were named Agustín. "Considero una gentileza del destino haberme puesto en el mundo el mismo día de mi obligatorio y prenatal nombre."[7] After graduating from the University of Buenos Aires with a Doctor of Law degree, he devoted himself entirely to a literary career. He wrote his first play, Dalilah, at the age of seventeen, and his first novel, Lluvia para Yosía, in 1946 at the age of twenty. Another novel, Las puertas del verano, followed in 1947. He published a collection of short stories, Los mundos absurdos, in 1949, many of which were successfully adapted for television. He again turned his attention to the theatre, and with

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[6] Ibid., p. 15.

[7] Cuzzani to author, July 25, 1973.

the presentation in 1954 of his first farsátira, Una libra de carne, he launched his successful career in the theatre. This initial success was followed by three other farsátiras, El centroforward murió al amanecer, 1955, Los indios estaban cabreros, 1957, and Sempronio, 1961. In 1965 he wrote the libretto for El Leñador, a ballet and pantomine presented in the Teatro Astral of Buenos Aires by the troupe of Otto Werburg. This same year saw the presentation of his deepest and most complex work to date, Para que se cumplan las escrituras. In 1970 his brief dramatic monologue, La Envidia, was presented, "integro el espectáculo 'Los siete Pecados Capitales,' en el cafe-concert, La Botica del Angel."[8] Cuzzani has recently written another play, which as yet has not been presented nor published. It is entitled Agamenon y las ubres, "en el mismo tono que las anteriores y en tren de componerse como ópera cantada y bailada."[9] He is presently working on another novel, Con los huevos en la incubadora.[10]

Cuzzani's plays, and in particular El centroforward murió al amanecer, have enjoyed great popularity outside of Argentina, having been performed in the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Cuba, Mexico, the United States, Canary Islands, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Switzerland, East and West Germany, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, the Soviet Union, Outer Mongolia, China, Japan, North Viet Nam, Algeria, Turkey, and Australia.[11]

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

Cuzzani's use of existential themes of alienation and of man caught up in the technological-industrial society are timely, and address the problems of contemporary man. Throughout his works Cuzzani portrays a society insensitive to the needs of man, together with the dehumanizing effects of modern technology. Angela Blanco Amores de Pagella makes the following observation on the development of this theme in the new Argentine theatre:

> Una civilización mecanizada, producto del adelantado deshumanizado de la técnica, y una esperanza en los postulados revolucionarios sociales, dejan en la post-guerra un cauce abierto para la rebelión de los espíritus. La máquina, monstruo moderno, crea nuevos problemos al hombre. Y el arte recoge en el grito del hombre que clama por su destino de hombre, un tema nuevo.[12]

Cuzzani uses dramatic technique together with structure and characterizations to reinforce his themes. In so doing he borrows many techniques from the German expressionists. Thus visual and auditory imagery serve to stress the central idea of the plays. This idea or impression is the focal point of Cuzzani's works, with the action being subordinate to the theme.

Cuzzani emerged as a dramatist in 1954 with the presentation of his first farsátira, Una libra de carne. From 1950-1955 he was part of a movement that witnessed a maturation of new advances in interpretation: This group also aided in the formation of a new theatrical conscience wherein the realistic-naturalistic feeling of the preceding generations gave way to a drama filled with scenic metaphors and plastic suggestions, resembling expressionism and European vanguardism.[13]

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[12]Angela Blanco Amores de Pagella, Nuevos temas en el teatro argentino (Buenos Aires: Editorial Huemul, S. A., 1964), pp. 101-102.

[13]Castagnino, op. cit., p. 437.

Cuzzani was also an important member of the independent theatre movement which regained prominence in 1955.[14] The philosophy of Cuzzani and other members of the resurgent teatro independiente movement closely follows that of the earlier group whose spokesman was Leónidas Barletta. In an article in Conducta, the official organ of the Teatro del Pueblo, Barletta discussed the theatre's mission, deploring the moral conditions of the Argentine masses at that time, citing their brutality, their lack of respect, discipline, and dignity, and their complete abandonment to their passions and material appetite. He saw these as manifestations of a lack of cultural and spiritual values, and in his opinion the solution lay in bringing these values to the people.

> El problema así planteado adquiría una insospechada dramaticidad. De todos los géneros, el más directo, el más eficaz, era el teatro. Después de los dos o tres grados primarios, la única posibilidad de instrucción y educación de la casi totalidad de la población que trabaja, no podía venir más que del teatro. El teatro es el único arte que puedo servir directamente la necesidad de vida espiritual de un pueblo.[15]

Cuzzani and the new generation of writers who emerged following the Second World War found themselves in the position of innovators. As a result of the War, the number of works in the repertoire of the Argentine theatre had diminished. Moreover, the popular forms of the sainete and the comedia costumbrista had already fallen into oblivion. As a result many dramatists were involved in starting new theatres, and in 1951 Cuzzani became one of the founders of the Teatro Popular Independiente Fray Mocho.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] José Marial, El teatro independiente (Buenos Aires: Alpe, 1955), pp. 71-72.

The military coup of June 4, 1953, followed by the advent of the Perón regime, served to stimulate the growth of the independent theatre movement. As had been the case in the days of Uriburu when the lack of opportunity for freedom of speech led to the formation of the first independent theatre groups for the purpose of utilizing the stage as a platform for expression, so it was in the days of his junior associate. Thus the Perón government's imposition of censorship diminished the quality of commercial theatre presentations, rapidly transforming the Argentine scene into "un adecuado invernáculo para comedias construídas sobre la base de las recetas dramáticas de los espectáculos que triunfaban en Broadway."[16]

During this period the independent theatre groups were semiclandestine and labored in silence. They were sometimes persecuted or even crushed by the ruling political regime.[17] With the fall of the Perón government in September, 1955, the teatro independiente fully emerged, bringing with it to the Argentine stage new criteria and new intentions. These groups were not committed to entertainment and to economic success. Rather they wanted to confront the country with an image of itself, searching for a universal theme that could be adapted to the Argentine scene.[18]

Osvaldo Dragún describes some of the achievements of the independientes:

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[16]Omar del Carlo, "El teatro argentino y sus autores," Cuadernos del Congreso por la libertad de la cultura, No. 76 (September, 1963), p. 44.

[17]Castagnino, op. cit., p. 437.

[18]del Carlo, op. cit., p. 44.

> Through the combined efforts of actors, directors, scenario writers, set designers, and conscientious citizens a lot has already been accomplished. Sometimes as many as a hundred thousand persons see a play by Cuzzani, Gorostiza or Lazarraga in a single season. A whole new generation of authors illustrates the commitment of the intellectual to the life of his country. There is direct contact with a socially conditioned public which demands that the artist share the problems and situations of his time.
>
> Even the newer professional theatrical companies have come under the influence of the independent theatre and now adopt plays that until a few years ago, only the latter could stage.[19]

Cuzzani, along with other playwrights of the independent movement, emphasized artistic elements and development of new techniques. The establishment of the Di Tella Institute in 1958 "to patronize the fine arts and foster sociological investigations"[20] further encouraged experimentation. The Institute became a center of vanguardistic currents, fostering new ideas, trying out such methods as the adaptation of audio-visual phenomena to the stage.

These ideas spread to other theatrical groups prominent by the mid-sixties, including the Recova Theatre and the Teatro Nacional, as well as the group of dramatists who comprised the movement known as the teatro nuevo to which Cuzzani belonged. The Recova group experimented a great deal in technique, but did not have the intellectual preoccupations of the Di Tella Center, taking no sociological or ideological stance. This group wrote, directed, and performed its works collectively. Its main goal was to establish direct communication with the audience.

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[19]Anton Arrufat, "An Interview on the Theater in Cuba and in Latin America," Odyssey, Vol. II, No. 4 (1961), p. 249.

[20]Virginia Ramos Foster, "The Buenos Aires Theatre 1966-67," Latin American Theatre Review, Vol. I, No. 2 (Spring, 1968), p. 54.

The Teatro Nacional, a more traditional group, presented many works by the old Argentine masters, such as Samuel Eichelbaum, Conrado Nalé Roxlo, and Armando Discépolo. The younger writers of this group engaged in the género chico criollo, relying on this popular older form to present costumbrista pieces which reflected the immediate reality of society. In the longer plays, the tradition of comedy was prominent, and in the forefront of this tradition were Ricardo Telesnik and Oscar Viale. Viale, in his satire, El grito pelado, tried to capture the authentic argentinidad.[21]

Cuzzani and other young dramatists who were politically and socially engagés comprised the teatro nuevo. This group searched for a creative type of communication and often found inspiration in myth or actual reality which they "transformed into concrete and meaningful plots."[22] They believed social, political, and aesthetic problems were closely related. Such commitment was not new to the Argentine theatre. From the dawn of the national drama it had remained faithful to the theme of the denunciation of social injustice which oppressed man and at times destroyed him.[23] When José María Gutiérrez wrote Juan Moreira, he fixed not only on the psychology of a character, but also established the circumstances by which that character was transformed into an archtype due to his encounter with a determined social structure.[24] While

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[21] Ibid., p. 57.

[22] Ibid., p. 59.

[23] Ibid.

[24] del Carlo, op. cit., p. 45.

a great chasm separates Juan Moreira from the later works of the realistic school, still the spirit of denunciation is exactly the same.[25]

The social criticism in the works of Cuzzani and other dramatists of the teatro nuevo far surpasses the mere description authors of the past presented. Theirs is a theatre eminently political, which at times almost becomes an instrument of combat. The aesthetics of the German dramatist Bertolt Brecht influenced the social and political commitment of this group to some degree. As Del Carlo points out, "Su /Brecht/ influencia sobre los más jóvenes autores de izquierda resulta patente, no sólo porque los planteos teatrales se harán a la exclusiva luz de la concepción marxista de la realidad, sino porque se pretenderá crear en el espectador efectos similares a los que se propone Brecht."[26] Prominent members of this group, in addition to Cuzzani, include: Carlos Gorostiza, Abelardo Castillo, Roberto Cossa, Osvaldo Dragún, and Andres Lizarraga.[27]

Although the 1966-67 season seemed promising for the continued growth of the Argentine theatre, subsequent events were to produce once again a period of decline. During 1968 a group of avant-garde artists emerged and separated themselves from the Di Tella Institute. They began a series of discussions "about the possibility of creating a movement which would carry out the role which every avant-garde should play: solvent of the ethics and aesthetics of our society, an irritant which can't

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[25] Ibid. [26] Ibid.

[27] Foster, op. cit., p. 59; del Carlo, op. cit., p. 45; Castagnino, op. cit., pp. 448-49.

be absorbed by the chic or the institutional."[28] In May, 1968 the group made its first public collective statement during Experiences 68, held at the Di Tella Institute. The avant-garde artists objected to the role which had been assigned to them within the official framework of the Institute, as being wearisome and trite. In their opinion the works being presented reflected that banality, and the Rosario artists' unit took it upon itself to expunge the offending plays bodily, tearing them up and throwing them into the street. The melee ended in the conditional arrest of the participants and the imposition of a $300 fine which the Rosario group paid to Di Tella.[29]

In August of the same year the vanguard artists held their first large organizational meeting to draw up a program of political and cultural action. The resulting propaganda action campaigns brought about police intervention which led the artists to reconsider their methods and to adopt plans clearly within the legal framework, while making certain that work of a clandestine nature would be such as would be difficult to suppress.[30]

The avant-garde found justification for a subversive art in the ruling regime's repression of artists. "For besides the repression implicit in the censorship of books and films, the closing of exhibitions and theatres, there is the other permanent repression. It is found in the form art assumes these days: an elegant consumer item for a particular class."[31]

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[28]"Argentine Subversive Art," The Drama Review, Vol. 14 (Winter, 1970), p. 98.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., pp. 99-100.

[31]Ibid., p. 101.

The Di Tella Institute which had received such harsh criticism from this politically-committed body for its cultural centralization and its lack of social and political motivation, also fell victim to government censorship, and the closing of the cultural activities of the Institute during the winter of 1971 had a dampening effect on the Argentine theatre.[32] The development of a truly sophisticated cinema which tended to divert attention from the stage further hampered the theatre.[33]

Cuzzani's works avoid the pitfalls of the new theatre that have also contributed to the present decline. These include carrying innovations to such extremes, and being so far removed from traditional drama as to alienate a large segment of the theatre-going public. Some of these techniques consist of audience participation, extemporization, and the use of mixed media.[34] While Cuzzani employs novelty in his plays, he avoids the extremism that detracts from some works. This is also true of his political commitment which, though apparent does not disintegrate into mere propaganda, a defect of some that has also detracted from theatrical attendance. Cuzzani sums up the situation of the Argentine theatre by the summer of 1973:

> Actualmente, el teatro en Buenos Aires atraviesa un período de desorientación y falta de público. Los motivos son múltiples pero compartidos por muchos centros teatrales del mundo.[35]

One of the problems facing the present-day Argentine dramatist, as well as those throughout Latin America, is that of creating a theatre

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[32]Virginia Ramos Foster, "Theatre of Dissent: Three Young Argentine Playwrights," Latin American Theatre Review, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring, 1971), pp. 45-46.

[33]Ibid., p. 45. [34]Ibid.

[35]Agustín Cuzzani to author, July 25, 1973.

which "authentically reflects national realities."[36] Cuzzani follows the trend of Argentine drama to reflect the socio-economic conditions of the country. Throughout its long history the Argentine theatre has mirrored certain realities of Argentine society, beginning with the dawn of criollo costumbrismo in El amor de la estanciera. While the methods of this portrayal have undergone progressive renovation in keeping with the artistic currents of the time, the basic concern has remained. The didactic tendency so evident in Cuzzani's works, has pervaded the entire gamut of dramatic types and movements. Thus Cuzzani and other contemporary Argentine playwrights are as concerned with problems facing the Argentine society as were the early thesis dramatists. The main difference lies in the problems themselves.

During the early days of the twentieth century Argentina was concerned with problems of growth and development, problems peculiar to her geography, history, and culture. The rapid scientific and technological progress of the last quarter of a century has served to make Argentina an integral part of the shrinking world community with problems which, though personal and national, are at the same time universal. This cosmopolitizing effect, most apparent in Cuzzani's palys, has not diminished the drama's relevance to everyday Argentine life, but on the contrary has expanded it to encompass all mankind. Thus it is at the same time exclusive and inclusive.

Borges sees in this cosmopolitanism and lack of local color of current Argentine literature, the authentic Argentina. He finds the

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[36]Foster, "Theatre of Dissent," p. 45.

validity of the Koran in the absence of camels, a fact which to him proves it to be Arabian. ". . .Mohammed, as an Arab, was calm, he knew he could be an Arab without camels. I believe that we Argentines bear some resemblance to Mohammed. We can believe in the possibility of being Argentines without abounding in local color."[37]

Cuzzani's plays reflect the spirit of Argentina which breathes in the works of her dramatists from the early days of her national theatre throughout its arduous, and at times glorious history. While the Argentine theatre has undergone several periods of decline, its vital spirit, like the mythological phoenix, has always risen from the ashes of decadence to achieve new heights in artistic creation. Cuzzani's dramas form a vital part of the most recent upsurge of the theatre in the fifties and sixties, following the period of stagnation brought about by World War II.

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[37]Jorge Luis Borges, "The Argentine Writer and Tradition," Odyssey, Vol. I (December, 1961), p. 37.

CHAPTER II

THEMES

An important current in the contemporary Argentine drama is a political theatre which denounces not only injustice but also all the moral vices attributed to the social scheme.[1] One of the major representatives of this new, socially compromised drama is Agustín Cuzzani.[2] He adopted the style of the farce as a vehicle for his ideas, adding to it his own innovations and thus arriving at a form which he calls the farsátira.

Thematically the farsátiras adhere to many of the concepts of the theatre of the absurd which rejects preoccupation with personal problems in favor of criticism of an unauthentic petty society.[3] In his play, Una libra de Carne, Cuzzani renews an old literary theme which had already appeared in the Gesta Romanorum and in the fourteenth century

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[1]Omar del Carlo, "El teatro argentino y sus autores," Cuadernos del Congreso por la libertad de la cultura, No. 76 (September, 1963), pp. 44-45.

[2]Raul Castagnino, "Tendencias actuales del teatro argentino," Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía, Vol. 20 (1970), p. 448.

[3]Martin Esslin, Theatre of the Absurd (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961), pp. 278, 292.

novel Il Pecorone of Fiorentino,[4] and perhaps is best remembered in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice. While the theme of usury is present in both Shakespeare's and Cuzzani's works, in the latter if figures as only one of a series of social ills.

In his farsátiras Cuzzani employs a visual and expressionistic presentation of the theme which he calls the "situación-espectáculo."[5] In Una libra de carne the central idea is introduced graphically with the arrival on stage of the main character, Elías Beluver, in a circus cage. This vivid and rather shocking entrance serves to make the audience aware of the character's dehumanized condition. His treatment parallels that of a wild animal, and the spectators on stage view him in much the same manner as they would the lion or tiger at a circus. The visual imagery says a great deal about the human condition without the need for words.

From this point of impact on, the play proceeds to examine this condition, probing the causes, and employing visual imagery as well as dialogue. The dehumanizing results of a technologically advanced society are illustrated in various ways. The regimentation of the clock shows how time itself has become an oppressor. The tyranny of the alarm clock is relentless. The simple, everyday fact of life that the clock has awakened Beluver at 5:30 a.m. every working day for eighteen years becomes almost unbearable. The subsequent bus ride to work is another common event with which the audience can easily empathize. The

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[4]del Carlo, op. cit., pp. 685-686.

[5]Agustín Cuzzani, "Balance y confidencia del autor," Teatro de Agustín Cuzzani (hereafter referred to as T.A.C.) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quetzal, 1960), p. 11.

bus is representative of machines which operate without concern for individual needs, and such simple details as reference to buses being late reveal the frustration of man dealing with them.

OTRO. -- ¿Y si dijéramos que el ómnibus venía atrasado?

OTRO. -- ¡Nunca! ¡Eso nunca!

UNO. -- ¡Eso no lo cree ningún patrón![6]

Cuzzani portrays the discomfort of the bus ride itself by showing the passengers hanging on to imaginary straps with one hand, trying to read a newspaper with the other, swaying back and forth with the motion of the bus.

Beluver's day at the office presents a picture of long hours of monotonous work. He has arrived a few minutes late due to the bus's tardiness, but his employer is not sympathetic, for after all there were earlier buses. He receives a lecture on the sin of laziness, during which he continues working diligently. His boss, don Bonifacio, tends to oversimplification, representing the all too prevalent viewpoint that people are poor because they are lazy.

> DON BONIFACIO. -- ... Por culpa de la molicie se han arruinado muchos hombres. ¡Míreme a mí! (Beluver vuelve a su trabajo.) Yo no sería nadie si me hubiera entregado a la molicie. Toda mi fortuna, todo lo que tengo, mis bienes, mis dineros, todo se lo debo al simple hecho de haberme levantado siempre diez minutos antes de lo necesario. Así es como se hace una fortuna. Yo estoy convencido que si todos los empleados se levantarán diez minutos antes, pronto serían patrones.[7]

Beluver works steadily with only a short time off for lunch. As soon as he completes one pile of work, another appears on his desk.

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[6]Cuzzani, "Una libra de carne," T.A.C., p. 36.

[7]Ibid., p. 38.

He does not look up until time to leave. Then as he puts on his hat and coat to depart, his employer again reprimands him for his indolence.

> DON BONIFACIO. -- No desperdicia el tiempo Beluver. Ni bien suena la campana huye del trabajo como si fuera pestilencia. Claro, a usted no le importa la prosperidad de sus patrones que le están matando el hambre desde hace tanto tiempo. ¡Ese es su agradecimiento! En lugar de aprovechar mis buenos consejos, se entrega usted a todas las formas conocidas de molicie.[8]

The fact that this day is representative of all Beluver's working days for the past eighteen years leaves the impression of routine-oriented, automatized man with little or no individualism remaining. His daily life, which represents that of millions, is unrewarding. He rises early, works long hours, arrives home late after a long bus ride, goes to bed, only to start all over again the next day. His sole recreation consists in reading the newspaper on the way to and from work.

A corollary theme in Una libra de carne is the decadence of bourgeois society which because of its indifference sacrifices the most helpless segment of humanity.[9] Cuzzani presents this idea both directly and indirectly, first with Beluver's actual contacts with various elements of society, and secondly with the reactions of the different groups to his trial. The indifference to human suffering is more subtle in the first instance. Here there is a pretended façade of concern, but the concern is not genuine because it is never aimed at the source of the problem. Thus when Beluver is striken ill and finds that his condition is a result of writing gothic letters, his employer is very sympathetic, but not to

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[8] Ibid., p. 40.

[9] del Carlo, op. cit., p. 45.

the point of changing the style of the company's lettering: "Nosotros no podemos, desgraciadamente, variar nuestras normas de trabajo. Y la letra gótica nos es imprescindible para la presentación y pulcritud de nuestros libros de comercio."[10] However, he very generously offers to accept Beluver's resignation and to give him a letter of recommendation. This is his reward for eighteen years of faithful service.

Beluver succeeds in finding another job, but at a lower salary because of his advanced age and precarious state of health. His second employers feel very self-righteous in giving him a position, but not enough to give him a decent wage. They consider themselves very liberal because they allow the use of any type of letter. "Aquí somos más liberales que su anterior patrón y no exigimos ningún tipo determinado de letra. Puede hacer la cursiva, la versalita, inglesa, caligráfica, la que quiera."[11] But they do make one stipulation, Their employees must all wear dark clothing. Beluver soon settles into the routine. However, events lead his new employers to believe that he lacks ambition because he is not young and full of initiative. "No me explico como a sus años puede estar usted depeniente de un miserable sueldo de hambre como son cuatrocientos ocho pesos."[12] It does not occur to the employers that they should be paying a living wage, but rather they feel there is something lacking in their employee. Otherwise, he would not be willing to work for such a meager salary.

When Beluver's ailment returns, this time caused by wearing dark clothing, he finds himself again without a job, for his liberal employers

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[10]Cuzzani, "Una libra de carne," T.A.C., p. 43.

[11]Ibid., p. 44.

will not hear of his wearing anything else. His situation continues to deteriorate until he is finally compelled to seek a loan from Tomás Shylock García at an exhorbitant rate of interest, so that even though he borrowed only 550 pesos, with interest his debt accumulates to 4,213.14 pesos. The usury theme, though basic to the action, is not the main idea. Rather it is the indifference of society which has brought Beluver to this point and has necessitated his dealing with a man like Shylock García. While the debtor-creditor situation may appear somewhat exaggerated, the pitfall of buying on credit is very real for the average working man in an industrially advanced society, and, as in the case of Beluver, the poorer one's credit rating, the higher the rate of interest. Shylock García, although he feigns sympathy and concern for Beluver when he proposes to lend him the money, is absolutely ruthless and unsympathetic when it comes to collecting his debt plus interest.

The jurors and spectators at the trial offer a more direct commentary on society's reaction to human suffering. Various segments of society are represented in the courtroom which provides a vehicle for social criticism of these groups and their attitudes. The jury consists of a teacher, a medical assistant, a broker, a financier, a pensioner, and a housewife; and collectively their sympathy is with Shylock García who has been cheated out of his money by an irresponsible bad-debtor. Their reasons for condemning Beluver reveal their innate prejudices. The teacher condemns him because of what she considers his laziness and lack of initiative and economy. She believes his conviction will serve as an example to the young not to fall into those vices. The medical assistant finds Beluver guilty because he only went to the doctor when

he was gravely ill, whereas he should have gone before he became ill. For the broker, Beluver's sins were not using a ball-point pen, his wearing dark clothing, "que está en contra de las normas del 'Manual del Buen Empleado,'[13] and his chewing gum, which was the product of his last employer. The financier finds him guilty on the basis of logic:

> RENTISTA. -- ... Beluver fue libre de firmar o de no firmar el documento. Si firmó, eligió él libramente su destino. El artículo 1197 del Código Civil garantiza la libertad de contratar que es la base de nuestra civilización. El hombre ha nacido libre. En nombre de la libertad, pues, condenamos a Beluver.[14]

To the pensioner, the mere fact that public funds are being spent on the trial makes conviction an economic necessity; while to the housewife the basis for guilt is Beluver's treatment of his wife. In this manner the trial becomes a burlesque of justice.

Throughout the procedure one of the spectators, a little girl, adds to the feeling of callousness and the degradation of society. She wants to be entertained, and her idea of entertainment is to see a hanging. That such feelings should be prevalent in one so young certainly is a terrible condemnation of the society that has produced this manifestation.

The press also comes in for its share of criticism. The case in question is simply one for non-payment of a debt, but the reporter embellishes and distorts the story.

> LA PERIODISTA. -- ... Hola, sí, están ventilando el proceso a un tal (Oye.) Elías Beluver, que atacó a mano

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[13] Ibid., p. 57.

[14] Ibid., p. 58.

> armada a Tomasito García, un niño indefenso y le cortó una libra de carne...[15]

She does not remain in the courtroom throughout the whole trial, but returns at the end and asks one of the spectators if it is over yet. When she finds that it has ended, she calls in another story which is again a distortion of the truth:

> LA PERIODISTA. -- ¡Hola! Redacción. Sí hablo yo. Lo condenaron. Parece que todo fue por una mujer. Una tal Molicia o Molicie, no sé bien. Vos poné Molicia que queda mejor...[16]

The lawyers are also not without fault. The defense lawyer reveals to the prosecution his dislike for his client and his admiration for Don Shylock, who is a gentleman. The defense attorney states that he is defending Beluver against his will. On the other hand, the prosecuting attorney is sympathetic to the accused and does not particularly care for Shylock García. These personal feelings, however, do not interfere with the lawyers' presentations of their cases. Their sentiments are divorced from their work. "¡Nosotros somos técnicos! Ya lo dijo Cervantes: No meter pasión propia en pleito ajeno."[17]

The total effect of society on Beluver becomes evident when the pound of flesh is cut from him, and the spectators discover that it contains not a single drop of blood. Society has already squeezed him dry. The resultant bloodless man then is the epitome of the dehumanized man, and there is little hope for his recovery. Justice has been served, and

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[15] Ibid., p. 39.

[16] Ibid., p. 60.

[17] Ibid., p. 56.

there is no concern for the man himself. At the end of the play one of the spectators raises a cry of protest, which falls on deaf ears.

The theme of alienation permeates this drama. Like Mallea's Chávez, Beluver never utters a word. He communicates neither with his employers nor his wife. Their words to him are in the form of constant criticism and complaints. He shows no reactions nor emotions to all the things which befall him. He moves about with the precision of a machine. His alienation becomes worse when he has to quit work because of his health. He is almost in a catatonic state as he sits on his bed doing nothing. He does not even hear his wife talking to him.

The theme of dehumanization, so predominant in Una libra de carne, is also central in El centroforward murió al amanecer, but the latter shows a little more optimism. "El autor da a su obra una proyección universal hacia la busca de un mundo mejor a través de los heroes anónimos e ignorados que mueren al amanecer."[18] Whereas Elías Beluver had been crushed by society and was defeated from the start, Cacho Garibaldi, the Centerforward, refuses to accept the loss of his liberty and struggles to regain it. Although he is unsuccessful, it is the struggle in the existential sense that is important.

The situactión-espectáculo in El centroforward is the public auction where Lupus buys Garibaldi for one million seven hundred thousand pesos. This spectacle gives a graphic impression of the dehumanization of man as he is sold as a piece of merchandise, the auctioneer calling

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[18]Miguel Suárez Radillo, "Tema y problema en el teatro hispanoamericano," Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, Vol. 46, No. 138 (June, 1961), p. 398.

attention to the fine quality of his product:

> REMATADOR. -- ... ¡Observen bien esa estampa! Vean qué musculatura. ¡Qué vigor! Pueden mirar su dentadura sana, su cabellera abundante. Oportunidades como esta no se ven dos veces en un hall de ventas.[19]

The Centerforward has not been sold to another soccer team but to an eccentric millionaire, Lupus, for his private collection. Whereas some people collect stamps, coins, rocks, or other items, Lupus collects human beings. The name Lupus is in itself symbolic of the character as it means lobo or wolf. Lupus' unique collection is housed in a magnificent palace, surrounded by walls and guards. They have everything they want, plenty of food, excellent drinks, books, magazines, radio, television -- everything except their freedom. Although they are living in luxury, their initiative and individuality have been stifled. Their life is artificial, lacking reality, which to a degree, they are afraid to face. As in Una libra de carne, there is a commentary on the modern, mechanized world that has dehumanized man, but in El centroforward Cuzzani presents the opposite end of the economic scale with equally devastating results. Thus economic betterment does not lead to authenticity.

The ballerina Nora serves as one example of the unauthentic life. Before Lupus purchased her she was the primera bailarina of the Teatro Coliseo, and her legs were insured for two million pesos. She had a promising career ahead of her. However, as a part of Lupus' menagerie she has nothing to look forward to, and she is discouraged from dancing at all.

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[19]Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., p. 86.

> NORA. -- A veces bailo. A solas. Escondida. El señor Lupus no quiere que baile. Dice que podría lastimarme de veras. Además, cree que el ballet deforma las pantorrillas. Sólo me deja dar unos pasos cuando viene algún visitante distinguido.[20]

The members of the collection have accepted their loss of individual liberty. The Professor became part of the group because of a stomach ailment. The only effective remedy for him was a compound of bismuth. As Sr. Lupus wanted to acquire him, he bought up all the bismuth in the city. This necessitated the Professor's acceptance of Lupus' offer. In the case of Hamlet, he is content to play out the role of the Danish prince, thus rejecting the reality of his true existence. The unauthentic lives of these characters is quite similar to that of Carola and Elpidio in René Marqués's El apartamiento. Both plays show the sterile atmosphere of a society wherein the individual has all his physical needs provided but is a prisoner within himself because he has relinquished his identity. This seems strange to Garibaldi, who remarks, "Lo que me llama la atención es esa resignación, esa normalidad con que ustedes aceptan vivir aquí dentro. Sin salir, sin ver gentes ... Como prisioneros."[21]

The dehumanization theme is further illustrated by King Kong, who is part monkey and part man. His companions are not quite sure what he is.

> Cuando se fundió el circo, figuraba en el inventario como mono amaestrado. Lupus lo compró y lo trajo aquí. Ahora que, visto de cerca, más bien parece un hombre. Bueno ... no estamos muy seguros.[22]

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[20] Ibid., p. 98.

[21] Ibid., p. 100.

[22] Ibid., p. 99.

King Kong serves as a symbol of the human condition, part beast, part man, at times it is difficult to tell which. While the other characters appear more human on the surface than King Kong, they are in a way less authentic and more superficial, for circumstances have reduced them to the level of animals as well.

Garibaldi introduces the theme of the search for identity and authenticity. He is the only one of the group willing to face the unpleasant reality of their true condition. Such a realization is painful, but necessary, in order to become an authentic person. In the third act he becomes aware of the truth and states to Nora:

> GARIBALDI. -- ... Ya he soportado demasiado. Me han dolido hasta los recuerdos más insignificantes. He aprendido más de la vida en estos días que en todos los años vividos hasta ahora. Y he aprendido que solamente libre vale la pena la vida ...[23]

Once he has arrived at this realization, he makes a choice in the true existential sense. He chooses to attempt an escape, a virtually impossible feat. Despite the odds and the consequences of failure, Garibaldi feels compelled to struggle against the inevitable. In his attempt to escape, he kills Lupus and is in turn sentenced to die at dawn. But even in death Garibaldi the man has triumphed for he has found his authentic self and become a unified being. He recognizes the importance of the struggle, and it is that struggle which gives meaning to life. In a final soliloquy he says:

> GARIBALDI. -- No. Yo no voy a morir. Esto ... también esparte de la vida. Pueden ahogar mi voz y castigar mi cuerpo. Eso también es vida. Yo ... soy un hombre.

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[23] Ibid., p. 105.

> He tenido que sufrir mucho para comprenderlo. Pero ahora sé que no estoy sólo. En cada barrio, en cada rincón de la ciudad enorme, en todas partes donde se sufre y se comprende, hay hombres como yo. Y entonces no importa que haya lobos que quieran comprar la sangre y se apoderan de la alegría y la felicidad del hombre. Yo he luchado.[24]

There are other more direct themes of social criticism in this play. Certainly materialism, which Lupus represents, appears throughout the work. However, the acquisition of each addition to the collection of homo-sapiens was also the result of materialism on the part of the seller. Garibaldi's club is in financial difficulty as is the ballerina's empresario. The author does not explain the reasons for the sale of Hamlet and King Kong, but does state that their cases are similar. Only in the case of the Professor is money not a consideration.

The last scene emphasizes materialism in the form of commercialism when the presentation of the execution takes the form of a television program complete with an announcer and sponsors. The Cannis Company commercial which Sr. and Sra. Cannis deliver in person is a definite criticism of yankee commercial imperialism wherein the business-minded North-Americans lose no opportunity to sell their products, even at a public hanging.

The search for identity becomes a more prominent theme in Los indios estaban cabreros. This play is set in 1491 with a change from the emphasis on the effects of an industrial society on man to the more philosophical and psychological yearnings of mankind. The underlying idea is a fantasy encompassing a reversal of historic events which seems

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[24] Ibid., p. 112.

perfectly logical to the author. A trip by American Indians to Spain at the time the Spaniards were planning their journey to America, "resultaba lo más armónico, lógico y natural, si arrancamos de muy antiguas leyendas y mitologías hebreas, egipcias, babilónicas, griegas, así como aztecas, mayas, toltecas o de todo el nahuac."[25] The Indians sail east in the hope of finding the Sun God and seeking his help against the tyranny of the dictator Axayaca. Prince Tupa has organized eight unsuccessful revolutions. He believes that he has failed each time, and will continue to do so, because the priests have deceived the Sun-God. Although the success of his mission is uncertain, it is his action in undertaking the search that really matters. As his friend Tonatio says "O llegas al Sol y cuentas con la ayuda de un Dios, o tú mismo te vuelves un Dios para la gente. Un Dios de la Esperanza."[26] As Tupa and his two companions, Tonatio and Teuche, prepare to set sail, the people gather round and present their petitions to the Sun-God. They want rain for their crops, more fish near the coast, their husbands home from the wars, spouses for their daughters, peace for all, and "que todo sea amor!"[27]

It is of course ironic that the Indians seek to find paradise and the solution to all their problems in a land to the east across the ocean, only to arrive in Spain; whereas the Spaniards set sail for the west in hopes of finding el dorado, the fountain of youth, fame and fortune. The fact that the Indians succeed in establishing roots in Spain,

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[25]Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," "Epílogo para críticos y bachilleres," T.A.C., p. 179.

[26]Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 136.

[27]Ibid., p. 138.

and the Spaniards, roots in America, shows an intertwining of the two races and civilizations which will never again be separable into distinct parts. Cuzzani does not hesitate to show the negative side of the Spanish heritage, but the aspects of the Indian civilization he presents in the first act are equally negative. In fact, it was these very conditions which led Prince Tupa to seek a new and better world. What Cuzzani seems to be pointing out is that negative conditions exist in all societies, but the enlightened man does not accept this state of affairs as inevitable. Instead, he seeks to find a better way and struggles against staggering odds to bring about change for the better.

The negative conditions in the New World stemmed primarily from an oppressive dictatorship imposed by the emperor Axayaca. Cuzzani draws a striking parallel between the conditions under the emperor and those in Spain under Ferdinand and Isabel. In the Imperio de Tuasantisuya the people greatly fear the priests who hold the power of life and death over them. In the name of the Dios-Sol the priests burn thousands of innocent people to placate the god to whom they attribute everything, even though there may be more human causes.

MUJER I. -- Gran sacerdote ¿por qué sube el precio de la harina?

SACERDOTE. -- El Dios-Sol quiere que suba, mujer. (La mujer besa y se retira; avanza mujer segunda.)

MUJER II. -- Gran sacerdote ¿cuándo volverán mis hijos de la guerra?

SACERDOTE. -- El Sol quiere que luche por nuestro emperador mujer. (La mujer besa y se retira.)

MUJER III. -- (Avanzando) ¿Cuándo pondrán en libertad a mi marido, Gran sacerdote?

SACERDOTE. -- El Sol quiere que esté en el cepo.[28]

The power of the priesthood is equally strong in Spain where at this time the Inquisition is in full-swing, and as in the New World, people are being burned, not to please the gods, but for the more progressive reason of weeding out the heretics.

Another parallel involves freedom of speech. In Tuasantisuya Teuche is severely whipped for shouting, "Viva el Príncipe Tupa!" In Spain, Don Pero has been imprisoned for 374 years for shouting, "¡Muera el Rey!", and he does not remember which king. Both lands have police who share the same characteristics, which the Spanish policeman describes:

> POLICIA. -- ¿Dónde han visto a la policía explicar nada? Se les detiene y se acabó. La policia no da ninguna clase de satisfacciones. Obra sobre los efectos y no sobre las causas. Es el brazo que ejecuta. ¡Jamás la cabeza que piensa![29]

To the Indians the conditions in their homeland are characterized by hunger and beatings. At first Spain appears to them to be the land of milk and honey. The fisherman and his family make them very comfortable and feed them well. As Tonatio says, "El hambre lo estoy olvidando ... y te diré que a Axayaca un poquito también ... Esta tierra no es precisamente el Sol como tú esperabas ... pero tiene sus encantos ..."[30] However, they soon become disillusioned, and Tonatio sums up the similarities between the two lands. "¡Acaso el látigo no es igual aquí que allá? ¡Acaso la policía de aquí es mejor que la de allá? ¡Acaso los

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[28]Ibid., p. 132.

[29]Ibid., p. 149.

[30]Ibid., p. 147.

sacerdotes de aquí no terminan por mandarnos al fuego como los de allá?"[31]

The three Indians make a rather undignified entrance onto Spanish shores as a fisherman catches them in his net. The fisherman naturally assumes they are fish, although his wife is not so sure.

> MARIA. -- ¿Qué hacen en la red esos tres hombres? ¿Están muertos?
>
> MANUEL. -- (Ríe) Tranquilízate, mujer ... no son hombres ... son peces. Los pesqué yo mismo en esa red.
>
> MARIA. -- ¿Cómo peces? Si tienen manos y cara y ojos y pelo y ... ¡Válgame Dios! y ...
>
> MANUEL. -- Calla, mujer, que también les he mirado yo. Pero no pueden ser otra cosa que peces. Yo mismo les saqué de la mar ...[32]

Their arrival in the net is the <u>situación-espectáculo</u>. Once again there is the image of dehumanization, although in this instance there is not the appearance of the individual crushed by the technological advances of society. Here ignorance produces the dehumanization of the men, viewed as fish, not only by the fisherman and his associates, but also by the learned members of the clergy. The deliberations of the ecclesiastical council over the nature of the Indians to determine if they are men or fish, whether they have souls or not, parodies the historical debates over the same question. In fact, some of the historical statements appear even more ridiculous than those in the play. As Cuzzani points out,

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[31] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 157.

[32] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 142.

> ¿No fue Fráy Tomás Ortiz el que colocó poco después a los indios en la categoría de 'leños o bestias o piedras', sin alma inmortal? ¿No fue Celio Calcagnino quien dijo que a los indios era lícito cazarlos como fieras? ¿O Fráy Juán de Zapata que identifica a los indios con gentes de más allá de Etiopía? ¿O Fráy Gregorio García, que los coloca en la categoría de 'esclavos naturales'?"[33]

The anticipation here of historical facts introduces the theme of the leyenda negra which becomes an integral part of the dehumanization theme.

While the Spain of 1491 was by no means a model of an industrial society, it was certainly more technically advanced than the Americas. In fact, Prince Tupa saw in the knowledge and science in Spain the tools for his ninth revolution. This final revolution would alter the course of history and hold out hope for a better world. At first Tupa was aware only of the positive effects of such a revolution. While they are still with the fisherman's family he notes the advantages of Spanish civilization.

> TUPA. -- ¿Tú no has visto como trabajan la tierra estas gentes? ¿Has visto su pan? ¿Su vino? ¿Sus herramientas? ¿Has notado con que facilidad escriben y leen todo lo que quieren? Con lo poco que hemos podido conocer en este mes tengo para llevar a nuestra tierra una revolución mucho más profunda que todo lo que hicimos hasta ahora.[34]

When Tupa first encounters his learned cellmates in the prison of Granada, he is again impressed with the advantages of an intellectual and technological revolution.

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[33]Cuzzani, "Epílogo para críticos y bachilleres," T.A.C., p. 183.

[34]Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 147.

> TUPA. -- ... En esta carcel está reunido todo lo que significa mi verdadera revolución. La ciencia, la sabiduría, los miles años de adelanto. Yo quiero llevar todo eso a mi tierra. Herramientas, ciencias, técnicas, arte! No habŕá dictaduras cuando todo eso se difunde.[35]

With the stage set for the impending revolution of the future, the visual image of the Indians caught in the fishing net takes on a double meaning. While neither the advanced civilization of Spain, nor the advanced technological society of the future has as yet dehumanized the trio, the graphic tableau of degradation prognosticates things to come. Those later events include the destruction of the Indian civilization and the enslavement of the Indians on one level, and the eventual loss of identity and individuality due to advanced technology and industrialization, on the other. The author is thus employing the concept which Toffler labels a time skip to bring past, present, and future events together and thereby flatten out time. According to Toffler,

> not only do contemporary events radiate instantaneously -- now we can be said to be feeling the impact of all past events in a new way. For the past is doubling back on us. We are caught in what might be called a 'time skip.' . . . An event that affected only a handful of people at the time of its occurence in the past can have large-scale consequences today. . .Whatever happened to some men in the past affects virtually all men today.[36]

When the prisoners learn that Queen Isabel has decided to provide them with ships for their return to Mexico, they are elated. Prince Tupa believes that his next revolution is about to begin. He will return to fulfill the dreams of Quetzaocoatl. Don Pero dampens his enthusiasm

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[35] Ibid., p. 160.

[36] Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), pp. 16-17.

when he reminds him that the Queen is involved in the project, and consequently, the price of the revolution will be high.

TUPA -- Ella nos dará barcos ...

DON PERO -- ¡Os dará! ¡Es una forma de decir! Esos hombres que van en los barcos con vosotros ... llevarán espadas, armas, cañones, y toda clase de arreos de guerra. Irán a la conquista de vuestros reinos y al saqueo de vuestros pueblos. Matarán y matarán, millones de indios! ¡Y no faltarán tribunales que digan que no tenéis alma inmortal! ¡Que sois animales o pescados o cualquier otra clase de combustibles![37]

Here again is the presentation of the black side of the Spanish conquest. But it is not that simple, for the conquest has its positive side as well. When Tupa asks the Spaniards for their advice, they tell him the decision must be his, for they are also concerned about the fate of the Indians. However, Imperiale does point out, "¿O quieres que condenemos a la ignorancia voluntariamente todo un mundo?"[38] Tonatio does not see why Tupa is so concerned about the death of the Indians. After all, Tupa has led many of them to their deaths in the battles of his eight previous revolutions. Moreover, "Muchos más son los que mueren de hambre y de peste, que podrían evitarse llevando estos médicos y sabios."[39] Tupa is uncertain, and the question uppermost in his mind is whether his revolution will be stronger than the conquering sword, "¿Hay algo que se llama civilización más fuerte que algo que se llama patria?"[40]

While Tupa is weighing the advantages and disadvantages of bringing Spanish culture to the New World, Cristóbal Colón is anticipating

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[37]Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 168.

[38]Ibid., p. 170. [39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

what he will find by crossing the ocean to the west. He shares Tupa's dream, in reverse. He will sail towards the west until he reaches the home of God, whereupon he will tell Him of all "los infinitos males y miserias que sufren las gentes de este mundo ..."[41] This astonishes Tupa who hastens to point out to Colón the futility of such a hope, as he, Tupa, left the lands of the west, sailing east in search of God, arriving in Spain. To Colón this is only further proof of his theory, as Tupa surely did not find God in Spain.

There is an optimistic tone to the whole anticipated adventure, in spite of the knowledge of all the suffering that will accompany this cultural revolution. However, at the beginning of the second act there is a commentary on the type of civilization which will eventually develop out of the blending of the two civilizations, and it strikes a somewhat ironic note. The prisoners are watching events in a crystal-ball, events that will take place within five centuries. The spectacle upon which their eyes are focused is a soccer game, and each one is cheering for his team. The three Indians do not quite understand their companions' interest in the football game, or exactly what it is. Don Ciro acknowledges that they don't completely understand it either, but they are trying to learn the game because,

> DON CIRO. -- ... Se llama football y parece ser la única ciencia y filosofía que se cultivará dentro de varios siglos. Debe ser muy importante. Apasiona a gobernantes y gobernados y como nosotros creemos en el futuro, pues ... tratamos de aprender football ... aunque es raro que Aristóteles ... tan sabio como era, no lo incluye en sus tratadas ...[42]

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[41] Ibid., p. 173.

[42] Ibid., p. 158.

Notwithstanding the negative aspects of the future, there is present within both the Indian and the Spaniard the spirit of progress and of rebellion against tyranny. Spain's contribution to progress and civilization also encompasses the contributions of the Arabs and the Jews, as represented by two of the prisoners. America is thus the beneficiary of the best of three cultures, the Indian, the European, and the Middle Eastern.

Prince Tupa and Don Pero decide not to go to America with the rest, but to remain in prison, Tupa waiting to be put to death, and Don Pero to continue shouting, "Muera el Rey!" Cuzzani sees his final scene as representing lo americano, and thus defining the identity of the American.[43] In the final action, Don Pero carves the word Tlausicalpán, meaning dawn, on the wall with a nail. "Que extraño que sonidos tan diferentes el tuyo y el mío sirvan para designar la misma cosa."[44] Here Cuzzani shows the Spaniard and the Indian in harmony with common objectives and a common spirit.

In Cuzzani's next play, Sempronio, the dehumanization theme is again prominent. In this play the interests of the State take away man's liberty and reduce him to the role of a machine. Sempronio, a retired middle-class worker, has become radioactive by pasting Japanese stamps from Hiroshima and Nagasake in an album. The authorities have discovered the presence of radioactivity in one of the barrios of Buenos Aires, and set out to find the source. What they find is Sempronio, with various

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[43]Cuzzani, "Epílogo ...," T.A.C., p. 183.

[44]Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 146.

electrical gadgets connected to him, such as the radio and the iron, which are operating off his current. As natural resources are the property of the State, the High Commissioner of the Atomic Energy Commission appropriates Sempronio as the property of the nation. When his wife Olga protests that he is not a piece of property but her husband, the Commissioner recites the family members' infractions of the law.

> ALTISIMO COMISIONADO. -- ... Todos ustedes han estado abusando sin permiso de la corriente de esta pila atómica, propiedad inalienable, imprescriptible e intransferible de la Nación ...[45]

The Commissioner proposes to take Sempronio to an ultrasecret place to protect him from enemy spies. When the family asks when they can see him, the reply is a further indication of Sempronio's dehumanization, and his predicament is reminiscent of that of Garibaldi in Lupus' palace.

> ALTISIMO COMISIONADO. -- Es muy difícil. Tal vez para fin de año, organicemos una exposición de nuestros más modernos materiales y artefactos nucleares. A lo mejor exhibimos también al señor.[46]

The Commissioner asks the family not to make his task more difficult. Instead, they should practice self-denial for the good of the State. In the meantime, he gives Olga a temporary receipt for her husband. Sempronio is taken away and is next seen is a cell where he is virtually a prisoner. The cell contains little furniture and a window with bars. He has nothing to do, no one to talk to, and no one has explained anything to him. Finally, the Commissioner arrives with good news -- Sempronio is no longer a man, but a number.

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[45] Cuzzani, "Sempronio," T.A.C., p. 203.

[46] Ibid.

ALTISIMO COMISIONADO. -- Es decir ... nosotros buscábamos una fuente radioactiva. No un hombre. El expediente ordenaba secuestrar toda máquina, yacimiento, artefacto o bomba que produjera radioactividad. Hubo que hacer una serie de trámites para transformar a usted en un artefacto. Pero felizmente usted ya no es un hombre. Es el Elemento S.P. 49 H 321 V 60 ... [47]

The similarity of this situation to that of man in the highly centralized, computorized, modern technological society can hardly be overlooked. Cuzzani seems to be showing that every day man is losing more and more of his individuality as his transactions are increasingly reduced to numbers. Now that Sempronio is a number instead of a man, he can go to work, another satiric comment on modern society which demands that one have a number before one is allowed to work. Sempronio is not overjoyed by this news as he does not feel that he has been as useless as the Commissioner believes.

When the Commissioner has Sempronio connected to an explosive charge which he is to detonate in a test, there is a malfunction and nothing happens. The Commissioner's solution to the problem is to call in mechanics to repair Sempronio, which serves to emphasize again his degradation. He is considered to function more as a machine than as a man. In fact, the Commissioner's whole attitude in this situation shows that he sees little difference between men and machines. Government bureaucracy has dehumanized not only Sempronio, but man in general.

ALTISIMO COMISIONADO. -- ... Ellos son buenos mecánicos. Además, si yo les doy una orden, tendrán que cumplirla. El mundo está organizado así. No se discute con las licuadoras o con las máquinas de afeitar. Se las repara ... ¡Yo soy el que da las órdenes! A los hombres

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[47] Ibid., p. 209.

y a las cosas. Les digo: ¡Funcionad! ¡Y ellos, a Funcionar![48]

On the other hand, if it should develop that Sempronio cannot be repaired, the Commissioner has no thought of letting him go. "Si a nosotros no nos sirve para nada, podemos venderlo a algún país más subdesarrollado que nosotros, para su reequipamiento!"[49] This demonstrates forcefully Sempronio's loss of identity and control over his own destiny. To be more or less drafted into the service of the State against his wishes involves a loss of his individuality and free will, but to be sold as a piece of goods when he is of no more use to the State denotes a complete loss of self.

Fortunately for Sempronio, the High Commissioner does not have his way, and he is free to go. Upon returning home, the current comes back, and this time when the Commissioner wishes to reappropriate him, Sempronio refuses, asserting his independence. "Mi energía es mía, no del Estado."[50]

This is the most optimistic of all Cuzzani's plays, for here the attempt at dehumanization fails. The criticism of society is still forceful. Besides viewing the destructive effects of industrialization, Cuzzani raises the question of atomic energy and shows his concerns in this area. In this drama he is strongly advocating the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The State wished to utilize Sempronio's energy to make bombs, and consequently, to kill people and destroy

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[48] Ibid., p. 215.

[49] Ibid., p. 214.

[50] Ibid., p. 225.

cities. Because of the motivation, Sempronio was unable to produce the current desired of him.

Cuzzani uses this situation to convey the main theme of the play--love. In the context of this work, love is a creative spirit. Thus it is that in the first act Sempronio is seen at home with all kinds of electrical appliances attached to him for which he is supplying the power. He is operating the iron for his wife, a radio for his daughter, and boiling water for maté for his son. Besides supplying energy for the members of his family, whom he dearly loves, he also furnishes it to those who need it. For Sempronio his giving is a source of great happiness. It adds meaning and purpose to his life. Although he has retired, he does not want to be idle, and he freely provides his energy without charge.

> OLGA. -- No hables de desgastes, que va resultando un abuso eso que todos los días te aparezcas con un club nuevo o una calesita o un sindicato que necesitan corriente. Me pregunto que pasaría si decidimos cobrarles algo por conectar a tu padre.
>
> SEMPRONIO. -- ¡Cobrar! ¿Por qué cobrar? Si a mí no me cuesta nada. Al contrario, es una gran alegría sentirme unido por cables a tanta gente que trabaja, a tantos chicos que juegan ...[51]

In this statement Sempronio expresses the feeling of brotherhood.

Although Sempronio became radioactive after having had contact with a number of stamps from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he discovers the true source of his power when he is a prisoner of the High Commissioner. In prison they serve him a delicious diet of radioactive materials,

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[51] Ibid., pp. 195-196.

> ... Antipasto italiano, pickles ingelses y una salsita liviana de estampillas japonesas, ... Gulasch de ternera con papas en Brandeburgo y un licuado de camisetas de marineros japoneses enfermos de radioactividad ... Ensalada de berros frescos del río con tomates de Bulgaria y crema de las Actas de la Conferencia International del Desarme ... De fruta, granadas radioactivas del Sahara.[52]

However, despite the attempts to keep him radioactive, Sempronio loses his power and is unable to detonate the bomb. The Commissioner blames Sempronio for the failure, "¡Traidor! ¡Viejo embustero! ... ¡Usted no quiso dar corrientes!"[53], and in a way he is right. Sempronio has not consciously withheld his energy, but as it is love that is the real source of his power, it is impossible for him to supply energy for destructive purposes. The fact that the Commissioner inadvertently consumes a pie made of radioactive stamps, and Sempronio's wife deliberately eats large quantities of stamps from Japan with the hope of becoming radioactive, further reinforces this idea. Neither one has any undesired or desired results, for the necessary element of love is lacking. It is obvious that the Commissioner has no humanitarian qualities. And while Olga desires to become radioactive so she may be with her husband which is a form of love, it is love in a much narrower and more selfish sense. Her desire is not creative, but rather a result of loneliness.

When Sempronio finally returns home, he is depressed because without his source of power he feels useless.

> SEMPRONIO. -- Es que no quiero descansar. ¡Eso es como estar muerto! ¡No se imaginan que feliz era yo con mi corriente! ¡Hacer andar planchas, radios, fábricas, calesitas! ¿Ahora, que me queda? Pintar las

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[52] Ibid., p. 211.

[53] Ibid., p. 213.

> macetas, matar hormigas, arreglar el gallinero o sentarme a hablar de fechas y recuerdos en alguna plaza. Levantarme estúpidamente temprano ... Nadie se imagine lo que he perdido.[54]

But it is this very feeling of the need to be of service to his fellow man, this creative love, which once again produces the energy within Sempronio. He finally comes to realize the source of his power, and with this realization he is able to resist the Commissioner. The Commissioner is intent upon discovering Sempronic's secret, and he gladly obliges.

> SEMPRONIO. -- ¡No hay ningún secreto! ... Ustedes empezaron a pedirme energía para hacer bombas, matar gentes, destruír ciudades ... y la corriente desapareció solita ... y no hubo forma de producirla. Aquí, bastó que se tratara de usos pacíficos, rodeado por mi familia, y la corriente volvió ... La fuerza que me brota, que me surge, que se me derrama, no es sólo radioactividad. ...[55]

Sempronio reveals that he derives his power from love. This word is too much for the Commissioner, and as everyone begins to shout amor, he runs offstage holding his ears, a symbolic action again showing the power of love.

Cuzzani's four farsátiras form a thematically progressive unity. Una libra de carne presents man's dehumanized condition with little element of hope. While the hero of El centroforward murió al amanecer fares worse than Elías Beluver, he is not resigned to his fate, and thus the element of struggle appears. ending with a note of hope for a better tommorrow. The focus on social problems then proceeds to shift from a theoretical plane to revolutionary action in Los indios estaban cabreros,

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[54] Ibid., p. 221.

[55] Ibid., p. 225.

and hope has been replaced by the initiation of action which will have future repercussions. The ultimate triumph of man over his circumstances through the medium of love is the thematic conclusion the playwright reaches in Sempronio. The four plays all deal with man's condition and the dehumanizing effects of modern technological society, but progressively they demonstrate man's ability to struggle against blind forces, and in the end to overcome them.

With the publication of these four works in a single volume, Cuzzani saw that

> su escalonda producción había practicamente agotado un ciclo al que ya no fuera prudente agregar más obras y del que no resultarán necesarias insistencias de nuevas farsátiras ni repeticiones de sus contenidos.[56]

Thus he set out to find new directions, and his next work, though maintaining some of the elements of the farsátiras, such as ironic criticism and circumstantial deeds, "apenas bordea la farsa y nunca llega al grotesco."[57]

Para que se cumplan las escrituras is a complex drama with multi-level themes. At the base are social problems, such as the profit motive and the exploitation of capitalism. At the next level is the theological question of free-will versus predestination; while overshadowing all of these is the question of the essence of man and the problem of freedom and responsibility.

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[56]Agustín Cuzzani, "Prólogo continuo y sin pausa," Para que se cumplan las escrituras (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quetzal, 1965), p. 7.

[57]Hebe Campanella, "El hoy y el aquí en el teatro argentino de los últimos veinte años," Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, Vol. 78, No. 234 (June, 1969), p. 688.

Taken at its simplest level, this play once again emphasizes the dehumanization and exploitation of man by a technological society. Here it is the computer that threatens to reduce man to a mere puppet. This marvelous mass of levers, buttons, tubes, and cables is so exact in its calculations that it is able to predict the future precisely and without error. With the creation of this electronic brain, man becomes virtually obsolete. Another undesirable consequence of such a machine is its invasion of the individual's privacy, for it knows his most intimate thoughts before he thinks them.

The inventors of the infernal machine, Kery, Tomás, and Pedro, introduce the profit motive. They plan to enter the computer at the international science contest where the prize amounts to one million dollars. A dilemma arises when the computer predicts that they will turn it over to an unknown person to operate for them. Tomás objects, "No la entregaremos. ¡Es nuestra! Además, no estamos obligados. La máquina puede dar resultados estadísticos, cálculos numéricos, pero no puede obligarnos."[58] Although this is true, it is also ture, as Kery points out, that if they do not do as the machine predicts, they will prove its fallibility.

> KERY. -- ... Pero con nuestra conducta demostraremos que los resultados de la máquina son falsos. ¿Cobraría un premio en esas condiciones? Desde el mismo momento en que la computadora anuncie algo que no se cumpliera, dejará de ser eficaz y perfecta. Es decir, que habría fracasado.[59]

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[58] Cuzzani, Para que se cumplan las escrituras, p. 28.

[59] Ibid.

The profit motive again appears when the professors, Marcos, Juan, and Mateo learn of the machine's potentials. They envision great possibilities, such as a group of capitalists being able to control the world markets, and, through speculation, to dominate practically entire countries. Such prospects dazzle them, and they make an offer to the inventors.

> MARCOS. -- Bueno ... no cometeremos la torpeza de ofrecerles dinero por la computadora. Ustedes son hombres de ciencia y no comerciantes. ¡Pero ... los asociaremos a muy buen porcentaje!
>
> JUAN. -- Habría que dar aceso a nuestros secretos a un pequeño grupo de políticos amigos ...
>
> MARCOS. -- Y a ciertos grupos industriales. Y a algún general con influencia ...
>
> MATEO. -- Eso es hablar sensatamente. A ustedes, jóvenes, les correspondera un porcentaje de las utilidades. Lo que se llama un royalty.[60]

Kery is a little doubtful about the propriety of this on the part of the professors, but Mateo assures him that all activities are proper for a professor -- "toda actividad es compatible con los cargos universitarios."[61]

The theme of the exploitation of man by capitalism provides a bit of humor in a discussion between Marcos and Lucas. Marcos points out that the socialists predict that the greater the exploitation, the closer the revolution. But nevertheless, no one ceases to exploit, to which Lucas replies, " ... ¡Ese es el verdadero papel redentor del capitalismo! Explotan más para acelerar la revolución de los explotados!"[62]

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[60] Ibid., p. 65.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., p. 78.

On the theological plane, this drama concerns itself basically with the question of free-will versus predestination, and to a lesser extent with original sin. The play abounds with biblical allusions and references, at times bordering on allegory, and in a sense it is an allegory of the crucifixion of Christ. The character of Manuel, the itinerant carpenter, represents the Christ-figure; whereas the computer, shaped in the form of a cross is symbolic. Manuel's death, stretched out upon the machine thus provides a visual image of the crucifixion. The actions that occur throughout the play are also symbolic of the events that took place in the life of Christ. The students, Tomás, Pedro, and Kery, who are the inventors of the machine, represent the apostles, with Kery symbolizing Judas Iscariot. The characters Mateo, Marcos, Lucas, and Juan portray the four evangelists. Thus the names of the characters are significant for their connotations, and reinforce the religious theme.

At this level the machine becomes first a prophet, referred to as Isaías, and later almost a God-figure, bearing the name of the other Manuel, for in being able to accurately predict the future, it has become as a god. A debate centers around whether this is desirable or not. Juan views it as the work of the Devil.

> JUAN. -- ... esa máquina profeta, en realidad, es fruto de las ciencias, es decir, desciende de la rebeldía de Adán. Es una hija de la manzana del árbol prohibido. Son ... los nuevos dioses que prometió la serpiente![63]

The computer which has predicted that the inventors will entrust its operation to a stranger, also predicts that stranger's death. Kery,

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[63] Ibid., p. 79.

Tomás, and Pedro, complying with the prediction, turn the machine over to a wandering vagabond, Manuel, who does not accept the inevitability of his death. However, when Manuel pulls the main lever and prophesies appear for the redemption of mankind, he views the computer in an entirely different light. He knows the machine's predictions to be accurate. Thus if he is going to believe in the certainty of these benefits being bestowed on man, he must sublimate his own free-will to that of the machine. He refers to the computer as his brother, the other Manuel, in summing up the situation.

> MANUEL. -- ¡Te amo, Manuel! ¿Me oyes? Tal vez el triunfo será tuyo. Tal vez tu tengas razón y sea yo quien muera. Yo. ¡Manuel la marioneta! Sin corazón, sin voluntad. Simplemente un mecanismo, una máquina de ser feliz. Quizá tú me ordenes! ¡Manuel, redime a los hombres! ¡Muere para que todos sean dichosos y bienaventurados! ¡Muere para que se cumplan las escrituras![64]

It is apparent that predestination robs man of his freedom. It reduces him to the role of an automaton, with no responsibility for his actions. As Kery emphasizes to Manuel, if he dies because of the prediction, then he will prove that man is not free. Manuel in turn questions what kind of freedom exists if one does not fulfill one's obligations. To this Pedro replies that if freedom does not exist, then he has no obligations because, "las cosas, los artefactos, los muñecos, no tienen ninguna obligación de querer ni de sacrificarse por la felicidad de nadie. Simplemente ... son, existen."[65]

If there is freedom, there is no destiny, says Marcos. Mateo relates that in Greece the rivers were gods, but even so they were not

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[64] Ibid., p. 73. [65] Ibid., p. 86.

able to change their courses and flow backwards. They had to obey their destiny. As to men, they were also bound by it when they believed they knew it. Prophesy becomes "la maldición histórica de la humanidad ... los antiguos no vivían su tiempo. Vivían una parodia del futuro, por culpa de las profecías."[66]

Believing in predestination and prophesy prevents man from living authentically in the existential sense, since in order to be authentic, man must constantly be in the process of becoming. He can never be static, but rather in a perpetual state of becoming. At its highest level Para que se cumplan las escrituras deals with man's essence and freedom. It is the drama of man as existence. Manuel values his freedom above all else, and this is what characterizes him before his contact with the computer. Its predictions of his death do not worry him because he believes in his freedom.

> MANUEL. -- ¡La libertad, mi querida señorita! ¡La libertad! El hombre no es un mecanismo ciego, una cifra en una computadora! ¡Sería fracioso que yo no pudiera hacer lo que se me dieran las ganas, porque las estadísticas se oponen! ¡No señorita! Sólo yo decidiré lo que ocurrirá el 17 de abril a las 3 de la tarde ...[67]

Moreover, he promises Estrella that whatever happens, he will defend his liberty.

His constant contact with the machine during a period of three months serves to diminish his confidence. As he comes to respect the accuracy of the computer, he begins to have doubts. He is no longer so positive about the question of freedom, and begins to wonder if it is

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[66] Ibid., p. 19.

[67] Ibid., p. 47.

after all just an illusion. The prediction that he will die heroically, in defense of certain ideals, further complicates the situation. Thus if he is to assert his freedom and not die as prophesized, he must betray the other Manuel.

A discussion of this prophesy among Juan, Marcos, Lucas, and Mateo reveals varying interpretations of Manuel's impending death. Marcos believes that the machine must be destroyed because it engenders all kinds of rebellion and extremism which will not stop until it destroys the entire social order. As Manuel is the caretaker of the machine, Marcos feels that if necessary, Manuel should perish with it, and therefore his death would be the result of an act of rebellion. Mateo, on the other hand, does not see Manuel's death as a rebellious act, but rather as a sublime act of obedience, complying with Divine Law, "Porque todo el plan de Dios se basa en la obediencia."[68] Juan and Lucas then debate the question of freedom, Juan asserting that Manuel's death will not affirm his obedience but his absolute freedom. Lucas, however, believes just the opposite. Manuel will only be free if he chooses to live despite the statistics. To this Juan replies, "La única libertad del hombre es elegir su muerte ... !"[69] This discussion revolves around the various thematic levels of the drama, and therefore they view Manuel's predicted death first in its social terms, then in its religious implications, and finally in the existential context.

Opposing desires torment Manuel in his state of uncertainty. He passionately wants his freedom, but at the same time strongly desires

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[68] Ibid., p. 79. [69] Ibid., p. 80.

that the announced prophesy for a better world come true. It is indeed a soul-searching problem, and he asks his friends to leave him alone so that he may go to the depth of the matter. When all have left except Kery, Manuel is suddenly struck with an idea--he will change the date of his death from the 17th of April to the 16th, and by such an action he will assert his freedom in the true existential sense.

> MANUEL. -- ¡Para empezar un día antes! ¡Para que todo ocurrá el 16, no el 17 de abril! ¿Comprendes? ¡Soy libre, Kery! ¡Esto es un acto mío! ¡Yo dirijo, yo quiero!' Yo adelanto el día de la bienaventuranza y la felicidad prometida. Lo hago yo, no la máquina, ¿comprendes? ¡Soy libre, Kery! Y la felicidad será para hombres como yo![70]

Manuel then enlists Kery's assistance in carrying out his plan. By changing the time of his death, Manuel is not only asserting his own freedom, but he is breaking the spell of the machine, and thus saving mankind from being trapped in the hands of blind and invincible forces.

Manuel's concern for the happiness and well-being of his fellow-man also reveals the theme of love in this play. It first appears with the arrival of Manuel. When Estrella asks him if he has any family or friends, he replies that everyoneis his family and his friends. Manuel then finds that the computer, whom he comes to refer to as the other Manuel, has a love for mankind also, "(Señala la máquina). Allí hay alguién que ama a los hombres y quiere morir por ellos."[71] Because of his love for man, Manuel desires the fulfillment of the prophecy in regard to the betterment of man's condition. At the same time, he decides to exercise his free will in order to save man from the chains of

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[70] Ibid., p. 91.

[71] Ibid., p. 62.

superstition and the tyrannical control of predestination. It is this commitment to freedom which most eloquently expresses his love.

Cuzzani's use of Biblical names and allusions serves to point up his existential ideas. While he does not necessarily contradict Christian teachings, he certainly views them in a different light. It is quite apparent that the author rejects the idea of predestination, and sees adherence to this doctrine as detrimental to man in that it robs him of his freedom. While the Christ-figure of Manuel desires to redeem mankind and is willing to sacrifice himself, he is unwilling to sacrifice his freedom. This freedom of choice so essential to existential thought is also central to the teachings of Jesus who emphasized man's ability to be free in spite of circumstances to the contrary, when he stated,

> But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

The question of whether Manuel has succeeded in redeeming mankind and obtaining the predicted blessings remains unresolved. However, by his action he has set an example and has raised hopes, and as in the case of Christ, only the future will show whether man will truly be the recipient of the promises. The pervading feeling, however, is that man will only arrive at a better state through action such as Manuel exemplified. In a way this does contradict Christian doctrine which believes that man will be saved through faith, not works. Here again it is a matter of emphasis, for Manuel surely has faith in the computer's

predictions, but for him action is also essential, for without it, man will be reduced to the role of a machine.

Cuzzani also uses Biblical theme in his earliest dramatic work, Dalilah, which he wrote when he was only seventeen. It is the story of a writer and his wife. The author is composing a drama about Sampson and Dalilah, and involuntarily assumes the role of Sampson.

> Es decir la de un hombre a quien la mujer (trasunto del acto sexual total) le 'ha quitado las fuerzas' y espera el renacer de las mismas. En la Biblia parecen ser los pelos. En mi obra es toda la potencia humana, el señorio total y--en el fondo--la energía sexual perdida.[72]

La envidia, a brief dramatic monologue, has as its theme, envy, and focuses on a frustrated writer turned critic. The critic, having just seen a play by a young author, is preparing to write a review. At first he is very enthusiastic and favorably impressed; but as he begins to remember his own failure, he becomes envious and finally writes a devastating criticism of the work.

For Cuzzani, man, and particularly lower-class and middle-class man, is the inexorable victim of the socio-economic organization in which he moves. In his dramatic works he is primarily concerned with the struggle against these blind forces to recuperate an authentic existence, human dignity, and individual freedom. He does not offer oversimplified solutions. In fact the only play in which he happily resolves the situation is Sempronio, and even here he shows the power of love as a means and not as an end. The other plays tend to raise questions, in the Brechtian tradition, to which there are no easy answers.

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[72]Agustín Cuzzani to author, July 25, 1973.

The themes Cuzzani uses in his dramas are related to the contemporary world and its concerns. They are not likely to be out-dated for some time unless the very fabric of modern society changes abruptly and radically. Cuzzani clearly speaks to contemporary man about problems which vitally concern him, such as the effects of increased technology, the world's capacity for self-destruction, the encroachment of government into every corner of the individual's life. The resultant loss of individuality, freedom, and identity has created phenomena from crime in the streets to hippies, from the drug scene to exotic and apocalyptic religious movements. Cuzzani attacks the problems with the zeal of an engagée existentialist, asserting the nobility of man in his unceasing struggle to rise above the oppressive and degrading conditions of society.

CHAPTER III

STRUCTURE

Cuzzani's abandonment of realism becomes most obvious in the structure of his plays, where he more closely follows German expressionism in general and Bertolt Brecht in particular. The term expressionism is rather loosely employed to cover a broad spectrum of dramatic schools. However, the keynote of expressionistic theory is found in Strindberg's preface to The Dream Play wherein he states:

> Anything may happen; everything is possible and probable. Time and space do not exist. On the insignificant background of reality, imagination designs and embroiders novel patterns; a medley of memories, experiences, free fantasies, absurdities, and improvisations.[1]

From such theory comes the basis for the structure of the new theatre which is diametrically opposed to the basic tenets of the realist-naturalistic drama. Brecht was intent upon breaking the illusion of reality, which was the soul of the realistic theatre. He maintained that it must be apparent to the spectators that they are not witnessing

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[1]John Gassner, Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 118.

real events, happening at that very moment, but rather that they are sitting in a theatre, listening to an account of things that have happened in the past.[2]

There are several philosophical reasons behind the abandonment of realistic structure. In the first place, the logical construction of plays of the Aristotlean theatre indicated a relentless course of fate, which made it appear unfathomable and incapable of being influenced by human initiative.[3] This of course violates the very core of existential belief which so strongly opposes fate and asserts individual freedom. Secondly, the view of the world which a realistic structure presents is that of an ordered world, which to many contemporary dramatists, including Cuzzani, is in itself unrealistic and false. They see the world as absurd and attempt to reflect that absurdity which to them is much closer to the truth than the surface reality of the more traditional realistic theatre. Thus they express a criticism of our disintegrating society by means of confronting the audience with a distorted picture of a world gone mad.[4] The more random, disordered structure of the works mirrors the chaotic, irrational pattern of contemporary man's life.

The realistic drama attempted to portray true-to-life situations. With this in mind it made use of a tight structure to intensify the feeling of reality. Cuzzani in his plays is not presenting real-life conditions, but rather irrational fantasy. His work "represents rather than

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[2]John Gassner, Brecht, the Man and His Work (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961), p. 125.

[3]Ibid., p. 127.

[4]Martin Esslin, The Theatre of The Absurd (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961), p. 300.

describes or explains what the author has to say. The audience has no doubt about the attitude it must take to characters and events, and willingly suspends belief."[5] This closely parallels the Brechtian stage which by abandoning the pretense that the audience is eavesdropping and that the theatre is the world itself,

> approximates the lecture hall, to which the audiences come in the expectation of being informed, and also the circus arena, where an audience without identification or illusion, watches performers exhibit their special skills.[6]

Cuzzani builds each of his farsátiras around a central situación-espectáculo, a visual spectacle which is the theatrical illustration of a conflict, "Donde la exageración aguda de sus contradicciones se refleja en matices absurdos que deforman cómicamente la presentación escénica."[7] Each farsátira presents a unique situation far-removed from reality. Its absurdity suppresses at once any inclination to view the play as a representation of life. So while the entrance of Elías Beluver in a circus cage in Una libra de carne may create hilarity, it prevents the audience from anticipating a true-to-life court scene. Likewise the arrival of the Indians to Spain in a fisherman's net replete with fish in Los indios estaban cabreros, and the presentation of Sempronio with electrical wires and connections fastened to him, destroy any illusions of reality. It is around this irreality of the situation that Cuzzani constructs his plays.

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[5]John E. Lyon, "The Argentine Theatre and the Problem of National Identity: A Critical Survey," Latin American Theatre Review, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring, 1972), p. 15.

[6]Esslin, Brecht, p. 126.

[7]Agustín Cuzzani, "Balance y confidencia del autor," Teatro de Agustín Cuzzani (hereafter referred to as T.A.C.) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quetzal, 1960), p. 11.

In the tightening of the structure, the realistic drama resembled neo-classicism. The classic tenet of unity of place, while not necessarily adhered to strictly, did hold a great deal of validity for the realistic dramatist. From his point of view, the fewer the changes of scene, the more closely the play reflected reality. Thus many plays of the realistic school had no scene changes, while others had limited changes, usually restricted to geographic proximity.

The new theatre as developed along the lines of Brecht's epic theatre knows no limitations of place. Being basically episodic in nature, continuity of scene is not necessary, nor is it desirable as a tool for creating the illusion of reality, as it is this very illusion which the playwright of the epic theatre wishes to destroy. The German dramatist Erwin Piscator originated epic drama in which he blended film and stage techniques, thus broadening the theatre in all directions to encompass the world and mankind.[8]

For the most part Cuzzani makes use of numerous changes of scene in his plays. He sometimes accomplishes this by the use of various stage levels, enabling a rapid shift from scene to scene with a resultant cinemagraphic or montage effect. In Una libra de carne there are numerous scene changes within the stationary scene of the courtroom. The action moves quickly from one scene to another, showing the chain of events in the protagonist's life which led to the present trial. The setting also alternates between past episodes and the courtroom, producing scenes within scenes and simultaneous views.

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[8]Gassner, Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama, pp. 282-3.

In El centroforward murió al amanecer Cuzzani uses a multi-level stage for scene changes. The predominant scene is that of a public stadium with a jail in view in the background. This setting remains on stage throughout the play, although the action changes to other stage levels. In one presentation a chorus of workmen constructed a gallows throughout the entire performance in full view of the audience, while at the same time the action was progressing on the other levels.

Los indios estaban cabreros also makes use of a multi-level stage. This allows for a rapid and smooth transition of scenes. Beginning with the second act the action shifts from a seaport in Spain to the bank of a river to the bedroom of Manuel and María to the patio of their house, then to an ecclesiastical council meeting and from there to various spots on stage, "En la platea, por distintos sitios, perseguidos por luces concentrados, los rumores aparecen."[9] The scene again shifts briefly back to the river bank and the laundresses, and thence on to another place in the orchestra pit, near the public entrance where a woman calls up to a window. At this point, the three protagonists, Tupa, Teuche, and Tonatio enter the orchestra pit, cross it, and climb upon the stage at a place where the scene reveals a jail whose barred front raises like a curtain to receive them so that they pass quickly from the exterior to the interior of the prison. Numerous scene changes also occur in the third act.

In contrast to Cuzzani's other works, Sempronio contains relatively few changes of setting, and thus it lacks the cinemagraphic

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[9]Cuzzani, "Una libra de carne," T.A.C., p. 153.

effect of the previous plays. Only in the first part of the last act is there any feeling of motion, and the author achieves this only briefly through rapid scene changes. With Para que se cumplan las escrituras, Cuzzani turns again to the epic theatre making considerable use of multi-levels and scenes set in the several corners of the stage. He also uses curtains to separate the various settings, and by raising and lowering them allows the scenes to flow into one another. While the dissolving of one scene into another breaks the unity of place, it provides a much smoother transition than traditional scene changes.

Time is another structural element which has always been an important consideration in drama since the days of Aristotle although the dramatic precepts regarding this unity have varied considerably. The classicists believed that the action shown on stage should not cover a period of time longer than it actually took to present it. Realistic drama, though not as restrictive as the classic theatre, did tend to tighten up dramatic time reducing the period covered in a given play as much as possible. Romanticism tended to be more rambling. Traditional drama, however classic, romantic, or realistic-naturalistic tends to follow a linear time continuum, whereas the new theatre views time in an entirely different manner. As realism tried to create the illusion of reality, of the real world, time advanced in the most familiar manner from point to point in a straight line.

To the dramatists of the new theatre time is more subjective, and interior time tends to replace exterior time in many instances. There is no longer the necessity for time to move linearly. Instead, from any given point, it may move backwards, jump forward, or blend

past, present, and future all at the same moment, which demonstrates the complexity of this concept as developed by these playwrights.

Cuzzani's plays are a good example of this complexity. In Una libra de carne he uses a series of flashbacks which progress linearly, while at the same time the parallel action of the courtroom trial is taking place. In this way past and present are interwoven. The future is present in the past, as well as the present, for during the flashbacks which are advancing in a straight line, the audience is already aware of what is coming. The author employs the same technique in El centroforward murió al amanecer, where in the first scene the audience becomes aware of the impending execution through the action of the condemned man who tosses a notebook from his cell window. A vagabond retrieves the notebook and begins relating from it the sequence of events leading up to the present situation. Thus time regresses before it progresses.

The element of time is even more novel in Los indios estaban cabreros. In this work Cuzzani deals with the past in a more conventional manner, revealing it through the discussions of the characters who relate previous events. But it is in the area of the future that the writer becomes more unique, as in this historical fantasy he builds his plot around what might have happened rather than what did happen. In Cuzzani's words,

> Lo real, dijera Aristóteles el tremendo, es sólo un momento de lo posible que se torna actual. Me propongo trazar ese límite a mi fantasía. Porque aún la fantasía necesita los mismos fundamentos que lo real.[10]

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[10]Cuzzani, "Epílogo para críticos y bachilleres," "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 179.

The events occuring on the stage are significant not only for furthering the present action, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, for their impact on the future. Here the author employs the theory of the time-skip wherein the immediate impact of an action is minor, but its future impact is greatly intensified. In this manner the Indians' decision to lead the Spanish to the New World affected fewer people at that time than it was to later.

This play also presents the future through the device of a crystal ball belonging to the six wise men with whom the Indians share a prison cell. The wise men make use of the crystal ball as a television set, only of course instead of viewing happenings of the present, they see events in the future. They have a habit of watching soccer games from the twentieth century as they wish to be modern and up-to-date. One of the men, Don Pero, has been in prison for some 374 years, a fact that serves to point up the insignificance of time in the traditional sense. When Prince Tupa learns that his cellmate is so old he is amazed and asks,

> TUPA. — ¿Y no se ha muerto?
>
> DON PERO. -- ¡Morirme! ¡Darles ese gusto! ¿y mi orgullo de caballero español? Mientras haya algún rey o tirano que gobierne un solo palma de tierra española, aquí estaré firme para gritarle, ¡que muera! y ya veis que no estoy tan viejo. Soy el más moderno de todos ...[11]

The implication here is that time is a state of mind, and age measured in external, chronological time is deceptive.

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[11] Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 157.

The past, present, and future converge at several points in the play. One such instance is when the three Indians first arrive at the prison and Abnib Ben Benib greets them as americanos, quoting the historical background of the Americas from an encyclopaedia which he has written. His historical knowledge is accurate but unknown at this point in chronological time, for America has not yet been discovered, let alone named. In this way the presentation of the past in the present implies future events. A similar convolution of time occurs in the third act when a policeman stops Cristóbal Colón and questions him as to his name and his nationality. In replying Colón quotes numerous chroniclers and writers, including Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Salvador Madariaga, and the American historian Prescott. Of course he is quoting works that had not yet been written.[12]

In the play Sempronio time appears to be more conventional, moving linearly from start to finish. While the author tends to follow more traditional lines in adhering to a chronological sequence, he does make use of interior time. He utilizes the character of Sempronio to present the problem of time for the retired person for whom time passes very slowly. In Sempronio's case, he acquired the hobby of stamp collecting in an effort to fill the weary hours. When he accidently became radioactive, he viewed it as a blessing because from then on he was busy providing electric current for the operation of all sorts of appliances and machines. The time he spends in prison, idle and separated from his family, passes very slowly, as he expresses upon his return home.

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[12]Ibid., p. 171.

SEMPRONIO. -- ¡Ah ... qué bien se está aquí! (a Olga) ¡No, mi vieja, ya no me llevarán más! La pesadilla terminó para siempre. ¡Cuánto los he extrañado! (Mira a Susanita) ¡Qué alta que estás! (A Olga) ¡Cómo crecen estos chicos! ...

SUSANITA. -- No seas exagerado, papito. Fueron dos semanas ...

SEMPRONIO. -- A mí me parecieron dos siglos ... ¡Qué sé yo![13]

Here the external time is two weeks as compared to the internal time of two centuries.

With Para que se cumplan las escrituras Cuzzani returns to a more complex concept of time. As in Una libra de carne and El centroforward murió al amanecer, he uses the flashback technique. However, in this work time makes a complete circle, whereas in the other two the action started at one point, jumped backwards, and then progressed to the beginning point and continued beyond it, in this later work the ending is precisely the beginning, and does not progress beyond that point. Although time moves more or less linearly between these two points, the future and the past are always superimposed upon the present. The computor's prophesies project the present into the future, while the biblical prophesies serve to tie the past into the present. The machine's predictions of the characters' speeches and actions also serve to achieve concurrent time. This results in future events becoming past before they have occurred in the present. One example of this takes place when Estrella enters the Cinco Esquinas bar and meets Kery and Tomás. They seem to know everything about her, including what she will

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[13] Cuzzani, "Sempronio," T.A.C., p. 220.

say before she says it.

ESTRELLA. -- Bueno, ahora dígame la verdad. ¿Ustedes son detectivos, no? Detectives privados o algo así.

KERY. -- (Tendiéndole una tarjeta) ¡Lea aquí!

ESTRELLA. -- (Leyendo) Estrella pedirá un refrescado de limón.

KERY. -- (Le tiende otra tarjeta.) Y mire esto.

ESTRELLA. -- (Lee) Estrella nos preguntará si somos detectivos privados (Salta.) ¡No puede ser![14]

In the most conventional type structure of the realistic drama the action develops step by step beginning with the exposition followed by the generating circumstances with rising action to the crisis, at which point the action definitely turns with the conclusion becoming perceptible, concluding with the resolution.[15] When the playwright follows this type of structure, he usually divides the play into three or four acts, each with its own climax.

The new theatre having a different purpose in mind generally follows a much different pattern, for here the dramatic action depends on the movement of the production rather than the seeking and arriving at a specific destination. This type of theatre tends to be horizontal rather than vertical. Brecht, in his desire to have the audience suspend belief, advocated freeing the spectators from the distration of suspense by telling them how the play would end.[16] The elimination or reduction

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[14]Agustín Cuzzani, Para que se cumplan las escrituras (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quetzal, 1965), p. 25.

[15]Lodwick Hartley and Arthur Ladu, Patterns in Modern Drama (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), p. 17.

[16]Esslin, Brecht, p. 126.

of suspense tends to lessen climactic effects, deemed so essential to the conventional drama.

In generally following this principal of reduced suspense, Cuzzani creates a theatre of circumstance rather than action, and the audience finds itself questioning why a certain event happened rather than what is going to happen or how the problem will be solved. His play Una libra de carne assumes the form of a demonstration by means of a court trial in the tradition of Erwin Piscator's The Case of Clyde Griffiths.[17] The fact that the plot is based upon Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice greatly diminishes any element of suspense. The use of flashbacks to show what led to the present trial becomes a device for demonstrating the nature and effect of the forces which in conjunction with the hero'e weak character, brought about his ruin. As most of the play concerns itself with evolving this circumstancial aspect through the examination of Beluver's milieu, and expanding it to encompass society in general, the development of a rising action and the resultant creation of suspense is missing. Moreover, while the drama is full length, there is no division into acts nor scenes, although there are constant scene changes within the main framework. The elimination of acts automatically does away with any intermediate rising actions and climaxes, and the scenes depicting Beluver's past are equivalent to narration rather than plot.

Despite the circumstancial nature of this work, it is not completely devoid of plot development, for like all courtroom dramas, the

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[17]Gassner, Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama, p. 287.

trial proceeds linearly and climactically to the point where the jury renders its decision, even though there are numerous interruptions by interjections of past events. The denouement traditionally consists of what happens from the moment in which the jury announces its verdict until the curtain falls. Given the type of jurors portrayed in this play, and the attitude of the spectators, the jury's decision is not unexpected. But unlike the majority of courtroom dramas, the climax follows the execution of the sentence rather than occurring at its pronouncement. After the pound of flesh has been extracted from the defendant, his attorney raises the legal point from the trial in The Merchant of Venice, arguing that while Tomás Shylock García was entitled to the pound of flesh, he was not entitled to any blood.

> DEFENSOR. -- Un momento, señoría. Formulo una reserva de derecho. Conforme a un antecendente jurisprendencial en caso anólogo ocurrido en Venecia en tiempos del Juez Porcio, el acreedor tiene derecho a la carne pero no la sangre del deudor, si no ha sido estipulado. Y nuestro documento dice solamente la carne. De modo que si se ha derramado una sola gota de sangre por causa de este proceso, el señor Tomás Shylock García deberá responder por el delito de lesiones tentativa de homicidio e indemnizar los daños y perjuicios a mi cliente. Solicito se disponga embargo inmediato de bienes.[18]

The judge's agreement with the motion creates a situation of suspense, but this is a rather unexpected and spontaneous crisis, not one that has been created step by step throughout the development of the play. The trepidation of Shylock García when he envisages the prospects tends to intensify the suspense, as does his unsuccessful attempt to

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[18]Cuzzani, "Una libra de carne," T.A.C., p. 59.

avoid the inspection of the package of flesh for traces of blood by offering to give it back to Beluver. The play reaches a climax when the judge orders attendants to open the package, and they find that it contains not a single drop of blood. The denouement, which in the conventional drama neatly resolves the situation, in this work raises questions put to the audience by one of the spectators who delivers a final message.

> HOMBRE. -- Pues yo le voy a decir por que no tenía sangre Beluver. (Lo van empujando hacia la sala) ¡Se la robaron! ¡Lo expremieron como una naranja! (Bajan a la platea.) ¡Se lo robó el patrón ese de la molicie! (El telón comienza a caer.) y el de la ropa oscura y el médico de la letra gótica y el del chicle. (Lo van empujando por entre los espectadores.) Y la terminaron de exprimir aquí, entre los abogados y los Jurados. (Se suelta de los Uijeres y se vuelve hacia el público.) La sangre del hombre es sagrada y no pertenece a ningún patrón, a ningún jurado, a ningún acreedor! Son vampiros que andan sueltos. Cuidado. La ciudad está llena de vampiros. ¡Hay que terminar con éso! (Lo van sacando otra vez a empujones. Casi mutis.) ¡Andan sueltos! (Salen.) ¡Son los vampiros! ¡Son los vampiros![19]

This final scene completely changes the tone of the play from burlesque and satire to intense seriousness and realism.

This ideological appendage is characteristic of Cuzzani's farsátiras, and although its usage invokes criticism from some quarters, the author feels that it is an integral part of the drama. In his discussion of this interpolation, Lyon concludes that here "Cuzzani too succumbs to the temptation to intellectualize and spell out his message."[20] In explaining his use of the structural device of the mensaje final Cuzzani states,

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[19]Ibid., pp. 61-62. [20]Lyon, op. cit., p. 16.

> En la farsa ... el absurdo no se subsume en el proceso, perdura hasta el final del combate transformando en convención en pacto. Y sólo cuando el conflicto desaparece y se establece en la paz final, falto de base se rompe y estalla de golpe, dejando al personaje o a la situación completamente en carne y hueso. Esta inevitable caída en la verdad-brusquedad que los griegos llamaban Aleteia, permite precisamente ese tremendo efecto del hablar puro y simple un personaje al público, al final de la farsa.[21]

The use of a final message or a rationalized explanation did not originate with Cuzzani, but rather he adopted it from other writers and works, as for example, Chaplin's The Great Dictator. This technique allows a more honest resolution of the conflict. In Una libra de carne there is no elaborate scheme to permit Beluver to overcome the forces of society, nor to show his heroic, though unsuccessful, efforts to overcome them. The author maintains the spirit of the farce until that final moment when the man delivers his speech, stating precisely and in realistic terms what has actually happened to Beluver, while at the same time indicting the whole of society as accomplices. There is no build-up nor prelude to this sudden intervention of the simple and direct truth.

The structure of El centro forward murió al amanecer is quite similar to that of Una libra de carne, but this play has the more conventional divisions of three acts. Here again the use of regressive action eliminates the element of surprise and minimizes suspense. From the very first scene the audience is aware that a hanging has been scheduled at dawn. When the condemned man tosses his notebook from the jail window, a vagabond retrieves it, and initiates the action by relating its contents to the spectators. As the outcome of the drama is already obvious,

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[21]Cuzzani, "Balance y confidencia del autor," T.A.C., p. 13.

its main interest lies in discovering the reason for the impending execution, and even this soon becomes apparent as the story begins to unfold. The first act ends with the sale of Cacho Garibaldi, the Center Forward, to a man by the name of Ennésimo Lupus. The author achieves a certain amount of suspense by revealing that Sr. Lupus does not represent any ball club. This element of suspense is further heightened by the fact that at this point the plot does not reveal the reason for the purchase of Garibaldi at a record high price, but leaves the audience wondering until the next act when it learns that Lupus is an eccentric millionnaire who collects people.

The change of setting to Lupus' palace and the introduction of a number of new characters not present in the preceding act interrupts the continuity of the story in the second act. The presentation of the background story of each of the members of Lupus' collection further disrupts the unity of action. An interval of dialogue between Garibaldi and Hamlet is important to the situational aspect of the drama but does nothing to further the plot. Since the circumstances are more important than the resolution of a problem, the second act is extremely significant, for in it Cuzzani demonstrates the quality of life of the individuals who have traded their freedom for material benefits. The thread of the plot reasserts itself when love develops between Cacho and the ballerina Nora at the beginning of the third act. It is also at this point that Cacho realizes the importance of freedom and resolves to escape with Nora. The outcome of this attempt is no surprise, as the audience is already aware of the ending of the play. Nevertheless there is a definite rising action in this act as Garibaldi becomes more and more

determined to escape and makes his plans only to have Lupus spoil them. The climax occurs when Garibaldi kills Lupus.

After a brief trial scene the play resumes the action from the point of departure in the first act, and thus the audience is once again back at the scene of the impending hanging which the author portrays in a farcical and humorous fashion. This tone of hilarity changes abruptly to the serious as Garibaldi delivers his final remarks before his execution.

> Al final ... se salva la fe en un mundo mejor, cuyos valores trascendentes hemos de preservar todos con nuestro esfuerzo generoso y sincero. 'Cacho Garibaldi muere, pero anuncia la aurora, 'toda ella llena de luz y de pájaros.'[22]

The structure of Los indios estaban cabreros differs somewhat from Cuzzani's previous farsátiras in that he does not use flashbacks, and neither is there a dramatic soliloquy at the end of the play. He divides this drama into three acts, each of which has a title: Acto Primero, "Los indios al sol," Acto Segundo, "Los indios a la sombra," and Acto Tercero, "A la sombra de los indios." The first act, set in Mexico in 1491, portrays the conditions of the poeple living under the dictatorship of the Emperor Axayaca, and thus the emphasis is more on the situation than on the action. However, it is not completely devoid of action as it sets the scene for the voyage of the Indians to the East in search of the Dios-Sol.

A brief humorous interlude during the first act breaks the unity of action. This is a scene where one of the priests is looking for a

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[22]Carlos Miguel Suárez Radillo, "Tema y problema en el teatro hispanoamericano," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, Vol. 46, No. 138 (June, 1961), p. 399.

victim, in the person of a pretty young girl, to sacrifice to the Dios-Sol. When he finds a likely prospect in the maiden Chola, she casts a spell on him whereby he will fall madly in love with the first woman he sees. Chola makes certain that that woman is the old hag, Quepuxilán. The spell is broken when the priest and Quepuxilán enter the darkness of the temple.

> SACERDOTE. -- ¡Abominación! (Reaparece) ¿Quién me ha embrujado? ¿Fuiste tu vieja espantosa? (Busca por todos lados, pero Chola ha huído hacia la playa.) ¡Maldición! ... ¡Oh, tú Sol que me oyes! ¡Caiga una lluvia de fuego y de estiercol caliente sobre los adoradores de la fealdad y de la vejez inmunda! ¡Que la tierra os pudra en vida! (Sale gritando) ¡Mueran las viejas! ¡Mueran las viejas![23]

Although this scene does nothing to further the action, it does contribute to the circumstantial element of the play by portraying one aspect of life in Axacaya's realm.

The second act depicts the Indians' arrival in Spain, and shortly thereafter the author introduces a sub-plot in the form of a love story which develops between Teuche and Mariceleste, the fisherman's daughter. This sub-plot contributes somewhat to the main plot since it is due to Mariceleste's efforts that Queen Isabel later agrees to free the Indians from prison. The denunciation of the three Indians to the Inquisition by the fisherman Manuel serves to move the action from his home to the ecclesiastical court and on to the prison in Granada. With the Indians' arrival at the prison, the action again slows down and becomes more circumstantial. It is also at this juncture that Cuzzani introduces the

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[23]Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 133.

cellmates. Their preoccupation with the soccer games and the future, as viewed in their crystal ball, again tends to break the unity of action, distracting from any projected direction the work may have seemed to be taking until that time.

Act three resumes the thread of the plot again when Mariceleste visits the Queen to plead for the release of the three Indians. Isabel agrees on the condition that they will act as guides for the impending expedition which will discover the new world. This action introduces the note of parallelism into the plot structure. Whereas the first act ended with the Indians preparing to sail to the east, the third act sets the stage for a voyage of discovery with Columbus to sail from Spain to the west. The oppressive situation in the New World has been shown in the course of the first act, and a parallel situation reveals itself during the second act. The Indians' action in sailing toward the east was an act of hope which turned out to be false. Columbus's action in sailing west is also based on a vain hope. Cuzzani structures the dialogue between Colón and Tupa on this parallelism.

> TUPA. -- ¿Cómo ... buscabas a Dios por el Poniente?
>
> COLON. -- (Se vuelve extrañado.) Claro ... Todo viaja hacia Occidente. Las estrellas, el sol, la luna ... las más viejas leyendas. Todo indica el camino ...
>
> TUPA. -- Yo llegué a esta tierra buscando a Dios por el Oriente.
>
> COLON. -- Y ya ves lo que encontraste. En cambio, por el Oeste ...
>
> TUPA. -- Ya verás lo que encontrarás ... [24]

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[24] Ibid., p. 173.

The climaxes of the first two acts are relatively weak. The first act reaches a climax when Prince Tupa announces his plan to sail towards the east to find the Dios-Sol. The climax of the second act comes when a prison guard delivers a message to Teuche from Mariceleste. Although the message is incomplete, it does provide a ray of hope for the prisoners.

GUARDIA. -- ¿Quién es Teuche?

TEUCHE. -- Yo, señor.

GUARDIA. -- (Llevándole aparte) Una niña ... una tal Mariceleste ... me dió quince maravedíes para que te diga un mensaje ...

TEUCHE. -- ¿Marciceleste? ¿Está aquí?

GUARDIA. -- (Secreteando.) Huyo de succasa y vino a pie detrás tuyo. Dice que irá a pedir a la reina perdón y ...

TEUCHE. -- Y qué ...

GUARDIA. -- Y nada. Quiso decir algo más pero no tenía más maravedíes ... [25]

In the final act Queen Isabel agrees to release the Indians from prison if they will agree to guide Colón's ships to the New World. This action is no surprise; in fact, the audience has already anticipated it. Prince Tupa agrees provided the Queen accepts certain conditions which he proposes, namely that Teuche be allowed to embrace Christianity and to marry Mariceleste, remaining in Spain with her, and that the prisoners be released from the jails of Spain and that they be allowed to accompany the expedition to the New World. Her majesty readily grants these requests. But the play has not yet reached its climax. This occurs when Tupa makes one further request that he be allowed to remain in prison

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[25] Ibid., p. 161.

to await his death. In the final scene in the prison, Tupa encounters Don Pero who has also decided to remain. The play ends on a note of hope as Don Pero carves the word Tlausicalpán, meaning dawn, on the wall, and the curtain descends as the chorus chants the word over and over again, which though providing some dramatic impact, is still rather anti-climactic.

In Sempronio Cuzzani adheres to a more traditional plot structure. The situation in this play is unique and fantastic so that the audience is at once aware of its unreality. Without the necessity of revealing the outcome from the start the author is able to achieve his aim of separating the audience from the action of the play so that they view it as observers and not as participators. Thus while there is not an over-abundance of action in this work, there is more of the element of suspense than in Cuzzani's other plays.

In the first act Cuzzani portrays Sempronio, who has become radio-active from licking Japanese postage stamps, as a contented source of electric power. The rising action is initiated when his son Diego reads the following item in the newspaper:

> DIEGO. -- Hay una noticia medio rara. Escucha. (Lee.) Curiosa radioactividad. A pesar del secreto policial, ha trascendido que las autoridades están muy preocupadas por ciertos trastornos radioactivos aparecidos en un barrio de esta ciudad. (Bajo el diario). Podría ser que ... se tratara de nosotros, viejo.[26]

The action is complicated when the High Commissioner for Atomic Energy, together with a professor, tracks the source of the radioactivity to Sempronio's home. The first act reaches a climax when the Commissioner

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[26]Cuzzani, "Sempronio," T.A.C., p. 196.

announces that he is appropriating Sempronio for service to the State, and proceeds to take him away from his family.

The second act takes place in a cell where the High Commissioner is keeping Sempronio prisoner. The conversation between Sempronio and the soldier does not further the action but demonstrates the soldier's learned reaction towards the prisoner and the fact of his radioactivity. He recites phrases and rules from the soldier's manual and is afraid to come close to Sempronio. The latter, however, behaves quite normally and begins to tell the soldier about his home and family, and particularly about his daughter Susanita. The introduction of this human element overcomes the soldier's caution, and as Sempronio whistles a tune and claps for him, the soldier, losing his inhibitions, begins dancing. In presenting this interlude Cuzzani is again stressing the situational aspect of the work rather than any progressive action. This act reaches a climax when Sempronio wired to an atomic charge, fails to trigger the explosion. The High Commissioner's reaction to this failure makes up the remainder of the act.

In the third act, Sempronio, devoid of his radioactivity, returns home. However, once he is again in the midst of his family, his electrical energy comes back. The High Commissioner reappears on the scene, demanding that Sempronio come with him once more. The return of Sempronio's energy and the reappearance of the High Commissioner and the professor are more or less repetitious of the first act. In both acts, Sempronio, surrounded by his family, is happily supplying his current when the High Commissioner intrudes upon the scene with the intention of taking Sempronio away with him. Here the parallel ends, for while

in the first act the Commissioner succeeded in doing just that, in the third act Sempronio's refusal thwarts his plans. This refusal marks the climax of the play with the denouement following as Sempronio reveals the secret of his energy. This revelation takes the form of a didactic speech which was also characteristic of Una libra de carne and El centro-forward murió al amanecer.

Cuzzani returns to the use of regressive action in Para que se cumplan las escrituras, and this tends to diminish the element of suspense. In this play the first and the last scenes are exactly the same, and thus the author reveals the outcome of the drama from the very beginning. He further eliminates suspense by building his plot on an allegory of the drama of Golgotha. What plot development there is follows that well-known story. However, in the area of situation there is a great deal of difference which serves to create interest and stimulate thought. This is in keeping with the Brechtian aim of giving pleasure to the audience by permitting it to discover new truths and thereby enlarge its understanding rather than providing entertainment by means of emotional catharsis.[27]

The plot revolves around an electronic computor built by three students, Pedro, Tomás, and Kery. This computor is so accurate it can even predict what a person will say before he says it. The first scene shows Manuel, "luciendo en la camisa una tremenda mancha roja a la altura del corazón, con los brazos abiertos, y la cabeza caída sobre el hombro, de pie, apoyado en el tablero, ... muerto."[28] He is stretched upon

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[27]Esslin, Brecht, p. 127.

[28]Cuzzani, Para que se cumplan las escrituras, p. 14.

the computer which also appears to be broken. The four men who discover his body decide to sit down and write Manuel's history. Thus Mateo, Marcos, Lucas, and Juan retire to a bar where they engage in religious and philosophical discussions revolving around prophesy. When Juan asks if there are such things as scientific prophesies, he sets the action in motion. At this point the focus of the scene shifts to the students Tomás and Kery, the inventors of the computer who have come to the Cinco Esquinas bar to test the validity of their machine's predictions. From here on Cuzzani designs the plot to show why Manuel died. As he has already revealed the outcome, it is the circumstances that he now wishes to investigate.

Even in its development the plot, which is already more or less known, does not move directly ahead. The situation evolves on two levels, which at times converge and cross over, and at other times remain separate and parallel. One set of actions centers around the students Pedro, Tomás, and Kery, and Estrella and Manuel. The other involves the evangelists, Mateo, Marcos, Lucas, and Juan. These latter are in reality the storytellers, each presenting the same occurences from his own individual viewpoint. While they do not actually relate four different stories, their discussions, which alternate with the other action, present their different interpretations of the situation, not necessarily of the concrete actions.

As the computer has predicted that the students will entrust its operation to a stranger named Manuel, when he appears they feel obligated to comply. With the entrance of Manuel, a sub-plot develops in the form of a love story between Manuel and Estrella. Before undertaking his new

assignment, the students advise Manuel that the machine has predicted his death. The climax of the first act occurs when Manuel asserts his freedom to Estrella, "¡No, señorita! Sólo yo decidiré lo que ocurrirá el 17 de abril a las 3 de la tarde. Estoy a punto de contestarle que acepté todo este trabajo como un desafío."[29] The scene then shifts to Marcos and Juan who comment upon the foregoing.

> JUAN. -- ¡Ja! ¿Oiste eso? ¡La libertad! ¿Pero de dónde salió el Manuel este? La ... li ... , la li ...[30]

The structure of the second act is quite intricate. The first scene shows Marcos and Mateo seated on the proscenarium fishing. At the same time they are carrying on a philosophical conversation about freedom and destiny. Simultaneously in another part of the stage the audience sees Manuel busily at work at the computer which is buzzing and throwing off sparks, while Estrella sits on the floor near him. The action switches from the evangelists back to Manuel by means of the following dialogue:

> MARCOS. -- ¡Ah! ... (Pausa. Marcos hace un movimiento de atención.) ¡Silencio!
>
> MATEO. -- ¿Pican?
>
> MARCOS. -- (Señala la cruz y sus habitantes.) ¡No, allá! Ya empieza. (Ambos miran. Las luces de los pescadores se apagan ... [31]

In the ensuing scene Estrella pleads with Manuel to leave the computer alone, and reveals her love for him. This leads to still another scene within a scene as Manuel pushes a button on the computer, and next to this setting appears a door with a sign over it which reads Registro Civil. A couple passes through the door declaring their love

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[29] Ibid., p. 47. [30] Ibid., p. 48.

[31] Ibid., p. 51.

for each other. Then a second couple passes through the door, making the same declarations. A third pair follows, composed of the girl from the first couple and the man from the second couple, again speaking the same words of love. Finally the fourth and last couple appears which is the girl from the second pair and the man from the first. Once again they repeat the now familiar words. Manuel has graphically made his point to Estrella, and at the same time has shown how the machine has depersonalized human feelings.

> MANUEL. -- ¡Míralos bien! Todos los años se casan aquí 28.765 parejas. Inexorablemente, fatalmente. Cada pareja cree ser única, libremente enamorada de los ... detalles. Pero sólo cumplen un número ciego, una cifra de amor que les corresponde. Todas dicen más o menos lo mismo. (suenan voces coreadas ahora por las parejas y el coro interior.)[32]

When Pedro, Tomás and Kery intrude upon the couple, bringing with them a group of professors from the University, the two levels merge, for the professors are none other than Marcos, Mateo, and Juan. The professors wish to take the computer to their offices and to make use of it for various profitable enterprises. Upon hearing this proposal, Manuel becomes quite upset and strongly protests such an action. When Pedro orders him to leave the laboratory, Manuel rushes to pull the main lever of the machine which until then he had not dared to touch. This act is climactic and results in a spectacular display of electronic fireworks at the end of which the computer produces a card containing the beatitudes and a promise of a better world to come. "Porque en verdad os digo que el fin de toda noche y el acabamiento de toda angustia por causa del

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[32] Ibid., p. 61.

hombre terminará en breve, y en la paz y el sosiego del tiempo, los hijos del hombre conocerán el amor."[33] Upon reading these words aloud, Manuel orders the professors out of the laboratory, and as they leave he returns to the machine and begins working feverishly with the help of Kery and Tomás. Estrella resumes her position seated on the floor as at the beginning of the scene, thus providing a circular aspect.

The setting then shifts to the left angle of the proscenarium where a telephone is ringing. The scene is an editorial room, and Lucas is now the editorial secretary. Pedro enters and the ensuing conversation deals with the prophesies the computer is now making. The conversation is a form of narrative which gives the audience information concerning the type of predictions the computer is making, and Pedro's attempt to discredit them. In order to show further concern over the effects of the machine's prophesies, the scene abruptly shifts to another corner of the stage where Marcos enters, pacing up and down, speaking into a telephone. His conversation serves to reveal the political threat the machine now poses to the establishment as well as its potential for economic gain, and hints at sinister actions that may follow. When he hangs up the phone, Marcos looks towards the scene of the laboratory thus shifting the audience's attention to the setting where the action is now progressing.

There are now two parallel actions in progress, that within the laboratory which involves Manuel, Estrella, the students and the machine's prediction of Manuel's death. The suspense built up around this action involves Manuel's choice as to whether he will die according to the forecast, or whether he will try to thwart this destiny. The parallel action

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[33] Ibid., p. 67.

in the scenes adjoining that of the laboratory centers around the evangelists who in addition to their exposition on the various aspects of Manuel's story, are involved in actions against Manuel which are to lead to his destruction. In one scene, Juan, in the role of a police deputy, is freeing a prisoner who is to furnish the department with information in return for his freedom. The two actions merge again briefly following this latter scene as Estrella and Kery enter the deputy's office to show him a threatening letter received at the laboratory.

At this point the action seems to digress since the next scene takes place between Mateo and a prostitute in the latter's bedroom. The connection is reestablished by the following dialogue:

> MUJER. -- Soy curiosa, ¿sabes? Me guata que me cuenten. Todos vienen con algún pretexto. Dime el tuyo. Yo colecciono pretextos.
>
> MATEO. -- No es un pretexto y te repito que no lo entenderías. (Más sereno.) Vine aquí para degradar mi virtud y sentirme igual a todos los pecadores, porque debo juzgar a uno de ellos.[34]

From here the action progresses to a meeting of Mateo, Marcos, Lucas, and Juan who are gathered together to pass judgment on Manuel. The action here is on two levels, first their participation in Manuel's death, and second, their position as chroniclers of the story. Thus they seem to be recording what has already happened, while at the same time deciding the fate of Manuel and what will happen in the future.

> MATEO. -- Me alegro que todos hayamos cumplido con la cita. Podemos empezar ya mismo. Yo estuve meditando profundamente y mi conclusión es ...

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[34] Ibid., p. 75.

JUAN. -- (Interrumpiéndolo.) Un momento, Mateo. Antes de oír la opinión de cada uno, quisiera proponerles algo. (Todos lo miran.) Quisiera que juntos los cuatro, recojamos toda la historia de Manuel y su muy curiosa máquina.

MATEO. -- ¿Tú dices, escribirla?

JUAN. -- Exacto. No creo prudente confiar en la memoria. Andando el tiempo, cada uno de nosotros recordaría sólo lo que mejor conviene. No sería la primera vez.

MATEO. -- Tienes razón. Además por escrito siempre resulta más verosímil. Los textos prestan certidumbre a los testimonios.

LUCAS. -- Yo no tengo inconvenientes. Sólo que se me ocurre, debiéramos esperar. Al fin y al cabo y la historia no está terminada.[35]

The ensuing discussion as to what should be done with Manuel is not of interest because of the decision, for that the audience already knows, rather it is the circumstances of the debate itself that are significant, for they argue the point of freedom and destiny on all levels and from all directions. Neither does this judicial process contain any element of suspense, but instead raises many questions which their decision that Manuel must die does not really resolve.

As the play returns to the laboratory and the story of Manuel resumes, the tension begins to mount once again, as it did when Manuel pulled the main switch. The direction of this part of the play now centers on Manuel's struggle within himself to assert his free will. This scene takes place on April 16, the day before Manuel's predicted death. From this point on Cuzzani begins to increase the dramatic tension. Since the audience is already aware of the final outcome, the achievement

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[35] Ibid., p. 77.

of electrifying suspense demonstrates the playwright's mastery of theatrical technique. The author uses Estrella to initiate the conflict. She has invited the three students to supper and proceeds to tell them that Manuel plans to wait until the last minute and then defy the machine. This is her own idea and not Manuel's. While the three students are very happy to learn of the proposed plan, it is not so simple for Manuel because he is torn between the desire for freedom and the desire for the betterment of mankind which the computer has promised. The climax of this struggle and of the play arrives when a brilliant idea strikes Manuel: he will die and thus save mankind, but he will choose the time of his death and thereby exercise his free will.

The denouement consists of the carrying out of Manuel's plan. The final scene is an exact replica of the first scene wherein the four evangelists discover Manuel's body, thus completing the circular structure of the play.

Here like in his other plays Cuzzani does not neatly resolve the situation, and the drama does not make decisions for the viewer. Neither does it pass judgment but rather stimulates the mind by implications. The play does not really solve the question of free-will versus destiny, although it does present one man's choice. Moreover, the work does not try to judge the actions of those responsible for Manuel's death. This again it leaves to the audience.

Because of indifference to dramatic rules, modern plays tend to become more difficult and more episodic than works of the past. As formlessness increases so does discursiveness, until the dramatist almost

emerges as an evangelist, proselytizing for his faith.[36] This leads to the interjection of prefaces, prologues, critical commentary and appendices which begin to accompany the works. The didactic element results in a violation of the concept of the fourth wall, so essential to the school of realistic drama. This concept may be defined as the consideration of the audience as non-existent.[37] Only in this way could the theatre present a fragment of life. The doctrine of the fourth wall made asides and soliloquies obsolete in realistic and naturalistic drama, for if the audience were to be viewed as non-existent, the characters would have no reason to address it directly.

Writers for the new theatre view the audience in an entirely different way from their predecessors of the realistic-naturalistic school. Far from considering it as non-existent, they often deliberately address it directly. Cuzzani makes use of the monologue to deliver his mensaje final. While the character may appear to be talking to an audience on stage, it is obvious that he is also addressing the audience in the theatre. Besides these final monologues, the author also makes use of the soliloquy and direct address to the audience. The aside dates back to the days of the Golden Age drama where it was used to inform the audience of some fact the other characters on stage did not know and supposedly could not hear. When Cuzzani's characters address the audience it is not for the purpose of divulging secrets but to break the

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[36]Robert Brustein, The Theatre in Revolt (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964), p. 12.

[37]John Gassner, Form and Idea in the Modern Theatre (New York: The Dryden Press, 1956), p. 30.

illusion of reality and to create an atmosphere of absurdity. Cuzzani uses the soliloquy, an old theatrical device, to present his thesis and as such it is a propaganda tool which is far removed from the soliloquies of the Golden Age and the nineteenth century Romantic drama.

In the opening scene of Una libra de carne the orderly makes his entrance and begins talking to himself and then addresses the audience. In El centroforward murió al amanecer the Vagabond acts as a narrator as he relates Garibaldi's story to the audience; while in the scene preceding the execution the Cannis Company commercial is directed towards the viewers.

There is another soliloquy at the end of the second act of Sempronio when the High Commissioner, left by himself on stage, discusses the problem of machines, while at the same time he pounds on the table, hitting his fist on the radio-active pastry. The tone of this soliloquy is far from that of dramatic impact, and does not deal with philosophical concepts.

> ALTISIMO COMISIONADO. -- (... queda solo.) Mantenamos la calma ... Pensamos ... no es más que un accidente ... un simple desperfecto. Ellos son buenos mecánicos. Además, si yo les doy una orden, tendrán que cumplirla. El mundo está organizado así. No se discute con las licuadores o con las máquinas de afeitar. Se las repara ... Y una vez reparadas, se las utiliza! Están todos muy equivocados si esperan que por un mínimo desperfecto me voy a desconcertar. ¡Yo soy el que dé las órdenes! A los hombres y a las cosas. Les digo: ¡Funcionad! Y ellos, ¡a Funcionar! (Saca la mano del pastel de estampillas donde fue a parar su puño cuando golpeó. Se mira.) En ... (Se sacude molesto, se limpia en la ropa. Luego se va asustando.) Este pastel es ... (Grita.) ¡De estampillas! ¡Radioactivas! ¡Socorro! ¡Me voy a desintegrar! ¡Voy a reventar como una bomba ... !38

38Cuzzani, "Sempronio," T.A.C., p. 215.

Cuzzani violates the fourth wall convention most drastically in Para que se cumplan las escrituras. In this play as in El centroforward murió al amanecer, the author uses the device of narration to move the action forward. The four evangelists are telling the story, and in so doing they at times speak directly to the audience. On other occasions they act as though they themselves are the audience viewing the drama. Such interpolations of direct address and narrative are at first startling, but the audience soon accepts them as normal, and although they may break the continuity of the play, they tend to add another dimension which creates surprise as a result of rapidly changing moods.

Cuzzani, along with other dramatists of the new theatre, has succeeded in shattering the unities of time, place, and action, as well as dissolving the fourth wall. However, these writers have added a fourth unity which serves to maintain cohesion in their works. This is the unity of impression. Whatever the divergent elements in these plays, they must all be aimed towards leaving one overriding impression. Thus while a drama's contradictory ingredients may seem to destroy one another, they are actually contrived to give mutual support. The dramatist may achieve this fourth unity even though there is an absence of consistency of character, external unity, and plot progression.[39] Such plays may appear anatomized due to their episodic nature, but they do form a unified whole when viewed from the standpoint of impression.

Cuzzani's works for the most part are aimed at giving an impression of man degraded by a highly mechanized and materialistic society.

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[39] J. L. Styan, The Dark Comedy (Cambridge: The University Press, 1962), pp. 275-77.

In Una libra de carne he leaves the impression of the desire for an authentic life that cannot be reconciled with the present conditions in the world. El centroforward murió al amanecer also shows the problem of freedom and of trying to be authentic in a regimented society. The essence of freedom is also predominent in Cuzzani's other plays. The structure of Cuzzani's dramas is designed to present a total impression of man's condition. He accomplishes this by means of joining varied and at times seemingly incongruous parts which in the end form a unified whole. His skillful blending and positioning of opposing elements serves to accomplish his purpose of dramatic impact.

CHAPTER IV

TECHNIQUES

The techniques Cuzzani and other contemporary dramatists employ are in many instances far from new. The appearance of a chorus dates back to the days of the ancient Greek theatre, the Shakespearian drama made wide use of the contrapuntal effect of comic relief, and romanticism used lighting effects to set or change the mood. What makes these and other devices unique is the way in which the playwright exploits them, as well as the unusual, and at times incongruous, combinations he puts together.

The open episodic shaping of the new drama allows rare logistic juxtapositions, along with sharp comic contradictions. This technique of counterpoint, as Brecht developed it, is a means of achieving alienation. Since the objective is to keep the audience from becoming too involved in the play, or from empathizing with the characters, the dramatist superimposes raucous comedy upon a tragic scene, or builds a comic attitude only to shatter it with a sudden shift to the serious or tragic. The incongruity of the solemn and the ridiculous, or the proximity of

the ugly and the beautiful also produce tragicomic tensions.[1] The playwright may also use tone, patterns, and impressions in a contradictory manner.

Beginning with Una libra de carne, Cuzzani makes wide use of the contrapuntal method in his plays. In this work there is the almost constant contrast between the serious Elías Beluver and his farcical surroundings. The bizarrely comic jurors set a mood of hilarity which is in sharp contrast to the serious and depressed mood which Beluver exhibits in the scenes from his past. The jury and the courtroom spectators greet these almost tragic incidents with nonchalance, and continue in their ridiculous behavior. The typical reaction of the Ama de Casa is, "¡Qué emocianante! ¡Como en el cine!"; while the Jubilado replies to all questions, "Yo no sé ... Yo soy jubilado." The little girl is constantly asking her father such things as, "¿Por qué tiene que ser una libra y no un kilo o dos? ¿Cuánto pesa una libra? ¿Qué es la molicie? ¿Qué es un filántropo? ¿Lo van a ahorcar?"

As the jury renders its decision each member gives his reasons for finding Beluver guilty. Their absurd justifications are a satire on justice. The flippant attitude of the jurors is in direct contrast to the horror of the sentence which the judge pronounces.

Another example of the contrapuntal effect occurs as the spectators are leaving the courtroom when the following comic dialogue takes place between an usher and the photographer.

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[1]J. L. Styan, The Dark Comedy (Cambridge: The University Press, 1962), p. 254.

UJIER. -- Esté tranquila. Pero recuerde que el Juez no quiere fotos de perfil. (al Fotógrafo.) ¿Oyó usted?

FOTÓGRAFO. -- No se preocupe. No tenía placas. La foto que va a salir es de la semana pasada. Pero a la gente le gusta que la fotografien para el diario. Después lo compran.[2]

This jocular mood is suddenly changed with the intrusion of a man who asks the usher what will happen to Beluver now.

UJIER. -- ¿Cómo que pasó? ¿No estuvo usted presente?

HOMBRE. -- Sí. Pero me refería a lo que le pasará después a Beluver. ¿Quién le dará trabajo, dónde irá? Nadie explicó nada.

UJIER. -- El procesado está en libertad. A la justicia no le importa saber ni averiguar nada de la vida privada de las gentes. Son libres y responsables de sus actos. (Pausa.) Y haga el favor de irse, que aquí no se puede estar.

HOMBRE. -- (incorporándose.) --Y dígame ... ¿tampoco le interesa a la Justicia saber por qué Beluver no tenía sangre? (Llega otro Ujier y se le une al que estaba.)

UJIER. -- Retírese señor. No estamos para discusiones. (Entre los dos Ujieres toman por la solapa del saco al Hombre.)[3]

This dialogue leads directly into the serious didactic monologue which the man delivers to the audience. It is both a commentary and a condemnation of the society that has robbed Elías Beluver of his life's blood. This speech produces a rather abrupt and unexpected change in mood and direction.

The technical aspects of Cuzzani's works most vividly demonstrate the flexibility of his theatre. His plays are not always presented in

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[2]Agustín Cuzzani, "Una libra de carne," Teatro de Agustín Cuzzani (hereafter referred to as T.A.C.) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quetzal, 1960), p. 61.

[3]Ibid.

exactly the same manner. Instead, various productions have contained different innovations, giving the works a more organic nature. One variation of Una libra de carne, which resulted in an even more heightened contrapuntal effect in the last scene, was a presentation in Rosario in which the climate closely approximated vaudeville, thus making the contrast between the preceding farce and the final message sharper, and adding a touch of irony by having the chorus of creditors falling from the ceiling, rebounding like rubber dolls during the delivery of the mensaje final.[4]

Cuzzani strikes a satiric note very early in El centroforward murió al amanecer. The play opens in a public plaza where a vagabond is asleep on one of the benches. A guard approaches him to tell him he must move because a very important ceremony will be taking place shortly. The occasion turns out to be a hanging, and the guard has a responsible role to play, as he explains to the vagabond.

> GUARDIAN. -- ¡Y claro! Tengo que repartir los programas, acomodar a la gente, guardar el orden, dar las explicaciones del caso. (Muestra el fajo de programas en su bolsillo.) ¿Ve? Las entradas están rigurosamente numeradas y no se admiten vales ni permisos de favor. Todo está bien organizado. En fin...yo supongo que usted comprenderá...Es solamente por esta noche. Después, el banco seguirá a su entera disposición, como siempre.[5]

The absurdity of a printed program for an execution is in sharp contrast to the horror of it.

As the vagabond reveals the story, there is a satirical scene in which the Nahuel Soccer team returns to its clubhouse after a

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[4]Cuzzani, "Una libra de carne," epilogue, T.A.C., p. 65.

[5]Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., p. 72.

victorious game with fans and reporters mobbing the team members. As compared to this tumultuous interval, the next episode is more sober as Cacho visits with his Aunt Dominga about the financial problems of the Club and his strong attachment for the team. The arrival upon this scene of a creditor and two court officials again adds humor and satire to the situation as first they try to establish his identity, and then procede to inform him that he is being attached for the debts of his ball club. Cacho assures them that he is Arístides Garibaldi, the center forward of the Nahuel Athletic Club, and proves it by showing them his foot, "Y bueno. Este es el pie que hace los goles. Usted puede comprobar ..."[6] He finds it incredible that they wish to impound him, and asks:

GARIBALDI. -- ¿Qué quiere decir todo esto?

ACREEDOR. -- Una simple precaución, nada más. No puedo ponerme de acuerdo con el Presidente de su Club, sobre la forma de pago de mi crédito y toma esta medida para asegurarme. Una simple precaución, nada más.

GARIBALDI. -- No entiendo que clase de precaución es ésa. ¿Usted me embarga a mí?

ACREEDOR. -- Claro.

GARIBALDI. -- Es decir no embarga mi sueldo, ni mis muebles, ni mi ropa. ¡Me embarga a mí![7]

The second act takes place in Lupus' palace, and contains a great deal of farcical humor as Garibaldi meets the other members of Lupus' collection, Nora, the ballerina, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, the Professor, and King Kong. When Garibaldi tries to explain the game of football to Hamlet it produces an extremely funny interlude.

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[7] Ibid.

HAMLET. -- ... y ahora, explícame, extranjero, ¿qué es foot-ball?

GARIBALDI. -- Pues el foot-ball es un juego. Consiste en correr con una pelota y meterla en un arco defendido por los contrarios. Juegan once contra once.

HAMLET. (pensativo) -- Comprendo. Y ... tú hacías eso?

GARIBALDI. -- Sí, siempre, Es mi especialdad.

HAMLET. -- Creo,entenderte. ¿Y ... para qué lo hacías?

GARIBALDI. (cortado) -- Y...para nada...Es el deporte a la gente le gusta. Es el deporte del pueblo. Cientos de miles de personas enloquecen por el.[8]

Garibaldi does not fare much better with King Kong. He tries playing catch with him, but King Kong runs off with the ball. This comic tone is in definite contrast to the next scene in which a depressed Cacho reveals to Nora his desire and determination to escape from Lupus' palace. This desire leads to the murder of Lupus which occurs while at the same time in the background the audience hears the deafening noise of the crowd shouting, "Garibaldi, pum," followed by the delirious announcement that Lalo Pelliciari has scored a goal. Thus the excitement of the soccer game is superimposed upon the horror of the murder. The execution which follows the murder and the trial is another satire, this time on Yankee commercialization. The Cannis Company Limited is sponsoring the spectacle, replete with an announcer and a singing commercial. For such a special occasion, Señor and Señora Cannis make a personal appearance to promote their product.

SR. CANNIS. -- Señoritas: Sólo he de decir unas breves palabras que me dicta la emoción de este momento. Y ellas son a propósito de la utilización de las sogas marca...

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[8] Ibid., p. 96.

CORO DE LOS TRES. (cantan) -- ¡Cannis Company Limited!

SR. CANNIS. -- ...En la ejecución pública de criminales. También fabricamos sogas de ocho cabos para pasear perros. ...

SRA. CANNIS. -- ...De dos cabos para atar paquetes...

SR. CANNIS. -- ...Especiales para pescar...

SRA. CANNIS. -- ... Y para remontar barriletes...

SR. CANNIS. -- Y siempre una soga para usted, marca...

CORO DE LOS TRES (en pleno swing.) -- ¡Cannis Company limited!

SR. CANNIS. -- ...Como pueden comprobar viendo este muestrario cuyos precios podemos proporcionar a los interesados, una vez que termine este lindo acto. Nuestra firma se cree en el deber de declarar su... (Vacila, Mira a la Sra. Cannis) How do you say happiness in Spanish?[9]

At the end of this humorous commercial, Garibaldi launches into his monologue whose somber tones are in direct opposition to the merry mood of a few moments earlier.

In addition to the alternating, and at times simultaneous, scenes of comedy and sobriety, Cuzzani also accomplishes a contrapuntal effect by the juxtaposing of opposite characters, such as Garibaldi and Lupus, and the contrast of beauty and the beast in the characters of Nora and King Kong. There is also the antithesis of Hamlet and Garibaldi, to whom he refers as the anti-Hamlet.

The playwright carries over this technique of counterpoint into his next play, Los indios estaban cabreros, where upon a background of hunger and beatings he superimposes humerous notes, which are at times

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[9] Ibid., p. 111.

carried to the ridiculous. For example, in the empire of Axayaca it is unlawful for miners to open their eyes outside of the mines. Teuche has disobeyed this law and seeks help for his burning eyes. The old hag Quepuxilanxuacoxetal gives him the following advice: "Mójatelos con agua fría y no mires al sol de frente, y además cállate la boca; que el ruido de los latigazos que te dará, me hará doler las orejas."[10] The poverty of the people is extreme, and heavy taxes further oppress them. A comic situation makes this clear when the town crier announces a new tax.

> PREGONERO. -- ...México: Décimo segundo día del décimo quinto mes del año 12 de las Cañas de la Octava Gavilla. Se ha establecido un nuevo impuesto en todo el territorio del país. Se refiere a los mendigos y limosneros y establece que dada la falta de bienes y propriedades los mendigos deberán juntar y entregar al recaudador official cada dos meses, una bolsa de piojos que serán sacrificados cada dos meses en holocausto a la divinidad...[11]

Farcical humor dominates the second act as Manuel the fisherman catches the three Indians in his net, and thus assumes that they are fish. This leads to many amusing situations, such as when they are taken to the Inquisition investigators and arrive there in a large tin can.

> CURA II. -- ¡Válgame Dios! ¿qué es eso?
>
> INFORMANTE. -- Son, los procesados...
>
> CURA III. -- ¿Y están ahí dentro?
>
> INFORMANTE. -- En efecto. Como se trataba de peces y debíamos conservarles hasta hoy a dos meses largos de la pesca consultamos a varios especialistas. Todos coincidieron en que esta era la mejor forma de conservarles. El aceite es por supuesto..de oliva.[12]

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[10] Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 127.

[11] Ibid., p. 128. [12] Ibid., p. 150.

The droll tone of this scene before the church tribunal differs greatly from the impression the three Indians present on their journey to prison. This trip is extremely unpleasant and disillusioning for the three because their guards constantly beat them. The crowds who turn out to see the famous peces during the course of their journey produce a circus-like atmosphere which serves to heighten the contrapuntal effect between the suffering of the Indians on the one hand, and the entertainment and exuberance of the crowd on the other.

A mood of optimism prevails during the first part of the third act as Mariceleste has had a favorable response from her audience with the Queen. Thus the three Indians have high hopes of carrying an intellectual revolution to the New World. This cheerful outlook suddenly changes when Don Pero mentions that Queen Isabel will be involved in the project, and Don Lope adds that along with civilization and science will go the arms of conquest. A serious debate ensues on the pros and cons of the proposed journey to the New World, and Tupa agonizes in his dilemma of wanting to bring a better life to his people via science and knowledge, but of wanting to spare them the suffering that will be inevitable as a result of the conqueror's sword. In the midst of this struggle, an interlude between the police and Columbus introduces a bit of comic relief.

POLICIA. -- ¡Eh usted!

COLON. -- ¿Qué desea, buen hombre?

POLICIA. -- ¡Documentos!

COLON. -- ¿Quién es usted para pedirlo?

POLICIA. -- (Mostrando una medalla y abriendo su libreta.) ¡Policía! (Pausa.) ¿Cómo se llama usted?

COLON. -- Ah...la cosa no es muy clara. Me llaman Cristóbal Colón, o Xhristopherens Columbus, o Colombo, o Colono, o Colom, o...[13]

The author again introduces counterpoint at the end of the play just when it appears that everyone will live happily ever after. Tupa interjects a sudden note of disquietude when he makes an unusual request of the Queen, "Quiero volver a la cárcel. Pronto vencerá el plazo para morir en la hoguera."[14]

By maintaining the spirit of farce throughout Sempronio Cuzzani makes the contrast at the end even more startling than in his previous works where he introduced contrapuntal effects much earlier. As the action towards the end of the third act closely parallels that at the end of the first act, with the High Commissioner's discovery of Sempronio's radioactivity, the expectation is that the comic farce will also continue as before. The sudden switch to the serious which Sempronio's monologue on the subject of love accomplishes, is so startling that it creates dramatic impact. The works preceding Sempronio all began on a note of comedy and ended on a tragic note. Sempronio follows a similar course, except that here the serious replaces the tragic element with no notable lessening of dramatic impact.

In Para que se cumplan las escrituras Cuzzani reverses this pattern, for here the play begins with the tragedy of Manuel's death and then changes to a satiric note as the evangelists begin the task of recording his story.

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[13] Ibid., p. 171.

[14] Ibid., p. 175.

MATEO. -- "Porque vendrá el día de Yavé de los Ejércitos sobre los soberbios y los altivos, y serán abatidos".

JUAN. -- (A Marcos, burlón.) El don de la profecía no fue dado .. los bebedores de té con limón. (Bebe.)

MATEO, -- (Leyendo y escribiendo. Pero más fuerte.) "...y sobre los cedros del Líbano, altos y sublimes, y...(Marcando)...sobre todos los alcornoques de Bazán. (Juan se vuelve como para reaccionar contra Mateo. Marcos le toma un brazo.)

JUAN. -- ¡Me dijo alcornoque! ¡Ninguna tortuga de sacristía me ha llamado a mí alcornoque![15]

The author continues this contrapuntal effect throughout the play by means of alternating scenes involving Manuel, the students Kery, Tomas, and Pedro, and Estrella on the one hand, and the Evangelists Mateo, Marcos, Lucas, and Juan, on the other. The situations involving Manuel are somber, while those concerned with the evanglists are at times serious, but often disintegrate into the satiric. An example of this follows the scene at the Bar Cinco Esquinas where they have just witnessed the students testing their computer's accuracy. The four are discussing what they have just seen when Mateo begins ardently shouting biblical prophecies which angers Juan who picks up a chair with the intention of throwing it at Mateo. Marcos, placing himself between the two, grabs a chair while Lucas takes a table with both hands and noisily places it next to Mateo's.

JUAN. -- ¡Basta, murciélago de campanario! Lagarto pálido de charcos proféticos! ¡Vieja bolsa de podredumbres!

MATEO. -- (Sin deternerse.) ¡Por tanto Yavé de los Ejércitos enviará flaqueza sobre los gordos y debajo

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[15]Agustín Cuzzani, Para que se cumplan las escrituras (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quetzal, 1965), p. 19.

de su gloria encenderá incendio como ardor de fuego!

JUAN. -- ¡Repartidor de almorranas! ¡Sembrador de langostas! ¡Viejo esputo!

MARCOS. -- ¡Silencio los dos! Debiera darles vergüenza reñir como ninos perdiendo toda noción de respeto y olvidando que cada hombre es sagrado en sus opiniones constructivas desde que hay libertad en el mundo.[16]

A short period of complete chaos follows this speech with all four men talking at once. Then suddenly all are silent, and as the dialogue continues a sober group now enters upon a serious conversation. The vacillating moods in this work are all the more disconcerting since they often occur suddenly within the same group of characters. Thus counterpoint also occurs not so much as the result of contrasting characters, but as the result of contradictions within characters.

Another technique which Cuzzani uses effectively in his works is that of the chorus. He does not employ the chorus, as in Greek plays, to advance the story through narration, but rather as a rhythmic emphasis of mood or idea. Often the language the chorus uses is nonsensical, based upon rhyme and rhythm.

In Una libra de Carne a chorus of the spectators emphasizes public sentiment, and as the Judge orders the presentation of Elías Beluver and the ushers accordingly call his name, the chorus echoes the call.

CORO (interior)-- ¡Beluver! ¡Eluver! ¡Luver! ¡Lías Luver! ¡Uver! ¡Uver! ¡Uver! (Las voces se pierden...).

CORO DEL PUBLICO. -- ¡Ha llegado el procesado! ¡Está presente el delicuente! ¡Ha estafado, ha defraudado![17]

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[16] Ibid., p. 32.

[17] Cuzzani, "Una libra de carne," T.A.C., p. 30.

As the prosecuting attorney presents the charges against Beluver, the chorus picks out and emphasizes certain points, being especially repetit.. .s of last lines.

ACUSADOR. -- ... Habría que ahorcarle, pulverizarle, aniquilar hasta el recuerdo de sus fechorías, para que no quede rastro de su obra. Un hombre así, no es un hombre. Es la incarnación del mal integral, del horro definitivo. ¡Es un maldito! (Hay gran agitación en el público. Algunos se han puesto de pie, amenazan con el puño. Vociferan, alborotan, puede oírse el Coro)

CORO DEL PUBLICO. -- ¡A matarlo, a quemarlo, a lincharlo, a niquilarlo! ¡Ha robado, ha estafado, ha defraudado! ...

ACUSADOR. -- ... Félizamente, aunque sólo fuera mera formula, mi cliente, el honrado comerciante don Tomás Shylock García, hizo firmar a Elías Beluver un compromiso, por el que en caso de no pagar la deuda, deberá dejarse cortar a beneficio del acreedor, una libra de carne.

PUBLICO Y JURADO. (Coro) -- ¡Una libra de carne!

ACUSADOR. -- ... Sólo una triste y flaca libra de carne de Elías Beluver, por la cual mi cliente ha pagado cuatro mil doscientos trece pesos.

PUBLICO (Coro) -- ¡Cuatro mil doscientos trece pesos![18]

Besides this use as reinforcement, Cuzzani also uses the chorus to help create the atmosphere of mechanization. In the scene which shows Beluver waiting for the bus, the chorus helps emphasize the feeling of oppression which mechanization produces in his daily life.

CORO DE PASAJEROS. (inclinándose para ver si viene el omnibus). -- ¡Ahí viene! ¡No, no viene! ¡Sí, viene! ¡No, no viene!

UNO. -- ¡Con tal que no venga atrasado!

CORO. -- ¡Qué no venga atrasado!

OTRO. -- ¡Inventemos una excusa!

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[18] Ibid., p. 32.

CORO. -- ¡Una excusa! ¡Una excusa! ¡Esa nos conviene!

. . . . . .

OTRO. -- ¡Los patrones no creen nunca nada!

CORO. (con terror) -- ¡Los patrones, los patrones, los patrones!

. . . . . .

CORO. -- No llegamos, no llegamos.

. . . . . .

CORO. -- ¡Maldición! ¡No llegamos! Los patrones, los patrones! ¡Malditos sean los patrones![19]

The chorus's final speech in this scene builds upon the previous refrains, incorporating them into one.

The chorus also produces an atmosphere of mechanization in El centroforward murió al amanecer. "La marcha militar de los carpinteros al comienzo del primer acto, su trabajo ronda y al compás de un canto casi ritual, es claro testimonio."[20] The carpenters' song is based on the old nursery rhyme, "Los maderos de San Juan." Their march, together with the rhythm with which they work and sing creates a mechanized effect.

CARPENTERISIMO. -- ¡Comenzad! (El coro se coloca en ronda de uno en fondo, formando un círculo. Cada uno blande su herramienta y comienzan a caminar rítmicamente. Medio agachados e incorporándose de súbito, como una danza indígena, sacudiendo en el aire serruchos, formones, martillos, etc. En el círculo que marca la ronda va surgiendo lenta y mágicamente, como surgen los picos de las montañas en los terremotos, un patíbulo ya construído. Mientras se eleva lentamente en el aire, la ronda continúa su paso marcado, cantando con voz ritual y pastosa).

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[19] Ibid., pp. 36-37.

[20] Hebe Campanella, "El hoy y el aquí en el teatro argentino de los últimos veinte años," Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, Vol. 78, No. 234 (June, 1969), p. 637.

CORO-RONDA -- ¡Al serrucho, al cepillo, a los clavos que entierra el martillo! ¡A la lima, al formón, aserrín, aserrán, aserrón!
A la escuadra, al garlopín aserrón, aserrán, aserrín.[21]

In the middle of the first act of El centroforward a chorus of soccer fans appears which shows the aficionados and their adulation of Garibaldi. This hero-worship is not for the individual, the real Garibaldi, but for his skill in the game. As such it is rather superficial and slightly hysterical.

CORO DE HINCHAS. -- Siento ruído de pelota
Y no sé, y no sé lo que será.
Es el Cacho Garibaldi
Que al Nahuel
Que al Nahuel hizo ganar![22]

The chorus' refrain, "Garibaldi pum!" echoes throughout the scene, and then the Vagabond takes it up at the end of the act to add an ironic note.

GUARDIAN. -- ¡Eh! ¿De qué se ríe? (El vagabundo lo mirá divertido) ¿Usted se estaba riendo solo?

VAGABUNDO. -- ¿Sabe qué pasa?

GUARDIAN. -- No.

VAGABUNDO. -- Garibaldi.

GUARDIAN. -- ¿Quién?

VAGABUNDO. -- Garibaldi ...

GUARDIAN. -- No entiendo nada. ¿Qué pasa con Garibaldi?

VAGABUNDO. (estallando en risa). -- ¡Pum![23]

This refrain appears again in the second act when Cacho arrives at Lupus' palace. Here he receives the greeting from the chorus of Nora,

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[21]Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., p. 74.

[22]Ibid., p. 79. [23]Ibid., pp. 88-89.

King Kong, the Professor, and Hamlet.

CORO. -- Celebremos que ha llegado Garibaldi;
¡Pum!
Garibaldi;
¡Pum!
Garibaldi;
¡Pum!
Celebremos que ha llegado Garibaldi;
¡Pum!
Garibaldi ¡pum! ¡pum! ¡pum![24]

The interpolation of the fans' choral refrain serves to point up the anonymity and loss of individualism of the inmates of Lupus' palace. The anonymous nature of a crowd of admirers is natural, and the author transfers that quality to the members of Lupus' collection by means of the repeated phrase.

The march of the miners in Los indios estaban cabreros similarly achieves the effect of mechanization which the march of the carpenters produces in El centroforward murió al amanecer. The miners give their recitation in a rhythmic monotone, almost like a litany, punctuated by whip lashes.

CORO DE MINEROS. -- Perla de fuego
rompe en la noche
su maravilla
sobre el mercado.
Llevan los indios
su minería
de lomos anchos,
de piel desnuda,
de ojos cerrados,
y en el silencio
y en el silencio
desesperado
TLAUSICALPAN.[25]

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[24] Ibid., p. 92.

[25] Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C. pp. 123-124.

At the end of the first act of Los indios estaban cabreros as the women are seeing the three Indians off on their voyage to the east, they give their petition to be presented to the Dios-Sol. The chorus of women repeats these petitions singly and then altogether, thus reenforcing the ideas.

MUJER II. -- ¡Qué no haya más hambre!

MUJER I. -- ¡Qué no haya más muertes!

TODOS. -- ¡Qué no haya más hambre!

TODOS. -- ¡Qué no haya más muertes!

MUJER II. -- ¡Qué no haya más fríos!

TODOS. -- ¡Qué no haya más guerras,
qué no haya más llantos,
qué todo sea amor ... ![26]

The second act takes place in Spain and in the opening scene there is another chorus of women, this time Spanish women speaking with a decided Spanish accent. These women are asking the protection of Santa Bárbara for their fishermen husbands; so as in the case of the Indian women, theirs is a chorus of petition.

MUJER III. -- El hombre que fue de pesca.

MUJER IV. -- La mujer en la casa,

CORO. -- Santa Bárbara nos tenga
Nos proteja Santa Bárbara
Patrona de las tormentas,
Señora de las borrascas,

MUJER I. -- ¡Con mar calma!

MUJER II. -- ¡Con mar gruesa!

CORO. -- ¡Con mar gruesa, con mar calma!

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[26] Ibid., p. 138.

MUJER III. -- ¡Qué el hombre se fue de pesca!

MUJER IV. -- ¡Qué la su mujer le aguarda!

CORO. -- Señora de las esperas,
¡Santa Bárbara, Santa Bárbara![27]

The march of the fishermen in the second act is in sharp contrast to the march of the miners in the first act. Instead of the monotone the miners used, the fishermen chant vigourously and happily. The mood is one of optimism and joy rather than pessimism and sadness.

CORO DE PESCADORES. -- ¡Mar bonanza y largo viento,
y buen viaje y salvamento!
¡Aquí, de los pescadores!
¡Fuertes velas, fuertes homes!
Si con San Nicolás
Va la barca a la mar
Lleva el cielo delante
y los vientos detrás.
¡A la mar, marinero
a la mar, a la mar
Que la aurora en el puerto
aguardándote está.[28]

Cuzzani's use of the chorus produces impressionistic effects, both through visual imagery and rhythmic chanting. He also creates these effects through the use of various staging techniques, such as lighting, stage props, and costuming. The situación-espectáculo is another expressionistic mode in that it presents a visual impression of man's degradation. Thus the appearance of Elías Beluver in a circus cage, of Cacho Garibaldi on the auction block, of the three Indians in the fishing net, and of Sempronio replete with wires and cables, all present vivid visual images.

Producers have accomplished different interpretations of these works by changing the scenography. For example, in one production of

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[27] Ibid., p. 140. [28] Ibid., p. 141.

Una libra de carne, Beluver's bedroom becomes a pivotal point. "De ella depende la ubicación social del Protagonista, marcándose por este medio si se lo interpreta como un obrero proletario, como un empleado de clase media, o hasta como un abúlico angustiado y enfermizo."[29] The use of a revolving stage in a production of El centroforward murió al amanecer allowed for a quick and complete change of scenery. Other changes in interpretation involve suppression or change of emphasis on character. Some productions of Una libra de carne suppressed the characters of the newspaper woman and the photographer, while others shifted the emphasis away from them by eliminating their dialogue and having them only take photographs. Certain presentations of El centroforward eliminated Hamlet's monologue entirely, while others translated the English portion into the language of the audience. Still another production put all of Hamlet's speeches into English, thus isolating him from the rest of the characters. Another change in El centroforward involved the use of the football fans of the first act as spectators seated on stage throughout the entire play.[30]

Throughout his works Cuzzani makes extensive use of lighting effects to produce moods. In Una libra de carne alone there are some 180 lighting changes by means of which the rhythm of the action reaches its maximum intensity. "La luz, en 'crescendo' o 'minuendo', marcaba a la manera de un latido rítmico, en el contrapunto entre Elías Beluver serio y su contorno colorido y farsesco."[31] In those plays where several

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[29]Cuzzani, Epilogue, "Una libra de carne," T.A.C., p. 65.

[30]Cuzzani, Epilogue, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., pp. 114-115.

[31]Cuzzani, Epilogue, "Una libra de carne," T.A.C., p. 63.

scenes divide the stage, the lighting serves to move the action from one scene to the next, as in El centroforward when the Vagabond begins narrating Garibaldi's story. As the Vagabond points to one angle of the stage, the lights come up brilliantly illuminating it, revealing a large radio sitting on a table with two fans entering the scene and installing themselves next to the radio to listen to the game. As the scene shifts back to the narrator, the voice fades and the lights go out. After the Vagabond relates more of the story, the lights again rise at the same place, and the broadcast of the game resumes until the light begins diminishing and finally goes out, returning the story again to the Vagabond. As he tells of the mounting debts of the ball club, lights go on in various parts of the stage, telephones ring, and lights reveal hands and faces of the creditors, while on center stage the lights show the president of the ball club holding a telephone.

A fantasy sequence which takes place towards the end of the second act achieves its dreamlike quality from the use of lighting. As Garibaldi's companions leave him on their way to greet a group of tourists, he puts his head in his hands and as the light decreases until only a single bright thread touches his head, he begins to hear a fantasmal chorus chanting, "Garibaldi, pum!" The illumination of a corner of the stage reveals a grandstand filled with fans while vendors run back and forth. As the chorus continues its chanting, the lights suddenly go out only to reappear dimly in another part of the stage where Garibaldi's Aunt Dominga appears, advancing towards him with a maté in her hand. As she offers him the maté, the light shifts from her to a spot on stage where a ray of light shows a cage with a canary which begins to sing.

The light again goes out and a brief silence follows before it goes on again, this time following a couple as they dance across the stage. These effects of brightening and dimming the lights continue revealing various other scenes, such as a boy with a football, Hamlet, the official and the auctioneer from the previous act, Lupus, a tourist, and finally Aunt Dominga once again. As she calls to Cacho the stage directions show a rising crescendo of emotions, "Hay un remolino de coros, silbatos de referee, gritos de cancha, latigazos de Lupus, músicas diversas. Todo junto y en sombras. Se hace un silencio. La luz vuelve a la normal."[32] The shift from the shadows to the light denotes the change from the unreal world of the imagination back to reality.

Lighting also serves in this play and others as the focal point for the action. Thus at the moment when Garibaldi strangles Lupus the lights gradually dim until the stage is in complete darkness. At that point the Vagabond lights a cigar, drawing attention to himself as he comments upon what has happened. This also changes the mood from one highly charged with emotion to a calm and detached one.

In the final scene of El centroforward murió al amanecer lighting is again of major significance. Here Garibaldi ascends the gallows, and as he delivers his final speech a thread of light begins to touch his face, gradually illuminating it. As he speaks the light becomes brighter and brighter, giving the appearance of light radiating from his face.

A similar effect occurs at the end of Los indios estaban cabreros when the chorus begins shouting, "Tlausicalpán" as the lights go up

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[32]Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., p. 103.

illuminating Tupa. This play also uses lighting effects to accompany scene changes. Whereas the setting of the first act is entirely in the light, the second act begins at night, an hour before dawn. The fishermen's wives, waiting for their husbands, carry candles. Thus the first view of the three Indians caught in the net is by candlelight. As the scene shifts from Manuel and María to the washerwomen, the lights in one part of the stage dim while they go up in another part. This pattern continues throughout the rest of the play.

Sempronio, having fewer scene changes does not use lighting effects to any great extent. Only at the beginning of the last act do the lights play an important role in achieving a montage effect. As the scene opens various groups are gathered in front of the Defensores de Balvanera Club in a rally for Sempronio. His son Diego is delivering a speech to the group, and in the middle of it the lights go out. Then an old man lights a candle and relates that he has heard that all the lights of the neighborhood have been cut off in order to break up the meeting because public acts are not permitted in the dark. His candle goes out and everything remains in blackness until the audience hears Susanita crying. As she advances the lights appear.

Cuzzani again uses lighting extensively to accompany scene changes in Para que se cumplan las escrituras. The rapidity and number of transitions makes the lighting technician's job an intricate one. In addition to shifting the place of action, lighting also accomplishes special effects in this work. The play opens in semi-darkness with only the silhouettes of three men discernible. This produces a furtive effect and a feeling of dastardly deeds done in the dark. As the curtain opens the

lights illuminate one corner of the setting revealing a dead Manuel, stretched out upon the broken computer. The use of various colored lights creates a plastic image of the crucifixion. Lighting again becomes expressionistically important in the scene where Manuel pulls the computer's main switch and receives a copy of the Beatitudes. At that moment the light focuses on Manuel giving the appearance of a halo around his head.

The symbolism which lighting and other scenic effects thus produce is characteristic of Cuzzani's plays, and certain symbols are recurring in his works, particularly the dawn and the cross. The symbolism of the dawn first appears at the end of El centroforward murió al amanecer when Garibaldi makes his speech about the dawn as a symbol of new day, and therefore of hope. The dawn appears visually, and in so doing projects the symbol of the cross.

> Cacho Garibaldi muere, pero anuncia la aurora, 'toda ella llena de luz y de pájaros.' ... Aurora en la que los maderos del patíbulo en que muere Cacho son simbolicamente dos maderos en forma de cruz.[33]

Cuzzani carries the symbol of the dawn over into his next play, Los indios estaban cabreros; and when the two works are read consecutively, the feeling prevails that the one begins where the other left off. As the play opens the first light of the dawn appears and continues growing throughout the entire scene until it reaches the intensity of the full light of day. Added to this visual symbol of the dawn is the auditory image which the rhythmic shouting of Tlausicalpán, followed by

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[33]Carlos Miguel Suárez Radillo, "Tema y problema en el teatro hispanoamericano," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, Vol. 46, No. 138 (June, 1961), p. 399.

the chanting of the poem to the dawn produces. The symbol appears again at the end of the play when don Pero carves the word Tlausicalpán on the wall of the cell, and the chorus takes up the shouting of the word as in the beginning.

The symbolism of the cross returns in Para que se cumplan las escrituras. Here the computer is in the shape of a cross, and thus Manuel's lifeless body draped upon it is symbolic of the crucifixion. In fact the entire play is an allegory on one level, and the story of Christ eveolves symbolically in the course of the work. Thus the scene in which Manuel first meets the students who have invented the computer, represents the temptation of Christ. Here the members of the group present their offers to Manuel in a phantasmagorical interlude. The hands of the characters who are offering the temptation enter and leave a cone of light.

KERY. -- Si eres valiente, toda la adventura de la vida.

PEDRO. -- Si eres cauto, toda la verdad de la piedra.

TOMAS. -- Si eres soñador, toda la poesía del mundo.

PEDRO. -- Si eres ambicioso, todas las perlas del mar.

KERY. -- Si eres intrépido, todo el poder de los ejércitos.

TOMAS. -- Si eres filósofo, toda la luz del pensamiento.

PEDRO. -- ¡Alas para que vueles!

KERY. -- ¡Noche para que sueñes!

TOMAS. -- ¡Vida para que cantes!

LOS TRES. -- (Atacan todos al mismo tiempo, componiendo en conjunto una especie de masa coral a tono de murmullo, de fondo, que continúa, ...) Bronce de campanas, rayo de sol, viento caliente, triunfo de los clarines, beso de las auroras, mano de todos los amigos, calle de todos

los encuentros, espiga, mármol, laurel, fantasía, música y vuelo de golondrinas de estío, tuyo, tuyo, tuyo.[34]

After Manuel has worked with the computer he becomes concerned about its accuracy, and thus begins to have doubts about his freedom and his ability to overcome the predicted death. In a parody of the Lord's Prayer, he offers a supplication to the computer.

MANUEL. -- No olvides que es mi propia vida la que está en juego. (Señala la máquina) Allí hay alguién que ama a los hombres y quiere morir por ellos. (Volviendo a la máquina en un acto de contricción.) Hermano mío Manuel que estás en el número, muéstranos cual es tu fuerza y tu credo. Dime por quién hay que morir. y cuál es la grandeza de tu ideal. Toma la palanca general.) Y que sea dicha entre tú y yo la palabra que trae la vida o la muerte...[35]

The scene in which Manuel finally does throw the main switch symbolizes the transfiguration, as the lighting effects are used to produce an image of Manuel radiating light. It is also at this point that Manuel reads the computer's print-out containing the Beatitudes and other portions from the Sermon on the Mount. Following this Manuel angrily throws out the professors who have come seeking the machine for their own profit, thus paralleling Jesus' action in driving the money-lenders out of the Temple.

PEDRO. -- Vamos de aquí señores profesores. Este es completamente inexplicable.

MANUEL. -- (Grita mientras salen) ¡Fuera de aquí, mercachifles! ¡Esto es un templo y no un mercado! (Con una mano en alto, como para castigar...)[36]

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[34]Cuzzani, Para que se cumplan las escrituras, p. 43.

[35]Ibid., p. 62.

[36]Ibid., p. 67.

As the story proceeds Pedro's denial of Manuel takes place when Pedro goes to the newspaper editor to state that he is not responsible for the actions of Manuel. Another biblical allusion occurs when Kery rebukes Manuel for his treatment of Estrella.

> KERY. -- ... No sé qué es lo que estás haciendo ni dónde quieres ir a parar. Parece como si te hubieras vuelto loco y te divertiese contrariar a Estrella y también a mí. No sé para qué lo haces ni lo entiendo bien, pero no lo apruebo. Y no tienes por qué decirle a Estrella que es tu mamá y todas esas cosas. (Sale enfurruñado.)
>
> MANUEL. -- (Lentamente deja de sonreír.) Madre ... mujer ... Yo ya no tengo madre ni mujer, ni hermanos ni nadie. Todos pertenecen al otro Manuel. Él que ama los rebaños y tiene una madre electrónica concebida sin amor. Que tiene hermanos sin carne ni sangre ni nombre, y que morirá dentro de cuarenta y ocho horas para redimir un mundo absurdo ...[37]

This speech approximates that made by Jesus when told that his mother and brothers were waiting for him. "'Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?' He looked over the people sitting around him and said, 'Look! Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does what God wants him to do is my brother, my sister, my mother.'" (Mark 3:33).

Towards the end of the play the students, Estrella, and Manuel partake of a supper together which is the equivalent of the Last Supper, with a few notable differences. Estrella serves it, and the bread in this more modern version is pizza. Manuel then makes a long speech which reveals the struggle within himself between his desire for freedom and his desire to free mankind. This speech in tone and idea is quite similar to that of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.

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[37] Ibid., pp. 72-73.

The first and last scene of the drama present a visual image of the crucifixion, showing Manuel's lifeless body, with his head fallen to one side, supported by the cross-shaped computer. This image both sets the stage for the play and summarizes it symbolically.

Another aspect of dramatic technique is speech and language. The main rhetorical rule in realistic drama is that speech is character-determined, and not given for effect unless naturally motivated.[38] In the new theatre this idea has virtually been turned upside down. As problems of communication have developed, the conventional use of language to convey ideas has dinimished. In extreme cases language has been reduced to nonsense words and phrases, while in its milder forms it has lost its monopoly as the conveyor of ideas, with visual imagery and symbolism supplementing it.

In his use of language, Cuzzani runs the full gamut from sermonizing monologues to nonsense phrases, and from everyday speech patterns to lyricism. His use of language as a tool to present and reinforce his ideas is primary, with character portrayal through speech assuming a more secondary role.

A good example of the use of nonsense language, in El centro-forward murió al amanecer, is the scene in the last act which portrays Garibaldi's trial. The three judges are ravens or crows, dressed in black togas.

JUEZ CUERVO (Al Fiscal Cuervo) -- ¡Cra, cra!

FISCAL CUERVO. (con gritos de furia) -- ¡Cra, cra, cracra-cra, cra, cra, cra!

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[38] John Gassner, Form and Idea in the Modern Theatre (New York: The Dryden Press, 1956), p. 40.

DEFENSOR CUERVO. (Con gestos de piedad) -- Cra, cra, cra, cra, cra, cra, cra, cra.

JUEZ CUERVO (A los dos llamándoles.) -- ¡Cra, cra! (Se juntan los tres y agitando sus picos graznan al mismo tiempo en tono rápido y progresivo.)[39]

Although the language makes no sense, as the Vagabond points out to the audience, it is easy to divine the sentence.

Another example appears in the second act of Los indios estaban cabreros in a scene depicting gossips. What they say makes no sense, but it gives the impression of gossip mongering.

RUMOR III, IV, Y V. -- ¡Se dice! ¡Se murmura!
¡Se sabe!
Se cuchichesecretecuchicheeeee.
Se secretecuchichesecretesecrete-
cuchicheaaa.
Secrete!
Cuchichi!
Secrete!
Cuchi cuchi!
Teeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeea!
¡Se dice! ¡se murmura! ¡mur mur
mureeeeeea! ¡se sabe![40]

While Cuzzani's characters often use the ordinary-speech that would be associated with them, this is not a hard and fast rule, and at times there is a change in the character's speech. Thus at the beginning of El centroforward murió al amanecer, Cacho Garibaldi uses the language typical of a dull athlete. However, by the end of the play he has shifted to a rather lyrical philosophical speech. Likewise the dialogue of the character Juan in Para que se cumplan las escrituras undergoes drastic changes as it moves from the serious to that of a drunk and back again to the sober.

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[39]Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., p. 110.

[40]Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 154.

Cuzzani also makes use of poetry and rhythm in his plays, particularly in the chorus. This rhythmic beat, combined with the visual imagery, helps create the expressionistic aspect of his theatre. The dramatic monologues generally contain a lyric element. Carlos Solórzano points particularly to the lyricism in Sempronio,

> El juego irónico ha sido pronunciado en esta obra y en ocasiones se desborda en situaciones de sainete, en las que aparecen expreciones del uso popular. Y sin embargo, toda ella contiene una profunda raíz humana, a la que vemos crecer paralela a la acción misma del drama, para concluir en una escena de exaltado lirisismo insospechada en la obra de este autor.[41]

Suárez-Radillo summarizes the style and language of the four farsátiras in his discussion of El centroforward. His observations may also be applied to the other farsátiras.

> Todas las bazas teatrales son juzgadas con acierto, y no es el menor, aunque la unidad expositiva pueda padecerlo, saltar, dentro del mismo tono de sátira, desde el realismo sainetesco con que se inicia la obra a la abstracción posterior, simbólica y deshumanizada, sin perder el pulso escénico y sin perder tampoco, salvo al final algo declamatorio y quizá innecesario, el tono de farsa más suave, incluso el habla y los modismos, pero no tan alejado de los "Esperpentos" de Valle-Inclán.[42]

Para que se cumplan las escrituras also contains a wide variety of language ranging from biblical quotations and philosophical parlance to colloquial slang. The chorus and the poetry are missing, but the down-to-earth language interspersed with lyricism still remains.

Cuzzani skillfully uses many of the techniques of the new theatre in his works. However, his is a balanced approach in that there is

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[41]Carlos Solórzano, Teatro latinoamericano en el siglo XX (Mexico, D.F.: Editorial Pormaca, 1964), p. 142.

[42]Suárez Radillo, op. cit., p. 399.

enough innovation to make the plays stimulating, but at the same time he never overdoes any one technique. The language in some plays of the absurd completely disintegrates into meaningless words or sounds which run throughout the performance. While Cuzzani uses nonsense words and phrases in his works, he does so sparingly and with the purpose of reinforcing the impression of the play rather than distracting from it. He also employs a wide variety of techniques within each play thus adding new dimensions and new horizons to his theatre.

CHAPTER V

CHARACTERIZATION

The characters in Cuzzani's dramas, like those of other contemporary works, while objectively valid, are not of themselves great characters. They tend to be representative of man, or various types of men in general, and as a portrayal of the human condition they at times verge on the allegorical.

Martin Esslin observes that in the new theatre the audience is confronted with characters whose motives and actions remain largely incomprehensible, and that it is almost impossible to identify with them.[1] In creating his characters, Cuzzani adheres to this prescription, thereby following the Brechtian tradition. Brecht advocated estrangement, opposing drama which draws the spectator inside until he experiences the action with the character.[2] By preventing the audience from empathizing

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[1]Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961), pp. 300-301.

[2]Raymond Williams, Drama from Ibsen to Brecht (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 278.

with the characters, Brecht was able to achieve the effect of alienation which was his particular contribution to the theatre.[3]

Cuzzani, like Brecht, makes use of estrangement in order to emphasize the moral relationship between the characters and the moral argument of the play.[4] The inability of the audience to identify with the characters produces in it a more critical analysis of the situation than is possible where there is subjective involvement.

Cuzzani achieves estrangement in various ways. The situación-espectáculo is one method whereby the absurdity of the situation immediately creates a gulf between the spectators and the characters on stage. Thus when Beluver makes his entrance in a circus cage, the audience at once suspends belief, and identification with him becomes virtually impossible.

Cuzzani also uses this method in his other farsátiras. In Los indios estaban cabreros, for example, the scene showing the Indians in the fisherman's net destroys any empathy the audience may have developed with them in the first act. The scene depicting the trio climbing out of a tin can serves to create even greater alienation. In Sempronio the very first glimpse the spectators have of the main character is so uniquely absurd as to prevent immediately any identification with him.

Cuzzani also accomplishes estrangement through the use of narration. Thus in El centroforward murió al amanecer the Vagabond breaks

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[3]Henry Adler, "Bertolt Brecht's Contribution to Epic Drama," Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama (John Gassner, ed.) (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 311.

[4]Ibid., pp. 310-311.

into the action with comments that are detached and at times mocking. This intrusion, while advancing the action, also breaks the tension and turns the audience from subjective involvement towards a more objective, critical observation. The author uses the same technique in Para que se cumplan las escrituras. Here the four evangelists, either seperately or in concert, intrude upon the scene with commentaries or with a sort of music-hall knock-about comedy.

The character's purpose determines to a great degree the type of character and character development the playwright uses. In the more traditional drama the characters exist only for the sake of the plot,[5] whereas in the thesis drama their main purpose is to promote the thesis. German expressionism, having as one of its themes man struggling against the social and political conditions that touched his life, had a tendency to develop allegorical or representative characters. Cuzzani's characterizations fall into this latter category with his characters assuming importance for the ideas they portray. Despite the rather set mold that such allegorical characters necessitate, Cuzzani's central figures often show an unexpected development, for while the dehumanizing elements of society are more or less static, man caught up in the throes of the technological era is not a fixed entity but capable of change. Thus Cuzzani tends to make use of two different methods of characterization within his plays.

In Una libra de carne the character of Elías Beluver represents that of a multitude of city-dwellers, leading an unauthentic, unrewarding,

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[5]Brandon Matthews, A Study of the Drama (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1910), p. 85.

and frustrating existence,

> cada uno con su egoísmo, enquistado en sí mismo, en su pequeño y miserable problema--, la vida sin atractivo que deja al hombre sin sangre, es decir, sin fuerza, sin empuje, sin acción sin ensueño, vacío, muerto ...[6]

Beluver fits well Harold Lubin's description of the anti-hero.

> The anti-hero takes many forms. Sometimes he is a mockery of the old hero forms, a poor slob fumbling his way through life exposing the incongruity of the heroic stance in a non-heroic world. . . But more basic, more pervasively characteristic of the anti-hero is his loss of purpose, his inability to find any meaningful direction to his life or to all human existance.[7]

The portrayal of his daily life depicts a mounting frustration made up of miniscule and insignificant details, such as the daily trauma of the bus ride to work, the discomfort of trying to read the newspaper on the bus, his employer's frequent criticism, and his wife's constant nagging.

Cuzzani cleverly develops the character of Beluver by showing the reactions of the other characters to him. Beluver himself never speaks a word, and yet the audience knows all about him from hearing the others's words to him and observing their attitudes. Beluver's lack of response to either his employers or his wife forcefully demonstrates his alienation. Señora Beluver reveals a great deal about her husband and his plight when she chastises him while he is preparing for work.

> SEÑORA BELUVER. -- ...A tus años ya deberías ser gerente de la firma, por lo menos. Tienes dieciocho años de antigüedad, ¿y qué has conseguido? Empezaste como tenedor de libros.y seguís siendo tenedor de libros. Si por lo

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[6]Angela Blanco Amores de Pagella, Nuevos temas en el teatro argentino (Buenos Aires: Editorial Huemul, 1964), p. 103.

[7]Harold Lubin, Heroes and Anti-Heroes (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1968), p. 311.

> menos hubieses hecho como el marido de la señora de Ricciardeli, que se independizó y tiene negocio por su cuenta. O como la señora de Zoppi ... La vi pasar en un auto como de una cuadra con chofer y todo. Y le daba órdenes con un teléfono. ¡Auto con teléfono! ¡Esa bruta! ¡Una cualquiera! ¿Y en cambio nosotros, qué tenemos? ...[8]

The fact that Beluver has no reaction to this criticism shows that it is a common occurrence, and that he is more or less resigned to his role in life. There is a silent frustration in his acceptance of her frequent tirades. He has the same lack of reaction to his employer's speeches which reinforces his spirit of resignation.

From the beginning of his story, Beluver is suffering from symptoms of alienation. Cuzzani accomplishes the disintegration and complete alienation of this character in several stages. First he shows the numerous creditors' harrassment of Beluver. His initial reaction is further withdrawal. But upon the appearance of Domínguez, Shylock García's representative, soliciting his loan, Beluver reacts violently, rushing at him in a rage. Beluver's docility and detachment up to this moment intensify the surprise at this sudden change in character. As the defense attorney points out, "Fue su último gesto de dignidad. Rechazar al prestamista, al usurero. Porque saber que esa hiena es insaciable y que pendiente sólo podía conducirlo a una catástrofe."[9]

The failure of this desperate and final effort to regain his dignity ensures a subsequent deeper alienation. The continued pressure

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[8]Agustín Cuzzani, "Una libra de carne," Teatro de Agustín Cuzzani (hereafter referred to as T.A.C.) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quetzal, 1960), p. 35.

[9]Ibid., p. 49.

from his creditors and his wife finally reaches such a pitch that Beluver cries out in his agony, uttering his only word in the entire play, "¡Basta!" and this one word summarizes his total frustration. By accepting a loan from Shylock García, Beluver seals his fate, and his circumstances go from bad to worse. When he suffers another heart attack, and the doctor forbids him to return to work, the hopelessness of his situation makes his alienation complete.

> DEFENSOR. -- ... Llegamos al final de la historia. Beluver ya no puede trabajar ni preocuparse. Ni siquiera oye la voz de su señora. (Entra la señora de Beluver y hace mímica de grande y severa reprimanda a su alrededor.) Esa señora que ahora dedica a contar los días, a enseñar el almanaque o el reloj a su marido. A mostrarle la bolsa vacía del mercado o el fondo de la cartera. Nada, Beluver ya no vive. Espera. Espera simplemente el broche de sangre para su destino...[10]

It is at this juncture that the police arrive and place Beluver in the cage, symbolizing his complete dehumanization. The portrait of a silent, unhearing, trance-like Beluver, and the visual image of him in the circus cage are far more expressive of his condition than any words could be, and Cuzzani successfully employs this type of imagery in his character portrayal.

The other characters in Una libra de carne are more stereotyped than Beluver, and thus exhibit little or no development. The members of the jury as well as the courtroom spectators represent various segments of society, and the author uses them as a basis for criticism of the particular groups to which they belong. The jurors all have their set notions and biases, although, like the Maestra, they believe themselves

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[10] Ibid., p. 55.

to be impartial.

> MAESTRA. (dando cátedra). -- Lo principal entre las personas que deben integrar un jurado es el equilibrio. La falta de todo extremismo nocivo y disolvente. Es necesario que examinen las cosas fríamente y se sepan colocar en el justo medio, que es la razón y la justicia. (Levanta una mano.) Por eso niños.[11]

The character of Beluver's wife develops through her speeches which reveal her as a rather unloving, selfish person, envious of her friends, and resentful of her husband's lack of success. Even during her husband's most desolate moments she shows no concern or sympathy for him, but continues her diatribe. When Beluver returns home from work, tired, depressed, and pursued by creditors, she greets him with complaints.

> SEÑORA BELUVER. -- Elías. Por fin llegas. Esto no puede seguir así. Estoy hasta la coronilla de acreedores y comerciantes que vienen día y noche a presentar cuentas. ¿En definitiva se puede saber si sos un hombre o un estropajo vos? ¿Será posible que a esta altura de la vida, cuando deberíamos nadar en la abundancia como los Amazzacanne o los Montefussar o los Belusci, tengamos que soportar humiliaciones?...[12]

The spectators and the chorus serve to create a farcical atmosphere, making it difficult to take the matter seriously until the interjection of the character of the Hombre in the final moments which abruptly shifts the tone. The Hombre introduces the didactic element of the play, raising questions and commenting upon society's role in Beluver's degradation. The fact that Cuzzani does not introduce this character earlier in the play adds to the impact, and his bitter condemnation of society is in sharp contrast with the burlesque of a few moments before.

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[11] Ibid., p. 24.

[12] Ibid., p. 48.

El centroforward murió al amanecer is again a type of allegory which depicts man's loss of his highest quality, "su individualidad, su dignidad de persona, porque puede ser vendido y comprado, porque puede pasar a ser propiedad de poderoso, cuyo capricho determina la formación de colecciones humanas."[13] The character of Cacho Garibaldi represents man and is the expression of his struggle to affirm himself as such. Garibaldi, like Beluver is a victim of society, but unlike Beluver, who resigns himself to his fate, Cacho develops a determination to fight.

Although Garibaldi is a symbolic character, he is not a static character, and as Brecht advocated, Cuzzani shows Garibaldi producing himself in the course of action, and therefore subject to criticism and to change.[14] Cuzzani first presents him as a typical athlete whose actions are spontaneous and practical. This caricature of Garibaldi depicts him more or less as an automoton, responding in a conditioned manner to the chorus of fans.[15] The reporter's interview with him serves to demonstrate Garibaldi's mentality.

> GARIBALDI. -- (toma el micrófono que le tiende el Repórter. Es un gesto mecánico. Un refiejo condicionado. Sonríe.) Estimados oyentes, buenas tardes. Quiero enviar un saludo a la afición deportiva, a todos los simpatizantes de nuestro querido Club y especialmente a mi tía Dominga, y a mi sobrinito Cachín que me estarán escuchando, y en general a todos los que me alientan con su aliento.
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> REPORTER. -- ¿Algunos impresiones sobre el match, Garibaldi?

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[13]de Pagella, op. cit., p. 103.

[14]Williams, op. cit., p. 278.

[15]Alyce de Kuehne, "Hamlet y el concepto del 'personaje' Pirandelliano en una farsa de Agustín Cuzzani," Cuadernos Americanos, Vol. 162, No. 1 (Enero-Febrero, 1969), 212.

GARIBALDI. -- Y ... el partido fue ...

REPORTER. -- ¡Dice Garibaldi que el partido fue muy movido!

GARIBALDI. -- El equipo jugó ...

REPORTER. -- ¡Dice que el equipo jugó muy bien!

GARIBALDI. -- Estamos muy contentos.

REPORTER. -- Y que están muy contentos de haber ganado. ¿Alguna cosita más, Garibaldi?

GARIBALDI. -- Nada más y muchas gracias.[16]

Garibaldi's world soon changes, and he is greatly disturbed when Lupus purchases him. What most upsets him at first is the fact that he will not be able to play football.

GARIBALDI. (rechaza con un gesto). -- ¿Quiere decir que todo el mundo va a venir a mirarme y dar vueltas alrededor como si yo fuera un bicho raro? ¡Yo quiero jugar al football![17]

As Lupus explains the situation Cacho gradually comes to realize that he is actually a prisoner, and while football is still uppermost in his mind, a gradual awakening of other sensitivities begins.

GARIBALDI. -- Pero entonces estoy prisionero. ¡Entonces usted me ha secuestrado!

LUPUS. -- ¿Secuestrado? ¿Prisionero? ... ¡Vamos! Pago un millón setecientos mil pesos por tí, te traigo a mi palacio, te ofrezco todos los placeres, la compañía de las mejores piezas de mi colección, te digo que estoy orgulloso de ti, y sólo porque no puedes visitar un club mugriento y una tía de lo más vulgar, te crees prisionero. (Pausa.) Tendrás que amoldarte a nuestro modo de vida. (Marca el mutis) Bueno, ahora te dejo. Instálate cómodo. (Ofrece) ¿Fumas?

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[16]Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., p. 80.

[17]Ibid., p. 93.

GARIBALDI. -- ¡No! ¡Yo quiero irme! ¡Yo quiero mi libertad!

LUPUS. -- ¿Tú qué?

GARIBALDI. -- ¡Mi libertad![18]

Garibaldi soon discovers that his companions do not share his enthusiasm for football, and he continues to feel frustrated because he cannot participate in any more games. However, along with this is a growing feeling of being trapped, and a growing need to be free. He finds it difficult to understand his fellow-prisoners' acceptance of the situation, and when they suggest that he will eventually become accustomed to it, he thinks differently.

> GARIBALDI (obstinado). -- ¡No! Yo no voy a poder acostumbrarme. Yo me voy de escapar de aquí. Ya lo he pensado. Yo soy libre. Yo quero vivir mi vida, estar con mis gentes, jugar a foot-ball. Yo no sirvo para este encierro. Hace poco que estoy aquí y ya me ahoga.[19]

By awakening this desire for freedom, Cuzzani transforms Garibaldi into an existential hero. In so doing he has chosen a character who represents the ordinary man on the street, rather limited in outlook and intellect, but nonetheless a man who does not wish to lose his identity, and who thus takes upon himself the struggle to maintain his authenticity and to regain his freedom. Cuzzani has deliberately chosen a common man for this task in order to demonstrate the nobility of man and the hope that his struggle engenders.

Garibaldi changes from a rather cloddish character whose only concern is football, to a rebel with a cause which leads him to the

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[18] Ibid., p. 94.

[19] Ibid., p. 100.

heights of self-sacrifice and finally philosophical eloquence. This dramatizes the existential belief that existence precedes essence, for Garibaldi's essence changes and develops throughout the play.

The character of Ennésimo Lupus is symbolic, as the name implies. "Lupus, cuya dehumanización la expone su nombre simbólico (lobo), que lo califica como la 'enésima' réplica de la voracidad irracional de la sociedad."[20]

The rapacity of society which Lupus represents extends allegorically by means of the character into the various aspects of the social fabric. Thus Lupus' acquisition of the Professor represents society's corrupting control over science and the intellectual; while his purchase of Nora and Hamlet is an intrusion into the sphere of the arts. When he buys Garibaldi he is encroaching on the world of sports. King Kong as a representative of the dehumanized elements of society, shows that the insidious control has infiltrated all levels of the social structure.

Lupus is not satisfied with all his wealth and material possessions; he wants to own people as well. In his treatment of Garibaldi he demonstrates a desire to corrupt the athlete by continually offering him cognac and cigars. In return for his complete possession of his victims, Lupus offers them material benefits.

> Lupus. -- ¡Vamos! ... Aquí serás feliz. Tendrás de todo. Comidas abundantes, bebidas excelentes. Libros, Revistas, Radio, Televisión. Todo.., para darte los gustos. Amigos...compañía...[21]

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[20] de Kuehne, op. cit., p. 210.

[21] Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., p. 94.

When Lupus discovers that affection has developed between Garibaldi and Nora, it pleases him, and he wishes to prostitute their love for his own selfish pleasure. In this way Cuzzani shows Lupus' insensitivity, and his callous invasion of the most intimate aspects of the lives of the members of his collection. This again symbolizes the intrusion of society and the State into the private lives of its citizens, thereby robbing them of their individuality.

> LUPUS. -- Exactamente. Un vivero, un criadero. ¡Una cabaña! Vosotros dos seréis mis planteles. Una bailarina y un deportista. ¿Os imagináis los hijos que vais a tener? ¡Que armonía de movimientos, que belleza de líneas, que fuerza que vigor en el desplazmiento! Veo los anuncios luminosos en toda la ciudad. Aviones a chorro escribiendo mi nombre en el cielo azul. (Marca en el aire.) ¡Cabaña Lupus! Ejemplares humanos selectos. Puros, puros por cruza, ¡alta mestización! ¡Sacaré precios fabulosos en el mercado![22]

This speech displays sinister overtones of racist ideology, degrading Cacho and Nora, and man in general, to the point that they resemble species in a zoo.

Lupus asserts his rights of ownership over Nora by virtue of having paid two million pesos for her. He believes this gives him the right to determine all phases of her life, and when he proposes to unite her with King Kong, it is too much for Garibaldi who proceeds to strangle Lupus. The allegorical nature of the characters of Garibaldi and Lupus make this climactic act of rebellion symbolic of man's struggle to be free.

> El sacrificio del centroforward--del simple hombre de la calle--ajusticiado por haber dado muerte al lobo que quiso comprar su sangre, su libertad, se convierte en el símbolo

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[22] Ibid., pp. 107-108.

de una nueva edad que--según Cuzzani--empieza ya a amanecer.[23]

As Cacho Garibaldi is the existential hero, the man of action, the character of Hamlet acts as his antithesis. In fact Hamlet refers to Cacho as the anti-Hamlet. Hamlet represents most graphically the unauthentic life for he is merely a character out of Shakespeare's play, and as such all his actions and his destiny are forseen and predetermined. Of course, as Nora explains to Cacho, he was an actor playing a role, but Lupus did not purchase an actor but the character of the Prince of Denmark.

> NORA. (sonrie). -- Comprendo que debemos parecerle a usted. Pero ya acostumbrará. Lo que ocurre es que el señor Lupus compró a Hamlet. No compró ni un actor ni un hombre de carne y hueso. Compró sencillamente un personaje. Y ahora tiene que ser Hamlet todo el día. Vivir, respirar, actuar, comer, y dormir como el clásico Príncipe de Dinamarca.[24]

The character of Hamlet greatly corresponds to Wolfgang Kayser's description of Pirandello's Henry IV, "... el protagonista es primero prisionero de su máscara, y al final, se queda dentro de ella."[25] Since the histrionic mask represents the exterior, unauthentic life, whereas the face hidden behind it is the actual person, Hamlet by rejecting his true identity has irretrievably lost his authenticity. He is more a puppet than a man, and unlike Garibaldi, he detests action for it can

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[23]Hebe Campanella, "El hoy y el aquí en el teatro argentino de los últimos veinte años," Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, Vol. 78, No. 234 (June, 1969), pp. 687-688.

[24]Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., p. 98.

[25]de Pagella, op. cit., p. 73.

only lead to his death. Thus he wishes to prolong the meditative part of the play because, "El tránsito de la inacción a la resolución representa el paso a la muerte."[26] This results in his living in a limbo of suspended animation. Hamlet's acceptance of his role is in one respect an act of cowardice, symbolic of a large segment of contemporary society which has abdicated its responsibilities. By rejecting the real world for a make-believe one, Hamlet has freed himself from having to make any decisions and from all human conflict. He lives in a world apart, separated from the rest of humanity.

Garibaldi and Hamlet are opposites, one committed to struggle, the other resigned to a stagnant existence that for him is "un refugio al margen de la vida existencial..."[27] Cuzzani's juxtaposing of these two characters also emphasizes the lack of communication between people. Cacho is appalled to learn that Hamlet knows nothing about football. When he tries to explain it to him, Hamlet finds it inconceivable that Garibaldi and others could be that interested in it.

> HAMLET. -- Si tu dices que a la gente le gusta, deben haber cambiado mucho los tiempos. Yo podría concebir un torneo, un juego, pero sólo como preparación para el combate. Pero tú dices que juegas porque sí, por el solo hecho de jugar. ¡Eso! ¡El deporte! Te entregas a la acción sin un propósito. (Rie.) ¿Sabes que tú eres el anti-Hamlet?[28]

Cuzzani adeptly uses the character of the Vagabond as the narrator who sets the scene for the action and comments upon it. Whenever

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[26] de Kuehne, op. cit., p. 212.

[27] Ibid., p. 216.

[28] Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," T.A.C., p. 96.

the tension reaches a certain level, the Vagabond breaks in, thus producing a contrapuntal effect and providing relief. The chorus of carpenters and the chorus of fans also provide counterpoint by presenting a comic interlude in the midst of an otherwise serious situation.

Los indios estaban cabreros also has an existential hero in the person of Prince Tupa. Tupa, like Sisiphus, does not give up. After eight unsuccessful revolutions, he is optimistically planning the nineth. Whether success or failure will result is not as important to him as the need to try.

> TUPA. -- ... Navegaré hasta el fin del mar y golpearé a las puertas del Sol bien de mañana. Y pediré por ti, y por él, y por todos nosotros. Le diré la verdad. No tengo más que esa balsa y el viento. Esa es toda mi novena revolución...
>
> TONATIO. -- ¿Y estás bien seguro que llegarían por ese camino? ¿Y si mueres? ¿Si las mil acechanzas del mar son más fuertes que tu nave? (Mirándole a fondo de los ojos.) ¿Crees, realmente, lo que nos dice?
>
> TUPA. -- (Que se ha apartado un poco con Tonatio.) Eres inteligente, Mendigo. Si muero o llego... ya se verá. Pero de una u otra forma... las gentes sabrán que su príncipe no los abandonó. Pase lo que pase, quedará una esperanza.[29]

Even though the three Indians have become virtual prisoners of the fisherman upon their arrival to Spain, Tupa is still determined to return to America despite all the obstacles.

> TEUCHE. -- Pero hemos perdido la balsa... hemos perdido todo... estamos como prisioneros...
>
> TUPA. -- Hay barcos enormes en los puertos. ¿Te has fijado qué velas? ¿Qué grandeza? Con embarcaciones así, será un juego navegar hasta nuestra patria.[30]

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[29] Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 136.

[30] Ibid., p. 147.

Cuzzani employs a unique concept of characterization when he uses a trinity for his protagonist. The three Indians, Tupa, Teuche, and Tonatio, as the three main characters are also symbolic of three facets of Prince Tupa. In this way Tupa, in the character of Teuche, remains living in Spain to found a race that someday will be the revolution. Tupa, through Tonatio, will return to America where he will lead the resistance against the Conquest. The third Tupa will die in prison calling out the name tlausicalpán.[31]

> Al lanzar el telón sobre este final, tuve la sensación emocionada de haber rozado siquiera un instante la definición de lo americano en la plentitud de su escencia, en el tríptico Tupa-Tonatio-Teuche, abriendo los tres vías por las que nuestra América se lanzó al futuro.[32]

Prince Tupa discovers the weapons for his ninth revolution in the Granada prison where he meets the wise men. These characters represent the advanced philosophy and wisdom of both Europe and the Middle East with Ab El Ircum and Abnib Ben Benib symbolizing the sagacity and knowledge of the Arabs, and Imperiale that of the Jews. These, together with Don Pero, Don Ciro, and Don Lope, form the totality of enlightenment. The Inquisition has imprisoned them for that reason. These characters are at the same time wise and comical. The picture of them watching a soccer game on their crystal ball television set is quite absurd.

> AB EL IRCUM. -- No creáis amigo Lope. El football tiene cosas emociantes. Ese Vélez Sarsfield, por ejemplo ...
>
> IMPERIALE. -- No diréis que es mejor equipo que el de Estudiantes el de La Plata.

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[31]Cuzzani, "Epílogo para críticos y bachilleres," T.A.C., p. 186.

[32]Ibid.

DON CIRO.--- ¡A callar, so pincharrata!

DON PERO. -- Por mis barbas. ¡Alguién osa discutir aquí al Boca Juniors! (Se encrespa.) Respetad mis años, al menos.

DON LOPE. -- Lo que son años tiene bastantes como para que le respeto un pueblo entero. Contando sólo lo que estuvo preso...[33]

The situations which led to the incarceration of these wise men are also humorous. Don Pero has been in prison 374 years for shouting, "Muera el Rey!"

DON PERO. -- ... En efecto, hace trescientos setenta y cuatro años fui encerrado por gritar ¡Muera el Rey! ¡Ya no recuerdo cual Rey! Pero cuando el tiempo vinieron a libertarme porque el Rey era muerto, pregunté: ¿Y quién manda ahora? Me contestaron que el hijo de aquel Rey. Entonces grito: ¡Pues que muera el nuevo Rey! Y así de grito en grito y de Rey en Rey me han tenido preso desde el ano 1118 hasta hoy, que corre el ano 1492...[34]

Don Lope is in jail for having translated Aristotle's writings from Arabic, while Imperiale, a writer, is there for what he did not write. "Gran buscador de libros judíos y asesor de impuestos. Llevo dieciocho tratados escritos y cuatro pensados. Estoy preso por los últimos cuatro."[35] Ab El Ircum tells a rather intriguing story. He wrote eight treatises on the soul and seven on the body, and for this they condemned him to die in the fire. However, every time they tried to carry out the sentence, providence intervened.

AB EL IRCUM. -- ... Pero cada vez que se enciende la hoguera para quemarme, rompe el cielo a llover de modo tan copioso, que apaga cuanto leno está

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[33]Cuzzani, "Los indios estaban cabreros," T.A.C., p. 156.

[34]Ibid., p. 157.

[35]Ibid., p. 158.

incendido. Hace ya catorce años que discuten los. doctores de la Iglesia si ello es obra de la Divina Providencia o del demonio.

ABNIB BEN BENIB. -- Un día te quemarán bajo techo.[36]

Both the sabios and the Indians symbolize the spirit of rebellion. The forces of ignorance have always resisted the advance of science and knowledge as personified by the wise men, but it is of such substances that enduring changes are made. The Indians, on the other hand, represent the individual who wishes to free himself from tyrannical rule and oppression. Their struggle is the result of a basic need within them to be free, rather than any conscious philosophical idea. Thus the learned men are surprised to find that the Inquisition has imprisoned such persons.

ABNIB BEN BENIB. -- ... y vosotros, ¿qué sabios sois? ...

TONATIO. -- Nosotros... en fin ... nosotros ...

DON PERO. -- ¡No sois sabios y estáis presos en España! ¡Caso raro!

DON LOPE. -- Es muy raro. Casi tan taro como ver un sabio suelto...[37]

Cuzzani develops several other characters in this play who provide comic relief, and thereby counterpoint to the more serious aspects of the play. In the first act which takes place in Mexico, the characters of the old hag Quepuxilanxuacoxetal, the beggars, and the town crier provide humor, while in the other two acts the fisherman and his wife, the Inquisitors, the Policeman, and Cristóbal Colón furnish some comic moments.

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., p. 159.

The character of Mariceleste is important to the development of the plot and also to Cuzzani's idea of the race of revolutionaries that she and Teuche will found someday. She is, however, a rather stereotyped ingenue character with little delineation, and is of value mainly in moving the action forward.

Cuzzani uses another ingenue-type character in the person of Susanita in his play Sempronio. Unlike Mariceleste, Susanita has little to do with plot development. Her main function is impressionistic since she serves to enhance the portrait of Sempronio's family life. Sempronio describes Susanita, and at the same time shows her relationship with her parents.

> SEMPRONIO. -- Ya sé lo que quisiste decirme, Susanita. Yo te comprendo bien. Querés decir que sos joven y alegre, que amás la vida y que estás segura de tu conducta, con o sin música. Tu madre, también comprende y está orgullosa de su hija. Sólo que... bueno... hay que perdonarla... Ella es una mujer anciana y respetable...(Ríe)
>
> OLGA. -- ¡Ahora sí! La anciana respetable soy yo (Padre e hija ríen entre sí.) Con ustedes no se puede hablar. ¡Están siempre de acuerdo! ...[38]

Cuzzani reveals the character of Sempronio's wife Olga more through her actions. He depicts her as a loving wife and mother, but at the same time as a woman with a mind of her own, more conservative and practical than the other members of her family who delight in teasing her. Her conversation with Susanita helps to demonstrate her character, as well as showing the existence of a generation gap.

> SUSANITA. -- Claro. Son las diez y media. ¡Es hora de Rock!

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[38]Cuzzani, "Sempronio," T.A.C., p. 194.

OLGA. -- ¡Las diez y media! Linda hora de levantarse, ¿no?

SUSANITA. -- Hoy es domingo. (Se acerca al padre.) Permiso, papito (Lo besa y le coloca el enchufe de la radio, del otro lado del cuello.)

OLGA. -- ¡Susana, esa radio está muy fuerte! Yo estoy planchando y tengo que conversar con tu padre.

SUSANITA. -- (Interrumpe a medias el baile y baja hasta la mitad el brazo-antena de Sempronio). -- Bueno, mamá. Yo no tengo la culpa. Ahora pueden conversar ...aunque después de veintiocho años de casados no veo que tengas nada interesante que decirse. (Se fue bailando.)

OLGA. -- (Espantada). ¡Nena! (A Sempronio) ¿Oíste? Vos tenés la culpa por consentirla todo el día a esta chiquilina. Ahí tenés el resultado.[39]

Sempronio himself appears to be the personification of love. His conversations with his family reveal his deep affection for them. He also displays a love for all mankind in his happiness at supplying energy for all the various groups. Cuzzani prevents the audience from identifying with Sempronio by means of the absurd visual image he presents, for in the course of the first act the members of his family, one by one, approach him to attach electrical connections to him. This all appears to be quite normal.

OLGA. -- (Termina de acomodar la ropa. Vuelve a tomas la plancha. Se acerca a Sempronio, que continua silbando bajito, y le coloca el enchufe entre la camisa y el cuello. Todo esto con mucha normalidad, sin tratar de destacarlo expresamente. Sempronio tampoco considera esta conexión como algo notable.) A ver...ladeá un poco más el cuello, por favor... (Sempronio obedece.) ¿Te molesta?

SEMPRONIO. -- ¡No! ¡Qué idea! ¡Cómo me va a molestar! (Sonríe.)[40]

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[39] Ibid., pp. 193-194. [40] Ibid., p. 192.

Sempronio is also the source of power for the doorbell, and when the High Commissioner and the Professor touch the bell it is Sempronio who rings, thereby increasing the sense of the ridiculous. The High Commissioner's treatment of him as a machine rather than a man demonstrates Sempronio's dehumanized condition. However, Cuzzani skillfully blends the absurdity of the character of Sempronio with the human. This type of mixture is apparent in the scene between Sempronio and the soldier at the beginning of the second act. The soldier at first views Sempronio as a thing, a source of radioactivity, and as such, something to be feared.

SEMPRONIO. -- Acércate, muchacho.

SOLDADO. -- No, está prohibido.

SEMPRONIO. -- Pero ahora no hay nadie.

SOLDADO. -- Tengo órdenes estrictas. (Mira alrededor.) Bueno, si le voy a confesar la verdad, también tengo miedo estricto.

SEMPRONIO. -- Si yo no te voy hacer nada.

SOLDADO. -- No, usted no. Pero el flúido ése que tiene usted...Aquí, la Altísima Comisión me ha hecho aprender de memoria el reglamento de precauciones que hay que tomar con usted.[41]

Sempronio, through his kind and loving attitude towards his family proceeds to overcome the soldier's fears and to win his friendship.

SOLDADO. -- Eso es lo raro. Digo yo...sus hijos, por ejemplo, ¿lo besan?

SEMPRONIO. -- Por supuesto. ¿Vos crees que se puede tener una hija como Susanita y no dejar que me bese todas las mañanas? ¡Es tan dulce Susanita!

SOLDADO. -- (En bobo.) ¿Es muy dulce, Susanita? Perdón

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[41] Ibid., p. 206.

... digo si es muy cariñosa su señorita hija.

SEMPRONIO. -- Podés llamarla Susanita, si querés. Contigo haría muy buenas migas.[42]

Cuzzani uses the character of the High Commissioner to represent the role of State control and bureaucracy. The Commissioner is not concerned with any of Sempronio's personal attributes or his personal life. He sees Sempronio merely as a piece of property belonging to the State.

ALTISIMO COMISIONADO. -- Es para mi un motivo de sincera emoción, en nombre de los más altos intereses que represento, darle la bienvenida. Y agradeceros, sobre todo, la buena voluntad con que os disponéis acompañarnos, sacrificando vuestra libertad y demás comodidades domésticas, para entregaros por entero al cumplimiento del deber.

SEMPRONIO. -- Libertad... deber...¿Quieren decir que me llevan con ustedes?

ALTISIMO COMISIONADO. -- ¡Por supuesto! ¡Usted es propiedad de la Nación![43]

The author portrays the High Commissioner as a man with very set ideas. He is lacking in sympathy, relying on rules and regulations rather than human feelings. Thus when Sempronio fails to detonate the bomb and asks for his release, the Commissioner can see no point in it. His reply reveals his bureaucratic bent.

ALTISIMO COMISIONADO. -- ¡Libertad! ... ¡Eso es lo único que sabe decir cuando ven al gobierno en dificultades! ¡Libertad! En lugar de colaborar, mortificarse, de entregarlo todo y soportar el peso de la desgracia ... ¡Libertad! ¡Si antes tuvo corriente, la volverá a tener! ... ¡Si alguna vez anduvo, volverá a andar! ¡Yo no renuncio! Este es sólo una alternativa, un desperfecto. Daré un comunicado, emitiré un desmentido... Cualquier cosa se arregla con un desmentido...

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[42] Ibid., p. 207.

[43] Ibid., p. 202-203.

> Le echaré la culpa a los extremistas, haré 40 charlas por televisión para explicarlo...[44]

The fact that the chorus' shouting of the word amor in the last scene sends the Commissioner scurrying away, holding his ears, visually emphasizes his negative nature. He would most certainly be a villainous character if the author did not portray him as a rather petty and ridiculous figure.

One production of Sempronio was presented in Buenos Aires in 1962 under the title, Sempronio, el peluquero y los hombrecitos. It was basically the same work, but with the addition of a number of new characters.

> Sin embargo, cuando se estrenó en Buenos Aires en 1962, el teatro que se encargaba de ella disponía de cerca de 60 actores que pedían trabajar en la pieza. Ello me llevó a incluir toda clase de personajes accidentales-Un grupo de agentes de Relaciones Públicas-Un peluquero que tiene la misión de cortar pelitos radioactivos a Sempronio para utilizar fraudulentamente la energía del mismo, una heladera eléctrica que es, en realidad un marciano espía (los marcianos parece que son así) etc. etc. En lo básico la misma obra. El refuerzo fue sólo accidental.[45]

While the characters in Para que se cumplan las escrituras bear many similarities to those in Cuzzani's other works, the expanded dimensions of this play produces characters of a broader nature. Thus the heroic existential act of sacrifice on the part of Manuel, although no greater a sacrifice than that of Garibaldi or Prince Tupa, nevertheless is on a grander scale due to the implications involved.

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[44] Ibid., p. 214.

[45] Cuzzani to author, July 25, 1973.

Manuel is the Christ-figure of the industrial era. His story parallels that of Christ in the Bible. At the same time he is the existential hero struggling to assert his freedom. As such he is a tormented figure, trying to resolve his paradoxical dilemma. Cuzzani uses the device of computer print-outs to describe Manuel to the audience.

> KERY. -- La máquina ya lo anunció. Manuel gusta terriblemente a las mujeres. Fíjense que la señorita Estrella todavía no lo conoce y ya se preocupa por él.
>
> ESTRELLA. -- ¿Así que su máquina también conoce los gustos femeninos?
>
> TOMAS. -- Con toda prolijidad. Manuel es alto, rubio, tiene 33 anos y la mirada muy dulce...[46]

At first Manuel is very sure of himself and his liberty. However, his daily association with the computer leads him to have doubts, until finally the machine's promises of benefits for mankind create a conflict within him. This contradiction is basic to his character development, and the <u>agonía</u> he experiences because of it is an existential affirmation, paralleling Christ's agony in the garden of Gethsemane.

> MANUEL. -- ... Yo todavía quiero ser libre y no he de entregarme sin intentarlo. Aún ahora estoy buscando ese acto, esa palabra que me demuestre que puedo ser libre, pero que no sea alprecio de condenar a toda la humanidad futura a la esclavidad y el sufrimiento... Y lo más duro, lo que me atormenta, es que quiero con todas mis fuerzas esa libertad que siento y que te he prometido, y al mismo tiempo quiero con la misma energía que todo lo que esa profecía anuncia se cumpla...[47]

Jesus' words in the garden of Gethsemane demonstrate the basic difference between him and the character of Manuel, when, according to

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[46]Cuzzani, <u>Para que se cumplan las escrituras</u>, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quetzal, 1965), p. 41.

[47]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 88.

Matthew 26:39 he says, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Here Jesus indicates his willingness to subordinate his will to that of the Father, and thus to comply with the prophecies of his death. Manuel is no less willing to die, but he is not willing to give up his freedom of choice.

Although seemingly cornered by the computer's prophecy of his death, Manuel still has one chance to assert his freedom--that is to choose his own death. By causing his death to occur one day earlier than predicted, Manuel is able to resolve the conflict within himself. His desire for liberty is constant throughout the play, but his faith in that ideal vacillates so that it is difficult to tell what his attitude will be from one moment to the next.

This fluidity of character is an affirmation of existential philosophy which claims that man has no stable nature and possesses no constant tendencies. Cuzzani expresses these ideas to an even greater extent in the characters of the four evangelists and the inventors of the computer, the apostles, "que se metamorfosean constantemente."[48] Particularly in the case of the evangelists the author fragments the characters so that there is a disintegration of personality with the same character assuming a new identity or completely altering his personality.

The greatest metamorphosis occurs in the character of Juan who one moment appears as a quarrelsome drunk and the next is completely sober. He resembles Hamlet in a way, for he is also assuming a role.

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[48]Campanella, op. cit., p. 688.

MATEO. -- Un café con aspirinas te hará bien.

JUAN. -- ¡Aspirinas! ¡Exhorcismos! ¡Conjuros!

LUCAS. -- De todos modos en la escena tiene que hacer de borracho.

MARCOS. -- (Meneando la cabeza, sale diciendo) Lo peor es que tiene mujer e hijos.

MATEO. -- (Saliendo.) ¡Y una alma inmortal! ...

JUAN. -- (Normal, como si de pronto se le hubiera pasado la embriaguez.) Ve tranquilo, Lucas. Sé bien mi parte. No estoy tan borracho como ustedes creen. (Sale Lucas, Juan camina serio. Parece un actor que se reconcentra.) ¡Realismo... eso! Juan estaba borracho. (Se pasea.) En un principio era el verbo y el verbo estaba pastoso y los que dan testimonio de estas cosas lo vieron y además le ofrecieron café con aspirinas... ¡Empecemos! ...[49]

Another reason for Juan's changeable nature relates to his representation of the Evangelist John, as it is not definitely known who wrote the Gospel of John. There are conflicting theories as to the authorship, some attributing it to the Apostle John, some to John the Elder, others to John the son of Zebedee, and still others to John Mark, Nathanael, or Lazarus. Cuzzani transmits this confusion over the authorship of this Gospel to the fragmented, schizophrenic character of Juan. Moreover, the author of the St. John Gospel was both a theological and literary genius, far exceeding the other evangelists in profundity of thought. The character Juan corresponds to this interpretation by being the one to present the existential viewpoint in the evangelists' discussion of Manuel's fate.

JUAN. -- ¿Elige vivir? ¿Pero es que alguién "elige" vivir? La vida se nos da de prepotencia, Lucas. La

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[49]Cuzzani, Para que se cumplan las escrituras, p. 37.

> única libertad del hombre es eligir su muerte. Si Manuel decidiese vivir, nunca sabríamos si lo hizo por amor de Estrella, o por el mero instinto de conservación. ¡Amor e Instinto de conservación! ¡Nada menos! ¡Las dos fuerzas ciegas más potentes de la naturaleza! Sólo puede decirse que alguien es libre cuando a pesar de esas fuerzas, dispone de su voluntad y escoge su propia muerte. ¡La única libertad, para el filósofo, es el suicidio! Por eso la aventura de Manuel es hermosa si decide morir, pudiendo no hacerlo.[50]

The characters of Mateo, Marcos, and Lucas also correspond to the characteristics of the Evangelists they represent. For example, Lucas arrives late upon the scene of Manuel's assassination. Mateo, Marcos, and Juan are already there. Actually, St. Luke was a highly educated, Greek-speaking Gentile who never knew Jesus personally, but like his friend Paul, was deeply affected by him. Thus the author has him appear on the scene later than the others, and after Manuel's death. Luke was also noted for his sympathy for the poor, and this concern provides the motivation for the character Lucas to desire Manuel's death.

> LUCAS. -- (Reconcentrado, habla para sí, con rabia.) ¡Bienaventurados los pobres! ¡Bienaventurados los que tienen hambre y sed! Ese es el mundo que yo espero y para que ese mundo venga es preciso que la máquina no se equivoque ni mienta. Todo tiene que ocurrir tal como está prometido. Y para que todo ocurra así ... (sombríó) Manuel tiene que morir el 17 de abril a las 3 de la tarde.[51]

Mateo, Marcos, Lucas, and Juan shift their roles from evangelists to other characters at various points throughout the play. In this manner Lucas becomes a newspaper editor, Juan a police commissioner, and Mateo a judge resembling Pontius Pilate.

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[50] Ibid., p. 80.

[51] Ibid., pp. 81-82.

Cuzzani gives the names of three of the Apostles, Pedro, Tomás, and Kery, to the characters of the three students who are the inventors of the computer. Pedro, in keeping with his name, denies Manuel.

> PEDRO. -- Quiero que quede constancia pública que yo, como inventor y dueño de esa máquina no me hago responsable del uso que hace de la misma el señor Manuel, ni apruebo ninguna de las predicciones que el citado Manuel pretende haber logrado.[52]

Tomás displays the doubts characteristic of the apostle Thomas. But it is the characterization of Kery, a derivativation from Kerioth, that is unique, for here Cuzzani attempts to redeem Judas Iscariot. No doubt his interest in Judas stems from the fact that according to the Scriptures, Judas was predestined to betray Jesus. Thus his act was not one of free will. In this play the author depicts Kery in quite a different way from the traditional view of a cold-blooded, money-hungry traitor. Cuzzani's Kery is both loyal and beloved.

> ESTRELLA. -- Kery, a ti el primero, por ser el más fiel. Y como premio por tu combate de esta tarde en la Comisaria. (Entrega el trozo.)
>
> KERY. -- (Recibiendo el trozo como si fuera una condecoración.) ¿Cómo, debo recibir esta distinción? ¿De rodillas? (Marca un gesto como para hincarse. Mira el trozo de pizza y le habla con cómica devoción.) ¡Oh, triángulo de harina caliente! Nunca te traicionaré. (Manuel se vuelve extrañado a mirarlo, deja su trabajo y avanza un poco hacia el grupo.)[53]

Although Kery finally betrays Manuel, it is at Manuel's request and for the purpose of saving him from the tyranny of prophecy. Manuel enlists Kery's help in bringing about his death a day sooner than predicted. In this way, Kery's betrayal becomes an act of love and freedom.

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[52] Ibid., p. 69. [53] Ibid., p. 83.

Manuel understands that by this very action Kery will become despised, and though he regrets it, the action is necessary.

> MANUEL. -- Si me quieres, si realmente me quieres ... hazlo bien. Que no sospechen de ti. Si te ofrecen dinero, acéptalo, así lo creerán mejor. (Lo va empujando.) Ve, querido amigo. Sufro por ti porque todos pensarán que me traicionaste. Pero es necesario que así sea...[54]

Other than characters in a brief fantasy scene, there is only one woman in the play, Estrella, and she is the composite of the women in Jesus' life. Estrella loves Manuel and does not understand why he should die. Throughout the play she tries to persuade him to give up his work with the computer, and thereby save himself from its prophecy. When she sees that her attempts are futile, she still hopes to persuade him to defy the machine.

> MANUEL. -- ¿Quieres echarlo todo a perder?
>
> ESTRELLA. -- ¡Claro que sí! Quiero echarlo todo a perder. ¡Quiero que vivas y que seas libre de todo este hechizo y aquí estaré las 24 horas para exigírtelo!
>
> MANUEL. -- Si te quedas, sólo lograrán que discuta contigo inútilmente 24 horas y cuando llegue el ataque ni siquiera sabré si muero por una causa o por la otra. Si realmente quieres que viva, déjame libre todo este tiempo.
>
> ESTRELLA. -- Pues te dejo un cargo de conciencia. De todos modos la amenaza no es para hoy sino para mañana a las tres de la tarde. Medita y daba todo lo que quieres, pero yo volveré mañana y estaremos juntos para vivir o para morir. Tu tendrás que decidir por los dos. Si me quieres, es la mejor manera de ayudarte a vivir, ¿no es cierto?[55]

There is one other important character in this work, and it is one that speaks no lines but who dominates the action from beginning to end. This is the figure of the computer itself.

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[54] Ibid., p. 91. [55] Ibid., p. 90.

> Esa máquina en forma de cruz, llena de palancas, botones, relojes, es el monstruo que terminará por devorar al hombre de hoy: la exactitud de su mecanismo capaz de predecir el futuro libera al individuo de todo posible error, pero al mismo tiempo le quita su libertad, su espíritu creador, su responsibilidad. El cerebro electrónico -- a cambio de cerebro humano -- es el signo de estos tiempos: queda así instalado el autómata en el lugar del hombre.[56]

Cuzzani presents a dualistic view of the computer. It is both the monster that Campanella describes and the hope of mankind. When Kery pleads with Manuel to live in opposition to the machine's prediction, or otherwise he, Tomás, and Pedro as its inventors will be his assassins, Manuel defends the computer's function.

> MANUEL. -- ¡La máquina es como un espejo! Sólo un cristal que refleja la fealdad de muchas cosas. ¿Qué culpa tiene el espejo de la fealdad que refleja? ¡No! Si me tocase morir, todos sabemos quienes amarán el brazo y cargarán las armas. Son mis enemigos, pero también son los tuyos, Kery, y los tuyos, Tomás..., y aunque no lo creas, también los tuyos, Pedro.[57]

Manuel believes in the computer's predictions of a better world to come, but at the same time he wants to break the machine's hold on man's free will. Thus Cuzzani is presenting the computer as man's saviour and at the same time as the destroyer of his freedom. The author does not resolve this contradiction for the audience, for in the Brechtian tradition, it is his intention to raise questions, not to answer them.

The characters in Cuzzani's plays, although in many instances allegorical or symbolic, nevertheless possess a personality and uniqueness all their own. His characterizations range from simple, one-sided

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[56]Campanella, op. cit., p. 688.

[57]Cuzzani, Para que se cumplan las escrituras, p. 87.

characters with little development, such as those found in Una libra de carne, to multi-dimensional and complex characters like those of Para que se cumplan las escrituras. Even though the audience is unable to identify with them, his main characters are memorable, for the problems they present or represent remain unresolved and haunting long after the curtain has fallen.

CONCLUSION

Agustín Cuzzani's dramatic works represent a period in the Argentine theatre when playwrights became concerned with supra-national problems of man's essence and the effects of an industrial, technological society upon him. Cuzzani's plays vividly demonstrate this concern, particularly in the area of man's alienation and dehumanization. Existentialism thus plays an important role in his viewpoint. He criticizes both social and political structures with much emphasis on individual freedom.

Cuzzani blends many techniques from the newer dramatic movements adding flavor and variety to his pieces. He uses expressionistic methods as well as those from the theatre of the absurd. While his works are all on the level of fantasy and farce, he exercises some restraint which prevents them from becoming incomprehensible, as is the case with some dramas of the absurd.

Cuzzani alters the patterns of his works to reflect the irrationality of an absurd world. He has abandoned the linear time continuum of realistic drama, replacing it with concurrent time and parallel actions on different planes. His structural schemes are masterpieces of intricacy and complexity which add to their appeal.

Cuzzani's plays show a definite pattern of progression on all levels. Una libra de carne introduces many of his new techniques, such as making use of a chorus as a rhythmic accompaniment to the mood, the situación-espectáculo, and flashbacks. Its characters are representative of various types, showing little development, with the protagonist exemplifying man's dehumanized condition. This work also introudeces the element of the grotesque, which Angela Blanco Amores de Pagella describes.

> Dentro del tema de la personalidad surge la preocupación por la verdadera vida, por el auténtico ser que a menudo queda oculto por las convenciones sociales y que subyace, apretado, por la vida exterior y falsa. Este tema, propio de la especie teatral llamada "grotesco", que se presente con carácteres dramáticos y cómicos en íntima fusión, empieza a interesar de manera definida a partir de las convulsiones sociales y económicas que trae consigo el período de la Primera Guerra Mundial...[1]

The tone of Una libra de carne is pessimistic, as the denunciation delivered at the end of the play provokes no sympathy on the part of the spectators. However, it does serve to raise questions which the author continues to ask in his following works.

El centroforward murió al amanecer is an extension of the first play, with the dehumanization theme again being strong. Here Cuzzani makes more extensive use of the chorus, adding marches and songs to its role. Lighting techniques become increasingly intricate, and he again makes use of flashbacks. In this work the author introduces a narrator in the character of the Vagabond. Expressionistic techniques also appear in this drama.

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[1]Angela Blanco Amores de Pagella, Nuevos temas en el teatro argentina. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Huemul, 1964), p. 70.

> El primer acto está presentado con vivacidad magistral y podría mencionarse como un momento dramático a la altura de los mejores de la obra de Bertolt Brecht; no sólo por lo significativo de la historia misma, sino por la forma creciente con que el interés dramático va marcando la transición entre la fábula amable y sus últimas consecuencias que son las más lacerantes de la crueldad que oprime a nuestro mundo.[2]

Although El centroforward murió al amanecer ends tragically with the hero's death, it nonetheless strikes an optimistic note of hope for the future. Whereas in Una libra de carne the forces of society had defeated the protagonist completely, robbing him of his identity, in El centroforward the same forces have awakened the desire for liberty in the protagonist Garibaldi, and thus instead of losing his identity, he discovers his authentic self, as he affirms in his statement, "Yo ... soy un hombre. *He tenido que sufrir mucho para comprenderlo.*"[3] Garibaldi's words as well as the visual imagery of the dawn strike a note of hope and belief in a better world to come.

In Los indios estaban cabreros Cuzzani translates this hope into action as the three Indians sail for the East in search of the Dios-Sol. The chorus is again prominent in this work, with the march of the miners in the first act, and the march of the fishermen in the second following the pattern set by the march of the carpenters in El centroforward murió al amanecer.

The theme of the degradation of man appears visually in the scene depicting the Indians in the fisherman's net, and also in the

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[2]Carlos Solórzano, El teatro latinoamericano en el siglo XX (Mexico, D. F.: Editorial Pormaca, 1964), p. 141.

[3]Agustín Cuzzani, "El centroforward murió al amanecer," Teatro de Agustín Cuzzani (Buenos Aires: Editorial Quetzal, 1960), p. 112.

scene where the Indians crawl out of the tin can in which the authorities have placed them in order to preserve them.

Cuzzani adds new concepts of time and structure to this work, thus taking a pseudo-historical plot and expanding it in time and space. The ending of this play is quite similar to that of El centroforward, with the symbolism of the dawn appearing again, this time denoting not only hope but a rebellious spirit that makes that hope more meaningful.

Cuzzani ends the cycle of farsátiras with Sempronio which is the thematic conclusion of the group. In this work the attempts to dehumanize man fail, and man, in the person of Sempronio, is able to overcome the evil forces of society through his use of the power of love. Many of the techniques Cuzzani uses in the first three farsátiras are missing in this final play of the series. There is no chorus, time moves linearly, and nonsense language has disappeared. However, Cuzzani still maintains the spirit of the farce through the situación-espectáculo which presents the absurd picture of Sempronio with electrical cords running from him that are operating various gadgets and appliances. Solórzano calls this play one of the most perfect works of expressionism.[4]

Having more than adeuately covered the theme of the technological society's dehumanization of man, and man's efforts to regain his authenticity, Cuzzani turns to a deeper subject that explores the meaning of existence, the true essence of man, and the meaning of freedom in Para que se cumplan las escrituras. Having abandoned the vehicle of the farsátira, the author projects a more dignified hero without the mixture

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[4]Solórzano, op. cit., p. 142.

of comic elements in his make-up, which makes him a tragic hero rather than a comic-pathetic hero. The element of satire is still present in this play, but it is confined to the interplay among the four evangelists.

This is by far the most complex and intricate of all Cuzzani's works, both thematically and structurally. Lighting effects become very significant in this drama to accompany scene changes and to produce symbolic effects. The action is circular with the evangelists appearing at the beginning and the end, as well as throughout the play, sometimes narrating events; other times participating in the action.

All of Cuzzani's plays from the outwardly simplest to the most complex contain a depth which is not immediately apparent. They are so packed with ideas and nuances that it is difficult to absorb them all at once. The first viewing or reading gives an overall impression of the central theme. Each subsequent viewing or reading adds new dimensions and conceptions which appear to be almost limitless. The profusion of ideas and the significance of the seemingly casual in these works is astounding. Their popularity and the universality of their appeal, as attested to by the large number of countries in which they have been presented, is due in no small measure to the fact that they offer something for everyone. The conditions and problems of which Cuzzani speaks are world-wide, and by presenting them in their various facets and on different levels, he broadens the public to whom they appeal.

Agustín Cuzzani's genius is apparent not only in the complexities of his dramatic structures and the virtuosity of his techniques, but also in the depth of his perceptions and the infinite implications of his drama. The problems which concern him are both contemporary and

timeless. The question of freedom has been around for a long time but the existential approach which Cuzzani exhibits shows a depth and maturity lacking in earlier dramas. Cuzzani's dramatic works are indeed excellent examples of the best aspects of the new theatre as it has developed in Argentina and in Latin America.

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