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Critical Literary Pedagogy: Teaching Literature for Social Transformation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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ABSTRACT Following the dawn of democracy in 1994 in South Africa, teacher training institutions were required to introduce critical, interpretive literary pedagogy to empower students with knowledge for social transformation. This study sought to investigate the effectiveness of the critical literary pedagogy used in the teaching of Zakes Mda's (2002) novel, *The Madonna of Excelsior*, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This study was qualitative and employed a literary analytical approach to collect data, which involved an analysis of a literary text, book reviews, assessment topics, and narrative interviews conducted with students. The study's findings revealed that the pedagogic practices used in the teaching of the novel empowered students with knowledge to challenge the socio-political issues that continued to affect the majority of South Africans. The study recommended a theory-driven approach to teaching literature to provide students with knowledge to use literature to challenge socio-political issues that shape(d) the South African society.