

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **EVITA: MYTH AS/OR LEGEND/LIVING LEGEND**

For Plato, the first known user of the term, mythologia meant no more than the telling of stories which usually contained legendary figures.

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Chapter Five reviews Uys's establishment and perpetuation of the Evita 'myth' as/or 'legend/living legend' as a satirical tool. As mentioned in Chapter One, Evita began as a disembodied voice in 'a little column in a Sunday newspaper written by a writer whose works had been banned<sup>1</sup> so often that [mainstream theatres] wouldn't perform his plays' (Kustow, 1998:2). Once Uys brought Evita to life in *Adapt or Dye* (1982) in April 1981, however, she quickly surpassed all his other personae in popularity and soon entered into the realms of 'folklore'. Abrams (1971:63,64) defines folklore as 'the collective name [given] to traditional verbal materials and social rituals' that include among the narrative forms 'myths', 'legends' and 'tales of heroes' and, by implication, heroines. During the last two decades of the twentieth century, Uys's Evita persona has become an established theatre and television personality and achieved almost 'mythical' proportions in South Africa and, to a lesser extent, overseas.<sup>2</sup> The extent of her 'fame' is evidenced by the eminent titles afforded her by the media, such as 'mega star' (Games, 2001:3), 'SA's first lady' (Gill, 1999:11) and 'the Afrikan [sic] queen' (Walker, 2000:8). Uys (Walker, 1997b:9) himself christens Evita 'the Elizabeth Taylor of Pofadder'.<sup>3</sup> This chiasmatically phrased title both elevates her to the status of an idol of Hollywood's 'silver screen' and, simultaneously, reduces her to the level of a country bumpkin. Uys confirms Evita's mythical/legendary qualities when he states that, provided that he manages 'to keep her totally modern', 'she'll outlive us all' (Walker, 1997b:9).

Chapter Five's exploration of the Evita myth as/or legend/living legend adopts the following structure: firstly it delineates those qualities of myth and legend that appear relevant to Uys's establishment of the Evita myth as/or legend as a satirical tool. Secondly, it follows the stages of this persona's literary development as a 'living legend'. This is evidenced by her spectacular metamorphosis from the satirical 'voice' of a newspaper columnist at the end of the 1970s, to a character in a revue in the early 1980s;

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<sup>1</sup> Uys (1986:7 & 9) states that the 'Publications Control Board ... bann[ed] all [his] plays during the 1970s [and 1980s]'. These plays included *Karnaval* (1975), *Paradise is Closing Down* (1978), *God's Forgotten* (1981) and *Panorama* (1987).

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting that Uys's invention and continual deployment of the Evita persona offers support, albeit unintentionally, for Breytenbach's (1985:197) theory, discussed in Chapter One, that the formulation and ongoing presentation of an image (such as a theatrical persona) is both influenced and determined by the community in which it exists.

<sup>3</sup> A small South African 'dorp' or village.

personality in the 1990s who, as the star of a television series, interacted with South Africa's first black President in 1994 and was invited to make off-stage appearances at political rallies; then to the recipient in 2000 of an international award for her service to humanity. Thirdly, it looks at how Uys establishes and perpetuates the Evita myth as/or legend/living legend through the following literary devices: his fabrication of the various members of the Bezuidenhout family and his presentation of two opposing versions of Evita's youth. This chapter also explores the process whereby Uys allowed his famous *alter ego* to evolve from her role as 'the saccharine-sweet wife of a conservative politician' to that of a notable political figurehead who not only 'escaped the censors', but also 'had the nation eating out of her well-manicured hand' (Whitehouse, 2001:71) and, in so doing, appeared to align himself (through his persona) with current feminist issues.

During the course of these analyses, the following literary and dramatic texts are examined: *A Part Hate, A Part Love – The Legend of Evita Bezuidenhout* (1994a) and, to a lesser extent, *Funigalore* (1995) as well as images from the *Evita Bezuidenhout Calendar 2002* (1997d). Brief reference is also made to Evita's appearance in a number of Uys's revues at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. As has been the case in previous chapters, the analytical technique used is an assessment of the effectiveness of Uys's consistent deployment of both syntactic and semantic chiasmus<sup>4</sup> through a subtle manipulation of words and images as tools for strengthening his satirical thrust.

Before commencing on the proposed review of the Evita persona's literary development as a 'living legend' or 'myth', these two terms are defined. Myth and legend are in themselves a chiasmic conflation of fact and fiction (a concept that is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six). These genres record the fantastical but supposedly 'true' exploits of deities and/or super-humans in order to help ordinary men and women to make sense of their existence. As is the case with the term 'satire' (defined at length in Chapter

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<sup>4</sup> As indicated in Chapter One, Uys's utilization of this literary device reveals not only the transposition of formal elements of grammar but also elements of meaning.

Two), the enhanced fictional genres of myth and legend are multifarious concepts with a variety of definitions. Marckwardt *et al.* (1965:469-70) classify both myth and legend as 'fiction' and offer the following explication:

Fiction [involves] the act of feigning or imagining that which does not exist or is not actual. ... A fiction is studied, ... a legend may be true, but cannot be historically verified [while] a myth grows up without intent [but] has been received as true at some time.

Cuddon (1977:356-7) corroborates the above description of legend, adding that it is 'a story or narrative about 'any popular folk hero (or heroine), revolutionary, saint or warrior'. Despite a lack of retrospective certitude, legends 'often grow taller and longer with time and ... may eventually be written down'.

Cuddon's definition of legend is an appropriate description of the 'reality' that Uys has consistently created around Evita during the last two decades of the twentieth century through his newspaper column, revues, books and television programmes. As already pointed out, Evita's fictional 'reality' has always been, and still is, inextricably entwined with the actual historical socio-political reality of South Africa, during the apartheid era and the early years of the African National Congress-led government. However, it is naturally impossible to verify the historical reality of Evita's supposed interactions with actual political figures, as for example when this fictional persona is portrayed as telephoning 'Indira Ghandi ... in New Delhi, where a State of National Emergency ha[d] been declared', on behalf of the then Prime Minister John Vorster. Vorster reputedly ordered Evita to find out how Mrs Ghandi had implemented a State of Emergency in India 'without the world closing her down' (Uys, 1994a:227).

The Evita 'legend' has grown over the years, as is evidenced by her continued presence in Uys's works. Her ever-increasing popularity with the general public is obvious because, at the beginning of the new millennium, Evita featured in an advertisement for the Softline Company (2001:13) entitled 'In a Class of Their Own' that was published in the *Sunday Times Magazine*. Here Evita appeared alongside such 'living legends' as Nelson Mandela, statesman and Nobel Prize winner; Bill Gates, a leading electronic

media entrepreneur and, arguably, one of the world's richest men; and Tiger Woods, a world-class golfer. Evita's photograph was placed above those of the other personalities – while this could have been done in deference to 'her' gender, it is more likely that it was done in respect of Evita's mythological and/or legendary status.

In addition to the broad definition of myth quoted above, Eliade (1964) and Larue (1975) offer more specific interpretations, some aspects of which are again relevant to Uys's creation of the Evita persona. Eliade (1964:5,6) regards myth as 'an extremely complex cultural reality' and offers the following definition as 'the least inadequate':

Myth tells how ... a reality, ... or a fragment of reality, [such as] a particular kind of human behaviour [or] an institution ... was produced [or] began to be.

Eliade (1964:145,144) affords myth a determining role, stating that myth's primary function is 'to reveal models [of existence] and, in so doing, give a meaning to the world and to human life'.

Myth is thus an apt tool for a political satirist such as Uys who consistently seeks to alert the public to the dichotomy between 'actual' and 'ideal' states of existence. Uys utilizes Evita, together with other personae, to alert the South African public to 'a particular kind of human behaviour' (Eliade, 1964:6), namely prejudice, especially racial discrimination, that both 'affects and, in some degree, ... structures [their] individual and collective lives' (Larue, 1975:1) during the second half of the twentieth century. In common with most myth 'makers', Uys is 'notable' for 'his mnemonic capacity ... imagination [and] literary talent' (Eliade, 1964:145). This is evidenced by his vitriolic parody of a wide range of public figures, such as P W Botha, and his creation of numerous imaginary characters, for example, Evita. Uys uses both kinds of figure to amuse his audiences and to sensitise them to the absurdities of contemporary society.

In one explication of the functions of myth, Eliade (1964:144) warns that the mere recounting of myths does not guarantee 'goodness', 'morality' or the replication of perfect models of society. Nevertheless, Eliade believes that myths, either 'directly or

indirectly’, ‘force man to transcend his limitations’. Here the use of the word ‘forces’ once again implies that myth is a controlling factor in human existence, albeit it a positive one. Larue (1975:1), like Eliade, also assigns myths an important role in the ‘constitution of man[kind]’ namely that of ‘continu[ing] to affect and ... structure ... individual and collective lives’ in contemporary society.

Uys, with the assistance of his Evita persona, has helped to ‘structure’ the ‘individual and collective lives’ of South Africans in a number of ways. An example of this structuring process occurred when s/he took Uys’s voter education revue, *The Ballot Bus and Town Hall Indabas* (1999a), around South Africa to encourage people to vote. Through the television magazine programme *Evita – Live and Dangerous* (1999e) s/he alerted the public to the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (both of these programmes are discussed in detail in Chapter Six). However, unlike his predecessors from the ‘golden age of satire’ (mentioned in Chapter Two), Uys does not see his role as being that of a ‘cleanser and guardian of civilization’ (Cuddon, 1977:601). Instead, ‘South Africa’s leading satirist’ (Nelán, 1999:43) is satisfied if ‘something lodges subconsciously’ (Viljoen, 1999:24). He hopes that, through his perpetuation of the Evita myth as/or legend, he will ‘indirectly’ assist the public to ‘transcend [the] limitations’ of their existence (Eliade, 1964:145).

Larue (1975:201) also attributes a transcendental function to myths because he maintains that they help humans to

acquire psychic strength to meet the trauma of existence and to answer the absurdity of the human dilemma of man existing briefly in endless time and space.

Larue (1975:211) also suggests that ‘because man was not prepared to live with the absurd, he developed myths’ and, judging from the unfolding of the Evita myth discussed in this chapter, people continue to do so in contemporary society.

Uys (1994b:7) appears sensitive to the trauma of existence facing contemporary South Africans when he states that ‘absurdity can kill when it loses its label and becomes a way of life’, as was the case with the racist policies of apartheid. Uys (1994b:7) believes that ‘laughter controls the madness of men and makes them men again’ and, thus, during the 1970s, he engaged (albeit subconsciously) in the chiasmic technique of creating absurd situations as a means of questioning reality. Uys (Wiesner, 1999:4) admits, however, that ‘in exasperation at South Africa’s [continued] absurdities’, he reversed his performance strategy in the 1980s and early 1990s and presented realistic characters on stage, such as his Evita persona, as a tool for counteracting life’s farcical situations. Uys (Willoughby, 2001:16)

insist[s] that ... unlike, say, the cutesy [*sic*] stage personae of Casper de Vries or David Kramer [two well-known South African comedians] [Evita] is more than a lovable culture mascot, being [instead] first and foremost a vehicle for sharp political protest.

One of Uys’s reasons for encouraging the public’s ‘immortalization’ of someone who is merely a ‘figment’ of his fertile imagination must surely be to remind them that Evita’s political ‘reality’ is man-made or legendary and not ‘God-given’ or mythical. Consequently, the ‘reality’ and values presented by a political ideology such as apartheid are likewise man-made and, therefore, expendable. Uys (1994b:7) warns readers that

... nothing is beyond satire, because everything created by people to control other people [such as norms and values] is deserving of a strong comment, but there are clever ways to do it.

For Uys, the cleverest of these is, of course, to continue to make ‘a strong comment’ in both his satirical texts and dramatic performances through the ‘flip likeability of ... Evita Bezuidenhout’ (Greig, 1999:10). Uys professes to be ‘quite good at [creating] absurd situations’ for his realistic personae, and his highly amusing, yet thought-provoking, portrayal of the more pertinent incidents of the Evita Bezuidenhout saga lend credence to this disclosure.

Although the Evita myth is currently well-established, it appears that like most other myths, it originally ‘gr[e]w up without intent’ (Marckwardt *et al.*, 1965:470) on the part of Evita’s creator. As indicated in Chapter One, a reader was responsible for naming this voice, thus integrating myth and legend. It was Uys, however, who decided to give this conflationary literary device a tangible presence and a surname during his first revue in the early 1980s. According to Uys (Bishop, 1991:198), Evita ‘started instinctively as a member of the chorus line’ along with ‘twenty [other] characters’, including other women that ‘the public didn’t take to’. When Evita became too dominant, Uys decided to drop this persona from his repertoire. However, despite this action, the public continued to clamour for Evita and thus Uys was forced to reinstate what was fast becoming the public’s preferred persona. However, Uys did not foster the Evita myth as/or legend merely to satisfy his audiences’ demand for amusement, but as a weapon against socio-political injustice both during and after the apartheid era. The comments discussed below provide evidence of Uys’s success. According to Baker (1994:256), this ‘suburban housewife with ideas above her station’ continued to grow in popularity in South Africa and, to a lesser extent, abroad, because her ‘malign delusions of grandeur provide[d] a brilliant deflation of the arrogance that shored up the apartheid system’ – a policy that was spearheaded by the Nationalists who had been voted into power by only ‘700 000 out of 27 million South Africans’ (Uys, 1986:124). During a decade of successful performances, the Evita myth as/or legend grew in both length and prominence until Uys eventually took advantage of his persona’s celebrity status and wrote *The Legend of Evita Bezuidenhout in A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a). Today, judging from the tremendous response she receives from the public, Evita’s popularity far outweighs that of Uys’s other creations.

Uys’s perpetuation of the Evita myth as/or legend involves a chiastic slippage between two literary genres, namely that of his prose works and the many mainly one-man revues that he performs both live (on-stage) and in front of television cameras. These two types of texts necessitate different approaches. In an interview with Granelli (1997:9), Uys outlined the technique he uses when creating his revues as follows: ‘I rewrite the show everyday ... it’s got to be politically new. I can’t help bad news but I can certainly avoid



old news'. Uys (Wiesner, 1999:4) also states: "I'm a reactor, not an actor. I don't have a script, I don't rehearse: I have a structure, and much of the material reflects the headlines of the afternoon on CNN and Sky News."<sup>5</sup> In direct contrast to her stage performances, Evita's supposed biography is far from 'politically new' because it was the culmination of 'five years of research into the fascinating details of South African politics' (Uys, 1994a:flyleaf). This exercise provided Uys with an opportunity for engaging in an objective analysis of the apartheid era from the end of the 1950s to the beginning of the 1990s, while he involved his heroine in a series of political intrigues.

Evita's success in 'the political arena' (Kustow, 1998:2) increased over the years until she became, somewhat sardonically, 'the confidant' (Uys, 1997a:2) of the leaders of the Nationalist Party as well as Uys's mask when, as noted before, he interviewed South Africa's newly elected President Nelson Mandela in *Funigalore II* (1994d). When Uys (1995:244) records how he felt while waiting, in the guise of Evita, for President Mandela to arrive on the set, he succinctly sums up the development of the Evita myth as/or legend as follows:

What a culmination to our fifteen years of involvement with this Evita Bezuidenhout. Nico<sup>6</sup> had given detail to my fantasy through the years of her development from revue sketch to national treasure, and now here she was ready to talk to Nelson Mandela!

During the course of 'chatting' to Uys/Evita, President Mandela, arguably South Africa's own 'living legend', not only compliments the mythical Evita, fast becoming a 'living-legend' herself, on her appearance ('Ah, and there you are, looking so beautiful'), but also on the legendary role she has played and, presumably, will continue to play, in South Africa's socio-political reality. Mandela (Uys, 1995:248) aligns Evita (or is it Uys?) with

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<sup>5</sup> American and British television news programmes.

<sup>6</sup> 'Nico de Klerk has been not only [Uys's] designer in the theatre and for film shoots since the early 1980s, but also [his] mirror when playing Evita' (Uys, 1995:17). Uys's description of Evita's evolution (with varying amounts of assistance from his designer and the make-up artists who, over the years, have 'painted Evita' (Uys, 1994a:21), appears to offer support for Breytenbach's (1985:197) claim that the fashioning and on-going delivery of a 'mask' 'takes place over a period of years'.

President de Klerk and ... other prominent Afrikaners like Constand Viljoen [who] have done very well indeed in ensuring that all of us come together ... and you yourself have played a tremendous role.

President Mandela is not alone in his assessment of Evita's success in the socio-political sphere. It appears that Uys's Evita has the ability to make people sit up and both watch and listen and is also capable of recording views that a wide range of South Africans want to read. Thus, as further evidence of his continued exploitation of the Evita myth as/or legend, Evita's 'opinions' are published in *The Essential Series*,<sup>7</sup> alongside those of other legendary South African figures. When presenting Evita's ideas, Uys follows his usual practice of focusing more on pleasure than pain. Some examples of Uys/Evita's amusing but often thought-provoking opinions on a wide range of topics are offered in Chapter Six.

The Evita myth as/or legend continues to grow and, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Evita still commands the attention of the South African public. This 'most fearsome of icons' (Accone, 1999:1) also continues to attract international acclaim whenever she appears outside South Africa. Through the use of the word 'icon' Evita is granted the stature of an idol or figurehead. However, this image is subverted by the phrase 'most fearsome' that depicts Evita as a tyrant who ridicules anyone who arouses her ire. Michael Kustow (1998:1), a British critic of some note, offers a more complimentary portrait of this 'legend' when he describes Evita as 'a liberating, extravagant, taboo-bending comic queen'.<sup>8</sup> This description presents Evita as a larger-than-life transvestite matriarch, who not only amuses her audiences but also 'liberates' them when she exposes many social, cultural and political norms as prejudicial 'taboos'. Kustow (1998:2) draws attention to the chiasmic aspect of Uys's *modus operandi* (namely conflating pleasure and pain as discussed in Chapter Two) when he comments that this 'authentic fake reality [both] entertain[s] ... with topical gags [and] enter[s] the political arena'. The term 'authentic fake reality' contains an example of semantic chiasmus

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<sup>7</sup> This series is jointly published by David Philip Publishers and Mayibuye Books.

<sup>8</sup> Further discussion of the term 'queen' occurs later in this chapter.

similar to the kind that Uys frequently deploys because ‘fake’ is the opposite of the other two words. In ascribing these disparate characteristics to Uys’s persona, Kustow appears to support the idea that Uys often uses Evita as the medium through which he fuses fact and fantasy (discussed at some length in the next chapter).

During the preparatory phase of South Africa’s second fully representational election, Uys continued to combine reality and fiction when he adopted the Evita persona as a means of putting the fun back into politics. As evidence of her mythological qualities, more than two decades after her first appearance on a South African stage, Evita was invited to address South Africa’s National Parliament. ‘With a wit as prickly as [the] cactus’ that formed an essential part of her speech, Evita, as mentioned in Chapter Three, gave the assembled politicians ‘an unforgettable lesson in history and politics’ (Jaffer, 1999b:5). This particular appearance attests both to the extent of Evita’s charisma and to the magnitude of the Evita myth as/or legend because in what other country would ‘a performer, in drag *nogal* [what is more], be allowed to address a national parliament’ (Snyman, 1999:2). It is this chiasmic conflation of male actor/female persona and fact/fiction that has helped to perpetuate the Evita myth as/or legend/living legend.<sup>9</sup>

Evita’s mythical status has been further enhanced by her appearance in five editions of the already mentioned cartoon strip *Madam & Eve* (Francis, Dugmore & Rico, 1999a-e) that appeared in the *Pretoria News – Interval* during October 1999. Evita joined the three female characters that regularly feature in this cartoon strip, namely Gwen Anderson (the Madam), her mother and Eve, Gwen’s maid.<sup>10</sup> It seems that the cartoonists, Francis, Dugmore and Rico, share Uys’s (1999d) view that Evita’s main attraction is the fact that the public ‘know she’s not real’. Hence, the focus of humour in three of these cartoons is

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<sup>9</sup> The ironic implications of this particular event should not go unnoticed. Evita preaches her sermon on democracy to a group of multi-racial politicians in the former ‘whites-only wing of parliament’ (Snyman, 1999:2), where many of the principles of apartheid were conceptualised and promulgated.

<sup>10</sup> These cartoon characters are, like Evita, household names in South Africa and regularly appear in cartoons in a number of newspapers, as well as in an annual cartoon anthology. During the first half of 2001 they featured in their own weekly television series. The cartoons discussed above appeared in the press prior to the television series and thus the three women, unlike Evita, had not yet been given a physical reality.

Uys's [in]famous persona. While Gwen and her mother think Evita is a woman, Eve knows Evita is Uys's transvestite persona. The humour here is doubled-edged – not only because Evita is actually a man and thus a fake, but also because the other three 'women' are fictitious cartoon characters and hence just as unreal as Uys's persona.

Public recognition of Evita's legendary status is not confined to South Africa. As mentioned in Chapter One, America's 'Living Legacy 2000 Award ... for women who [have] led us into the 21st century' was bestowed on Evita in San Diego, California. Uys, in the guise of Evita, is 'the first South African to join [the] ranks' (Walker, 2000:8) of such distinguished recipients as Empress Nagako, Hillary Rodham Clinton and Mother Teresa. The presenting of this prestigious award to Uys/Evita and his/her acceptance of the award offers definitive proof of the magnitude of the Evita 'myth', as well as recognition of her contribution (or perhaps it is more correct to say Uys's contribution) to both political and social reform in South Africa.

Walker (2000:8) pays tribute to Evita's celebrity status and, as already noted, dubs her the 'Afrikan [sic] queen'. This title merits closer examination. Firstly the spelling 'Afrikan' appears to be a compromise between 'Afrikaans' and 'African' and is thus an apt description of Evita, who began her career at the height of apartheid but is still equally at home today during President Thabo Mbeki's much publicized 'African Renaissance'. Similarly, although the word 'queen' is the title given 'to a woman who is the chief ruler of a state' (Little *et al.*, 1973:1727), the title 'drag queen' is bestowed on female impersonators with panache and a glitzy style of dress. Thus, through his use of this title, Walker also acknowledges that Evita is the transvestite persona of one of South Africa's leading satirists, and it is Uys who rightly deserves credit 'for excellence and humanitarian contribution' as well as 'for the laughter and positive energy' (Walker, 2000:8) that Evita evokes.

In addition to this humanitarian reward, 'the indomitable Evita Bezuidenhout' was appointed 'an honorary *alumnus*' of the University of Cape Town (an academic

institution of considerable renown and Uys's *alma mater*) during the first year of the new millennium. This academic award recognizes 'the profound effect' that 'Uys's most beloved *alter ego*' has had, both in the past and currently, on 'the consciousness of South Africans [and] also on people abroad' (Kruger, 2000:1). In addition to heaping praise on Evita, this article lists the 'irrepressible Pieter-Dirk Uys' as one of the University's 'most beloved *alumni*'.

With more than a touch of irony, Krouse (1999a:16) appears to encapsulate Evita's legendary but mythical status when he describes her as follows:

More than a relic of apartheid, Uys's drag character is a survivor of the defunct [apartheid] system that, once upon a time, threatened her very existence – even if she was just fiction from the start.

Uys admits that his audiences know that Evita is just the fictitious product of 'the whims of a stage comic dressed up as a woman' (Uys, 1995:247) and yet they still willingly accept her. Uys (1999d) believes that 'Evita draws people out because they know she's not real'. It is precisely this illusory quality that 'makes her even more real' and encourages people to 'confide in her and not feel compromised'. The public's unconditional acceptance of Evita makes them 'forget that they are being attacked or censored' which gives her the freedom to express sentiments that Uys himself could or would not voice. Hence, Uys (Accone, 1999:1) maintains:

There's an interesting area I can inhabit with Evita – this designer democrat, clown creature – where she [and by implication, Uys] has power.

Uys's Evita is accepted by people from all levels of South African society and, consequently, revues and public functions in which this persona features are always well attended. It appears, therefore, that Uys's audiences have taken 'the leap of faith' (Larue, 1975:200) that 'transcends intellectual analysis' and, as a result, they unquestioningly accept the Evita myth as/or legend because 'the experience justifies the belief'. Thus, according to Larue (1975:200,201), albeit in a different context, they 'willingly ... believe in a fiction [that they] know to be a fiction, there being nothing else'. Proof of this unconditional acceptance can be found in Uys's (1986:66) recollection of an incident

that occurred after a performance of *Adapt or Dye* (1982) in Bloemfontein in 1982. Evita was signing autographs off stage when an ‘old *oom* [man] leant towards her and said: “*Mevrou* [Madam] you were very good, but if I ever get hold of that Pieter-Dirk Uys, I’m going to *donner* him” [beat him up]’.

From her humble beginnings as the mouthpiece of a guest writer for a newspaper, Evita has, over the last two decades of the twentieth century, evolved into Uys’s greatest comic device. Although Uys (Kustow, 1998:3,4) admits that Evita ‘says things that are shocking’, Uys believes that, in contrast to his earlier works, there is little chance of Evita’s barbed repartée being banned because she ‘doesn’t exist’ and so ‘whatever happens around her doesn’t exist either’. Equally at home in ‘Afro-chic frock[s]’ (Snyman, 1999:2) or ‘glamorous ... cocktail ensembles’ (Kustow, 1998:1), Evita fulfils such illustrious roles as ‘Nelson Mandela’s ... most caring comrade’ (Kustow, 1998:1) and the ‘self-appointed godmother of the nation’ (Walker, 1999:3). Thus, acknowledging the effective enshrining of the myth, Evita affirms Uys’s earlier prediction of her successful future, both in South Africa and abroad, as a tool for exposing various forms of political and social injustice. Testifying to the chiasmic mode that is a common trait of Uys’s literary style, Evita (Snyman, 1999:2) confidently claims that ‘it’s not the future that’s unpredictable – it’s the past’. Evita is a fictive creation and what Uys terms the ‘unpredictability [of her] past’ appears to be an indisputable fact because her ‘past’ was created in retrospect when Uys wrote her ‘biography’; and her[story] continues to be invented every time she appears in a revue. In common with some of her fellow South Africans, Evita chooses to forget the less attractive details of both her personal life-history and the socio-political reality of the apartheid era.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the theatre-going public’s insatiable appetite for Mrs Bezuidenhout during the mid-eighties compelled Uys to create a family around her. Uys (1994a:flyleaf) portrayed this fictitious family initially on stage in *Farce About Uys* (1983) and on film in *Skating on Thin Uys* (1985). Through his creation of these other characters, Uys made Evita into a three-dimensional character who is not only the wife of a politician, but is also portrayed as both a mother and grandmother. Uys’s family soon

became an integral part of the Evita myth as/or legend and was gradually expanded into an entourage of considerable dimension that included not only relatives but employees. Close family members whom Uys impersonates in his revues are Evita's husband, Dr J J de V Bezuidenhout (Hasië), her children, Izan, De Kock and Billie-Jeanne, her mother, Ossewania Poggenpoel, and her sister, Bambi Kellerman. Readers of Evita's biography, *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a), know that Billie-Jeanne is married to Leroy Makoeloeli and that Evita has three grandchildren, Winnie-Jeanne, Nelson-Ignatius and La Toya-Ossewania. Evita's faithful retainers include her two domestic helpers, Sophie (discussed in Chapter Three) and Greta (mentioned in Chapter One), a gardener, Pompies (who later becomes President of Bapetikosweti), a personal assistant, Bokkie Bam (described in detail in Chapter Three), and a chauffeur-cum-bodyguard, Gabriel Gouws. Some of these characters (played by actors and actresses) appear alongside Evita and her family in *Farce About Uys* (1983)<sup>11</sup> and *Skating on Thin Uys* (1985), while all of them feature in *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a).

Uys's (1994a:16) fashioning of three prominent members of the Bezuidenhout clan, namely Dr J J de V Bezuidenhout and the 'most unlikely twins', Izan and De Kock, is examined in more detail below through a close reading of *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a), and a semiotic analysis of the *Evita Bezuidenhout Calendar 2002* (1997d). In *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a) the reader is also frequently introduced to the opinions of Uys (a character in the story with the dual roles of biographer and narrator). While Uys (the narrator) cannot be seen as a straightforward equivalent of Uys (the author and political satirist), the similarity in their backgrounds, occupations and viewpoints frequently results in a conflation of the narrator and the author. Thus, predictably, it is often difficult for the reader to establish whether the various standpoints that Uys (the narrator) adopts are merely part of the fictitious world that Uys (the author) creates around Evita, or whether they are the views of Uys, the writer and political comic.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>The characters of De Kock and Sophie are subject to close scrutiny in Chapter Four, through semiological analyses of extracts from videos of *Farce About Uys* (1983) and *Skating on Thin Uys* (1985).

<sup>12</sup> During discussions of *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a) the term 'Uys (the narrator)' is used to differentiate this persona from 'Uys (the author and actor)'.

According to Uys (the narrator) (1994a:46), Evita first met Dr J J de V Bezuidenhout in 1957. At that time the twenty-two year old starlet was playing the female lead in ‘a political thriller’. Bezuidenhout ‘had been sent by Dr Verwoerd to join the commission looking into the film industry as a means of education’,<sup>13</sup> and, according to Evita (Uys, 1994a:46), he was ‘very knowledgeable and cordial’. They next met in 1958 in Laagerfontein when Dr Bezuidenhout visited the library where Evita worked. Uys’s (1994a:46) description of this meeting again provides evidence of his practice of juxtaposing seemingly contrasting images. During this encounter, Dr Bezuidenhout’s (Uys, 1994a:56) ‘glasses fell to the floor [and] a sudden movement dislodged his upper dentures’ causing ‘his top lip [to] collapse into a crumpled heap’. However, these glaring physical limitations are counteracted a few paragraphs later when Evita’s future husband is portrayed as a man with ‘passion’ that is ‘remarkably and cleverly tempered with humour and knowledge’ (Uys, 1994a:57). According to Uys (the narrator), ‘the young MP for Laagerfontein felt confident that the rosy future held a special bower for him’ because ‘there was talk of a possible ministry’. These two sentences once again offer evidence of Uys’s deployment of semantic chiasmus. The optimistic image created in the first sentence, through the inclusion of words with positive connotations such as ‘confident’, ‘rosy’ and ‘special’ is quickly deflated through the insertion of the words ‘talk of’ and ‘possible’ in the second sentence, to insinuate the speculative nature of the politician’s anticipated promotion. Even at this early juncture, Uys warns his readers not to expect too much of Dr Bezuidenhout and continues to couch his exposé of the MP’s political ambitions within chiasmic structures. Uys (1994a:76) hints at the dubious nature of Dr Bezuidenhout’s actions when he states that the young politician could be found

... solemnly walking the passages of Parliament, usually a few respectful steps behind Dr Verwoerd, but never too far from a friendly camera.

At first glance, the phrase ‘a few respectful steps behind’ appears to be synonymous with ‘never too far from’. Thus, ostensibly, Evita’s ‘spouse’<sup>14</sup> is portrayed as a dedicated

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<sup>13</sup> Presumably Uys uses the tongue-in-cheek phrase ‘means of education’, to draw attention to what he perceives as the Nationalist Government’s use of the audio-visual media for political indoctrination and propaganda.

<sup>14</sup> The embedded self-reflexive irony is, therefore, integral to both the humour and the creation of the myth.



disciple of the man who ‘embod[ies] the Afrikaner dream of apartheid’ (Oakes, 1988:423). However, the fact that, in the first phrase, the object of Hasie’s attention is the Prime Minister and, in the second, it is a ‘friendly camera’, calls the calibre of his allegiance into question. Evita’s husband is depicted as an attention-seeker who uses his connections with the Nationalist ‘inner-circle’ to further his own career. Unfortunately, however, unlike his wife, he never achieves political success and eventually becomes a bitter and frustrated recluse.

Although Evita (Uys, 1994a:161) states that her husband ‘was once a man of integrity and drive’, this remark is somewhat ironic in the light of her spouse’s nickname, ‘Hasie’, which is the diminutive form of *haas*, the Afrikaans word for rabbit. When used as a nickname, *haas* has negative implications such as ‘idiot’ and ‘fool’, while *hasie* has connotations of cuteness, the chiasitic slippage pointing to the inappropriateness of giving this name to ‘a man of integrity and drive’. Here again it appears that Uys is playing with words and, in so doing, offers his audience both a positive and negative image of Evita’s husband. In the photograph of Hasie that appears in the *Evita Bezuidenhout Calendar 2002* (1997d), Uys is dressed in a long brown paisley dressing gown over pyjamas and sheepskin slippers. He wears glasses and has a receding hairline and a large ‘double-chin’. Uys depicts Hasie slouching in an armchair with his knees and feet turned inwards as he, in stereotypical South African fashion, dunks his rusk in his coffee. It is thus not surprising that Hasie (Uys, 1994a:162) says: “I’ve always wanted to ask why he [Uys, author and actor]) makes me out to be so pathetic ... when he does us in the theatre.” In the picture under analysis, Hasie is surrounded by sheets of hand-written script that, in an ironic comment on ‘his’ attempts at creating his own legend, support his claim that he is busy ‘completing Chapter 6 of his never-ending book, which would finally expose the hypocrisy of Nationalism’ (Uys, 1994a:342). However, the numerous screwed up sheets of paper that are strewn around the room act as a metaphor for Hasie’s wasted potential, not only as a writer but also as a politician. Somewhat ironically too, the *Dokter’s* description of his book is equally applicable to Evita’s biography, *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a) in which Uys (the author) satirises the activities of the Nationalist Party.

According to Uys (the narrator), Evita's twin sons were born on 31 May 1961 (previously the day on which the formation of the Republic was celebrated) and their names help to reinforce their disparate natures. Ossewania, Evita's mother, 'suggest[s] the name "Izan" which is "a good masculine name that remind[s] her of the heroes of the war" ' (Uys, 1994a:88). It is only when Evita sees this name reflected in a mirror that she realizes Ossewania's heroes are actually members of the Nazi Party led by Adolph Hitler, whom her husband Hasie had initially abhorred and later admired. When Izan grows up, his actions become more brutal, thus reinforcing the aptness of his name. For example, he and his right-wing 'buddies' 'beat up two stupid Indian men, who should've have known better than buy tickets to look lustily at white "pussy" ' at the Glitter Pit.<sup>15</sup> In a satiric deflation of his brother's 'macho' image, De Kock's name appears to be related to the size of his penis. At age sixteen, in an attempt 'to interest his ... very presentable young [male] teacher', he scribbles 'they don't call me De Kock for nothing [on a] home-made card of a naked man with an erection' (Uys, 1994a:246-7). It is through such risqué descriptions as this that Uys broadens the scope of his satirical mode that, as mentioned earlier, focuses on humour rather than censure. It is also through such incidents that Uys draws attention to what he regards as one of the inconsistencies of apartheid, namely its concerns for safe-guarding public morals through various forms of censorship, while perpetuating the flouting of certain basic human right's issues. (The abuse of basic human rights is an issue that is referred to throughout this thesis).

In his depiction of Evita's twin sons, Uys (the author) frequently juxtaposes semantically chiasmic statements that, like the twins' names, serve to reinforce their conflicting natures. For example, when the boys are small, Izan has 'his finger permanently posed to squash anything' (Uys, 1994a:90) and 'tortured the small wooden oxen and donkeys that were part of the [Christmas] nativity tableau, and wanted to know why Jesus was black' (Uys, 1994a:100). Through these descriptions, Uys prefigures his later depiction of Izan as a bully and a racist, characteristics often associated with nazism. In direct contrast to

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<sup>15</sup> The Glitter Pit is a 'luxury hotel and casino' (probably a parody of Sun City) situated in the fictitious homeland of Bapetikosweti. 'Here white South Africa [*sic*] in its Calvin Klein jeans could see, taste and touch what was taboo in its land of Calvin the Churchman' (Uys, 1994a:15).

Izan's contempt for both nature and other racial groups, De Kock, although 'cocky', is also a gentle, effeminate child, who, according to Uys (1994a:90) 'want[s] to wear every flower in his hair' and at Christmas time 'wore the big silver star in his blonde hair for days'. Some years later, on what was supposedly Evita's thirty-first birthday, Uys again depicts the stereotypical characterisations of Izan and De Kock when he states that Izan, acting in his usual aggressive manner, 'prised the six-carat diamonds out of ... the pretty brooch' Ouma Ossewania had given her daughter, while the gentler but already effeminate De Kock (Uys, 1994a:159) merely wore his 'Mama's new earrings'.

The disparate depictions of Izan and De Kock quoted above affirm Uys's (1994a:16) earlier description of Evita's sons as 'the most unlikely twins' and thus provide justification for Uys's subsequent creation of their incompatible lifestyles while, at the same time, enhancing the Evita myth by casting her as a legendary mother. Izan is a 'fascist' and a disciple of 'AWB leader Eugene Terre'blanche' (Uys, 1994a:167) while De Kock is 'the sensitive artist of the family, mediocre ballet dancer and proverbial gay blade' (Uys, 1994a:17). Recounting the escapades of these diametrically opposed brothers serves a dual purpose. In creating and/or adopting the persona of Izan, Uys (1995:7) fulfils his self-imposed role of 'political comic' because it furnishes him with an opportunity for satirising the activities of South Africa's Afrikaner *Weerstandsbeweging* and other right wing political groups. Fabricating and/or donning the De Kock 'mask' provides Uys with a forum for airing his belief that prejudice goes far beyond either racial discrimination or apartheid. As stated in Chapter One, Uys believes that people also exhibit intolerance towards a wide range of other issues such as 'transsexualism' (Bishop, 1991:202), homosexuality, language and culture. Even De Kock's mother, Evita, supposedly has difficulty accepting her son's homosexuality. Using words that Uys (1994a:246) describes as 'decent and acceptable', Evita evades the truth when she refers to her homosexual son as 'highly strung', 'sensitive', 'easily hurt' and 'needing the company of younger boys'. Presumably Uys (the narrator) is self-reflexively and not without humour, voicing the view of Uys (the author and satirist) when he (Uys, 1994a:246) comments that, like many other 'loving' parents, Evita finds it hard to acknowledge the cause of these signs. Consequently, Uys (the narrator) (1994a:246) is

tempted to demystify homosexuality by informing Evita that ‘De Kock is only gay’, and that accepting people’s right to a different sexual preference<sup>16</sup> is, contrary to the historical view, ‘not the end of the world’.

Uys depicts the aggressive Izan and the effeminate De Kock in the *Evita Bezuidenhout Calendar 2002* (1997d) as part of the Bezuidenhout family’s Christmas photograph in which Uys plays the roles of Evita, Hasie and their three children. Uys reveals the twins’ diverse natures through his donning of contrasting outfits and facial expressions. The scowling Izan wears a black pinstriped suit and bright red patterned tie, while the broadly smiling De Kock wears an immaculate off-white suit and waistcoat, a large maroon bow tie and a brightly coloured handkerchief tucked into his jacket pocket. It can be argued that Uys is merely presenting two stereotypical images, that of an aggressive chauvinist (Izan) and a ‘camp’ homosexual (De Kock). Alternatively, it is possible that Uys is reaffirming his condemnation of racial prejudice as practised by right-wing groups (mentioned in Chapters Two and Four) and his support of people’s right to a different sexual preference that is now legally entrenched in many countries, including South Africa, but has not yet been fully accepted by all societies.

As noted previously, Uys helped to perpetuate the Evita myth as/or legend’ through *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a). In this book, Uys (the author) creates two accounts of Evita’s youth: one that she supposedly tells Uys (the narrator) during a series of interviews; the other that Uys (the narrator) reputedly uncovers as a result of his exploration of ‘media files’ and a ‘series of short sessions’ (Uys, 1994a:14) with Evita’s past associates. Both these recollections cover the period from Evita’s supposed birth as ‘Evangeline Poggenpoel’ (Uys, 1994a:24) in 1935 until 1958 when Uys (1994a:57) marries his heroine to ‘Johannes Jakobus de Villiers Bezuidenhout ... heir to the [Bezuidenhout] dynasty’. (From Evita’s marriage onwards, Uys only presents one version of her life story.) In his presentation of the two parallel but conflicting annals of Evita’s youth, Uys confirms his pleasure/pain mode of satire (see Chapter Two) through his frequent utilization of chiasmus as a satirical tool.

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<sup>16</sup> See Chapter Four, Footnote 27.

During his investigations, Uys (the narrator) supposedly discovers that Evangelie Poggenpoel is the illegitimate child of a 'hoer' (whore) (Uys, 1994a:25), Ossewania Poggenpoel. Ossewania's licentious homosexual brother, Poppie, so the legend goes, acted as Evita's surrogate father until he was murdered by the wife of 'a good looking [coloured] carpenter' (Uys, 1994a:33), who had been one of his numerous lovers. In contrast to these 'sordid secrets', the Ambassador (Uys, 1994a:24) alleges that her mother 'went to the best schools and could've been a great pianist' had she not 'dedicated her life to the Lord'. When Uys's heroine was seventeen, her father (Uys, 1994a:34), a 'strong gentle man who was always laughing', was 'murdered by some drunk kaffirs'. Evita thus presents herself as the beloved child of respectable, middle-class Afrikaans parents, who would not allow their two daughters to mix with 'low-class white rubbish' (Uys, 1994a:26). Uys entertains his readers by interspersing glimpses of Evita's personal and sentimental recollections that boost her mother's supposed avowal that 'nothing would ever melt in her mouth' (Uys, 1994a:24) with the sensational, and often sordid, details of her not quite 'kosher' 'other' past. (Here again, it appears that Uys draws attention to what he regards as one of the inconsistencies of apartheid, namely a desire to be 'the cleansers and guardians' (Cuddon, 1977:601) of society, while disregarding basic human rights (mentioned in Chapter Two). Uys (Bishop, 1991:208-9) claims that it is sordid details such as those he attributes to Evita's youth that

helped him grab the attention of a Calvinist society [who] only listen when you use swear words, so ... you make them realise that the swear word in your repertoire is not "*kak*" [shit] but "apartheid".

During the course of his 'investigation' Uys (the narrator) (1994a:27) gleans the following memories from one of Evita's former school teachers:

I rather think she had a very good sense of logic, but it was always only the logic that she created, not one that [was] ... imposed on her.

When confronted with these facts, Evita reputedly denies having acted illogically. Uys (the narrator) (1994a:28) comments on her reaction as follows:

Her forced laughter filled the room. ... I ... quickly scribbled [down the] facts ... which she ... casually rattled off in a familiar, precious way.

Through his deployment of phrases such as ‘forced laughter’ and ‘casually rattled off in a familiar, precious way’, Uys presents Evita’s account of her school days as being both pretentious and dishonest. The various discrepancies between Evita’s two ‘pasts’ serve to reinforce the following claim that the narrator (Uys, 1994a:31) makes during one of his first visits to *Blanche-Noir*, namely:

You are now leaving reality, you are entering the [mythical] world according to Evita.

It is possible that Uys intends this latter statement to be a humorous literary allusion to ‘the world according to Garp’ – another imaginary realm where the boundary between reality and allusion is constantly blurred (an aspect of Evita’s development that is discussed more fully in Chapter Six). These contradictions subtly counteract the validity of Evita’s account of her exemplary roles of daughter, wife and mother, on the one hand, and the diplomatic representative of a political party with a questionable human rights record, on the other. Presumably, it is such ambiguities that prompt Uys (the narrator) (1994a:13) to caution readers of Evita’s biography not to expect it to be a logical document because there

... is no logic in South African life, death or politics and there will and can and should be no logic in this story. That would make it too sad to be true. I want to keep it too good to be real.

Here, Uys juxtaposes two sentences with a similar linear structure but containing semantically diverse phrases (‘would make it’ versus ‘want to keep it’ and ‘too sad to be true’ versus ‘too good to be real’). In proffering this illogical story of Evita’s youth to his readers, Uys also destroys the logic of the rest of Evita’s life story and, in particular, her involvement with the Nationalist Government from the end of the 1950s until the early 1990s. Thus, by implication and retrospectively, he subverts the credibility of South Africa’s socio-political situation during the apartheid era, especially the establishment of independent states or homelands<sup>17</sup> for black South Africans. Uys (1994a:13) reminds his

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<sup>17</sup> See Chapter Two, Footnote 13.

readers that the reason for establishing homelands such as his fictitious Bapetikosweti was supposedly so that

... all blacks would ... be able to vote, live and earn a living wage in their “place of origin”, so, logically, there would no blacks in South Africa.

As proof of the flawed reasoning behind this political theory, when Uys (the narrator) recounts his first visit to *Blanche-Noir*, where Evita supposedly reigned supreme for more than ten years, he (Uys, 1994a:12) depicts this homeland as follows:

A bit of the mess God forgot to clear away when he made the world. [A place where] husbandless women [wait amidst] dusty, rusty bushes and mottled tin-shack mansions propped up by derelict 60s motors [for] the precious little money that came in brown envelopes [from] their nearly forgotten mates still working the gold-mines somewhere far away.

This bleak description, with its oxymoronic tension (‘tin-shack mansions’), suggests that Bapetikosweti (and, by implication, the actual Homeland Republics) did not provide the majority of the black population with the promised opportunities. According to Uys (the narrator) (1994a:13), many of Bapetikosweti’s citizens ‘are still working [in] the gold-mines’ in faraway South Africa for ‘precious little money’. Hence it seems improbable that the ‘dream scenario’ that depicts the homelands as a utopia for black South Africans will be taken to its supposedly logical conclusion, namely a ‘whites only’ South Africa. Uys (the narrator) (1994a:13), however, suggests to his readers that they should not be surprised at the failure of the apartheid government’s chain of reasoning because ‘there is no logic in South African life, death or politics’. Consequently, through his continual presentation of political satire in a variety of genres, namely prose and dramatic presentations on the stage, television, radio and CD, Uys (1994a:12), as mentioned in Chapter Two, constantly reiterates his belief that ‘democracy and Christianity ... have never enjoyed their honest meaning in South Africa’.

Another way in which Uys perpetuates the Evita myth as/or legend, is by allowing her to move beyond politics and theatre and to enter the world of business. Perusal of Evita’s

website (<http://www.evita.co.za>) shows that Evita has her own theatre-cum-restaurants at *Evita se Perron* in Darling in the Western Cape (an aspect of Evita's 'career' that is also dealt with in Chapters Three and Six) where her adoring public can watch her shows or purchase copies of her videos, CD recordings, books and 'T-shirts' from her shop. *Evita se Perron* is also an ideal venue for that 'special Xmas Party', 'corporate function [or] wedding reception' (Uys, 2001f; 2001g).

Evita's legendary image was further strengthened when s/he launched her own range of wines, perfume and men's cologne. Evita's wines (Uys, 2001g:4) consist of *Evita's Blanc* (white) and *Evita's Noir* (black) (the latter is a seemingly chiasmic conflation as, although it is a red wine, it looks black when poured into a green bottle). When the names of Evita's wines are combined, they remind the reader that Evita was previously mistress of *Blanche-Noir* when she was supposedly still the South African Ambassador to Bapetikosweti. The name of Evita's 'exclusive ... French-made, freshly floral scent', *Jeau Mour* (Uys, 2001g:4), is obviously another of Uys's chiasmic creations. This perfume was created 'for the woman who is' (the customer) by 'the woman who isn't' (Evita). It also involves another form of chiasmus, namely a contrast between verbal and audio messages. As Gill (1999:11) points out, although this name may 'look a little French when printed on the packaging', when said 'out loud' it 'could get a response of anything from "screw you too" to "up yours"'. This type of lewd language is not usually associated with an upmarket perfume. It thus appears that when choosing this French-sounding crude South African slang expression as the name of Evita's 'exclusive' perfume, Uys's tongue was 'firmly in his cheek'. According to Evita (Uys, 2001g:4) this 'scent' is 'a cry of the veld mingled with the passionate echo of a Parisienne amour' a description that offers further evidence of Uys's utilization of semantic chiasmus as the harsh sound of 'cry' is contrasted to the more muted 'echo' and the simple, natural world of the 'veld' with the sophisticated intrigue of a 'Parisienne amour'. Uys continues this amusing 'sales-pitch' and describes *Jeau Mour* as 'the scent of a woman who is ... part of South Africa like biltong, proteas, mopani worms and reconciliation'. Hence it appears an ideal choice for the perfume of Uys's chiasmic persona whose role is to bridge



the gap between the 'old' South Africa, under the rule of Afrikaner Nationalism, and the 'new' South Africa, under the rule of the African National Congress.

As mentioned earlier, this chapter attempts to show how, through his portrayal of Evita's experiences, initially as 'the saccharine-sweet wife of a conservative politician' (Whitehouse, 2001:71) (already quoted), and later as a political figurehead, Uys (albeit inadvertently) encourages his readers to review their stance on a variety of socio-political issues that appear to be closely related to current gender issues (also dealt with briefly in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis).

Before continuing this discussion, it is perhaps necessary to provide some background information on feminist theory, both in general and within the context of South Africa, in order to show 'the base upon which the superstructure'<sup>18</sup> of the Evita myth as/or legend is built. Wark (2001:44) stresses the importance of making people more aware of how

... oppression and ideological control are embedded within all forms of social institutions from the publicness of the art world [and by implication, the literary world] to the privacy of the home and family and are thus experienced [both] socially and at the subjective level of the individual.

Consequently, artists and authors have, since the advent of feminism in the 1960s, attempted to make other women, and society at large, more aware of the ways in which women are seen and treated in society. Many contemporary women have fought, and are still fighting, to throw off the stereotypical identity that society has imposed upon them, and which limits their choices in life, and to replace this by a more wide-ranging identity that they construct for themselves. The work of contemporary artists, like the work of all protest artists,<sup>19</sup> plays an important role in social change. Although artists such as Uys may be taking small steps and making small changes, their ideas can, and do, seep into society at large and help to change general opinion.

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<sup>18</sup> This terminology is appropriated from Chidi Amutha's theory of African literature and seems apposite in the context of African feminism as well as Uys's use of the female Evita voice.

<sup>19</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, Uys's (1994b:3) work is a combination of 'protest politics' and 'protest art' and can be described as either 'protest become art' or 'art become protest'.

Within the context of South African feminist issues, Daymond (1996:xix) writes that

[because] in the past the issue of power has been focused on race and [not gender] in South African writing, ... black and white women now face major obstacles to the development of a community of purpose [namely that of empowering] unequally related [women] within one historically bounded place [South Africa], to speak as one voice with regard to gender issues.

Daymond (1996:xix,xx) further argues that race still appears to ‘determine the degrees of power that women may be granted’ in South African society because

many black women activists have charged white women academics with exercising proprietorial rights, as experts, over knowledge [and] assuming the right to “speak for” ... black women.

However, Daymond (1996:xxi) suggests that this argument ignores two vital issues. Firstly, in contemporary South Africa ‘questions of power and privilege affect *all* groupings (class, ethnic, religious, age) [and] constantly need to be negotiated’. Secondly, ‘experience ... has to be investigated and reported [in order] to become that which is consciously known’, namely knowledge.

Lockett (1996:17) extends the debate with regard to the position of women writers in South Africa when she states that both white and black women are

... part of the oppressed “Other” as opposed to the “Self” of the academy. [Although white women] may identify with black women, [black women] are more likely to view [white women] as agents of their oppression.

Lockett then questions whether ‘white women have the right to speak for or about black women when they ... reject the discourses that [white men] have made about [them]’.

Schalkwyk (1996), however, brings a male perspective to the South African feminist argument with regard to the crucial connection between feminist discourse and hands-on experience that appears relevant in terms of this chapter’s discussion of Uys’s use of the *Evita* persona. Schalkwyk (1996:57,58) states:

Discourse is ... a product of experience [and] language [is] a vehicle for the communication of what have to be originally private sensations. ... If experience [is seen] as an irreducible given – as something owned by a sovereign consciousness [that] split[s] the community into ... autonomously experiencing individuals [then] a woman [will] have [no] more access to ... another woman's experiences than a man ... . In theory, [both] would ... have the same degree of access – none. [Consequently] the great, mobilizing and liberating force of feminism as a political and communal movement ... would then be lost. [On the other hand] to speak of the sharing of communal experiences evokes [the] concept of [an] experience [that] is not ... the private property of any individual or class – but is rather placed, mediated, and ... constituted, by the social and ... public sphere of language.

Uys's Evita persona is a white Afrikaans woman and the product of a male author and actor. However, from Schalkwyk's perspective, this should not detract from Uys's ability to understand and comment (through his Evita persona) on the 'communal experiences' of women in general, and South African women in particular. Those South African women who regard themselves 'as part of the oppressed "Other" ' might refute Evita's supposed championing of women's rights because she is Uys's creation and they reject 'the discourses that [male] oppressors have made about [them]' (Lockett (1996:17). However, it is likely that Uys, through his deployment of the Evita persona can, and does, contribute in some small way to 'the great, mobilizing and liberating force of feminism as a political and communal movement' (Schalkwyk, 1996:58).

At first glance it appears that Uys also rejects the overt championing of women's rights since he finds 'strident feminism ... terribly noisy [and] irritating' (Bishop, 1991:189). However, as stated in Chapters One and Three, Uys (Bishop, 1991:202) admits to fighting all forms of prejudice, including discrimination against 'women, ... AIDS victims ... and disabled people'. Uys (Bishop, 1991:193) also appears to promote women's rights when he attributes Evita's popularity to the fact that women like her because he 'do[es]n't make fun of women' while 'men like her because [he] make[s] fun of men's preconceptions of women'. Although, as mentioned in Chapter Three, the Nationalist Party did not allow women to participate in politics during the apartheid era, Uys's fictitious Evita claims that she has upheld the interests of South African women in

the male-dominated political arena since the early 1980s. Thus it appears that Evita has been part of the ‘mobilizing and liberating force of feminism’ (Schalkwyk, 1996:58).

Hence, as indicated in Chapter One, Chapter Five attempts to trace Evita’s phenomenal development from the obsequious role of servant to her authoritarian husband to the elevated political positions of both ‘Ambassador-for-Life’ (Uys, 1994a:343) and the ‘Official Afrikaans Substitute First Lady to President Nelson Mandela’ (Uys, 1997a:3). This investigation necessitates returning to *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a) to examine how Uys continually deploys Evita in tasks that are often perceived as women’s duties, namely cooking, homemaking and entertaining and, in so doing, appears to align himself with current gender issues. These ‘chores’ are happily undertaken by the wife of Dr Hendrik Verwoerd (Evita’s supposed mentor), who ‘believ[es] that a woman’s duty [is] to see to her husband’s and family’s needs, down to the smallest detail’ (Uys, 1994a:66). Yet, exhibiting his usual fondness for semantic chiasmus, Uys (the author) soon counteracts this description of a supposedly ‘traditional’ partnership with what might be seen as a more progressive attitude towards marriage. Uys (1994a:66) describes Joyce Waring (another politician’s wife with whom Evita supposedly associates during the early years of her marriage) as someone who ‘never ... ke[pt] quiet about her contempt for chauvinism and all it entailed’. In this way Uys provides his readers with a subtle clue that Evita too might not always be depicted as blindly following her husband’s directives. This section focuses on how Uys ‘allows’ Evita to gradually break free from her subservient position and rise to the apex of the political ladder often through the medium of the so-called ‘traditional’ female task of providing food.

In the early years of her supposed marriage, Evita, at first glance, appears to be in awe of her husband and his political colleagues, particularly Prime Minister Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, and thus content to play the role of a mindless lackey to a domineering husband who frequently ‘telephoned his wife to bark orders at her’ (Uys, 1994a:81). However, a closer look at Evita’s private thoughts reveal that she has no intention of retaining her position as a ‘camp-follower’ to both her husband and the Nationalist Party. Uys’s (1994a:63) heroine first castigates herself because there is ‘no detail in her

opinions, no opinion in her conversation’ and then reminds herself ‘you must pull yourself together or else you will vanish into their whirlpool without trace’. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Uys again engages in a chiasmic conflation of two seemingly different characters, namely a stereotypical wife versus a contemporary independent woman. It appears that here Uys associates himself with current feminist issues (referred to earlier in this chapter) when he implies that it is Evita’s acceptance of this challenge that marks the beginning of ‘the rise of Evita Bezuidenhout’.

As stated earlier, the young Mrs Bezuidenhout’s role model is Mrs Betsie Verwoerd because, according to Uys (1994a:66), Mrs Verwoerd ‘tirelessly organized, encouraged, discussed and decided’ – all qualities that endear her to the newest of the ‘women-in-waiting’ [politicians’ wives]. While the act of encouraging can be regarded as a facet of a woman’s nurturing role, the other verbs, in contrast, imply the existence of a more forceful side to the feminine psyche. The word ‘discussed’, for example, indicates a two-way process between equal partners, while the words ‘organized’ and ‘decided’ create the impression of a strong-minded woman who adroitly manages both her own and other people’s lives. These dynamic activities are in direct opposition to Uys’s earlier depiction of Evita as her husband’s deferential servant and thus prefigures the life-style changes that lie ahead of Evita. Consequently, in his recording of the early years of Evita’s marriage, Uys already alerts his readers to the more tenacious side of his heroine’s nature:

“Now all we need are twins to make it a national celebration,” suggested Dr Verwoerd.

... “That would be too good to be true,” [Evita] responded, knowing that twins were just what she had planned, and knowing that what she planned always came to fruition.

In making Evita (Uys, 1994a:81) repeat the words ‘knowing’ and ‘planned’ in her response to Dr Verwoerd’s supposed ‘challenge’, Uys prefigures the emergence of Evita’s ‘family’ and his creation of the multiple family roles through which he extends his satirical thrust. Perhaps paradoxically, however, Evita’s ‘future’ lies not only in the hands of her creator, Uys the author and myth-maker, but also in her entranced public.

Audiences and readers who have enjoyed and been delighted by Evita's performances in reviews are party to Uys's chiasmic conflation of fact and fiction, past and future, and know that Evita not only becomes a successful political figure but also outlives Dr Verwoerd.

However, after allowing his readers a glimpse of his heroine's more independent future role, Uys (1994a:81) deliberately negates this image a few paragraphs later when he reintroduces an ingratiating Evita who, in response to her husband's orders,

... just nodded and said 'ja' [yes] and noted down her obligatory commitments. She was not feeling very well, but ... her husband was in command and she must obey.

It is only after the birth of her twin sons that Uys shows Evita making a conscious effort to take control of her own life. Consequently, Uys (1994a:91) comments that 'Dr Bezuidenhout knew he couldn't argue' when he learns that his wife would not be 'going ... to Cape Town [because] she had no time to play politics'. Ironically, as the story evolves, it is Evita who spends more and more time 'playing politics' until she eventually becomes a master at this game, a ploy that allows Uys to focus more and more on his role of South Africa's leading political satirist.

At first, the political 'games' that Evita (Uys, 1994a:163) plays consist of nothing more than 'appear[ing] next to her husband on the podium' during his official trips. For instance, they are depicted as attending the inauguration of the Transkei Legislative Assembly. However, it appears that the attainment of self-rule does not guarantee the demise of racial prejudice. Many white and black South Africans still register discomfort when forced to socialize and, consequently, Evita's first excursion into the realms of 'diplomatic détente' is not very successful. With his customary talent for educating through laughter, Uys (1994a:111) offers his readers the following amusing picture as the vehicle through which he pokes fun at certain long-standing acts of racial discrimination:

[Evita] didn't feel very comfortable surrounded by the ambience of black life. She honestly wasn't the type of Afrikaner to talk about smells, but there was a definite, sharp, "different" aroma that wafted around the confines of the airless chamber.

Her African counterparts (Uys, 1994a:111) appear equally upset because while

they were not the type of Africans to comment on smells ... that Afrikaner woman's stench was more than any civilized person could bear.

The second part of the extract contains clauses that, although syntactically similar to those of the first, contain opposite meanings, namely, 'she ... wasn't the type of Afrikaner' with 'they were not the type of Africans'. Uys also deploys two clauses that are both syntactically and semantically different when he replaces 'a ... sharp, "different" aroma' with 'that Afrikaner woman's stench'. Through his presentation of these two paragraphs, Uys challenges such stereotypical myths as 'all blacks are dirty and, consequently emit a pungent odour' and 'all whites are clean and, hence, pleasant smelling'. Through this entertaining narrative Uys is perhaps reminding his readers that many South Africans, of all races, are guilty of intolerance towards their fellows. Uys also has his tongue firmly in his cheek when he uses the phrase 'civilized person'. 'Civilized' is a quality sometimes regarded as the prerogative of European colonists, who traditionally branded all other races as unsophisticated.

Through a subtle manipulation of fact and fiction (examined in greater detail in Chapter Six) Uys capitalises upon political reality to 'create' his drama. Uys employs this methodology when he portrays Evita engaged in embracing the dual roles of housewife and politician. While Uys depicts Evita as involved in such activities as cooking and entertaining, he simultaneously allows her to use these traditionally female activities as the instruments through which she executes high-powered political manoeuvres. The following two situations, one during the early years of Evita's marriage and the second at the height of her political power, provide excellent examples of this particular chiasmic configuration while, at the same time, cementing the mythological and legendary dimensions of this character.

In the first situation in 1964, Evita (Uys,1994a:118) and her husband, Hasie, give a dinner party for the Minister of Justice, John Vorster and his wife, Tini, 'two days before' the conclusion of 'the Rivionia Trial'. Vorster is confident that 'Mandela and Sisulu and the others' (all prominent members of the then banned African National Congress), will be sentenced to be 'hung by the neck till dead'. While Vorster and his colleagues regard the imposition of the death penalty a tenable verdict for the Nationalist Party, Evita supposedly considers it to be politically unsound. Thus Uys's (1994a:119) persona decides to combine 'culinary terroris[m]' with political intrigue and, as a result, prepares what she terms 'Vorster's most hated dishes'. According to Uys (the character and narrator), this activity necessitates her 'slaving over' a hot stove, an unpleasant occupation that is often regarded as the destiny of some married women, even during the twentieth century. Evita, however, readily admits to Uys (the character) that, in this instance, she actually enjoyed preparing 'this disgraceful meal as if it was the last supper', an inference that gives this particular dinner party a ritual quality. Uys (1994a:119) uses alliteration to enhance the unpalatable nature of Evita's culinary efforts when he describes two items of the main course as 'stringy spinach' and 'lumpy leeks with clumpy cheese'. To complement the main course, Uys's heroine cunningly serves 'a bread-and-butter pudding' covered in 'a sticky sauce' that makes 'it impossible for her guests to talk'. Evita uses the diners' vocal incapacitation to her advantage and, with the benefit of the author's hindsight, she is made to articulate her opinions on the Rivionia Trial – sentiments that contrast sharply with the views of the then Minister of Justice. During his enforced silence, Evita reputedly cautions Vorster that if he 'hang[s] these nobodies, they will become martyrs to a cause that could so easily be buried forever'. In an overt reference to Robben Island, Evita advocates that the Minister of Justice 'lock them up somewhere, give them all life sentences and throw away the key [because] nobody will remember them'.

In the above situation, Uys uses Evita to satirise what he perceives as the Nationalist government's erroneous thinking with regard to the stature of the leaders of the then banned African National Congress. As Evita supposedly recommended, the accused in the Rivonia trial and others, were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment on Robben



Island. However, ironically, in direct contrast to Evita's prophecy that 'nobody will remember them', African National Congress stalwarts, such as Mandela and Sisulu, continued to be revered by the majority of black South Africans, both during their terms of imprisonment on Robben Island and after their release. Mandela, in particular, was subsequently afforded a legendary status far beyond that of Uys's Evita persona, as was evidenced by the African National Congress' overwhelming success in both the 1994 and 1999 elections.

The second example of Evita's political growth occurs when John Vorster succeeds Dr Verwoerd as Prime Minister, and supposedly continues to send Uys's heroine on diplomatic missions to meet important Heads of State. On one such occasion Evita and Hasie are sent to the Holy Land where Golda Meir<sup>20</sup> (Uys, 1994a:164) runs her 'country like a household' and naturally, as mentioned in Chapter Two, she entertains her South African guest in familiar surroundings – the kitchen. When Evita (Uys, 1994a:164) supposedly first meets Golda, Mrs Meir is 'stirring furiously at the large pot on her crowded stove' and so, once again, Uys involves his heroine in such 'traditional' female roles as sharing recipes and swopping gossip. Evita compliments Golda on her wonderful recipe and Golda encourages Evita to 'eat, dahlink, eat' because she 'is too thin for a woman of political substance'. Uys makes Evita reply: 'I'm of no substance at all, Mrs Meir, I am just a wife and mother.' In this way Uys ironically foregrounds Evita's apparent inability to fulfil anything other than a nurturing role through his inclusion of the demeaning phrase 'no substance at all' and the belittling adverb 'just'. Adopting a feminist mask, Uys points to the irony for, while Golda appears to hold contrary views to Evita's, Israel's Prime Minister seemingly elevates the role of wife and mother above a political career when she says:

To be a wife and a mother is, for many, the greatest aim in life. I just couldn't make it. Politics became my secret lover, my drug, my addiction.

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<sup>20</sup> Golda Meir was appointed as Israel's Foreign Minister in 1956, and elected Prime Minister in 1969 (Waxman, 1970:415,416).

Here, despite Mrs Meir's disclaimer, Uys subtly conflates reality (Meir's political prominence) and fiction (Evita's political aspirations and eventual prominence). Like Golda, Uys's Evita not only makes it both as a 'wife and mother' but also manages to assuage her 'addiction' for politics, a dual role that serves to enhance the myth of Evita. Perhaps this is why Uys suggests that 'one of the most remarkable women in history' (Uys, 1994a:165) later asks Evita, arguably the most outstanding of Uys's female personae, for advice on how to stop 'the Arab hordes' from 'tramp[ing] her small tribe into the dust of the ... promised land'. Without hesitation Evita replies: 'Go get them, Mrs Meir.' Uys (1994a:166) reports that, with equal speed, Golda orders General Moshe Dayan 'to "take Cairo before my hair is dry" [and] he nearly did'.

Uys thus casts Evita in the role of catalyst in the Israeli/Arab conflict that has not yet been completely resolved, as is evidenced by the increase in friction in the Middle East at the close of the twentieth century. The impact of Evita's 'dalliance' with Israel's political leaders at the end of the 1960s was, however, less positive than her supposed interaction with prominent South African politicians at the beginning of the 1990s. Evita (Uys, 1994a:346) is credited with both persuading State President P W Botha to allow her to nurse Nelson Mandela back to health (discussed in detail later in this chapter) and advising the Nationalist cabinet to 'vote for ... F. W. de Klerk' who soon 'bec[a]me State President [and] freed Nelson Mandela'. In his *A Part Hate, A Part Love*, Uys (1994a:166) reinforces Evita's legendary power when he implies a connection (albeit it a tenuous one) between South African and Israeli political strategies:

... the problems which had caused the Middle Eastern war had multiplied by the 90s and had been met with tried-and-tested brutality. ... Ironically the Jews ... had inherited the ... mantle of oppression so slyly dropped by F W Klerk when he became [President] and [thus] ... posters previously screaming "FREE MANDELA" now read "Free Palestine".

Uys is not alone in his views. Commenting on the upsurge of violence in the Middle East during the opening years of the twenty-first century, Osman (2001:5) also sees a link between apartheid and the current unrest when he states:

There are similarities between the ideologies of Afrikanerdom and Zionism, which portray the ruling groups in each case as an outcast people who, escaping oppression, found freedom in a Promised Land.

It is presumably Evita's ability to make decisive responses when faced with difficult situations that enabled Uys's heroine to 'bounce back' even after she and her spouse had been 'banished' to New York, during the early 1970s, because of Hasie's alleged illegal sexual indiscretions with a 'half-naked kaffir-girl' (Uys, 1994a:219).<sup>21</sup> Uys's Evita refuses to be vanquished by her expulsion and reputedly soon obtains employment 'at the [South African] Consulate as a tourism consultant' where she enlightens 'ignorant' Americans on South Africa's 'political situation'. From this small beginning, Evita (Uys, 1994a:223) soon becomes 'involved with [South Africa's] UN team', albeit in the roles of cook and hostess. It is her expertise regarding traditional South African cuisine that enables Evita (Uys, 1994a:226) to enter into a partnership with 'the long-serving South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha' who, like herself, 'kn[ows] that the way to a delegate's vote [is] through his stomach'. According to Uys (1994a:226-7), Evita and Pik develop

... a very lucrative system of culinary diplomacy in New York [and] spend hours in the small kitchen of her apartment on Park Avenue, taking turns in the preparations for a major diplomatic breakthrough on behalf of their beloved land.

The irony is implicit in this situation for it is through her involvement in a series of domestic tasks, that Uys allows Evita to regain her lost stature within the ranks of the Nationalist party and once more accomplish assignments of considerable political magnitude. It is only after Evita is persuaded to prepare and serve some of her country's more well known delicacies that South Africa's proposed 'expulsion from the UN [is] happily vetoed by France, Britain and the US' (Uys, 1994a:224).

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<sup>21</sup> In addition to the passing of Act No 55 of 1949 forbidding mixed marriages (mentioned in Chapter Two, Footnote Six), an amendment to the 1927 Immorality Act ... outlaw[ed] sexual relations between all blacks and whites' (Oakes, 1988: 375).

However, as Uys's Evita moves towards maturity, her attitude with regard to catering changes. By the mid 1980s, she (Uys, 1994a:119,227) has lost her taste for both 'culinary terroris[m]' and 'culinary diplomacy'. Evita explains her change of heart when she (Uys, 1994a:294) informs Uys (the narrator) that

... she no longer like[d] the idea of cooking as [she] was now a senior member of the Diplomatic Corpse.

Uys's sleight of hand appears deliberate because this is not the first time that his Evita persona confuses words or resorts to malapropisms. In this instance his/her writing of 'corpse' (a dead body) rather than 'corps' (a special department) is both humorous and challenging. Firstly, Evita's poor command of English makes her look foolish or ignorant. Secondly, the connotations of lifelessness and inertia that 'corpse' evokes weakens the efficiency of the Diplomatic Corps and, in particular, that of its 'senior members'. Presumably the reason for Evita's supposed lack of enthusiasm for cooking is because she 'no longer' enjoys an intimate relationship with one of the most 'senior members' of the Nationalist Government, namely her earlier fellow chef and political soul-mate, the then Foreign Minister Pik Botha. Evita (Uys, 1994a:294) tells Uys (the narrator) that prior to the planned celebration of the signing of the Nkomati Accord, Pik had merely

telexed her the likes and dislikes of the visiting blacks and suggested that she prepare *potjiekos* [stew]<sup>22</sup> [and] asked [her] not to dress too conspicuously [because] P W didn't want her to upstage his wife.

This situation is a far cry from their earlier successful culinary partnership. Consequently, implicitly evoking her growing legendary status, Evita complains to Uys (the narrator) that

Pik was not being very nice to me. I think he resented my position beyond that of just a homeland caretaker.

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<sup>22</sup> A traditional [South African] stew cooked in [a] three-legged pot (Uys, 1994a:383).

However, in an overt comment on the paradox of political allegiance, Pik's supposed rebuff does not prevent Evita from once again attempting to prevent the Nationalists making Mandela into a martyr. Uys (1994a:348) credits Evita with saving Mandela's life because he portrays her as allegedly persuading President P W Botha to allow her to take 'Madiba' (Mandela's nick-name) 'home ... to *Blanche-noir*' and 'nurse [him] back to health' (discussed later in this chapter).

Although, as mentioned in Chapter Three, Evita's former mentor, Dr Verwoerd, had 'considered women [to be merely] pretty decorations for the enjoyment of men' (Uys, 1994a:140), Uys allows his persona to play an ever-increasingly responsible role in the making of extremely important political decisions. In so doing he, albeit unconsciously, portrays Evita as overcoming the restrictions of gender prejudice in politics and 'breaking through' what many 'female executives brand "the glass ceiling" ' (Wallace, 2000:76).<sup>23</sup> The following extended excerpt from *A Part Love, A Part Hate* (1994a) provides examples of how Uys's (1994a:346-7) persona surmounts what appear to be examples of gender prejudice:

Evita Bezuidenhout walked into P W Botha's hushed office in Tuynhuis [looking] slim, elegant [and] ready for new business. ... She'd driven herself from Cape Town's airport, having asked a traffic cop on his motor bike to escort her. ... The hastily assembled gallery of securocrats and shady *Broeders* (brothers) sullenly rose to greet her. ...

"We are not accustomed to being summoned to a meeting by a mere citizen of the land, Mrs Bezuidenhout," [the State President] snapped.

"I am here because of Nelson Mandela."

There was a gasp of horror. The unmentionable words had been spoken. ...

"Sire, if that man dies in jail, the effect on this country and all its people will be too ghastly to contemplate," she cried.

"You are wrong, Madame Bezuidenhout. We have contemplated it already. Nothing is so ghastly that it can't be handled by Our State of Emergency. ... Make no mistake, Madame Bezuidenhout, no one will dictate to the South African government! And that includes you!"

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<sup>23</sup> This name is used to explain the situation in which, although women have been promoted to a managerial position in the corporate world, very few of them have been appointed as Managing Directors or Chief Executive Officers.

He frothed at the mouth, his eyes bulged, his chest wheezed. ... All the hangers-on nodded and agreed. “Mutter mutter mutter, yes yes yes!”

“Sire, if Nelson Mandela dies of TB in Pollsmoor Prison, you will be found guilty of more than just carelessness. ... It is 1988, Sire; TB can be avoided.”

...The State President was understandably worried. ... This curse of democracy had a habit of fraying the edges of his magic carpet. “What do you suggest, Mrs Bezuidenhout?” he asked coldly.

Evita launched into phase two of her plan ... with “that smile” on her renovated face becoming more secure. “My mother has a wonderful book of *boererate*, herbal remedies for every disease and ailment. ... Let me take Nelson Mandela home with me to *Blanche-Noir*. I will see to his total recovery and then he will be strong enough for the next step. ... With thy permission, Sire!”

P W’s tongue ... darted out of his quivering mouth. One of his eyes twitched grotesquely. ... The motley chorus line of nodding heads ... watched and waited.

Evita didn’t blink. She sat on the edge of the chair and held her breath. ... In Pollsmore Prison an old man coughed and coughed and coughed.

Eventually P W spoke.

“Yes.”

In the above lengthy extract, Uys constantly juxtaposes semantically contrasting images of the fictitious Evita Bezuidenhout and the real P W Botha (the then Prime Minister and State President) that portray Evita as holding dominance over Botha. While Uys uses Evita’s surname four times, he only uses Botha’s once, although on one occasion he does refer to him as ‘The State President’. Evita is definitely in control of the situation as she looks ‘elegant [and] ready for new business’, has ‘driven herself’ from the airport and ‘walks’ unannounced into the Prime Minister’s office. With the same meticulously selected lexicon, Uys reduces ‘P W’ and his ‘hastily assembled’ male colleagues to bumbling subordinates. While Botha supposedly attempts to control Evita by reminding her that she is ‘a mere citizen of the land’, his own insecurity is revealed in the word ‘snapped’. In contrast, Uys allows Evita to retain her authoritative position when she threatens Botha that the ‘effects’ of disregarding her advice will be ‘too ghastly to contemplate’. (Uys use of the words ‘Sire’ and ‘Madame’ are allusions to the French Revolution, an aspect that is discussed later in this chapter.)

Although P W claims that ‘no one will dictate to the South African government’. Uys portrays him as having lost control of the situation (‘he froth[s] at the mouth, his eyes bulge [and] his chest wheeze[s]’), thus reducing his claim to mere bravado. Evita, sensing her opponent’s weaknesses, reiterates her earlier threat in even stronger terms. Her tactics are successful – the President is ‘worried’ and he grudgingly asks for her ‘suggest[ions]’. Evita has obviously anticipated this type of response and the words ‘that smile’ and ‘secure’ indicate her confident attitude. Just, as mentioned earlier, she had met Dr Verwoerd’s challenge and produced twin sons almost thirty years ago, she knows that when she makes plans they always come to fruition. This time her ‘plan’ involves Nelson Mandela’s ‘total recovery’ and eventual release.

Uys concludes his recounting of *The Legend of Evita Bezuidenhout* in *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a) on a high note. As her ‘swan-song’ as Bapetikosweti’s Ambassador-for-Life, Uys (1994a:380) affords Evita the privilege of ‘address[ing] the opening session of the final sitting of the multiparty conference at the World Trade Centre in Johannesburg’ in 1993. As South Africa’s well-documented history chronicles, Mandela was elected President shortly after South Africa’s first democratic election in 1994 when the Nationalists were ousted after 40 years as South Africa’s ruling party. It is presumably as a consequence of acts such as these that Uys (1994a:354) feels justified in announcing that ‘apartheid was dead’ and, as discussed in Chapter Six, granting Evita the honour of interviewing South Africa’s first black President.

Evita continues to thrive in the ‘new South Africa’ and is described by Uys (1997a:3) as ‘one of the few true Afrikaner aristocrats not to have lost her head on the tumbrils of democracy’. Uys’s use of such words as ‘sire’, ‘madam’, ‘aristocrats’, ‘tumbrils’<sup>24</sup> and ‘lost her head’ evokes images of an earlier and less peaceful exchange of power, namely the French Revolution, during which many aristocrats, unlike Uys’s fictitious Evita, literally lost their heads. Uys’s allusion to the atrocities of the ‘Reign of Terror’ subsequent to the start of the French Revolution is perhaps a reminder that the

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<sup>24</sup> ‘A rude cart in which prisoners were taken to the guillotine during the French Revolution’ (Marckwardt *et al.*, 1965:1352).

dismantling of one political ideology and the introduction of another, such as occurred in South Africa during the last decade of the twentieth century, can be a doubled-edged entity with both positive and negative consequences.

Although as Frost (2001:109) notes, ‘icons have it tough [and] those with any sense make their mark and retire quietly to let the myth develop or expire’, the above analyses of Evita’s political development indicate that Uys’s most popular ‘icon’ has neither lost her power nor been forced to retire. On the contrary, the Evita myth has developed to such an extent that it has become a living legend, with Evita continuing to make her presence felt during the early years of the twenty-first century. Uys (2001i:13) ranks this former Afrikaans housewife alongside such famous ‘*Symbols of Sex and State*’ as ‘Cleopatra, Catherine the Great, Winnie Madikizela Mandela’ and, naturally, Evita’s namesake, ‘Evita Peron’. This particular period of Evita’s renowned career is discussed, among other things, in Chapter Six of this thesis.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONFLATING CHIASTIC CONFIGURATIONS: FACT/FICTION/FACTION**

In a country whose women traditionally hold their tongues, Uys's boast that the non-existent Evita is South Africa's most famous white woman is probably true. Delicious gender-political issues abound. Could a female satirist playing a male, say, have achieved half as much during this time?

Guy Willoughby

In Chapter Six, Uys's chiasitic blend of fact and fiction is discussed with specific reference to his creation and portrayal of the Evita 'mask' during the last ten years of the twentieth century. In the light of Uys's conflation of factual and fictional issues, this chapter considers whether it is Evita, the fictional persona, who controls Uys, the factual author/actor, or if it is Uys who manipulates Evita. This conflict of 'minds' is discussed within the context of the reciprocal relationship between the self and *alter ego* that Breytenbach (1985) encapsulates in his cross-over 'I'/image device (explained in detail in Chapter One). The next assumption to be examined is that Uys continued to use Evita's witticisms to express his personal views on political, social and cultural dissonance in post-apartheid South Africa during the closing years of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The third assertion derives from the second, namely that the self-proclaimed 'Mother of the Nation' (Pons, 1999:11) continues to assist her creator in the new millennium in alerting the general public to socio-political injustices, both nationally and internationally. In order to perform her satirical role more effectively, Uys's Evita has accepted her creator's persistent challenge that all South Africans must '*Adapt or Dye*' (1982) and she is now 'electronically empowered'. South Africa's 'bustling mistress of ... mischief' (Pons, 1999:11) has her own website and e-mail address and constantly interacts with other 'internet' users throughout the world. Thus, with her usual admix of humour and censure, Uys's *alter ego* continues successfully to fulfil the role for which she was originally created at the end of the 1970s, namely that of a satirical mouthpiece.

The issues outlined in the above paragraph are explored through an examination of extracts from a selection of Uys's written texts and televised performances. These include the following works: written texts – *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a), *Funigalore* (1995) and *The Essential Evita Buizuidenhout* (1997a); videos of television programmes – *Funigalore I and II* (1994c; 1994d), *Evita's People's Party incorporating The Ballot Bus and Town Hall Indabas* (1999b) and *Evita – Live and Dangerous* (1999e). In addition, articles and letters published via the electronic media on the <http://www.millenia.co.za> and the <http://www.evita.co.za> websites such as *Evita's Memo* and *Evita's Monthly Newsletter* are also examined together with Evita's involvement in Uys's

presentation of *For Fact's Sake, a schools-tour with an entertainment about AIDS/Safe Sex/Taboos and Urban Legends* (2000c). In keeping with the central focus of this thesis, cognizance is taken throughout these analyses of how Uys enhances the satirical thrust of his messages through the use of both syntactic and semantic chiasmata.

Uys's invention and presentation of his Evita persona, as a medium through which he presents his socio-political satire in his written texts and stage and television performances, necessitates the conflation of such chiasmic configurations as reality versus fantasy, fact versus fiction and, by implication, enhanced fact and enhanced fiction. (The enhanced fictional genres of myth and legend were defined and explored at length in Chapter Five.) While 'fact' and 'reality' are both synonyms for 'truth', Little *et al.* (1973:745,725) define fiction as 'that which is feigned or invented' but which often depicts characters and situations that mirror reality. Fantasy, however, results from the author's entering the illusory world of 'make-believe' and 'forming representations of things not actually present' in the real world.

In his *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a), Uys entertains his readers when he depicts situations that 'mingle the true with the false' (Marckwardt *et al.*, 1965:470) and, in so doing, enhances fact through the inclusion of fictional characters and circumstances that mirror reality. The following quotation from this work is offered as an example of this form of chiasmic structure. In a letter that Uys's fictitious persona supposedly writes to P W Botha (Prime Minister of South Africa from 1979 to 1989), Evita (Uys, 1994a:268) tells him that

... her maid Sophie and her garden boy Pompies refused to work on the 16 June as they felt it was proper to mourn those blacks killed on the same day in 1976. This, [she] felt, would be a pattern for the coming years, so would it not be a good idea, in the light of Mr Botha's "new South Africa" to declare June 16 an official public holiday along the same lines as 16 December?

It is a fact that many South African's employ domestic workers in the roles of 'maids' and 'garden boys'. It is also a fact that many South Africans believe it is 'proper to mourn those blacks killed on ... the 16 June ... 1976'. Consequently, in the 'new South Africa', under the direction of the African National Congress, '16 June' is a legislated

public holiday just as 16 December is. The public holiday on 16 June honours the numerous black school children who died in the Soweto riots during the second half of the nineteen seventies as part of the 'liberation struggle'. It is also true that on 16 December, members of the Afrikaner nation honour a vow their ancestors made. Before the Battle of Blood River in 1832, their forebears promised that if God allowed them to defeat the Zulus, they 'would note the date of the victory ... that it might be celebrated to the honour of God' (Oakes, 1988:119). The above extract also refers to a number of fictional characters and situations. Evita, Sophie and Pompies are fictional characters and thus Evita does not employ them, nor does she recommend that P W Botha (a real politician) create a new public holiday on 16 June. In addition, P W Botha is not usually given credit for establishing the 'new South Africa' (a term used to describe post-apartheid South Africa). This honour is normally reserved for Nobel Prize winners, former South African Presidents F W de Klerk and Nelson Mandela.

By hinting at Evita's ability to forecast public opinion accurately on such an important issue as the legislation of a public holiday, Uys enhances the credibility of his fictional heroine. Likewise, he enriches fact by suggesting that Evita (Uys, 1994a:267-8) is a key player in P W Botha's plan 'to change' the country into a 'new South Africa'. By using inverted commas on either side of the phrase 'new South Africa', it is unlikely that Uys is merely following common practice for expressing hypothetical concepts. It is more likely that he is casting doubt on the ethical principles underlying 'Mr Botha's' reform policies. The picture that Uys presents in the quoted extract also conflates contrasting images of his Evita persona. He depicts Evita firstly as a white 'madam' with two domestic helpers, who disparagingly refers to her adult gardener as a 'boy' and, secondly, as a liberal South African who shows respect for the memory of black South Africans who died in the apartheid 'struggle'. Yet it must be remembered that, while these images mirror reality and thus should not be dismissed as mere fantasy, the fact that Evita does not exist places them within the realm of enhanced fiction.

Uys (1995:3) warns his readers that in *Funigalore* (1995) they will see 'reality as it is invented' and 'truth as produced by technology'. Reality and truth are supposedly

definitive notions that cannot be either ‘invented’ or ‘produced by technology’. Thus these two incongruous phrases suggest that in this series Uys engages in a form of semantic chiasmus through which he melds fact and fiction (mentioned above) when, in his role as an actor, he interviews South African politicians (real people) in the guise of Mrs Evita Bezuidenhout (a fictitious persona).

It is thus not surprising that Uys (1995:15) reminds his readers that ‘reality and fiction had joined hands’ in *Funigalore I* and *II* (1994c; 1994d). According to Uys (1995:3), both viewers of these programmes and readers of his book live in the ‘age of faction and the fabrication of truth’ and, thus, he is confident they will accept his coupling of reality and enhanced fiction. Uys’s use of the term ‘faction’ warrants further comment. If read in the context of the claim Uys (1995:15) makes in this television series that ‘reality and fiction had joined hands’, it appears to be just another example of this writer’s habit of manipulating words and combining the terms (and concepts) ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’. However, ‘faction’ is a word that already exists and is defined as ‘a party of people combined for a common purpose’, usually ‘violent opposition ... to a government’ (Marckwardt *et al.*, 1965:453). Prior to 1994, many supporters of banned African political parties were considered ‘terrorists’ because of their often ‘violent opposition’ to the Nationalist-led Government and its apartheid ideology. ‘Faction’ thus appears an apt expression in the context of the *Funigalore I* and *II* (1994c; 1994d) television series in which Evita interviews prominent members of the unbanned African National Congress, the Pan African Congress and the South African Communist Party, who were formerly regarded as insurgents by the previous government.

Uys’s (1995:3) phrase, ‘the fabrication of truth’, is another example of his use of semantic chiasmus, because ‘truth’ means being ‘faithful to fact or reality’, while ‘fabrication’ is ‘a contrived ... story [or] falsehood [involving] a series of statements carefully studied and fitted together in order to deceive’ (Marckwardt *et al.*, 1965:1348, 453,470). These deceptive statements ‘may mingle the true with the false’ and thus appear to validate the choice Uys (1995:3,15) makes regarding the chiastic expression ‘the fabrication of truth’ to depict a programme in which, as mentioned above, ‘reality

and fiction’ are blended as is the case in both *Funigalore I and II* (1994c; 1994d) and *Evita – Live and Dangerous* (1999e), another television magazine-programme broadcast during December 1999 and January 2000. Extracts from this second programme are discussed later in this chapter.

In *Funigalore II* (1994d) Evita interviews Mr Roelof F (Pik) Botha, the then Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs in South Africa’s Government of National Unity. (Prior to this appointment, Pik was a member of the Nationalist Government’s Cabinet and South Africa’s longest standing Foreign Minister.) This interview reveals how Uys fuses fact with enhanced fiction or legend. Uys (1995:127) reminds his readers that, ‘according to legend’, Pik and Evita had ‘been very close’ for many years. Both readers of Evita’s supposed biography and viewers of Uys’s revues will be familiar with their fabled intimacy. Uys (1997a:14) describes Pik as ‘vibrant and intense, a born actor and a great manipulator’ – qualities that can likewise be applied to the Uys/Evita combination. Uys (1995:128) again aligns Pik Botha with Evita when he describes Pik as ‘another legend famous for histrionics and flamboyance’. Although the past diplomatic and romantic *liaison* of the two ‘larger-than-life’ figures is purely a figment of Uys’s creative imagination, throughout their televised *tête-à-tête*, ‘the minister didn’t waver once in his commitment to the Evita legend’ (Uys, 1995:199). The following description of their emotionally’ charged ‘reunion’ clearly shows that both ‘Evita and her Pik’ (Uys, 1995:198) enjoy overacting in front of a camera:

The door opens. Pik Botha sees [Evita] and his face creases into a welcoming smile.

“Evita!” he says in those subterranean tones of his.

“Hmmm,” purrs *Mevrou* [Madam]. He steps forward and with his hands gently on her shoulders, kisses her on each cheek. This is not just a greeting in the European style! This is a graphic recharging of old batteries not yet quite flat.

Evita pauses for a second. “Hello, Pik,” she answers in her come-hither alto.

“Welcome,” he whispers.

“Thank you, *skat*, [darling]” she sighs. “Can I come in?”

Uys's (1995:128) earlier labelling of Pik as 'another legend' is supported through such exaggerated descriptions as: 'welcoming smile', 'subterranean tones', 'graphic recharging of old batteries', thus making Pik a fitting counterpart to the seductive Evita who 'purrs' and 'sighs' and speaks in a 'come-hither alto'.

When recollecting this particular interview, Uys coincidentally draws his readers' attention to another form of chiasmus, namely the amalgamation of actual and television time, when he remarks 'by the time we shot this greeting scene, the sun was down and the light was fading fast'. After describing the reunion between these two 'old flames', Uys remarks that while 'on screen, the day was still young', 'that was actually where the day with Pik ended'. Uys points out how a film-maker and his cast can manipulate 'real' and 'stage' time by juxtaposing scenes that are shot at the end of a television shoot with those taken at the beginning. Consequently, television viewers see Evita and Pik 'hunting' 'big-game' (Uys, 1995:203) subsequent to their initial meeting although, in reality, this scene was shot much earlier in the day. The hunting scene also blurs the boundaries between real and fictional locales because, while it purports to take place in the African bush, it was shot on the ranch of a close friend of Pik Botha. Uys (1995:203) reports that instead of live animals, 'the object of Evita and Pik's hunt' is a replica of 'the huge elephant that sets the tone at Sol Kerzner's *Lost City* in South Africa's North-West Province, thus adding a comic touch to their 'dramatic encounter' with nature. Here, Uys juxtaposes fact with both fiction and fantasy when he recalls how these two celebrities imbue television's small screen with the glamour of the 'big screen'<sup>1</sup> when Pik imagines himself as the dare-devil 'Indiana Jones'<sup>2</sup> and Evita becomes an exotic 'African Queen'.

Uys continues to compress fact and fiction into 'faction' when Evita reminds Pik of their shared experiences in Vienna. While it is probably true that both Pik Botha and Uys (the author) have visited Vienna, Pik could not have been there with Evita because 'she is the one woman in the land who doesn't exist' (Uys, 1995:39). However, Pik is soon so

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<sup>1</sup> The 'big screen' is a term that is used to describe the cinema screen during the 1980s and 1990s as a means of differentiating the film industry from television.

<sup>2</sup> Indiana Jones is a character in a series of popular Hollywood movies during the early 1990s, and played by a young and dashing Harrison Ford.

engrossed in this make-believe world that he joins in Evita's (or is it Uys's) 'game'. Pik creates his own version of their common past, presumably by combining his personal knowledge of both Vienna and Uys's well-known persona. When Evita asks Pik if he remembers their visit to Vienna, Pik (Uys, 1995:211) does not hesitate for a second, but nonchalantly replies: "I remember it so well. It was spring. ... We went dancing [and] to an open-air concert." Pik thus exhibits similar behaviour to that described in Chapter Five in which people 'willingly ... believe in a fiction [that they] know to be a fiction, there being nothing else' (Larue, 1975:200). Pik suddenly takes the lead in this exercise in nostalgia and asks Evita if she 'remember[s] that time in the snow' (Uys, 1995:211). Uys (1995:211) (the actor) acknowledges his loss of control when he comments: "Shit? Whose fantasy *is* this?" However, his anxiety is short lived because 'Evita remembers exactly. After all, she was there with Pik'. Meanwhile Uys (the actor) continues to listen 'for clues as to where this is going'.

This particular incident offers evidence of a rather unique blending of fact and fiction in which, having ousted Uys (Evita's creator and presenter), Pik (a real person) and Evita (a fictitious character) confidently operate within the world of fantasy. The reciprocal nature of the Uys/Evita relationship is discussed at some length later in this chapter.

Both Pik and Uys offer reasons for the ease with which the Minister is able to move between his own 'real' world and Evita's fantasy one, during the filming of *Funigalore II* (1994d). Pik (Uys, 1995:207) claims that 'in order to be a politician, you also have to be a little crazy', while Uys (1995:209) comments that 'being a South African politician ... had given [Pik] practice in walking a tightrope between realities'. For the duration of the television shoot, these realities consist of the factual life of the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs in post-apartheid South Africa and the fictional world of Mrs Bezuidenhout. However, once the 'hazards of film-making' are over and 'jokes start rolling into the arena' (Uys, 1995:198,209), Pik leaves behind Evita's fantasy world and re-enters the real world of actors, directors and camera crew. He (Uys, 1995:209) says: "Pieter, ... I want to tell you this joke, not Evita [because it is] not a story to tell a lady."



As indicated earlier, this chapter explores a selection of Uys's texts in order to establish whether Uys controls Evita or *vice versa*. This investigation takes cognizance of the 'chiastic interplay' (Jacobs, 1997:5) (referred to in Chapter Three) that occurs between the artist and the persona, and through which the artist runs the risk of losing his/her own identity when the 'self' is subsumed into the *alter ego* or mask. However, the resultant 'imago' (Breytenbach, 1985:149) is capable of simultaneously 'looking back and forth' (Budick, 1996:12,13), and is thus an ideal tool for a satirist such as Uys who uses humour to appropriate the 'spaces' between the seemingly opposing cultures and ideologies of white and black South Africans. Examples of how the locus of control continually changes from inventor to invention are found in this episode of the *Funigalore II* (1994d) when Uys/Evita interviewed Pik Botha. At one stage during the filming of this particular episode, Uys (1995:208) admits:

There were times during this day that I didn't know where the hell I was, let alone where Evita was supposed to be.

It appears from the above remark that both Uys and Evita had relinquished control to the third member of this dramatic triangle, namely Pik. However, this situation is not permanent, because, on other occasions during the same interview, Uys (1995:211,213) implies that he and Evita are equal partners, with synchronised tastes and reactions, as can be seen from the following remarks: 'wonderful, wonderful, Evita and I reply' and 'before Evita or I can let out a scream of claustrophobia'. Towards the end of the day's filming, the nature of the relationship becomes more ambiguous, because Uys (1995:209) states:

I leant against something huge to give poor Evita's feet a rest. Jokes started rolling into the arena ... some really funny and extremely rude stories. I love them. [I] laughed like a drain out of Evita's rather prim mouth.

Initially the above quotation seems to imply that, on this occasion, instead of one member of the pair trying to control the other, Uys and his persona are engaged in a supportive relationship. The reason Uys gives for 'lean[ing] against something huge' is 'to give poor Evita's feet a rest' because, throughout the television shoot, s/he, or he/she, has been wearing the high-heeled shoes that are deemed 'standard performance attire' (Tewksbury,

1994:35) for female impersonators. Although it is during the enactment of his Evita role that Uys wears these shoes, it is his feet that are feeling the effects of having worn such impractical footwear throughout the day. It is therefore likely that while Uys appears to voice his concern for Evita's comfort, he is actually gratifying his own desire for physical relief. During the second half of the quoted extract, Uys (1995:209) again takes control because he is the one who loves listening to 'extremely rude' jokes and laughs without constraint. Uys's reference to Evita's 'rather prim mouth' indicates that on this occasion Uys is forced to express his emotions through the 'prim mouth' he has created for his persona. However, the inclusion of the qualifying adverb 'rather' implies that Uys's persona has the suggestion of a smile on her lips and, in all probability, like her creator, would enjoy the jokes if Uys allowed her to do so.

Another text that exhibits the presence of 'the interactive binarisms' (Jacobs, 1997:4) (also discussed in Chapters One and Three) that occur between actor and persona is the description Uys (1995:8,9) gives of his metamorphosis into Evita, prior to her appearance at an 'ANC's Western Cape ... Painsinsula rally' during 1994. Uys's report suggests that the relationship between himself and Evita is similar to the 'concept of *imago*' (Breytenbach, 1985:197), a state of being in which two distinct entities evolve into one inseparable 'being'. Uys (1995:8,9) describes this process as follows:

... I found myself ... arriving in my shorts with a plastic bag in my hand, holding *Mevrou's* [Madam] frock. The marshals ... glanced at the bag with interest. "Is she in there?" they asked ... .

I was shown into a small caravan where the change could be made from forty-something *boerseun* [son of an Afrikaner] to a middle-aged *supertannie* [super aunty] ... .

Soon I was dressed and Mrs Evita Bezuidenhout emerged ... glowing in the orange, white and blue of her Voortrekker dress. ... A *boerevrou* [Afrikaans housewife] in her traditional cultural outfit? ... Allan Boesak's <sup>3</sup> introduction – "Pieter-Dirk Uys!" – didn't help my nerves. ... There I stood in a dress. ...

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<sup>3</sup> At that time Boesak was a prominent member of the African National Congress.

Never mind. ... Evita surges onto the stage. ... “Amandla, *skatties!*” [freedom, darlings] she cries and waves a clenched fist.

Here it appears that, initially, it is the actor/dramatist who has absolute control over his persona because it is Uys (1995:8-9) who ‘arriv[es] in [his] shorts’ and it is Uys who is ‘shown into a small caravan’. Unless Uys chooses to adopt the familiar physical attributes, mental qualities and vocal idiosyncrasies of Mrs Evita Bezuidenhout, she will remain nothing more than a paper bag full of women’s clothing. However, this passage also shows that, while at times, Uys controls Evita, at others, Evita holds sway over Uys. Once the performance begins, Mrs Bezuidenhout takes charge and ‘surges onto the stage crying “Amandla, *skatties*” ’.<sup>4</sup> After her speech, Evita (Uys, 1995:11,13) ‘sits in the front row [because] Nelson Mandela wanted it’. When this renowned statesman arrives ‘he open[s] his arms ... and embrace[s]’ Evita. Her creator states, possibly with a slight twinge of jealousy, ‘I had never met him ... as me’, a comment that indicates the persona has taken precedence over the artist.

A few months after the rally described above, Uys, again in the role of Evita, interviewed President Nelson Mandela for *Funigalore II* (1994d). The triangular relationship between artist, persona and audience offers support for various other aspects of the image/I fusion. In the following extended extract from *Funigalore*, Uys (1995:242-3) describes how five women react to his ‘remodelling’ of himself into the Evita persona, when he dons women’s accoutrements in the ‘ladies’ powder-room’ prior to interviewing Nelson Mandela. This text offers evidence of how, through this process of metamorphosis, the artist and the persona are conflated and control frequently passes from one to the other.

The door opened ... and five ... [of] the President’s Cleaning Ladies [entered]. I was in their loo! [toilet].

“*Haai, Meneer* [Hello, Sir],” said the first lady. “Can we watch the transformation?” I was still wearing PDU [Pieter-Dirk Uys’s] clothes; only the face showed the goodies ahead.

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<sup>4</sup> This is another example of Uys’s use of chiasmus. Uys’s Evita combines her favourite Afrikaans endearment, ‘*skatties*’, with her newly acquired ‘politically correct’ Xhosa slogan, ‘Amandla’, and urges everyone to vote ‘for a democratic South Africa’.

“Of course,” I said.

The ladies watched each movement carefully ... each item was greeted with a hiss of admiration and a mutter of comment. I looked into the mirror. There I stood in costume. All that was lacking was the hair. The ladies stood transfixed. ...

“Now, ladies, look. When I put on the hair, she’s here.” ... “Are you ready?”

“*Ja, Meneer* [Yes, Sir],” they all said.

I put on the wig. Instantly Evita Bezuidenhout was there. The ladies changed their attitude in a flash. Suddenly there was no chummy interest, ... they stuttered and tried to look busy. I gave them an Evita stare in the mirror.

“*Haai, waarlik* [Oh, truly],” whispered the first lady, “there’s Mrs Bezuidenhout. *Môre, Mevrouw* ... [Morning, Madam].”

“*Môre, Mevrouw*,” the others echoed. ...

“No, man, leave *Mevrou* to get ready now,” said one and started bustling the others out.

“But can we have a photo with *Mevrou*?” asked another.

“*Natuurlik* [of course],” I said and they looked at Evita twice before realizing that I was in there. They giggled and nudged each other but the earlier bond was gone. *Mevrou* Bezuidenhout was here and that meant back to work. We posed quickly for pics [photographs] before she would notice and they left. I looked into the mirror. Evita Bezuidenhout glared back at me. It was time for me to leave too.

Here Uys describes the mixed reactions of ‘the President’s Cleaning Ladies’ to his metamorphosis. This passage confirms the claim by Breytenbach (1985:148) that the persona acts as both ‘a means of contact’ and an ‘isolator’ (as cited in Chapter One). Initially the women signal their acceptance of the actor who is hiding behind the persona when they speak directly to Uys in the phrases ‘*Haai, Meneer?*’ and ‘*Ja, Meneer*’. Uys’s description of the women’s response when the transformation into Evita is complete, apart from her wig, suggests that the process of modification links both Uys and his persona to his attentive audience. Phrases such as ‘watched each movement carefully’, ‘hiss of admiration’ and ‘the ladies stood transfixed’ reveal the intense level of the women’s involvement. Once the metamorphosis is almost complete and ‘Evita Bezuidenhout [i]s there’ (Uys, 1995:243), the women exhibit the kind of Coleridgean ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ referred to in an earlier chapter. They readily accept

Evita as a replacement for Uys and the '*Haai, Meneer?*' and '*Ja, Meneer*' is transposed into 'there's Mrs Bezuidenhout. *Môre, Mevrouw*' and 'can we have a photo with *Mevrou*'. However, when Uys finally 'puts on the wig' and 'becomes' Evita, the 'earlier bond [is] gone' and 'suddenly there [is] no chummy interest'. Instead 'the ladies change their attitude' and order each other to 'leave *Mevrou* to get ready' and hurriedly 'start bustling [each] other out'. The above extract clearly reveals that the action of adopting a persona involves a chiasmic conflation of both attraction and alienation.

A closer reading of the quoted passage offers support for the theory put forward by Breytenbach (1985:148) that a struggle ensues between the 'I' and the 'image' during transformation. Through the statement 'I put on the wig', Uys reveals how, initially, he occupies the dominant position and starts the process of change. This situation is soon reversed because the statement 'Evita Bezuidenhout was there' indicates that the persona has usurped Uys's power. Uys subsequently states 'we pose quickly for pics before she would notice'. The adverb 'quickly' and the phrase 'before she would notice' suggest that the actor and the cleaners are intimidated by the Evita persona. This is confirmed by the fact that Evita 'glared' at her creator when he 'looked into the mirror'. Uys's further comment supports this interpretation when he suggests a parting of the ways for himself and his persona in his farewell sentence 'it was time for me to leave too', indicating that, in keeping with the argument presented by Breytenbach (1985:197) that artists consciously choose to 'live behind projections of themselves', Uys cedes control of the pending interview to Evita. It appears that in appropriating Evita's identity, Uys, the actor, is 'smothered' (Breytenbach, 1985:148). It is possible, however, to apportion another interpretation to Uys's farewell statement. It could mean that Uys is taking control because only when he physically leaves the cloakroom and moves into the venue where the interview is to be held can s/he converse with Mandela.

Uys's description quoted above implies that although Uys has 'become one with his *alter ego*' (Breytenbach, 1985:148), they are not yet irrevocably fused. Hence it depicts the artist and his/her persona as two discrete entities, indicating that the process of appropriating a persona is not a straightforward one but rather a schizophrenic

relationship involving fluctuations of power between the ‘I’ and the ‘image’. This type of relationship is revealed when Uys describes how he uses his persona as a literary tool when, as noted in Chapter Five, he chooses Evita to interview Mandela. In the following extract Uys (1995:248) describes both his own and Evita’s reactions to some of Mandela’s more challenging comments:

I let Evita simply nod ... I let Evita venture a “Well” but he [President Mandela] isn’t finished.

“And you yourself have played a tremendous role.”

Now who is he talking about, me or Evita? I was never sure in this interview; ... I don’t think Mandela plays to the character of Evita. He sees me there and talks to me. ... It is important, therefore, for me to gently weave in Evita’s reality, so that even though [Mandela] never mentions her name, it could be that he is talking to her, not to me.

The above passage again clearly demonstrates the intricate relationship that exists between the artist, the persona and the audience. Uys (1995:248) says that Mandela does not ‘play to the character of Evita’ but to him. Thus, it appears that, although it is Evita who sits opposite the President, Mandela knows he is actually being interviewed by Uys, the author and performer. However, in order to maintain the continuity of this particular television series in which Evita conducts the interviews, it is essential that Uys establishes his persona’s dominance. Uys (1995:261) does this by continuing to ‘gently weave in Evita’s reality’ and, in so doing, confirms what the audience already knows, namely that Evita is ‘on the warmest terms with her new leaders’ while Uys has ‘never met any of them’. The success of Uys’s endeavours is evident because, when the general public watch this particular episode, it appears as if Mandela is talking directly to Evita. Uys seems aware of the chameleon relationship that exists between a performer and his/her persona because Uys (1995:254) offers the following chiasmic description of his/her discussion with President Mandela: ‘[w]ell, in some moments ... I was not just “in there”; I was also “peeping out”.’

The phrase ‘in there’ describes a situation in which the persona appears to dominate the relationship, and the artist (Uys) becomes invisible. However, the prefix ‘not just’

implies that Uys is not entirely consumed by his persona and, briefly, exerts his dominance over Evita. Towards the end of the interview and speaking through Evita, Uys (1995:256,239) tells Mandela ‘you are definitely my greatest hero’, thus confirming his earlier statement that Mandela ‘is the most remarkable politician in the world’. When the President responds by saying ‘well, that is mutual, because you are my hero’, it is likely that Mandela’s use of the word ‘hero’ is intentional because Mandela (Uys, 1995:248) previously complimented Uys on his ‘important contribution towards normalizing the situation [in South Africa]’.<sup>5</sup> However, Uys soon reverts to his role as a satirist and performer and ‘pulls back and let[s] *Mevrou* get on with her job’. As Walker (1997b:9) notes, Uys ‘has enough respect not to meddle in her life’ and thus restores the fictional reality of *Funigalore II* (1994d), in which Evita plays the leading role.

As mentioned above, this chapter now examines Uys’s continued deployment of Evita as a tool for satirising the socio-political reality of post-apartheid South Africa. Uys (1997a:3) confides in his readers that in order to do this, Evita, ‘like [most] other white South African[s]’ in the ‘new’ South Africa, must ‘steer her ship of survival through the stormy swells of radical change’. In order to ‘circumnavigate the terrible aftermath of the apartheid system she helped spawn’, Evita conveniently forgets her supposed earlier ‘involvement with ... the former fascist structures of so-called white supremacist rule’ (Uys, 1997a:22). As readers of *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a) know, Evita’s ‘biography’ documents her close links with the Nationalist Government between 1959 and 1994. For example, during the implementation of the black homeland policy, Uys’s Evita (1994a:98), like many of her contemporaries, chose to ‘look the other way’ when her cook committed suicide when the home of her ancestors was incorporated into the fictitious ‘North Sotho Homeland’. Instead of repudiating this form of ‘resettlement’ Evita opts for ‘a new cook’ and refuses to ‘allow an unfortunate incident like this to jeopardise her ... happy future’ (Uys, 1994a:115). ‘In exchange for [her] cooperation in [the] homelands matter’, Evita (Uys, 1994a:286-7) is made Bapetikosweti’s Ambassador-for-Life, with all the perks that accompany the post.

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<sup>5</sup> Mandela was referring to the need to create a post-apartheid South Africa in which ‘blacks will not oppress the white minority and the other minorities’ (Uys, 1994a:248).

Uys (1995:262) admits that under ‘the protective shadow of Evita Bezuidenhout’s vast public aura’ he continued ‘peer[ing] round corners’ throughout the 1990s and alerted the public to the socio-political reality of post-apartheid South Africa as, for example, when Uys records his and/or Evita’s incisive comments in *The Essential Evita Buizuidenhout* (1997a). As mentioned in Chapter Two, Uys ‘exploit[s] a whole range of incongruous juxtapositions’ (Fowler, 1973:138) in order to ‘re-educate himself’ and to shock those members of public who had ‘conveniently forgotten apartheid’s harsh realities’ out of their amnesia. When challenged on her role in apartheid, his heroine (Uys, 1997a:3,22) loudly protests: “[M]y conscience is clear, because I have never used it.” The statement ‘my conscience is clear’ assumes a certain amount of prior soul-searching by the speaker and, consequently, the receiver expects it to be followed by a statement that offers evidence of self-reflection. However, when Evita declares ‘I have never used it’ (her conscience), her remark insinuates her inability both to engage in inward debate and to show compassion, as was reflected in her supposed treatment of her cook Greta. Although Evita and, by implication her compatriots, might not have actively supported apartheid, their apathy perhaps enabled this particular ideology to last for four decades.

In post-apartheid South Africa, Evita (Uys,1997a:3) still shows ‘hardly a twinge of remorse’ for what Uys (1999h:3) terms her ‘ice-thin racist hypocrisy’. Obviously ‘old habits die hard’ because, during *The Ballot Bus and Town Hall Indabas* (1999a), Uys’s Evita (Haffajee & Jurgens, 1999:4) ‘goes off [stage] with a revolver [supposedly] to negotiate with a striking driver’ (as mentioned in Chapter Four), thus suggesting an autocratic approach rather than mediation and debate. In contrast to his persona, Uys (Walker, 1997b:8-9) expresses concern that ‘freedom of speech’ is in danger of reverting to ‘no speech’, a fear echoed by Jansen (2001:30):

The viciousness of official attacks on intellectuals might very well end up preventing any other potential voices from daring to assume that criticism and dissent are useful qualities in a democracy. ... The idea it seems is to ensure that intellectuals provide criticism within the confined spaces of power, not in the public domain, [and] that the terms and the territory of public dissent itself be determined by those in power.



Uys, himself an intellectual and critical thinker, appears aware of the danger of elevating one particular perspective of socio-political reality above another when Evita voices her opinion on the '*Great Trek*'. Uys (1997a:34) satirises not only what is regarded by many as a significant event in South African history, but also the plan to rewrite South African history from an African perspective. Evita/Uys describes this journey as

... the forced migration of hundreds of peace-loving Christian Boer citizens who couldn't stand another moment living under the oppressive yoke of British Imperialism. It was a magnificent moment in our history: women and children, men and youths, combining their passion for liberty and carrying their fat oxen and heavy wagons across the vast and vicious Drakensberg.

This quotation illustrates what Eastman (1948:193) calls 'ironic comedy' (discussed in Chapter Two) in which the writer 'play[s] off ... the humor [*sic*] of big talk [against the humour] of understatement'. Initially Uys adopts the grandiose style many South Africans have come to associate with accounts of this particular event. Through his use of such phrases as 'the oppressive yoke of British Imperialism', 'magnificent moment in our history' and 'passion for liberty', Uys affords this item the deference usually reserved for important historic events. However, Uys immediately deflates this image when he completes this sentence with the amusing description of his burdened 'forefathers' struggling over the Drakensberg mountains. In this image the unexpected happens – instead of the Voortrekkers being transported by ox wagon, they transport both wagon and oxen. In allowing Evita to re-write history in this amusing and irreverent manner, Uys cautions against cultural groups' rewriting history from their own perspective.

In her new role of 'Comrade iVita b'Zuidenhout' (Uys, 1997a:3), Evita (Uys, 1997a:34) presents the 'new' version of this epic journey:

My new friends in the ANC assure me that the Voortrekkers were actually on the run from the Colonial Police for stealing cattle and raping black women. Someone else will have to believe today's history books, ink still wet.

'On the run from the Colonial Police for stealing cattle and raping black women' portrays the 'Voortrekkers' as criminals trying to escape the law, and not as political refugees fleeing 'British Imperialism'. Through his inclusion of the word 'new' Uys suggests that

Evita's friendships are transient, thus casting doubts on the quality of her own and her colleagues' comments. The phrases 'ink still wet' and 'someone else will have to believe' not only stress the speed with which 'today's history books' will be written, but perhaps more importantly, suggest that, in common with its predecessor, the new rendition of the '*Great Trek*' might not be based on objective research. Uys again uses his persona to remind South Africans that, in common with 'her[story]', history is 'man-made', thus highlighting the fallibility of the written word and the dangers of all forms of cultural, political and social prejudice. As mentioned in Chapter One, Evita's 'herstory' is contained in *A Part Hate, A Part Love* (1994a), a book that Dr Dikgang Makwetu Banda predicts will be 'the first prescribed book on South African history for schools in the New South Africa' (Uys, 1994a:backcover). This description is very similar to the accolades attributed to 'the Real Story' found in the *Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa* (Oakes, 1988) and used as a source of reference for this thesis. The publisher claims that the latter book 'strips away the curtain of myths, misconceptions and lies that have for so long obscured the country's past, opening your [the readers'] eyes to a story you only thought you knew' – surely an objective that Uys achieves equally well through his satirical works and, in particular, his creation of the Evita 'myth'.

In an entry in *The Essential Evita* entitled *Parliament*, Evita (Uys, 1997a:60) discusses the activities of this particular establishment, both during the time of the Nationalist Government and during the post-apartheid era. As usual, this text contains examples of Uys's satirical mixture of censure and comedy (pleasure/pain as discussed in Chapter Two). Uys/Evita initially adopts a formal approach and defines Parliament as 'the seat of government'. However, s/he devalues its status by apportioning Parliament the mundane role of 'a place where you could once ... have a nice meal in peace' and describing it as 'the National Party Club'. Uys (1997a:60) engages in socio-political criticism when Evita points out that the Nationalists were not the only South Africans who supported apartheid from '1948 to 1994' and casually dismisses the opposition parties as follows:

We had some opposition in the form of the United Party, then Progressive Party, Progressive Reform Party and the Democratic Party. *Ja*, [yes] they all pretended well and it was a joy being part of that parliamentary clique.

By listing the various names of the opposition parties, Uys implies the weakness of an irresolute opposition that frequently re-invents and re-names itself – here Uys prefigures the subsequent formation (and later dissolution) of the New National Party and the Democratic Alliance. In the clause ‘they pretended well’, Uys alludes to the irresolute nature of South Africa’s opposition parties, and in the phrase ‘parliamentary clique’, he aligns them with the Nationalist Party.

Evita continues her discussion of Parliament and boasts that Nationalist MPs engaged in such democratic practices as ‘debates, committees, questions, discipline and concern’. However, Uys undermines the quality of the MPs’ activities by prefixing them with the word ‘motions’, thus implying a puppet-like following of rules and not the realization of committed actions. Evita points out the insignificance of the MPs’ behaviour when she says that the wives ‘made up the rules’ and then trivializes their decision-making activities (and, by implication, those of the politicians) when she follows this statement with a description of such domesticated activities as deciding ‘what to wear’, ‘where to wear it’ and ‘whom to invite’. Evita’s exposure of the Nationalist-led government is somewhat ironic because MPs in the current African National Congress-led government have also been criticised for their lack of commitment. Willoughby’s (2001:6) comments offer support for this contention:

Love or hate her, the so-called former Ambassador to Bapetikosweti commands more media time than many ... actual political figures – she seems to speak more often in Parliament than most sitting MPs – and her sayings and doings are perpetual news.

Consequently, these politicians are also on the receiving end of Uys/Evita’s witty censure (Uys, 1997a:60):

They [the ruling African National Congress] are now discussing the possibility of moving the whole Parliament permanently away from Cape Town. ... But I don’t know why they bother. It’s too late. Parliament is already moving, day by day, bit by bit. One day the fax machine, the next day the computer, then the heaters, then the taps.

Initially Evita appears to adopt a *laissez-faire* attitude towards the removal of office equipment. However, Uys presumably has a more serious purpose for presenting a cumulative description of the disappearance of property bought with taxpayers' money, namely that of alerting the public to the current increase in corruption and crime at all levels of South African society. Uys's warning is corroborated by headlines such as: 'Poor pay is no excuse for corruption' (Fynn, 2001:5); 'More questions for Yengeni' (*Pretoria News*, 2001b:1);<sup>6</sup> 'Angry mob brutally kill[s] two suspected robbers' (Hosken, 2001:10) and 'Criminals are hero-worshipped in townships' (Charle, 2001:1).

Despite the negative image of South Africa that is frequently presented in the local media, Uys (Thamm, 2000:72) says: "Every months or so I have this urge to renew my love affair with South Africa ... there's so much going on here, so much to do." When interviewed shortly after receiving 'the Living Legacy 2000 Award', Uys (Walker, 2000:8) once again expresses his confidence in Evita's future, while acknowledging the dubious nature of her past. In his usual chiasmic style, he spans her whole life in the following statement:

She comes from a past that no one remembers and goes into a future that no one will forget.

The first half of Uys's comment gives the impression that the past (under apartheid) is too terrible to be remembered and thus it can be forgotten. As such, it is an appropriate comment for a character who was both a 'former racist' and a Nationalist, during the days of apartheid but now, at the beginning of the new millennium, is 'a reborn designer democrat' (Uys, 1995:5). However, this reading is too simplistic an interpretation of post-apartheid South Africa for an astute political commentator who aims to 'offend everyone but ... not upset anyone' (Wiesner, 1999:4). Consequently, the description of Evita's background needs to be reassessed. Uys/Evita's reference to 'a past that no one remembers' appears to describe South Africa's current reality in which 'nobody among

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<sup>6</sup> Tony Yengeni, the 'ANC's Chief Whip', reputedly 'failed to declare a gift of a luxury vehicle' he allegedly received from Daimler-Chrysler Aerospace, one of the beneficiaries of the 'arms procurement deal' (*Pretoria News*, 2001b:1). On the basis of these allegations, Yengeni was arrested in October 2001 and subsequently resigned his Cabinet post.

the country's white minority ... admits to having supported a policy which had been described as a crime against humanity' (Nyatumba, 2001:5).

The second part of the sentence ('goes into a future that no one will forget') is more complex, as it suggests a chiasmically composed future that will be both too perfect and too awful to forget. Perhaps this is why Uys (Bishop, 1991:202) appears so confident about his future that he states:

I have a long life as a satirist in the future South Africa. I don't need apartheid to make comments. ... Human nature will never let me down [because] people love laughing at things that are not to be spoken about.

It thus appears that in continuing to present the public with 'things that are not to be spoken about', Uys (1994a:flyleaf) will ensure that Evita carries out the role for which she was originally created during the apartheid era, namely that of 'informing the nation of the stench under the cloak of respectability'. Once again there is evidence of a *double entendre* in Uys's statement because the 'cloak of respectability' protects both Uys's 'Afrikan queen' (Walker, 2000:8), or 'African Queen' (Uys, 1995:203), and the public figures s/he seeks to expose.

One of the ways in which Uys has tried to ensure that South Africans would have a future that they would not want to forget was to encourage them to vote during the 1999 elections through the presentation of *The Ballot Bus and Town Hall Indabas* (1999a). When commenting on his reasons for touring South Africa with this particular programme, Uys (Accone, 1999:1), as mentioned in Chapter Two, stated:

Voter education is about everybody mattering. No one must take me seriously, but I must take everyone seriously.

In the televised version of this voter education revue, Uys (1999b) discusses his reasons for using Evita in this role, claiming that it is necessary to put 'the passion back into politics' because 'politicians have nothing to sell'. Although, Uys admits that he usually 'doesn't like going out in public' dressed as Evita because he has 'to keep the character

going', Uys often interacted with the general public in his Evita guise before and after performances of this revue. In order to put 'the fun part [back] into politics', Uys blurred the normally rigid boundaries between black/white and Afrikaans/African cultures when his '*Boere Tannie*' wandered amongst informal traders and '[ate] African cuisine' from their stalls. Sometimes, however, although still in costume, Evita was given a less prominent position and it was Uys (the author and actor) who interacted with the public in a more serious manner, for example, when he looked at young people's identity documents and stressed the importance of their registering as voters.

Uys also uses Evita to express his views on controversial socio-political issues during performances of *Evita – Live and Dangerous* (1999e).<sup>7</sup> In one such episode, Uys scrutinizes the educational policies of the African National Congress. Disguised as Evita, Uys interviews Kadar Asmal, Minister of Education in Thabo Mbeki's Cabinet. Evita introduces the Cabinet Minister as 'a brilliant man who holds the future of this country in his hand' (Uys, 1999e) and asks Asmal questions that allow him to expound his Party's somewhat idealistic policies and action plans. At the same time, showing her usual preference for what Uys (1997a:2) earlier described as 'double-speak', Uys's persona draws attention to several contentious matters. These include the Education Department's plan to raise the entry age to primary school, as well as crowded classrooms and the shortage of textbooks and science equipment in historically disadvantaged schools. In support of Evita's more probing questions, Uys intersperses the interview with two pre-filmed sequences that provide the viewer with a different perspective on education. Through this meta-media device, Uys perhaps hopes to persuade the viewers to weigh his satirical criticism of the education system against the explanations that Asmal provides for the problems facing South African schools.

In the first sequence, Uys/Evita once again questions the objectivity of the recording of past events in history books. While Evita's rendering of the Battle of Blood River (1838)

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<sup>7</sup> This television magazine programme was aired on Sunday nights during December 1999 and January 2000 on the e-TV channel of the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

between the Voortrekkers and the Zulus is extremely amusing, Uys uses Evita's send-up of this event to voice some harsh criticism of both authoritative education systems and Afrikaner Nationalism. According to Evita (Uys, 1999e), when she was a child, pupils were 'taught things at school and ... just accepted them'; for example, she had believed 'until 1994 [that] God was Afrikaans'. With equal dogma she now informs the public that it was 'politically incorrect to conceive ... that we Afrikaners should win a battle against the Zulus'. In an attempt to placate her 'new' political friends' desire to rewrite South African 'history books' (mentioned earlier), Evita irreverently recants the 'colonial' version of the Battle of Blood River.

In her 'politically-correct' interpretation of a painting of the Battle of Blood River, all acts of aggression are replaced with social activities, for example, Evita (Uys, 1999g:4), points out that, contrary to 'Nationalist propaganda', the Afrikaners and Zulus were participating in 'a *braaivleis*' [the South African name for barbeque]; the 'tannies' were dancing the *toyi-toyi*, while the Zulu warriors were 'swimming ... some face up and some face down' in 'Tannie Sannie's tomato sauce'. In conclusion, Evita (Uys, 1999e) states that, in the interests of 'reconciliation and peace', the descendants of the 'conquerors' and the 'conquered' have 'agreed to agree' that 'the Battle of Blood River never existed'. However, she does add the proviso that this was only done after 'many golden handshakes'<sup>8</sup> and, in this way, reduces the supposedly 'noble' intention of both parties to one of mere financial gain. While some viewers might have been offended by Uys's outrageous 'spoof' of an event that many South Africans hold sacred, Evita's revised version does provide viewers with a reason for laughing. Uys (Bishop, 1991:210,08) believes that 'humour is a great philosophy' and 'laughter [our] last democratic right' because it helps people to demystify aspects of the socio-political reality that they, like Evita and her contemporaries, had previously accepted without question.

In the second pre-filmed sequence that Uys airs whilst interviewing Asmal, Uys is

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<sup>8</sup> The term 'golden handshake' is a euphemism widely used throughout Africa for payments, either in kind or in money, that people receive either on retirement, retrenchment or as a bribe when they have concluded a deal that ensures additional financial benefits for the other parties.

disguised as a disillusioned white male matriculant – this persona is similar to one that appears in Uys’s earlier revue, *Live from Boerassic Park* (1997b). Uys alerts his viewers to the realities of education under South Africa’s second democratically elected government at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In this way Uys casts doubts on the validity of both the Minister of Education’s comments and the activities of the Education Department. Uys uses this sequence to draw attention to the Education Department’s introduction of outcomes-based education and the accompanying changes in curriculum and subject content. Uys’s (Walker, 1997b:9) schoolboy persona is still waiting for [his] matric[ulation] results’ and complains about inefficient and corrupt practices in the administration and marking of National Senior Certificate examinations. The pupil wishes he had followed his peers’ advice and bought copies of the examination papers (a practice that allegedly occurs in some provinces). When the pupil finally receives his results he discovers that he has been awarded both ‘a retirement benefit and a golden handshake’ thus, ironically, relieving him of the necessity of working. Uys/Evita’s reference to ‘a golden handshake’ acts as a reminder that many South African teachers were retrenched, despite the alleged shortage of teachers that Evita refers to when she questions Asmal about the ‘crowded classrooms’. The composition of this particular episode of *Evita – Live and Dangerous* (1999e) once again demonstrates Uys’s habit of juxtaposing amusing and serious elements in the form of fictional sequences and live factual interviews. In this programme, Uys uses Evita to disseminate his concerns over what he obviously perceives as the gap between policy and reality in the field of education in South Africa.

Another area in which Uys sees a similar ‘gap’ is the current HIV/AIDS crisis<sup>9</sup> facing not only South Africa but most of the world. Uys thus adopts the role of a ‘sex educator’ who ‘wages war against ignorance about HIV and AIDS’ (Sichel, 2001:9). Just as in the

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<sup>9</sup> AIDS or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is a currently incurable disease that is extracting a ‘devastating toll from men, women and children’ in Africa, as can be seen from McGeary’s (2001:49) statistics: ‘17 million Africans have died since the AIDS epidemic began in the late 1970s, more than 3.7 million of them children. An additional 12 million children have been orphaned by AIDS. An estimated 8.8 % of adults in Africa are infected with HIV/AIDS.’



‘old South Africa’, Uys (Merten, 2000:16), ‘assisted’ by Evita, helps people to laugh ‘at the fear of politics that could kill’ in the ‘new’ South Africa. Uys encourages them to laugh ‘at the fear of sex that can kill’. During an interview with Merten (2000:16), Uys expresses the following uncharacteristically pessimistic view:

The first virus was apartheid and that lasted for 40 years. Then we found a cure: democracy. Now we have AIDS. We must just hope we are still around when they find a cure.

In another episode of *Evita – Live and Dangerous* (1999e), Evita/Uys plays host to both Judge Edwin Cameron, who had just openly declared that he had tested positive for HIV/AIDS, and a young stand-up comedian from the Cape Community Collective Project, who admitted she was homosexual (another controversial issue). A now more tolerant Evita (Uys, 1997a:7) subverts her earlier self-righteous declaration that ‘Afrikaners can’t get [AIDS], because we’re not black, we don’t take drugs and we are not sexually experimentative’. However, in deference to the ‘difficulty’ that Evita (Uys, 1997a:22) has ‘saying [condom] loudly in a public place’, Uys uses her supposedly more worldly-wise younger sister, Bambi Kellermann (another of Uys’s personae) to provide viewers with a graphic demonstration of the use of condoms in this episode of *Evita – Live and Dangerous* (1999e). After the airing of this pre-filmed sequence, Uys’s ‘prissy’ Afrikaans matron professes to be shocked and embarrassed by the behaviour of her sister, who ‘runs a brothel in Paarl’ (Uys, 1997a:79). In this way, Uys maintains Evita’s ‘genteel’ image, while using her popularity as a ‘talk-show hostess’ to engage the public in a discussion on such socially relevant issues as HIV/AIDS and homosexuality.

During the second half of the above television programme, Evita appeals to viewers to telephone the studio and make comments or pose questions on these controversial issues to both Judge Cameron and herself, thus once again conflating fact and fiction. However, as the viewers can neither hear nor see the people who purportedly telephone the studio and only hear Evita’s response, these callers, like Evita, might be a figment of Uys’s

imagination. It is possible, therefore, that Uys is again using a meta-media device to stimulate public debate.

In a second pre-filmed sequence that Uys presents in this particular episode of *Evita – Live and Dangerous* (1999e), viewers watch Evita as she reputedly visits a home for children suffering with HIV/AIDS, thus enabling Uys to confront a number of commonly held misconceptions with regard to this disease. Initially, Evita is depicted as being reluctant to drink tea with the child minders because she is scared of catching AIDS. Even after she is reassured that AIDS cannot be transmitted in this way, she surreptitiously wipes her cup with her handkerchief. She is initially portrayed as being scared of making physical contact with the orphans and is supposedly surprised to learn that, instead of being locked-up, they are treated like normal children and regularly hugged by their minders. Feigning a gradual loss of her inhibitions, Evita can eventually be seen feeding some of the AIDS orphans and playing games with them. By using the Evita persona in this way, Uys (McGeary, 2001:47) breaks down some of ‘shame, stigma and ignorance’ surrounding HIV/AIDS in ‘Botswana, South Africa [and] Zimbabwe – the heart of the heart of the epidemic’ because, as mentioned before, Uys (Bishop, 1991:202) believes that prejudice is not the sole prerogative of apartheid, but also involves discrimination ‘against AIDS victims’.

Clearly Uys feels so strongly about the unpleasant reality of South Africa’s AIDS ‘pandemic’, that he continues his ‘war’ against this killer disease through both his *For Fact’s Sake, a schools-tour with an entertainment about AIDS/SAFE Sex/Taboos and Urban Legends* (2000c) and his one-man revue, *For Fact’s Sake* (2000d). Evita accompanies Uys on his AIDS education programme through which Uys, with the help of his personae, seeks to ‘arm more than 30 000 high school learners with vital HIV/AIDS information’ (Thamm, 2000:71). Uys’s Evita persona is portrayed as both a mother and a respected Afrikaans matron with grandchildren who are at risk and, like her equally famous ‘co-star’, Nelson Mandela, comes across as a concerned citizen. Uys, adopting the voice and outward appearance of Nelson Mandela (*Pretoria News*, 2001a:1) reiterates that ‘we in the ANC are committed to fight the HIV virus’ and reminds his audience that

'the struggle is not over yet'. Uys employs these two well-known personae to add credence to his AIDS show in which he (Prinsloo, 2001:1) 'uses humour to educate the pupils about sex and the killer disease'. Uys uses the 'struggle against apartheid' as a metaphor for the struggle against the AIDS pandemic. In this show Uys also speaks 'through the persona of P W Botha' who, with his previously referred to wagging finger and lolling tongue, must surely introduce some humour into this sombre topic.

As mentioned in Chapter One, in order to cope better with some of the problems that she and her fellow South Africans faced during the last decade of the twentieth century and at beginning of the twenty-first, Evita accepted Uys's call to '*Adapt or Dye*' (1982) and became computer literate. S/he uses the '*www.evita.co.za*' website to inform his/her fans of Evita's activities, such as her involvement the voter education programme and Uys's current AIDS education programme for school children. Uys (2001c:1) argues that now that 'the arena of death in SA [South Africa] has moved from politics to sex, the weapon of humour and satire must be used in that minefield' to reassure the public that while 'people are dying [of AIDS]' they 'are also living with AIDS'. Uys's concurrent use of 'dying' and 'living' once again shows that semantic chiasmus is an integral part of his satiric mode. Uys uses 'Evita's Memo' (2000g:2) to create awareness of the AIDS crisis in Southern Africa in which Evita comments on an AIDS Conference held in Durban at the beginning of the twenty-first century:

There has been that international AIDS Conference in Durban. I thought it was about Foreign Aids, but I believe all AIDS is now local. I hope Thabo sorts out this mix-up between what came first: HIV or apartheid. Something leads to AIDS and I don't think it's only poverty and unemployment. But I wore my red ribbon and served my *lekker bobotie* to the delegates. As long as I don't have to share their cups or their forks. ...

Here Uys uses both syntactic and semantic chiasmus (melding fact and fiction) as an aid to humour when he contrasts the phrases 'Foreign Aids' and 'all AIDS is now local'. Uys cleverly draws attention to South Africa's constant but often unsuccessful quest for increased foreign aid in the form of investments and donations with the unwanted 'successful' increase in the incidence of local AIDS cases. Uys (1994b:7) maintains that

satire 'is a reflection of the happenings around one [and] has to adapt or else it will die ... because what worked today cannot work tomorrow'. Uys's persona obviously shares his views and, consequently, keeps up to date with current events. When Evita (Uys, 2000g:2) expresses 'hope [that] Thabo sorts out this mix-up between what came first: HIV or apartheid', s/he is referring to the President's controversial questioning of the 'current approach to the HIV/AIDS problem, which is rooted in the premise that HIV causes AIDS' (Altenroxel, 2001:1). At first, it might appear that Evita's juxtaposing of the seemingly unrelated terms 'HIV' and 'apartheid' is just a slip of the tongue, and that she had meant to say 'AIDS'. However, this statement also shows a similarity between Evita's words and the claims by her mentor (Uys, 2000a:23) that 'the arena of death [in South Africa] is no longer politics ('apartheid') but sex ('HIV' and/or 'AIDS')'.

Uys obviously does not share Evita's optimism, because he mercilessly lampoons President Mbeki's views on AIDS in *For Fact's Sake* (2000d) and portrays 'Mbeki ...camouflaged in a doctor's gown and a surgical mask' (Sichel, 2001:9). However, Uys's satire is both appropriate and accurate when weighed against the outcome of the 'long awaited report by the Presidential panel on AIDS', that reveals that 'the depth of the cleft on the aetiology of AIDS' (Altenroxel, 2001:1) remains as deep as ever. It appears that Evita/Uys is not alone in associating AIDS with the actions of both South Africa's apartheid regime and the new African National Congress-led government. Judge Edwin Cameron, 'one of South Africa's most prominent carriers of the AIDS virus' (*Pretoria News*, 2001c:1), voices similar sentiments. He blames the unprecedented rise of AIDS on 'an ineptitude on the part of the apartheid government which, grievously, has been matched on the part of our democratic government'.

It appears from the above quoted extract from 'Evita's Memo' that Evita (Uys, 2000g:2) initially champions the cause of AIDS sufferers because she proudly announces that she wore her red ribbon – the universally accepted sign of empathy with, and support for 'people living with' and 'dying' from AIDS (Uys, 2001c:1). However, in the next sentence, Evita (Uys, 2000g:2) undermines her alignment with the comment 'as long as I don't have to share their cups or their forks'. In common with the majority of Uys's

satirical writings, 'Evita's Memo' (2000g:2) contains 'a sting in the tail' and Evita shatters her Florence Nightingale-like image when she rebuffs of any form of physical contact with AIDS sufferers, even if only through the sharing of cutlery. Unfortunately, Evita's lack of knowledge and attendant intolerance of AIDS sufferers is not an isolated incident. As was the case with her earlier recorded televised 'visit' to a home for children suffering from AIDS, Evita's behaviour serves to draw attention not only to society's current prejudice towards 'people living with AIDS' but also to their ignorance of how AIDS is transmitted. It is presumably these generalised misconceptions that Uys seeks to bring to the public's attention through the medium of works such as *Evita – Live and Dangerous* (1999e), *For Fact's Sake, a schools-tour with an entertainment about AIDS/Safe Sex/Taboos and Urban Legends* (2000c) and the revue, *For Fact's Sake* (2000d).

In addition to his commitment to fighting the AIDS crisis, Uys, or rather his persona Evita, still engages in satirical censure of questionable socio-political issues. One such matter is the compensation promised to people who testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.<sup>10</sup> In her monthly newsletter, 'Evita's Memo' (2001b), Uys, in the guise of Evita, addresses his/her concerns to Doctor Frene Ginwala, Speaker in the National Assembly, when s/he (Uys, 2001b:2) 'smell[s] something not so nice around [Ginwala's] seat of power'. Uys's Evita (2001b:1) begins the letter by championing the interests of her 'favourite char' whom she describes as follows:

Ou Fiela was faithful and clean and never stole anything. ... She washed all our clothes, even our ... underwear ... and enjoyed it! I treated her like a human being, in spite of the fact that sometimes she behaved like a black with no education. ...

Ou Fiela went to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission because her sons were killed by the Security Police during the apartheid years. ... [However, although] she wanted revenge [she forgave her sons' killers when she] was promised some money. ...

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<sup>10</sup> A structure that was put into place by South Africa's first majority government under the leadership of the African National Congress in order to achieve reconciliation between the victims and perpetrators of crimes committed during the apartheid era.

In the first paragraph, Uys portrays Evita as a patronising liberal ‘madam’ through the juxtaposition of conflicting statements. Uys firstly stresses Ou Fielas positive characteristics through the words ‘faithful’ and ‘clean’ and then negates these qualities when, through the words ‘never stole anything’, ‘Madam’ Evita implies that not all domestic workers are so honest. Uys follows the same tactic when Evita surreptitiously debases the statement ‘she washed all our clothes’, by claiming that Ou Fielas had ‘enjoyed’ washing her employer’s ‘underwear’. Evita confirms her condescending attitude when she qualifies the statement ‘I treated her like a human being’ with the words ‘sometimes she behaved like a black with no education’. Evita has obviously forgotten that Ou Fielas lack of education was probably caused by the inadequacies of the ‘Bantu Education Act’<sup>11</sup> implemented by the Nationalists.

However, Evita is not the only person to exploit her ‘maid’, because, according to Evita, Ou Fielas has not yet received the compensation she was ‘promised’ in lieu of revenge. In this way, Uys subverts the integrity of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is depicted as both reneging on its obligations, and also, somewhat naively, assuming that forgiveness can be bought. Speaking through Evita, Uys (2001b:1-2) complains to Dr Ginwala:

And now the TRC is not allowed to pay the victims of the Struggle their few promised rand. ... There is R345 million waiting to be paid to the people who agreed ... to forgive ... in exchange for some financial help. For education, pills, doctors, wheelchairs. Graves. ...

So many people in government today are ... returned exiles [who lived off] donations from other peoples’ budgets. ... And here we have people who stayed and fought and lost their children and their hope and their lives and their belief in a future ... The stink of carelessness comes back into politics as the wheel of fortune turns. Frene? I smell something not so nice around your seat of power.

Uys again aligns a number of semantically opposed ideas, presumably to draw attention to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s unfulfilled pledges, for example ‘few

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<sup>11</sup> Act No 47 of 1953 (the Bantu Education Act) that ensured that ‘the curricula complied with the “nature and requirements of the black people” ’; the Universities’ Amendment Act whereby ‘separate university institutions were created for Asians, blacks and coloureds’ and ‘blacks were denied access to white universities’ (Cameron & Spies, 1986:278-280).

promised rand’ versus ‘million[s] waiting to be paid’ and ‘seek revenge’ versus ‘forgive’. The words ‘education’ and ‘doctor’ remind readers that many ‘victims’ of apartheid were denied their basic rights, while the words ‘wheelchairs’ and ‘graves’ emphasise that South Africans of all races were maimed or killed as a result of the armed struggle. In the final paragraphs Evita scathingly describes two contrasting groups of African National Congress supporters – the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’. Here Uys (1995:262) abandons the ‘gentle stroke’ (cited earlier) he adopted immediately after the demise of apartheid and subjects the African National Congress-led government to the type of harsh censure he had previously reserved for the Nationalists and their supporters. When recounting the experiences of the fictitious Ou Fiel, Uys’s persona engages in a chiasmic slippage between the idealistic ideologies of both the Truth and Reconciliation Committee and the African National Congress and the harsh realities of the real world in post-apartheid South Africa.

As mentioned earlier, Uys is obviously not partisan in his satirical critique and, as Willoughby (2001:6) notes, he uses every opportunity to lambaste the African National Congress government for corruption, mismanagement and high-handedness, and to decry in witty accents the ever-widening spiral of criminality into which the country has fallen.

In another edition of ‘Evita’s Memo,’ Evita (2000g:1) voices her criticism of other political parties when she draws attention to the merger of the Democratic Party and the New National Party. She (Uys, 2000g:1) anticipates the subsequent demise of the Democratic Alliance when she questions the reasoning behind the unexpected union of these previously rival political parties:

I said: “Tony, surely if you have a choice of getting into bed with a former enemy, in this case the ANC or the NP, why do you choose the lowest denominator?” He answered: “Rather the Devil you know than the Devil you don’t!”

... What a clever boy Tony Leon is. Now at least the DP [Democratic Party] can say it has black and coloured members. ... Thanks to the merge[r] with the National Party ... all [the] old Nationalists, *Broeders*, torturers, killers, liars, thieves and others have found a safe haven in the Democratic Party.

In the above passage, Uys once again conflates Evita's fantasy world with the real world of the questionable political 'dalliance' (Uys, 2000g:1) of the newly formed 'Democratic Alliance' while, simultaneously using semantic chiasmus for satirical purposes. Uys/Evita first praises the merger ('what a clever boy Tony Leon is') and then condemns it as merely an act of expediency when s/he labels the former Nationalists 'torturers, killers, liars [and] thieves'. However, Uys's Evita is a survivor and, silencing her doubts, quickly announces: "I'm thrilled. Now at last I can say I'm a Democrat." It is thus not surprising that Uys and his persona are frequently heard to comment that 'hypocrisy [is] the vaseline of political intercourse' (Kustow, 1998:1).

It seems fitting before concluding this chapter that specifically discusses Uys's continued creation and portrayal of the Evita 'mask' during the final decade of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first, to again consider Eichbaum's (1990:29) criticism (mentioned in Chapter Three) of this particular persona:

I have never thought that Evita Bezuidenhout was one of the undoubtedly talented Mr Uys's finest, enduring or even endearing creatures. ... Although she might have been moderately amusing in the early 1980's when Pieter-Dirk Uys first created her, the concept, repeatedly trotted out over the years, began to wear a bit thin a long time ago. ...

... Evita Bezuidenhout merely passes a flow of comments of a vaguely political nature [that do not] get to the jugular of the absurdities of apartheid or the often fatuous politics of this country, be they left or right. ...

It was fun for a time, but quite frankly I am now getting heartily sick of the mannered cavortings of Mrs Bezuidenhout and it is time for Mr Uys to move on to other things ... .

Mr Eichbaum's opinions are not the same as those held by the majority of critics or audiences, as is evidenced by Evita's unprecedented popularity and continued growth. However, Uys's persona has taken Eichbaum's (1990:29) comments to heart and has 'move[d] on to other things', such as those discussed in this chapter (voter education and AIDS awareness programmes). A decade later, Evita has proved to be one of Uys's most



‘enduring [and] endearing creatures’ (Eichbaum, 1990:29) and Uys has extended her theatrical successes into the worlds of business and technology. She acts as hostess in the successful theatre-cum-restaurant complex, *Evita se Perron*, and has a range of perfumes and wines and a web-site through which she continues to successfully circulate her ‘political ... patter ... on the absurdities of ... the often fatuous politics’ (Eichbaum, 1990:29) of the African National Congress-led government.

However, it remains an open question whether political correctness in issues of race and gender will affect humour in South Africa. Uys (Wiesner 1999:4 ) believes that in today’s South Africa there is a very thin line between what is satirical and what is racist. Political correctness could become the concrete condom on the weapon of satire.

Rather than heed Eichbaum’s (1990:29) recommendations (quoted above) to abandon ‘the mannered cavortings’ of Mrs Bezuidenhout, Uys has developed and refined this particular persona. As his satirical mouthpiece, Evita has achieved international acclaim. This is no mean achievement for Uys’s fictitious character who some ten years earlier had, according to Eichbaum (1990:29), already ‘beg[u]n to wear a bit thin’.

The story of Uys’s heroine has thus grown ‘taller and longer with time’ and has not only been ‘written down’ but has also come off the page in the physical presence of Uys’s Evita persona and into the theatre and the lives of real people until she is, arguably, South Africa’s ‘leading lady’. As Krouse (1999a:16) wittily notes, this is ‘an accolade not many South African men can confidently bestow on themselves’. Commenting on Evita’s success, Willoughby (2001:6) states:

Delicious gender-political issues abound! Could a female satirist playing a male, say, have achieved half as much during this time?

## CONCLUSION

### LOOKING BACK/LOOKING FORWARD

The future is certain; it is just the past that is unpredictable.

Evita Bezuidenhout *alias* Pieter-Dirk Uys

Pieter-Dirk Uys is one of South Africa's most successful satirists and fulfils the dual roles of writer and performer. In true satirical spirit, his work both challenged and entertained audiences during the oppressive years of apartheid, and continues to do so during the last decade of the twentieth century and the opening years of the twenty-first. While his work has achieved national and international recognition, relatively little research has so far been undertaken on his contribution to South African literature *per se*.

The focus of this thesis, therefore, has been to examine Uys's use of the rhetorical trope of chiasmus, an aspect of his work that has, to date, received little or no attention. The multiple nuances of 'chiasmus' were examined pointing to the performer/persona relationship in terms of ' "I" create Image; Image makes "I" ' (Breytenbach, 1985) and the related 'semiotic richness of stage sign-vehicles'. Uys's own particular blend of entertainment and censure was examined in an attempt to verify Uys's claim that his work contains 'forty nine percent [*sic*] anger, fifty one percent entertainment' (Bishop, 1991:199), a strategy that this study defines as the 'pleasure/pain principle'.

Before this study commenced there were only three completed theses and one incomplete study that explored aspects of Uys's work. While two of these examine the character 'Evita Bezuidenhout' at some length, they do not contain an in-depth discussion of how Uys's use of this particular persona involves a chiastic conflation of male actor and female persona. In a later article, McMurtry (1993) traces Evita's development from a satirical voice in the *Sunday Express* at the end of the 1970s to Uys's most popular persona in the 1980s and early 1990s. While this article describes Evita's rise to fame and discusses Uys's role as both a satirist and female impersonator (issues explored much more fully in the present research project), it does so, once again, from a general perspective and only covers Uys's work up to and including 1995. The current study was, thus, more narrowly defined because it focused on Uys's use of chiastic configurations as a satirical device and, in particular, his deployment of the Evita Bezuidenhout persona as his satirical mouthpiece. This investigation involved a semiotic analysis of both verbal and non-verbal sign-vehicles in a selection of Uys's prose works

and revues, as well as articles that are published via the internet on Evita's website, and includes works from the beginning of the 1980s until the present (the end of 2001).


This thesis also attempted to discover whether, as Uys gradually developed and portrayed the Evita persona, he continued to remain in control or if, in fact, Evita has insiduously gained dominion over her creator. Uys's use of Evita as a means of alerting the public to social, political and cultural dissonance as well as his acting as a mediator between the 'old' and 'new' South Africa was examined.

The findings of this study thus point to Uys's use of chiasmus in all areas of his work, such as prose works, revues and television performances, ranging from his use of the pleasure/pain principle of entertainment mixed with criticism, his female impersonation, his use of verbal and non-verbal signs and in the admixture of fact and fiction.

A limitation of this study is that the exploration has focused primarily on Uys's use of chiasmus and has excluded other tropes. Also, in terms of his personae, the focus falls mainly on his creation and deployment of the Evita Bezuidenhout mask. The study has therefore not given full consideration to his satirical depiction of both real people, such as past and present political figures, or to purely fictitious creations who, nonetheless, engage in a combination of factual and fictitious events, although these are mentioned in passing. The study has, therefore, not analysed in any detail Uys's creation and utilization of other fictitious 'women' such as Nowell Fine and Evita's 'mother', Ossewania Poggenpoel, nor his portrayal of both 'real' and imaginary male personae, such as Presidents P W Botha and Nelson Mandela or his 'Cape Coloured' characters. It has not unnaturally looked at Uys's work from the perspective of an English mother-tongue speaker and thus some of the nuances of Uys's practice of using both English and Afrikaans may not have been fully appreciated or explored. The South African emphasis also excludes Uys's broader satire of world issues.

Some aspects that warrant possible further research include the following: Uys's creation of 'faction' – a strategy that involves the fusion of fact and fiction through which his



audience is 'foxed by what looks  by what sounds true but can't be, and convinced beyond a doubt by something that can only be a lie' (Uys, 1995:5). The socio-political implications of Uys's satire have not been explored in depth in this study, nor has the question of whether, in the current age of politically correct speech, there is still a role for those who draw attention to matters of social and political dissonance, a task that often necessitates the satirist's calling 'a spade a spade'.