

FICTION'S TRUTH AND MEMORIES OF MODERNITY - Some reflections on South Africa's unresolved dilemma

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As indicated by Appadurai (1996) and Ashcroft (2001), fiction has a privileged position in relation to journalism and other writing practices when it comes to promoting social action and change. Dramatized fictions, not least, in the form of live theatre, film or broadcast soap operas, are potentially very powerful communication tools.

My focus in this paper is on literary fiction as a transgressive means of investigation on the one hand and as a vehicle for cultural identification and social empowerment on the other. I will argue that these two aspects are intrinsically connected, and that the second aim should be subordinated to the first.

I will specifically discuss South Africa in the transitional period from 1991 to the present as my case, with emphasis on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its impact on culture and public debate.

Keywords are Memory, Modernity, Truth, Transgression and Interpolation.